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FemFest 2012 Celebrates 10 Years of Inspirational and Powerful Theatre!

Winnipeg, June 18, 2012 –Sarasvati Productions presents FemFest 2012: Staging Identity, the 10th annual theatre festival of plays by women for everyone. This year’s lineup includes an exciting mix of artists. It will be an amazing showcase of talent from across the country as well as a celebration of local playwrights. Sarasvati Productions is thrilled to mark FemFest’s first decade in Winnipeg by offering increased community outreach and more opportunities to emerging artists.

“It is amazing that FemFest is still kicking after 10 years,” says Artistic Director Hope McIntyre. “We’ve been convinced time and time again by women theatre artists that the festival is necessary. I don’t think they’ll ever let us stop!”

A unique departure for FemFest is the inclusion of Urban Ink’s *Women in Fish*. More than a performance this projects is truly a community initiative that includes the coming together of women to share their stories. In addition to community sessions, it includes an art installation as well as a performance outside the theatre for aboriginal organizations. *Women in Fish* was originally produced by CBC as a radio documentary and has been shortlisted by the prestigious Jack Webster Award for Best Documentary. Since then it has been welcomed by several communities as a means to use the arts to explore a region’s history.

FemFest runs at the **Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** (at the University of Winnipeg, **400 Colony Street**) from **September 15-22, 2012**. 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 pace 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.*

An Exclusive Sneak-Peak at the FemFest 2012: *Staging Identity* Performance Line-Up!

FULL PRODUCTIONS

Empty by Hope McIntyre

Based on the true stories of food bank users, this play is a powerful, sensitive and humorous exploration of the human side of poverty.

Immigration Stories

Created in partnership with the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba and developed through workshops with immigrant women, this play is a unique look at the hopes, dreams, trials and tribulations of newcomers to Canada.

DEVELOPMENTAL WORK:

Bake-Off

Selected playwrights are given a list of ingredients and have two weeks to mix up a script! The staged readings of the resulting pieces will be like a dessert buffet with tasty treats and plenty of delightful surprises.

Cry After Midnight by Talia Pura

The story of three women – a surgeon, a soldier's wife and an Afghan national – and their war in Afghanistan.

In Waiting by Claire Therese

Is a woman's identity linked to her ability to bear children? Molly is infertile, her struggle to conceive is wreaking havoc on her marriage and to top it all off she discovers one of her teenage students is pregnant.

SHORTS:

Is It Wednesday? By Pam Calabrese MacLean

Two elderly women meet at a bus stop; as they chat they struggle to hold onto their memories.

Short-List

As fillers throughout the festival, we will offer audiences the chance to hear excerpts from scripts from FemFest shortlists in recent years.

TOURING PIECES:

Sonofabitch Stew: the Drunken Life of Calamity Jane By Renee Iaci, Deb Pickman & Brian Peterson

Shameless Hussy Productions (Vancouver)
Daune Campbell starts as Jane Payne a cussin', fussin', drinkin', brawlin' women's studies professor who has become a legendary maverick by kissing off life's middle-of-the-road for the rougher and more thrilling ride on the trail of her lifelong heroine Calamity Jane.

My Pregnant Brother by Johanna Nutter (Montreal)

The true story of Johanna's life growing up in Montreal with a hippie mom and her younger sister (who was to become her brother) told with love, honesty and humour.

Women in Fish by Marie Clements with Rosemary Georgeson, Eileen Lorenz & the WIF Participants

Urban Ink (Vancouver)
This multi-media performance weaves the tragedy of a fishing boat lost in a storm together with the bigger tragedy of the loss of traditional use of the land.

Cabarets

Plus our exciting opening and closing cabarets featuring women artists in all disciplines!