

POWERFUL FEMFEST 2018 PLAY FEATURES CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE

Winnipeg, August 27, 2018 –Imagine a stage filled with nine classical Indian dancers, whose rhythm cause the theatre to vibrate, and whose movements are echoed by six actors speaking the story from an epic text. This FemFest’s in-house production, *The Game*, is a modernized adaptation of a story from *The Mahabharata*, a colossal epic well-known in Indian culture but seldom seen in Canadian theatres. Sarasvati Productions has the honour of working with Manohar Performing Arts of Canada, a classical Indian dance group, to bring this wonderful multi-disciplinary piece to life.

The script is written by a team of two sisters, Shyamala and Sowmya Dakshinamurti. The play tells of an act of violence committed against the iconic queen Draupadi from six different perspectives, the last of which is her own. The audience is left to determine who is speaking the truth. “It will not tell you what to think, but it will tell you *to think*.” says writing and choreographer Sowmya Dakshinamurti. This new take on a legendary narrative is relevant to the #metoo movement, with its astute exploration of the obscuring of truth in cases of sexual assault. The multiple versions of the story clearly illustrate how misogyny and personal biases can distort the truth in a person’s mind.

The work blends the classical with the contemporary and the physical with the rhetorical in a way that is truly one of a kind. The dancing is a central aspect to the play. It’s what really lets the audience see through each character’s eyes and makes the storytelling so dynamic. The Dakshinamurti sisters originally wrote *The Game* as a play. They have performed it as a dance piece with Manohar Performing Arts of Canada, but have not yet performed it with the original spoken script.

There will be just three opportunities to see this new interpretation of the work on stage during the festival. The piece is directed by Cherissa Richards with design by Joseph Abetria.

FemFest 2018: Staging Resistance runs from **September 15-22, 2018** at the **Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** (at the University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street). Tickets are \$15-\$20 for single shows and a full festival pass is available for \$50. FemFest welcomes everyone to join this celebration of transformative theatre. For more information, please visit www.femfest.ca.

About Sarasvati Productions: *Founded in Winnipeg in 2000, Sarasvati Productions is experimental and transformative theatre that presents significant social issues; engages in community collaboration; and supports emerging artists. FemFest has been up and kicking since 2003 and to date has showcased hundreds of artists!*