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Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis Welcomes Australian Playwright & Jazz Singer Fiona Stewart



(Memphis, TN)--The Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis (WTFM) recently received some wonderful news. Australian playwright Fiona Stewart will travel all the way from the land down under to perform her one-woman production *Bijou's Secret*. WTFM is a biennial festival that was founded in 2012 to highlight and award the contributions of women in

theatre arts and showcase performances about women, written and directed by women. This season features over 30 plays, workshops and readings. Stewart is WTFM's first international participant. WTFM will begin Thursday, August 7, 2014 with The Gyneka Awards Gala, the opening performance of WTFM that honors women who exemplify the theatre arts in their respective areas. The Gyneka Awards Gala will take place at The Circuit Playhouse, located 51 S. Cooper, Memphis, TN 38104, at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, August 8th and 9th, participants will attend workshops and performances by female playwrights from around the nation and now the globe. Stewart is scheduled to perform two performances of *Bijou's Secret* on both Friday and Saturday.

Stewart is excited about the opportunity. "The fact that this is a women's festival already makes me feel part of a tribe, even though I'm so far away and haven't met anyone yet. There is an immediate sense of intention and purpose when women join together to celebrate life. I am so keen to see the other women's work and hopefully meet with some new collaborators," she said.

Bijou's Secret is the haunting story of three generations of women, and how their lives have been blighted by the bitterness of the unacknowledged past. Stewart plays the three women: the French matriarch Bijou, a single mother; her daughter Mireille, an alcoholic poet; and her daughter, Sandra, a down-to-earth artist. The mystery at its heart, and the believable construction of the three women who, while living very different lives, and each quite self-contained, are inextricably intertwined.

Bijou's Secret is Stewart's first play but she is no stranger to the stage. She spent 10 years as a jazz vocalist in France – and her one-act incorporates songs by Gabriel Fauré, Kurt Weill, Artie Butler, and one of her own Mother's songs into her performance.

WTFM founder Ruby O'Gray, hopes that Stewart is the first of many international participants, "There are only two other women's theatre festivals in the world and there are thousands of women in theatre. We want to become the must attend event for those women to hone their craft, display their talent and network. We are honored to have Fiona Stewart join us, and we look forward to showcasing her talents as well as all of the women who have had their works selected to be performed," said O'Gray. For more information and to purchase tickets to the Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis, visit www.womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org or call 901.213.7566. Tickets to the festival go on sale in June.

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