THE WORLD’S LARGEST ARTS FESTIVAL,
THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE:
MECHANICS, MYTH AND MANAGEMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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By

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ABSTRACT

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the world’s largest arts festival. Its success has inspired imitation and so fringe theatre festivals have proliferated around the world. This dissertation is not a history of the Fringe, but an examination of those structures of the Edinburgh Fringe which have allowed it to continue to grow and succeed. To understand how the Edinburgh Fringe works one must understand that no performer is invited, those performers who come to Edinburgh are not given any financial assistance by the Fringe and the productions are housed in temporary performance spaces. There is no central governing body at the Edinburgh Fringe. The Fringe Society coordinates rather than coerces by providing needed services to performers and venue managers.

The importance of these basic structures is often neglected. Both in Edinburgh and beyond three myths exercise as much influence as an understanding of these structures. The term “myth” is used to describe three ideas which are not factually correct, but which serve a useful purpose in promoting fringe theatre in both Edinburgh and beyond. The most important of these myths holds that the Edinburgh Fringe is dominated by new and edgy work. This last myth is so
foundational it has come to be incorporated in the very definition of fringe theatre. Each of these myths has had an impact on non Edinburgh Regional Fringes, few of which closely imitate the structure of the Edinburgh Fringe.

The most misunderstood and arguably the most important of the structures which have ensured the Edinburgh Fringe’s continued successes are the entrepreneurial venues administered by independent venue managers. This dissertation scrutinizes the antipathy some at Edinburgh have for the entrepreneurial venues. It then investigates in some detail the risks and labors undertaken by managers of venues large and small to demonstrate how these venues operate and why the managers take on such a demanding task.
Dedicated to Clearance Pollock
Ada Pollock and Jim Pollock
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INTRODUCTION

For Paul Gudgin, the fringe director, this festival is an organic thing, like a garden that's just been left to grow wild.¹

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world. For three and a half weeks each August the Fringe takes over downtown Edinburgh. Every available space is converted into a theatre, crowds of actors mob Princes Street and the Royal Mile, and the atmosphere is electrifying. In 2005, the Fringe hosted 26,995 performances of 1,799 shows in almost 250 venues.² There were an estimated 16,190 performers.³ It would take five years, three months, and twenty-five days to see every performance at the 2005 Edinburgh Fringe.⁴

¹ Allan, Words Vicky, “The directors' cut; All the world really is a stage during the Festival. We meet the seven directors whose job it is to assemble the acts,” The Sunday Herald, 27 July 2003, 18.


Society’s box office alone sold 1,338,550 tickets, which is just under half of the total number of tickets sold.⁵

The Fringe began with the Edinburgh International Festival, which was launched in August 1947 as "an initiative to re-unite post-war Europe through arts and culture."⁶ Other European festivals featured a world renowned composer or dramatist: “Salzburg had Mozart (even if he hated the place) and Bayreuth had Wagner; Malvern, for some strange reason, had George Bernard Shaw.”⁷ But Edinburgh had no native artist of world renown around whom the city might plan a festival. The first International Edinburgh Festival director was Austrian native Sir Rudolf Bing, who had previously been the general manager of Glyndebourne Opera and before that at the Charlottenberg Opera in Berlin. Bing decided to "make a virtue out of not being a festival linked narrowly to the works of one composer or writer nor with its emphasis on just one group or one view of the arts."⁸ As it does today, the first Edinburgh International Festival hosted a wide variety of performances including opera, orchestral concerts, chamber music, dance, along with

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English and foreign language theatre. Sir John Falconer, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, wrote in his introduction to the first Festival Souvenir Program:

The idea is a new one for Edinburgh, but I feel confident we will succeed in establishing our fair city as one of the pre-eminent European Festival Centres. To succeed, we require help and cooperation of lovers of art the world over, especially as one of our objects is to foster and maintain the international character of the event. We wish to provide the world with a Centre where, year after year, all that is best in music, drama and the visual arts can be seen and heard amidst ideal surroundings.

Despite the success of the official International Festival, it is the Festival’s famed Fringe that distinguishes the official Festival from other such events. The year the official Festival began, eight companies, which could not be accommodated at the main Festival, showed up uninvited. The organizers of those companies reasoned that a suitable audience would already be in Edinburgh for the Festival, and so they took the chance of finding their own audiences and press coverage. They received no assistance whatsoever from the official Festival. They had no central box office, and no support in finding performance spaces. These early companies

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10. The Edinburgh International Festival will be referred to throughout as the Festival, the official Festival, or the International Festival, whereas, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe will be referred to as the Fringe, the Fringe Festival, the Edinburgh Fringe, or the Festival Fringe. When the use of the term fringe by itself is capitalized it will refer to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, when it is not capitalized, it will refer to other fringes around the world: or the term will be used generically.
used buildings such as the YMCA and turned them into unconventional theatre spaces. Their risk paid off; they not only brought in audiences but received plenty of press coverage. The first year the press referred to these "un-official" performers as "Festival Adjuncts."

