

ILT Foundation Grant \$15,000, 8 April 2009

To assist with running the “Invercargill May Arts Festival 2009”

ILT FOUNDATION ALLOWS MAY ARTS FESTIVAL PERFORMER A CHANCE TO COME HOME

SINGER Rachel France describes her return to Invercargill to perform in the May Arts Festival as a spiritual journey home.

Her early years spent learning how to act and sing was a springboard for a career which continues to this day.

The former Verdon College pupil will return to Invercargill this month to entertain her audience in *San Souci: A tribute to Edith Piaf*.

France said she was highly influenced after learning French at secondary school. After falling in love with the music of Piaf she and her partner Tom Callwood, who also plays double bass, decided to arrange the music to create an act where France could conjure all her creativity into one role.

“I love it. It means I can use my theatrical skills as well as my singing training.”

That was four years ago and after many successful performances including a weekly gig at the Museum Hotel in Wellington and performing at Te Papa during the showing of the Monet collection, she has continued to evoke the emotion of the French singer who became famous for her powerful ballads.

In a striking departure from Piaf, France will also perform in the festival as her alter ego *Raisin Frost: Cheesy Chunes from the Mainland*. It is an opportunity for France to showcase her original material.

France hopes to squeeze in some time with friends and family while she is in town.

“I feel quite happy I’m coming home.

“I love being at home – I have quite a spiritual connection. It’s really quite fulfilling.”

She believes the high quality line-up of performers featuring during the month is a direct result of the \$15,000 grant the ILT Foundation has given towards the Venture Southland-run event.

“The ILT Foundation does a fantastic job. The running of this festival is just so professionally done and that’s because of the funding.”

ILT foundation chairman Alan Dennis said it was a great opportunity for Southland to host local, national and international artists of such a high caliber.

“We are being spoilt this month with a wide range of creative performances – everything from music and dance to the spoken word and art.

“We hope all Southlanders take advantage of the chance to see and hear some of the great talent we have in the city and surrounds.” end