

FemFest 2011 Inspires Audiences

Winnipeg, September 28, 2011– Sarasvati Productions’ **FemFest 2011: Staging Inspiration** wrapped up on September 24th with over 1200 people taking in performances, workshops and outreach activities. This year marked the 9th annual festival with artists traveling to Winnipeg from England, Newfoundland and Vancouver.

Although officially ending with its exciting cabaret on September 24th, an extra reading of the new children’s play *Bear and Blue’s Adventures Through the Whispering Woods* was added on September 25th at the Children’s Museum.

“We’ve heard nothing but positive responses to this year’s line-up,” says Artistic Director Hope McIntyre. “Both the audiences and participating artists were inspired by the work. We are already planning for the festival’s 10th anniversary in 2012.”

Certainly a highlight was hosting over 140 elementary school children for the workshop presentation of *TopDog* by Janice Salkeld. The festival’s goal is to support and showcase women playwrights; by showing new works in development in front of her target demographic the playwright was truly able to gauge how the piece was working. The children were extremely excited to be there and keen to participate.

Zena Edwards, guest artist in residence from London, England also had a profound effect on both audiences and emerging artists. Her lecture was attended by over 100 students from the University of Winnipeg’s Department of Theatre and Film. The overview of her artistic journey both inspired students and opened their eyes to the possibilities of collaboration between artistic disciplines. Edwards also conducted one on one mentorship meetings with emerging artists, providing them with guidance and advice. This was a rare opportunity for Winnipeg artists.

As a result of the festival there is already talk of other theatres in town bringing the artists back and of one show being remounted for the Winnipeg Fringe. The festival has therefore successfully achieved its goal of providing opportunities for women playwrights.

About Sarasvati Productions: *Sarasvati Dramatic Theatre Productions and Repertory Inc. (founded in Winnipeg in 2000) seeks to inspire artists and audiences through the use of theatre and to provide a place where artists can develop, showcase their skills and celebrate their creativity.*

About FemFest: *Founded in 2003 by Sarasvati Productions, FemFest presents the work of both established and emerging artists from across Canada. The festival’s mandate is to produce one-act plays by women and showcase women theatre artists.*