During the second year of the Festival, dramatist Robert Kemp, while previewing a production to be performed in Dunfermline Cathedral, north of Edinburgh across the Firth of Forth in Fife County, first used the term "fringe" in an article in the *Evening News*. “Round the fringe of official Festival drama there seems to be more private enterprise than before…”11 Thereafter, the adjuncts became known collectively as the Fringe.

From its modest beginnings in 1947, the Fringe has expanded from eight companies to, in 2005, over 16,190 performers from around the globe. As many as 26,995 performances of 1,799 different shows are presented in 250 different performance spaces within about 21 days.12 The Fringe has been recorded in *The Guinness Book of World Records* as the largest arts festival in the world. (Another record spawned by the frantic atmosphere of the Fringe was achieved by Nigel Tantrum, a man from Great Britain, who attended a record number of 169


performances over the course of the 1994 Edinburgh Festival and Fringe at a cost of £1,500 pounds, or about $2,550.\textsuperscript{13}

This study is not a history of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, but will focus on those characteristics and structures of the Fringe that I believe to be most important to its long term survival, growth, and success. It is astonishing how little understood the basic structures of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe are. The Fringe is probably the best known arts festival in the world. It is most certainly the largest, with performance alumni on every continent and of all ages and backgrounds. Even with this wide exposure, how the Edinburgh Festival Fringe operates is not widely understood. This dissertation will explain how the Fringe works. This is important because an arts festival of this size is worth studying to determine what makes it so successful.

The Edinburgh Fringe inspires the theatre community beyond Scotland. Recent decades have seen the spread in numbers and influence of other arts festivals calling themselves “fringes.” These non-Edinburgh regional fringes, or NERFs, often little resemble their namesake.\textsuperscript{14} Many scarcely have more in common with the original than the use of the term “fringe,” yet all look in some way to Edinburgh as their model or inspiration. Interpreting the relationship between the Edinburgh


\textsuperscript{14} NERFs will be used throughout the text to indicate the various non-Edinburgh regional fringe’s around the world.
Fringe and other festivals calling themselves fringes requires some subtlety. One strategy would be to examine the basic structures most important to the success of the Edinburgh Fringe, and then define out of existence all the NERFs which do not closely conform to these. This would be an empty exercise in nominalism, both sweeping and useless. Instead, I will identify those structures most important to the Edinburgh Fringe’s success. Then I will demonstrate that while these structures may best support the largest arts festival in the world, a group of myths about the Edinburgh Fringe have also helped to sustain and grow the Edinburgh Fringe. These myths, not the conscious imitation of Edinburgh Fringe structures, have played the leading role in inspiring Non Edinburgh Regional Fringes. This is particularly true of the fringe festivals sprouting up in Canada and the United States.

There is much to be celebrated in the proliferation of non-Edinburgh regional fringes. At the same time, those involved in establishing new fringe festivals and scholars studying this phenomenon ought to direct their attention to an overlooked, much maligned, yet vitally important institution at the Edinburgh Fringe, the entrepreneurial venue with its risk-taking venue manager. The entrepreneurial venue manager operates theatre spaces, most often converted from other uses just before the Fringe, in return for a rental fee or guarantee from each production using the theater. Any entrepreneur can lease a property, build theatres, and pass inspections can try their hand at this risky venture. The initiative of these venue managers has opened up new spaces every year to performers, who flock to Edinburgh to fill them.
The entrepreneurial venue is the least imitated of all the structures of the Edinburgh Fringe, yet it is the contention of this study that it is the key to the Fringe’s success and its phenomenal growth.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter One will demonstrate how the Edinburgh Festival Fringe works by examining in detail its essential characteristics. First, no one is invited to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe by a central authority. No governing body selects shows and no committee picks a theme or highlights a particular playwright, style, or subject. If a production performs at the Fringe, a company or performer has chosen to do this themselves. Because no central authority invites productions to the Fringe, there is no financial help for companies to perform in Edinburgh. Companies must themselves raise the considerable costs required to perform in August. Finally, performance space is provided by entrepreneurial venue managers, most often in temporary theatres constructed solely for the 25 day run of the festival.

These essential characteristics of the Fringe are not at all what one would expect in a major arts festival, and they raise a lot of questions. How does a production find a theater in which to perform? Why would companies take such an enormous risk? Chapter One will also examine the process a company goes through to perform at the Edinburgh Fringe, what it expects to get out of the experience, and what help it can expect to receive. The aid and comfort that companies do receive is provided by the Fringe Society. The Fringe Society is not a central governing body
of the Fringe, rather it is the focal point of a loose polity of entrepreneurial venues
and performing companies providing essential services in exchange for fees.
Chapter One includes an analysis and brief history of the Fringe Society.

Chapter Two will examine one aspect of the relationship between the
Edinburgh Festival Fringe and non Edinburgh Regional Fringes. These NERFs are
connected to the Edinburgh Fringe as much by a shared mythology as by any
conscious imitation of the structures of the original Fringe. The term myth is not
used pejoratively in this study; dismissing or belittling the Fringe myths does not
help us understand the Edinburgh Fringe or the NERFs. The mythical conceptions
of the Edinburgh Fringe, while not factually accurate, serve a useful purpose. The
myths are helpful both in sustaining the Edinburgh Fringe and in promoting imitators
abroad. Three myths about the Edinburgh Fringe are the most powerful: the myth of
discovery, the myth of the small audience, and most importantly, the myth of the
Edinburgh Fringe as a festival given primarily to new works.

