

FEMFEST OPENS WITH A BANG!

Winnipeg, September 9, 2011– *FemFest 2011: Staging Inspiration*, Winnipeg’s Theatre Festival of Plays by Women for Everyone will host its opening night gala cabaret on Saturday, September 17th. Sarasvati Productions, the organizers behind the festival which is now in its ninth season, are thrilled to host such an exciting and diverse array of performers and local celebrities. The cabaret will be hosted by popular television personality, Susan Tymofichuk from CTV. It will feature a collection of theatre, art, film and music. Some local artists participating are Anita Lebeau, Caroline Barrientos, Shelley-Lynne Hardinge, and the Fufuchichi choir featuring Michelle Boulet, Sarah Constible and Liz Quesnel.

“The evening cabarets are such an important part of the festival, it is a rare opportunity for audiences to mingle with the artists and to enjoy not only theatre but music, art and film as well,” says Artistic Director Hope McIntyre. “We are thrilled to showcase so many talented women as part of our opening night festivities,” she adds.

The content for this year’s opening cabaret includes some of the most recognized women artists in the country with an emphasis placed on Canadian content. SG Lee, a 30 year theatre veteran will be traveling from New Brunswick to perform with Winnipeg actor Dan De Jaeger who you may have seen in *Cannibal! The Musical* at the Winnipeg Fringe this year. Their piece titled *Breathtaking* was inspired by asthma – and compiled over the internet. The series of stories and breathing create the feeling of having your breath taken away. Anita Lebeau will also be showing her National Film Board short film titled *Big Drive*. She is a multiple-award winning film maker, and has freelanced projects in animation for *Sesame Street* and *Sesame Park*.

The multi-disciplinary cabaret has been so popular that the festival will once again close with another stellar line-up of female artists at a closing cabaret. This closing event will be hosted by popular radio personality, Chrissy Troy from HOT 103. It will feature Cara Lytwyn performing her stand up comedy routine. She is Rumours Comedy Club’s “Funniest Person with a Day Job” winner from 2009. She also performed at the Winnipeg Comedy festival this year, and was part of *Tazzy’s Angels* at Winnipeg Fringe Fest 2011. We will also be featuring the Nova Dance Collective, a group of young Winnipeg contemporary dancers. They had a very successful run at this year’s Winnipeg Fringe Festival, receiving rave reviews and sell-out shows.

We are also very excited to announce that both evenings will be followed by a reception, which will be catered by La Trattoria. It is Winnipeg’s only Sicilian restaurant, and has been very successful since it opened earlier this year on Provencher Avenue in Saint Boniface.

The Opening Night Cabaret and Reception take place on Saturday, September 17th at 7pm. The Closing Night Cabaret and Reception take place on Saturday, September 24th at 9 pm. Tickets for each evening are \$10 and can be reserved through the website www.femfest.ca or at 586-2236.

All FemFest events take place at the Canwest Centre for Theatre and Film (at the University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street).

Opening Cabaret and Reception Saturday, September 17 @ 7 PM

Hosted by Susan Tymoffichuk, CTV

Featuring:

- *Breathtaking* - a performance piece by SG Lee
- Music by Hip Shakin' Mama Shelley Lynne Hardinge
- *Big Drive* – a short animated film by Anita Lebeau
- Music by the Fufuchichi choir featuring Michelle Boulet, Sarah Constible and Liz Quesnel
 - Prairie Caravan Tribal Bellydance
 - Short films by Caroline Barrientos
- Visual art by Mentoring Artists for Women's Art artists Kelly-Jo Dorvault and Willy Carleton
 - Plus teasers from FemFest shows *Magpie*, *MonaRita* and *Travelling Light*

Closing Cabaret and Reception Saturday, September 24 @ 9 PM

Hosted by Chrissy Troy, Hot 103

Featuring:

- *Louise* – a short animated film by Anita Lebeau
 - Dance piece by Nova Dance Collective
 - Stand-up comedy by Cara Lytwyn
 - Music by Jessee Havey
- Sketch comedy by Aliza Amihude, Kami Desilets and Keri Lee Smith
- Visual art by Mentoring Artists for Women's Art artists Lisa Bissett and Faye Hall