

FemFest 2011 Opening Weekend

Winnipeg, September 20, 2011– Sarasvati Productions’ **FemFest 2011: *Staging Inspiration*** started off in great style as hundreds attended readings, workshop and performances. This year marks the 9th annual festival with artists traveling to Winnipeg from England, Newfoundland and Vancouver.

The festival launched with readings for new plays in development by local writers Rose Condo and Tyler White. For the first time FemFest offered children’s programming with a reading of White’s play *Bear and Blue’s Adventures Through the Whispering Woods*. The children in the audience were delighted by this romp through a magical forest. The feedback will allow the playwright to continue to develop the work in the long term. Another special showing of this piece will occur at the Children’s Museum on Sunday, September 25th at 1pm.

The skill development workshops facilitated by guest artists were all full to capacity! These workshops allow local emerging and established artists to work with amazing artists from other parts of the country or world. Sara Tilley’s neutral mask workshop introduced new concepts to a group of mixed artists and FemFest’s artist in residence from the UK, Zena Edwards, had a group of writers exploring new techniques of incorporating poetry into dramatic scripts.

“We work on the festival for over a year in advance,” says Artistic Director Hope McIntyre, “so it is nice to see it have such a great launch. The audiences loved the work they were seeing at the opening cabaret and our goal to inspire is certainly being achieved.”

SCHEDULING UPDATE

Some sad news came after the opening weekend. Due to a serious injury **guest artist Kelley Jo Burke had to cancel her participation** in FemFest. As a result *Ducks on the Moon* will not be showing. *Magpie* by Katherine Koller will take its place at the Wednesday, September 21, 9 pm slot.

FemFest continues at the Canwest Centre for Theatre and Film (at the University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street) until **September 24, 2011**. Tickets are \$10 for single shows with the full festival being available for a \$50 festival pass. FemFest welcomes all audience members to join in a celebration of female artists and experience a taste of the local and national art scene.

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.*