Chapter Two will examine how these myths have fostered the development
of fringe festivals outside Scotland and how those involved in founding new fringes
define what “fringe” means to them. Fringes affiliated with the Canadian
Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF) and some emerging festivals in the United
States will be central in this inquiry. Because of the power of some Fringe myths,
particularly in North America, NERFs often inspire ideological strife which helps
spawn “fringes of fringes.” Even Edinburgh has experienced such schisms, first in
the 1980’s, and again recently with the rebel Free Fringe, which organizes free performances in free spaces by actors fed up with the Fringe Society and especially with entrepreneurial venues.

Chapter Three will examine in detail the most maligned structure of the Edinburgh Fringe, the entrepreneurial venue. It will demonstrate how few NERFs employ entrepreneurial venues as a part of the structure of their fringes. The entrepreneurial venue and its manager are widely misunderstood at the Edinburgh Fringe. To correct this ignorance and misunderstanding, this chapter will offer a year round examination, organized by month, of what a venue manager must do to operate successfully. Having demonstrated the enormity of this task, Chapter Three concludes by examining four Edinburgh Fringe venues through interviews conducted with their managers. In every instance, the motivation for their work is less that of making a profit, profits are elusive and take years to realize, and more a love of the challenge of building temporary theaters and a love for the Fringe itself, in all its messy glory.

A survey of the field reveals no previous scholarly studies dealing specifically with the structures and essential characteristics of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. There are several books that document the Edinburgh International Festival, and these occasionally mention the Fringe. These include *Festival in the North: The Story of the Edinburgh Festival* by George Bruce, published in 1975, and *Banquo on
Books dealing solely with the Fringe, besides various guides, programs, and “how to” books, are few. Alistair Moffat, who became the Fringe administrator in 1976, wrote *The Edinburgh Fringe* in 1978; his book covers the first thirty years of the Fringe. The next administrator of the Fringe Society, Michael Dale, also wrote a book: *Sore Throats and Overdrafts: An Illustrated story of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe*. Dale’s book, published in 1988, is largely dependent on Moffat for the early years of the Fringe, Dale’s contribution is a history of the Fringe from the late seventies to mid-eighties. In the back of the book, he includes three interviews with Fringe notables; Rowan Atkinson, better known as the physical comedian Mr. Bean; Allen Wright, Arts Editor of *The Scotsman* at the time the book was published; and Dr. Jonathan Miller, author of several books and chairman of the Fringe Society at that time. *Sore Throats and Overdrafts* also contains 24 pages of quotes from Fringe participants. The sociologist Wesley Monroe Shrum’s 1996 volume, *Fringe and Fortune... The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art* views the Fringe as “a great laboratory for the performing arts,” in which he observes the “process of mediation at work, examining the ways in which highbrow and lowbrow forms are distinguished by the public, the performers, and the critics themselves.”¹⁵ A portion of Shrum’s book does go over some structures of the Fringe, but primarily from a

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critic’s point of view. The year 1996 also saw the publication of the celebratory booklet *The Fringe: 50 Years of The Greatest Show on Earth*. This is a forty-two page souvenir book written by *The Scotsman* for the fiftieth anniversary of the Fringe which has a brief overview of Fringe history and some amusing anecdotes. In 2003, the Fringe Society published a small book (only about 17 pages of actual text) entitled *Behind the Fringe: Conversations with Leslie Bennie (Treasurer, 1972-2002), and Andrew Kerr (Company Secretary, 1969-2002)*, by Jackie McClone. It offers the historical viewpoint of these two men, both of whom were integral to the operation of the Fringe Society during those years.

Another useful book is Joyce McMillan’s *The Traverse Theatre Story*, which offers a history of the world famous nursery to new works. This book is not specifically about the Edinburgh Fringe. However, because the Traverse had its origins as a Fringe venue and because it made the transition to a year round establishment due to the desire of its founders to keep the “spirit of the Fringe” alive throughout the year, McMillan’s history is an important text. Because McMillan dedicated an entire book to the worthy Traverse Theatre, the Traverse is not investigated in this study. The Traverse is unusual for having become a year round venue and is hardly a typical Fringe venue. My study concerns venues in their most characteristic form, as little understood structures vital to the continued success of the Fringe.
The Glasgow University Library’s Scottish Theatre Collection contains a significant amount of paperwork donated by the Edinburgh Fringe Society. This collection allows valuable glimpses into the inner workings of the Society. There are, however, limitations to this fine collection. First, the Fringe Society did not begin until 1958, eleven years after performers began voluntarily gathering in Edinburgh to capitalize on the International Festival’s audience. Second, as Alistair Moffat mentions in *The Edinburgh Fringe*, the first Fringe office was leaky and often flooded; because of this, many of the early records of the Society are lost.\(^{16}\) However, for more recent Fringe history the records can be quite helpful. New records are regularly deposited as soon as the Society has no immediate use for them. The collection contains financial records, minutes, news clippings, programs and correspondence from participants, mostly discussing payment or non-payment of fees. When I visited the collection in 1997, everything was disorganized and stuffed randomly in boxes. As of 2005, the collection is in better shape. The University Library has finished filing most of the collection, and is further along with cataloguing the documents in the Special Collections database. However, because the database is not complete, I recorded a large portion of it for my own records.

