

Claudia Hommel To Preform At Manhattan High School

International touring and recording artist, Claudia Hommel will be bringing a piece of Paris, France to Manhattan, Kansas on Thursday, March 27 and Friday, March 28. Students at Manhattan High School will get "up front and personal" with Hommel when she performs her cabaret show, "Souvenirs of Paris, 1950" and meets with students for workshops in French, performing arts, and social studies.

Hommel will cap off the two days in residence with a benefit concert for the Manhattan AFS Adult Chapter at the Manhattan Arts Center on Friday, March 28 at 7:30pm. She'll perform "Women of Paris: a tribute to great ladies of song" with fellow Chicagoan, singer Elizabeth Doyle at the piano.

Hommel's career has been colored by her childhood in Paris. "My parents were real 'Americans in Paris'. I was raised on French children's stories and my mother's recordings of Edith Piaf, Yves Montand and others." Speaking of "Women of Paris", Hommel points out, "By 1900, Paris was defined by its women, especially those who sang. If you wrote a hit song for Paulette Goddard like 'Fascination', your career was set. And while we may not know her name in the United States, Mistinguett gave us the song "My Man" and the 'look'—sporting a humongous headdress and a 12-foot train, coming down the biggest staircase you could plant on the stage of the Folies Bergeres."

Other singers being celebrated in Hommel's show are Josephine Baker, her fellow expatriate Bricktop, Lucienne Boyer, Juliette



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Gréco and, "of course, Edith Piaf. This year a lot of Americans will discover Piaf for the first time, now that the actress playing her life, Marion Cotillard, has won the Oscar."

Drawing on her own three decades of active career on stage, Hommel's master class offers a unique opportunity for young singers at all levels of stage experience to strengthen their

interpretive skills. They'll be coached whether they sing opera, musical theatre, pop, jazz, folk and art songs. In Hommel's "Songshop" she helps young performers to discover the story-telling aspects of their songs, the personal connection they can share with the audience, and the liveliness of their physical presence that make up the performance process.

"The essence of most singing is our desire to share how we feel about something really important. The stakes at telling the truth are pretty high when you're singing out," says Hommel. "But there are as many ways to sing a song as there are people to sing them. Since we're usually drawn to a song because it "speaks" to us, let's find out what it wants to say. And have fun while we're at it."

With rave reviews wherever she goes, Hommel is a favorite from the Art Institute of Chicago to the Musée de Montmartre in Paris, from high schools and colleges coast to coast. Born in Paris and raised in Detroit where she obtained a Masters Degree in Library Science, she worked as an archivist before going off to New York City to pursue a career in theatre and music.

Now based in Chicago, Hommel is on the faculty at the DePaul University Music School (Community Division). She is a founding member of the Chicago Cabaret Professionals and a member of the Actors Equity Association, Screen Actors Guild, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and the Music Educators National Conference. For additional information on Claudia Hommel,

visit her website at <http://www.cabaret-paree.com/index.html>

The Manhattan High School French Club in conjunction with sponsors Philip and Juene Kirmser and a grant from the Manhattan Community Foundation are responsible for bringing Hommel to Manhattan. Proceeds from the evening concert at the Manhattan Arts Center will benefit the group that supports the foreign student/Americans Abroad exchange program at the high school, the Manhattan AFS Adult Chapter.

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