

CABARET

THE PLEASURE OF LEAH COTTERELL: A SAD SONG SINGER

RESPECTED SOUL SINGER AND PERFORMER LEAH COTTERELL WILL TAKE TO THE STAGE ONCE MORE TO DELIVER AN EMOTIONALLY IMPACTFUL SHOW THAT REVOLVES AROUND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

THE MUSIC of the performance will serve as a memoir for Leah's life and her experiences in a family dealing with schizophrenia, dementia, and agoraphobia.

What emotions are you hoping for the audience to experience while walking away from the theatre at the conclusion of the performance?

From experience with the show I expect the audience will feel uplifted. The mixture of sadness and beauty, chaos and strength in the show are a kind of definition of bitter sweet, but there's so much in it that is redeeming.

How has music helped you and others around you?

In my life, music engagement has given me a profession, a purpose, a sense of meaning. For my family members, music was a place to connect to others, to dream and to feel safe with strong emotion.

What makes Mental Health Week so



important?

Any public campaign that brings a positive focus to the subject of mental health will have some incremental effect on the stigma and shame – the bi-products of isolation cause most of the damage.

How can we fight the stigma of mental health together?

Take the example of RUOK Day. It is a great campaign – focused on the idea that people who are depressed may not be able to ask for help. From my own experience of depression I know that is true.

If someone out there is struggling with an issue in silence right now, what advice would you give them?

Seek treatment beyond drug therapy: there are options for low cost counselling through medicare, through charities and through training organisations.

LEAH COTTERELL PERFORMS 'THE PLEASURE OF SAD SONGS' AT JUDITH WRIGHT CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS, 14-15 OCTOBER. MENTAL HEALTH WEEK RUNS NATIONWIDE, 9-15 OCTOBER.