The Fringe Society is not a central authority; Fringe Society staffers do not command, control, and record centrally the minutiae of the Fringe. There is helpful information in their archive providing a satisfactory history of most years of the

Fringe Society itself. Their records could never support a history of the Fringe as a whole.

Another useful archive, but difficult to use as it has yet to be organized or categorized, is the Demarco Archive. Richard Demarco has collected an extensive archive of his many artistic endeavors, much of which is inexorably connected with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. He has programs in his archive of every Edinburgh Festival and Fringe since 1947. While a small portion of Demarco’s archive dedicated to his work in the visual arts was taken by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 1995, and in 2005 the University of Dundee was granted over £300,000 to digitize another visual arts portion, the Fringe and theatre segments of his archive remain untouched. In 2005 Demarco moved from his cramped quarters in downtown Edinburgh to a 9,000 square foot building in Skaterow. This move

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17 Dundee University was awarded an over £300,000 grant to digitize the visual arts portion of the archive in 2005, primarily visual images such as photographs. However, this does not include the extensive theatre portion of the archive.

18 “The Demarco Digital Archive project is a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project in the School of Fine Art, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), in collaboration with the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (SNGMA). The project commenced in May 2005 and the principal outcome will be a digital archive comprised of selected key material from the Demarco European Art Foundation (DEAF) archive and the Demarco archive held by SNGMA. Approximately 10,000 items [out of 250,000-700,000 – depending on source], primarily photographs with some films, plus audio recordings, documents, publications and artworks, will be digitised, with supporting data and interpretative texts. The resultant digital archive will be publicly accessible through a dedicated website.” (http://www.dundee.ac.uk/facdjcad/demarco.htm)

19 Author’s visit to Demarco Offices from 2000-2003, as well as research at Skateraw in 2005. Also useful is the following article: Macmillan, Duncan, “New Meaning to the Term ‘Agri-Culture,’” *The Scotsman*, 6 September 2005, 34.
will be helpful to future researchers as his archive is now more accessible, but it has yet to be organized, filed and categorized.

The Fringe Society publishes three *How to...* books, which are helpful to all newcomers, primarily for those bringing productions. *How to Do a Show on the Fringe* walks companies through the various steps involved with bringing a show. *How to be Fringe Safe* explains safety procedures, how to obtain a theatre license, and what needs to be done to pass an inspection, while *How to Sell a Show on the Fringe* discusses marketing and publicity. It has added a *Spaces* book in recent years which formalized property and venue listings. The *Spaces* book details the available venues for the given year, along with contact details, stage dimensions and services offered by each particular venue. Because this study is interested in the mechanics of the Fringe, it has frequent recourse to these publications.

The scholarly studies most useful to this dissertation do not concern the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, but fringe festivals in North America. A 1989 dissertation by Erika Paterson of the University of Victoria is entitled *Ordering Chaos: The Canadian Fringe Theatre Phenomenon*. Amy Lane’s (Wayne State University) 2003 study is called *The Edges of Fringe: Development and Structure of the American Fringe Festival*. Both of these dissertations offer a detailed history of the early Canadian and American fringe festivals respectively. Another interesting, but less useful thesis is Donovan King’s *Optative Theatre: A Critical Theory for Challenging Oppression and Spectacle* (University of Calgary, 2004). Donovan
King began the Montreal inFringement Festival to protest policies of the Montreal Fringe. Along with the inFringement web site and local newspaper articles, his thesis is helpful to understanding why this “fringe of a fringe” was started.


When used with appropriate caution, the internet is an excellent source for researches on current topics. The internet has become a valuable promotional, critical and community building tool for fringe festivals. Venue managers are users of the internet. The websites of fringe theatre festivals around the world are useful for information on the history and statistics of these festivals, for an illustration of how they work, and to study how companies participate. The same is true of websites for individual venues at Edinburgh and of the excellent website maintained by the Edinburgh Fringe Society. Because these sites are created by the organizations themselves, they are fairly reliable about how their fringes are structured. When
interviews fall short or surveys go unanswered it has often been necessary to fall back on the information provided by these websites.

