

## *Here I Am – Celebration of Identity for International Women’s Week*

**Winnipeg, February 1, 2019:** Women on the moon, a literal elephant in the room and body parts named Thelma & Louise. In total an array of nine unique stories will be featured in March as Sarasvati Productions will again produce and take to the community their cabaret of monologues to celebrate International Women’s Week. This year’s theme is *Here I Am*, focusing on coming into one’s own, often in the face of adversity. The event will offer a line-up of monologues by Canadian playwrights as well as performance pieces by local creator/performers including puppetry, spoken word and song. The goal of the cabaret is to honour the diversity of women’s stories and explore a wide array of experiences.

In addition to two public showings in a traditional theatre, there will be several unique performances so that the work is fully accessible to Manitobans. This year will mark the first time that Sarasvati Productions will bring its work as far as Flin Flon. Community shows will also occur in The Pas, Steinbach, Gimli, and locally at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights plus a number of community venues.

Although the playwrights are from all over Canada, the nine solo pieces are performed by a cast of local artists. Singer/songwriter waNda wilsoN will share her story with music. “*My piece is my life, it is the story of the turning point in my life. I sobered up. I got my life back.*” says wilsoN. Slam poet Shereen Ramprashad explores the many labels worn by women. “*I wrote I Am Not A Victim at a time when there was a lot of anti-Semitism against the Muslim community, equally disturbing was that women were bearing the brunt of sexist racism by politicians and the media for votes and ratings. Observing the impact those messages had on the mindset of the public got me thinking back to my experiences with ignorance and bigotry.*” shared Ramprashad when asked about the origin of her piece.

Sarasvati Productions launched this popular event in 2003. Over the years it has featured over a hundred monologues showcasing a range of voices, issues and styles. Through partnerships with multiple organizations, past performances have been hosted at women’s shelters, drop-in centres, and even shopping centres. This year’s performances will occur from March 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>.

The full performances of the cabaret of monologues will take place on **Saturday, March 9 at 4pm and 8pm at the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (at U of W, 400 Colony Street). Tickets are \$15** and can be purchased at [www.sarasvati.ca](http://www.sarasvati.ca) or by calling 204-586-2236.

*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 and showcase their skills and celebrate their creativity.*

*About International Women’s Day: In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolutions calling on member states to proclaim a day for women’s rights and international peace. Following the UN’s lead, Canada chose March 8 as International Women’s Day (IWD). Over time, International Women’s Day has grown into a week-long series of commemorative events and activities across the country, recognizing global progress toward general equality.*

**Sarasvati Productions**  
**International Women's Week Cabaret of Monologues: *Here I Am***

***Sunday Morning Brunch*** by Ivy Charles

Performed by Brooklyn Alice Lee

Josephine is a spunky seventeen-year-old girl, confident in her sexuality. This confidence is put to the test when she introduces her girlfriend to her religious family (and of course Father Henry) at Sunday brunch.

***Thelma and Louise*** created and performed by Nan Fewchuk

While waiting in Cancer Care, Maggie reflects back on her life, her resentment towards her large breasts, and how the thought of losing one of them changes her perspective.

***Geraldine Sloan Truhill: Mommy's Going to the Moon, Kids!*** by Natalie Frijia

Performed by Lauren Marshall

In 1961, NASA denied training to the "Mercury 13", an all-female band of astronauts. Refusing to take no for an answer, Geraldine fights for respect from NASA and her family.

***The Lightfishers*** by Leslea Kroll

Performed by Amelia Warkentin

Chris is a patient in the psychiatric ward of St. Andrew's Hospital. After experiencing a traumatic event, Chris has begun recovery from an addiction to painkillers.

***I Am NOT a Victim*** created and performed by Shereen Ramprashad

*I Am NOT a Victim* is a charismatic, satirical poem challenging the media's perception that women are – and always will be – a victim of something.

***Talking about ED*** created and performed by Hailley Rhoda

*Talking about ED* is a short puppet piece exploring the "elephant in the room": how disability and the secrecy surrounding it affects lives.

***Who's Driving?*** by Makrenna Sterdan

Performed by Kim Kakegamic

Janet is a fast-talking car saleswoman looking to get you into your next vehicle, all based off current global issues. The biggest problem with these cars isn't the millennials, or the toxic chemicals, or the Nazis... it's the auto-pilot feature.

***Bare Bones*** performed by waNda wilson

waNda wilson portrays an eclectic mix of raw, sweet edge with a musical approach that is bold, courageous and out of the ordinary. In this piece, Wanda will share a story followed with a song.

***Oracle Jane*** by Vicki Zhang

Performed by Renee Hill

How do you confront the destructive power of your own creation? When a data scientist meets a single mother in need, she questions and reflects on her life's work.