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## FemFest 2012 Opens to Marvellous Response!

**Winnipeg, September 17, 2012** –FemFest 2012 opened this weekend to rave reviews from Winnipeg theatre goers. The 10<sup>th</sup> annual festival of female playwrights is a staple in the Winnipeg theatre scene and an exclusive for Canadian audiences.

Opening weekend had about 200 people attend readings, including first time playwright Claire Therese's *In Waiting*, which had the audience debating gender stereotypes, and Talia Pura's new powerful play *Cry After Midnight*. The opening cabaret featured dancers Sasha Amaya and Zorya Arrow, festival teasers that wet the audience's appetite and a set by local favourites the Mad Young Darlings. Sunday was a show-free day but included a community performance of *Women in Fish* at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre that provoked a lively discussion about women's roles in Manitoba industries as well as skill development workshops allowing local artists to learn skills from visiting guests the shameless hussies and Johanna Nutter.

FemFest 2012 continues throughout the week. There are a variety of performances featuring the best and brightest in emerging and veteran theatre talent in Winnipeg. Created in collaboration with the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, *Immigration Stories* tells the real-life stories of immigrant women coming to and navigating through their new lives in Winnipeg. *Empty* explores the true stories of food bank users and poverty in Winnipeg.

In addition to the local talent, FemFest is pleased to host a variety of female playwrights and actors from across Canada as part of this stunning festival line up who will be presenting their pieces in the upcoming days. Tonight, for example, Marcia Johnson from Toronto will be one of five playwrights whose curious and creative readings will be showcased at our inaugural Bake Off initiative. As well, we are pleased to present Johanna Nutter from Montreal (*My Pregnant Brother*), urban ink productions (*Women in Fish*) and shameless hussy productions (*Sonofabitch Stew: The Drunken Life of Calamity Jane*) from Vancouver.

FemFest continues at the **Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** (at the University of Winnipeg, **400 Colony Street**) until **September 22, 2012**. Tickets are \$10 for single shows with the full festival being available for a \$50 festival pass. FemFest welcomes audience members of all backgrounds and genders to join in a celebration of female artists.

**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.*

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