Another resource vital to my research is my own Fringe archive. It has been collected over more than a decade of attending the Fringe and contains a decade’s worth of Fringe Programs, extensive business records, brochures, flyers, reports, and correspondence from Venue 123 and Rocket Venues. I have accumulated many articles over this time, collecting from the Scottish and British press everything I could about the Edinburgh Festivals, particularly the Fringe. My records have been generously supplemented by gifts and copies from Richard Demarco’s archive. My archive also contains years worth of Fringe Society AGM meetings recorded on video or audio, Fringe Society “Road Shows” recorded on video, videos of many Fringe shows, a large collection of photographs, a digital collection of past venue web sites, a video collection of every performance of Richard Demarco’s Richard Demarco and Friends in 2001 and 2004, and interviews recorded on video or audio with performers, reviewers and venue managers throughout the years. I constructed two databases for my research. The first is about selected fringes around the world, incorporating my own research from these fringe web sites, as well as surveys returned by administrators of these fringes. Unfortunately the survey was not returned in large numbers, I received seventeen responses for the seventy sent out. However, I received a great deal of very useful information from those who did return my survey.
In my second database, 5,435 plays listed under the “theatre” section for ten years of Edinburgh Festival Fringe programs were entered into a database to aid in the study of the proportion of new works to previously produced performances at the Edinburgh Fringe. This database was also helpful in charting the playwrights most popular in any given year of the ten. In addition to archival research I relied on my own practical experience with the festival as an audience member, producer and as a ten year veteran venue manager.

A word on the use of stories and anecdotes: because I am studying a decentralized festival of massive proportions, statistical analysis is not often possible, and not something I am interested in doing. I have supported my arguments with evidence throughout the work. The material which best illustrates how the fringe works and what motivates people both at Edinburgh and in the fringe festivals cropping up around the world are stories of their efforts, conflicts, successes and failures. Because there is a lack of understanding of how the Fringe operates, stories of how venue managers, actors, Fringe society administrators and others have conducted themselves and accounts of their experiences often supply my best evidence.

My interest in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe dates back to my first Fringe experience in 1995. A friend at St. Andrews University produced Bayous, a play I had written, and brought it to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. I was not very involved in the production, but by going to the Fringe Festival with the cast and crew I gained
three insights into the Fringe. While my play earned a very good review in *The Stage* (London), there was no correlation between that good review and good attendance. The producer of *Bayous* lost money on the venture. Secondly, the director, cast and crew of the production felt ill used by the venue manager. Through them I was introduced to one of the most powerful misconceptions of the Fringe, the venue manager as exploiter. Thirdly, in the course of attending as many shows as possible, I discovered that my first impression of the Fringe, as a festival which was overwhelmingly geared toward new works, was inaccurate.

The next year I decided to direct a production and take it to the Fringe. Never being one to choose the easiest route, I put together a production of Joe Orton’s farce *What the Butler Saw*. This play is not Fringe friendly, not at all a minimal production which a sensible company would bring to the Fringe. Orton’s farce requires a realistic, four-door, French-window set, and calls for a *deus ex machina* conclusion in which an actor enters from a skylight. After looking at those venues which had a secure structure above the performance space from which the actor could descend at the end of the play, and after pricing the three and a half hour time slot required for set up, production and strike, the cost proved prohibitive. The rights to do the piece were already expensive, about £3,000 for 18 performances. We decided the only way that we could afford to bring our production to the Fringe was to rent an empty hall from the landlord. This meant establishing our own venue. This would be much more work but, as determined students who did not understand
the scope of the task, everyone agreed to make the attempt. A community center was available that year which had once been an old elementary school; we leased the space. It had a bright orange gymnasium, complete with removable basketball hoops. The landlord offered upstairs spaces, which had once been classrooms, for us to convert into a small studio theatre, a storage and changing space, and a café/bar space. The lobby area at the bottom of the stairs became the box office.

After consulting the Fringe Society our new venue was assigned a number, Venue 123, and listed as an available performance space for the 1996 Edinburgh Festival Fringe; our enterprise had been launched. Companies started inquiring about the spaces, and booking. The more companies that booked and paid in advance, the nicer the theatre we could build and the better the technical equipment we could obtain. We assigned a long prime time slot in the main theatre to our production of *What the Butler Saw*, which would have cost a fortune had we rented from a venue manager. The time and labor involved in booking, building, managing, and tearing down this venue was not negligible. On the other hand, everyone in our considerable cast and crew shared the burden, so we managed to get ourselves “free” venue space. The financial risk added a degree of stress to the project.

We allowed ourselves a week for set up and we could only work during regular business hours because our contract made us liable for the expense of janitorial overtime hours. This was a beginner’s mistake made more miserable by the fact that our technical skills fell short of the tasks required. St. Andrews
University does not have any technical theatre courses, nor does it offer a theatre degree. Productions at St. Andrews are cast and staffed by students in other disciplines. We were fortunate to have some assistance: a performing group that had arrived early from Glendale Community College loaned their expertise, as did the various inspectors, especially the gracious theatre license inspector Malcolm Kennedy and the crew of electrical inspectors. The theatres were built on time.

Little time was left to refresh our Orton production, which had not been performed for months due to the summer break and the busy set up week. A quick run-through was all that time allowed. Ironically, this probably improved the production. Without making any cuts we slashed 30 minutes from the production time between the initial performance at St. Andrews and the production at the Edinburgh Fringe. In a farce which piles one absurdity on another, this frantic pacing forced an improvement. Unfortunately, the reviewer sent by the Scotsman was not impressed; he thought students could not play Butler’s middle aged characters. This review did not depress attendance. Despite the fact that we did not have time to “flyer” for the show, sales were brisk.

