

Award-Winning LGBTTQ+ Advocate performs at FemFest 2017: Coming of Age

Winnipeg, June 28, 2017 – Ivan Coyote has produced eleven books, created four short films, written three storytelling-meets-music albums, and visited over fifteen schools encouraging discussion about gender identity and social justice. Now Coyote’s high-energy concert *Tomboy Survival Guide*, an honest, funny, and moving memoir backed by a full band, is coming to FemFest 2017: Coming of Age at **8 p.m. on Sunday, September 18th, 2017** at **The West End Cultural Centre**, marking a first-time partnership between the venue and Sarasvati Productions. Ivan Coyote will also give an inspiring lecture and reading from his books for queer youth as part of the festival on Saturday, September 16, 2017 at 4 p.m. at the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film.

This will be the second year in a row Sarasvati Productions opens its festival of powerful plays by women for everyone to artists who do not identify as cis-gendered. *Tomboy Survival Guide* will continue Sarasvati Productions’ mandate to show experimental and transformative theatre that presents significant social issues. Coyote is well-acclaimed, being called a “natural-born storyteller” by The Globe and Mail and praised by Toronto star as a “talent for sketching the bizarre in the everyday.” Coyote’s readings have received several positive testimonials from parents, teachers and students. The talented musicians in *Tomboy Survival Guide* include trumpet player Alison Gorman, bass player and vocalist Pebbles Willekes, and percussionist Sally Zori. Gorman directs Queer As Funk, an LGBTQ Motown group in Vancouver, and has played with a list of performers—Dan Mangan, The Salteens, Pacific Sound Collective, Kate Reid, and 54-40. Willekes has played with Paint, Powervox Project, Sheila Boudreaux & Mary K Conspiracy and Moonflower. Zori plays with multiple ensembles, including Queer As Funk, and has shared the stage with orchestras led by John Morris Russell, and soulful performances fronted by Aretha Franklin.

In addition, to presenting *Tomboy Survival Guide*, the 15th annual festival will also take over the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film for eight days of exciting performances. This year’s theme revolves around coming in to one’s own – growing up, maturing and accepting oneself. FemFest 2017 will take audiences through an empowering journey as they explore how we move forward as individuals and as a community. In celebration of FemFest’s 15th anniversary, Sarasvati Productions will be presenting *Watching Glory Die* written by master playwright Judith Thompson and produced by Mulgrave Road Theatre, producing *Two Indians* by emerging playwright Falen Johnson, and co-hosting *The Human Library*™, an interactive experience in partnership with The Millennium Library. Alongside these productions, FemFest 2017: Coming of Age will have its usual opening cabaret and live readings. Playwrights will also be testing their work in the annual theatrical Bake-Off and One Night Stand.

FemFest runs from **September 16-23, 2017** based out of **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 all audience members to join the celebration of female artists and enjoy the local and national art scene. For more information visit our website: www.femfest.ca.

About Sarasvati Productions: Founded in Winnipeg in 2000, we seek 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. FemFest has been up and kicking since 2003 and to date has showcased hundreds of artists!

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