There was no one to staff the theatre during our performance. We solved this problem by hiring cast members from other Venue 123 productions to run the box office and front of house for the three to four hours our cast was busy on the show. That first year, we had twenty different theatre companies that sub-leased from us perform 323 performances of 27 shows during three weeks.
After the first year, Louise Tate and Robert Haken, the stage manager and the actor who played the policeman in our production of *Butler*, decided to join me in continuing to manage the venue. We were motivated, in part, by how many companies wanted to return to our venue after our successful 1996 run. We decided that both doing a production and running the venue was too much work, so we focused on the venue. We did it because we enjoyed the work and we liked helping companies experience the festival; we knew that running a venue would allow us to continue experiencing the Fringe in a way which was affordable, if not particularly relaxing. Without subsidizing a production, there would be additional funds left over to help pay for housing, hire more staff, recruit a qualified technician, and perhaps earn a small stipend for ourselves. This was the beginning of what has been for me, an odyssey of ten years as an entrepreneurial venue manager at the Edinburgh Fringe. Some of the highlights are worth relating because they demonstrate the changes of fortune, risks, and unexpected consequences of trying to expand as an entrepreneurial venue manager.

In 1997 Venue 123 collaborated with the publication *ThreeWeeks* to award the best new works on the Fringe with free performance time. This seemed like a good idea but many winners were not eager for the extra work. The award was not a success. The following year, 1998, brought no significant changes. In 1999, spurred on by the addition of the Theatre Arts Center on 10 Davies Street as an extra venue,
our enterprise changed its name from Venue 123 to Rocket Venues. The 1999 brochure explained the name change:

The definition of Rocket states that it is: 1. self propelling device powered by burning of explosive contents, uses firework, for display, signaling, etc. 2. Propelled by a rocket engine, move fast, especially upward, as rocket.

Our name has a hint of the spirit of the fringe – self propelled companies powered by an explosive energy and creativity that display performances, and hopefully, moving upward very fast!\(^{20}\)

The year 2000 saw the addition of two more venues, Rocket @ St. John’s Hall and Rocket @ Kirk O’Field, bringing our “empire” up to four venues and seven theatres.\(^{21}\) By this time Rocket Venues had become my operation, Bob Haken had completed law school and become a solicitor and Louise Tait had enrolled at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. That year also saw the first of many years of collaboration between Rocket Venues and Richard Demarco with the founding of Demarco Rocket Productions.\(^{22}\) This collaboration, through the

\(^{20}\) Author’s archive.

\(^{21}\) The “@” sign is frequently used in venue names; it did not originate with Rocket Venues.

\(^{22}\) “Richard Demarco OBE has been a major force for the past near half-century in furthering avant-garde art in Scotland. His gallery showcased the experimental, both in the visual arts and in theatre. His close association with artist Joseph Beuys and the Polish artist-playwright Tadeusz Kantor has been significant for bringing the Eastern European avant garde west. He was co-founder of the Traverse Theatre in 1963 and Vice Chairman from 1963-67. He has presented over [1,000] theatre productions and has experienced all [59] Edinburgh Festivals. He was awarded the British International Theatre Institute Prize in 1995 by Sir Richard Eyre at the Garrick Club in London. In the same year, he was awarded the Polish International Theatre Institute Award in Warsaw for his 30 year long commitment to presenting East European Theatre to the English speaking world at the 1972
Demarco European Arts Foundation, assists us in bringing in the most exciting troupes and performers from Eastern Europe. Featured performers have included the Yakub Kolas State Theatre of Vitebsk, the theatre of Belarus State University, Opera Buffa of Poland, famed dancer Yvette Bozsik of Hungary, Serbian dance troupe Balkans New Wave, and many other Eastern European groups.23

In 2001 the city council decided it would sell the Theatre Arts Centre so we replaced that space with Rocket @ Royal College of Surgeons. This was my *annus horribilis*. Beyond covering my expenses, I had never been able to pay myself in previous years. Twice I had lost manageable sums of money. Rocket had no cash reserves. In 2001 I had to navigate terrible problems with one of my landlords, a default from a major client, a poor year for bookings, and some unexpected expenses. The accumulated losses forced my husband and myself to seek help from Edinburgh Festival and thereafter at the 1973 and 1976 festivals. He has lectured on theatre and the Edinburgh Festival throughout the UK, Europe and North America. He was appointed to the position of Vice President of ‘The First Theatre of the 21st Century’ at Kingston upon Thames along with Sir Peter Hall and other British Theatre luminaries. For seven years he was Professor of European Cultural Studies at Kingston University and is now Professor Emeritus. For his services to French, Italian and Polish culture he was appointed Chevalier des Arts et letters de France, Cavaliere della Repubblica d’Italia, and awarded the Gold Order of Merit of Poland.” (Rocket Venues brochure 2002, author’s archive.)

23 Regrettably, in 2006 Rocket has banned all state productions from Belarus to protest the Stalinist “president” Lukashenka’s fraudulent elections and continued repression of student protesters. Our principal contact with the government of Belarus, Dr. Alan Flowers of Kingston University, has been banned from Belarus by the KGB for telling the truth about the impact of the Chernobyl nuclear incident on the Belarusian environment, and for meeting with democracy activists. Please see: http://www.nearinternational.org/alerts/belarus320040809en.php.
family and refinance to cover Rocket’s losses. This would not be the last year of losses, but it was by far the worst.  

Since the Royal College of Surgeons turned out to be the worst kind of landlord, in 2002 we moved again. Rocket Venues gave up both the Royal College of Surgeons and the Kirk O’Field properties to concentrate on spaces we acquired in the brand new Apex International Hotel and the Apex City Hotel. We listed them both as Rocket @ Apex Hotels. In 2003 we lost the Apex International Hotel to weddings, and ran theatres only at the Apex City Hotel. This was also the year Rocket added our best property thus far, the Roxy Art House (formerly Lady Glenorchy Church used by the Pleasance as “Pleasance Over the Road”). Sadly, we lost our original venue, Venue 123 to other community projects. In 2004 we dropped St. John’s because the space was no longer financially viable and the landlord repeatedly confiscated our deposits. We dropped the Apex Hotel spaces to concentrate on the Roxy Art House. In 2005 at the Roxy Art House, Rocket Venues

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24 This terrible year was a culmination of several factors. First, the rental fee for the Royal College of Surgeons was quite expensive compared to past spaces Rocket had rented. Therefore, financially the budget was already tight. Second, prior to the festival (but after the Fringe Program went to print) a large company bringing approximately 20% of the shows to the Royal College of Surgeons announced that they could not pay their contracted amount. Finally, when Rocket arrived for set up, the Royal College of Surgeons insisted on a new unacceptable contract before letting us in the building. (The contract stated that the Royal College of Surgeons could censor any play they chose, but because at that point all the shows were already booked, it was not something to which Rocket could agree.) After lawyers became involved, both parties came to an agreement, and Rocket was finally allowed into the space with less than 24 hours before the first show was to open. The essentials of the space were quickly built (luckily it was a simple space compared to some), rehearsals rushed and though a few shows used their first performance as a rehearsal instead of a show, most shows opened as planned. And while the venue did not look as good as it could the first few days, it was functional and passed inspections.
produced 568 performances of 75 different productions in four theatres during the three weeks of the festival.
CHAPTER 1 – STRUCTURE OF THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

To walk along the Royal Mile in Edinburgh during the month of August is to scarcely notice the gothic revival buildings, the cobblestone streets, or the stores hawking cheap plaid souvenirs to tourists. Every few paces there is another desperate actor, producer, or promoter waving a flyer, offering discount tickers, reciting lines from a production, or indulging in stunts which border on public nuisance. Flyering quickly loses its appeal to struggling artists hawking their shows; Edinburgh is awash in handbills for weeks. Desperate tactics often yield better publicity and such exhibitions are also very much a part of an Edinburgh stroll in August.

A few of the more extreme tactics have made it into the newspapers, the ultimate reward for bad behavior. The Scotsman reported on David McSavage's arrest for repeatedly shouting "penis." He claimed he had to do it because, "there was a scantily clad dance troupe to the right of me and so I had to do something to keep the audience." The actual arrest came after he threatened "to set fire to his own

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25 The “Royal Mile” is the term for High Street which runs from the Royal Palace at the one end, and the Edinburgh Castle at the other. It is also where the majority of the tourist style shops are located. The Fringe Society’s office is on this road. A section of this road is closed during the festival for street performances, craft booths and for the large number of actors flyering for their shows.
McSavage complained about the hypocrisy of the arrest, describing a banner that had been next to him at the time of the arrest which read, "Hitchcock's bollocks." 27

Another stunt on the Royal Mile that created a huge outcry in the papers was a scene featuring actors covered in fake blood. 28 The Manchester-based Throat Company's Darren Cheek prostrated himself on the ground while Michael Reddington, and Jolyon Bateman stood over him with congealed blood dripping from their mouths. The director of the show, Ed Higginson said in an Evening News article that they did it to be noticed: "That was one way of raising our profile and getting noticed - and we certainly have been noticed." 29 The Evening News printed a large colored picture of the stunt on the front page - perfect publicity for any Fringe group. Most Fringe performers could only dream of such publicity, and so press outrage feeds more outrages.

The performers have not only to fight for audiences, but also for reviewers who they hope will write good reviews; these reviews can add audience members. The List, a weekly entertainment magazine which gives over a large portion of its pages to covering the Edinburgh Fringe in August, has a section called "Bribes,


28 In a nation which has had to contend with IRA bombing campaigns one can see why this stunt would give offense.

Please." The writers promise "in greed" to mention shows which send gifts, and a glowing review for "really nice stuff." Bribes have included: beer, a baseball cap, a pack of pasta, and a voodoo doll, complete with pins. The powers of the doll could only be activated after the reviewer mentioned the time and place of the performance - appropriately enough, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible.*

In a city packed twenty to a flat with actors and an atmosphere of competition intense enough to lead to these desperate tactics, it would be fair for the tourist to wonder why anyone would choose to participate in the Edinburgh Festivals mammoth Fringe. The numbers are grim. Competition is stiff: 1,799 shows struggle for audiences and recognition. Performances themselves take place in less than ideal environs; for many the only venue space available is a small hot room with six lights and a ten minute turn around time between shows. The press might not come. On top of these hard truths, most actors believe the persistent myth that the average audience for a fringe show is only six. And yet thousands participate and pay an enormous amount to do so – on average around £7,000 pounds. Why do so many people want to perform on the Fringe? Why does it grow every year?

This chapter will explain the characteristics of the Edinburgh Fringe which are defining both in the character and in the growth and continued success of the festival. The enormous size and influence of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has given it an outsized role in the arts world. This role has become more and more apparent

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over the years as more festivals calling themselves “fringe” have emerged.

According to my research, there are to date somewhere between 70-80 “fringe” festivals throughout the world. To understand this influence, it is necessary to understand the basic characteristics of the original fringe. These characteristics are that no one is invited, no one gets financial help from the Edinburgh Fringe, and temporary, even strange performance spaces are used. The Fringe is a polity only loosely organized around the Fringe Society, which offers services and consensual help rather than rules and regulations.

What has set the Edinburgh Fringe apart from all other festivals, and what continues to give it its vitality, is that the Fringe does not invite participation by any performer or company. The Fringe provides no financial support for productions which choose to perform in Edinburgh in August. This is in large measure because the central organism of the Edinburgh Fringe, the Fringe Society, has as its sole function to help participants help themselves. The Fringe Society has neither the means nor the will to invite productions or encourage any particular type of show. If the Fringe Society is the nerve center of the Edinburgh Fringe and its soul is the thousands of actors and performers who risk time and money to participate, its heart may very well be the entrepreneurial venues set up each August to house the performances. This chapter will only briefly touch on unconventional performance

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31 Author’s database and resources.
space at Edinburgh, because a systematic treatment of the entrepreneurial venue is the subject of Chapter Three.

The Fringe is like a living organism, and to be involved in the largest arts festival in the world is not just to make a rational decision about bookings and performance times. For actors and producers, participation in the Edinburgh Fringe is an ambitious gamble and an expensive undertaking; the journey is embarked upon for intangible as much as economic reasons. That being the case, this chapter will demonstrate what the atmosphere of the Fringe is like and what motivates the performers and participants by detailing the process of participating in the Fringe and by sharing stories which convey key insights into the Edinburgh Fringe experience. It will also detail the few restraints performers labor under, the process of coming to the Fringe, and other basic aspects of the Fringe experience. These stories constitute a kind of visceral evidence of Edinburgh in August, and as such they can be useful and important.

NO ONE IS INVITED, ANYONE CAN COME

Unlike most festivals which begin selecting featured performers a year or more in advance, the Fringe does not send out invitations. The fact that everyone participates without an invitation fosters independence, autonomous democracy and even a hint of anarchy. Since companies receive no invitation to the Fringe, they do not have the benefit of a host theatre to provide a performance space, financially back the production, or to initiate a publicity campaign. The groups have to work
hard to find a venue in which to perform, because most conventional theatres are automatically out of reach, having been taken by the International Festival. Despite this, in 2005, over 250 performance and exhibition spaces, mostly unconventional, were found for the duration of the three-week event. Because of the challenges, only those who very much want to perform will participate, which in turn attracts a large and varied audience. It is this eclecticism that makes the Fringe not only a unique and successful festival but, in the words of Hilary Strong, the 1998 Fringe Director, it is what gives, "the Fringe a role in the arts world far beyond the three weeks of madness in Edinburgh."\(^{32}\)

Much of the madness can be seen in front of the Fringe Box Office on the Royal Mile, in the heart of Old Town Edinburgh, where performers are desperately trying to attract an audience. With 1,799 shows on the Fringe, many companies feel they have to become startlingly interactive to be noticed. Some will perform scenes of their productions on the sidewalks, while other members of the group hand out flyers about the show. Some arrange themselves in motionless but interesting formations while holding out flyers for passersby to take. In figure 1 below, performers put their hot pink flyers inside chalk outlines for pedestrians to pick up. Many performers take the more aggressive approach of shoving flyers into every pedestrian's hands.

\(^{32}\) "Strong Language," The Scotsman, 10 August 1998, Festival section, 4.
Bribery is another popular tactic. For instance, actors in a play having anything remotely to do with sex might pass out condoms attached to an advertisement for their show. The musical improv troupe Baby Wants Candy passed out candy with their flyers, while another company, Absolute Banana Company, passed out bananas. *The Scotsman* mentioned a Dutch group performing as part of the *Amsterdam Parade*, who passed out what appeared to be bags of marijuana. The bag read, "Great Stuff: Amsterdam." A card inside said that it was "Good for one cup of genuine Dutch afternoon tea."³³ Performing groups often try to secure

sponsors who sell items appropriate to their show and who will donate “freebies” they can pass out in promotional efforts.

REASONS FOR PERFORMING AT THE FRINGE

So, why does a company decide to face a variety of obstacles and perform on the Fringe? There are four reasons. The first is to increase visibility for one's self or organization. This includes the thrill of being discovered, winning one of the many prestigious awards available at the Fringe, increasing popularity, building a portfolio, networking with other theatre people, and receiving reviews. The possibility of overnight fame, as opposed to the sensible accumulation of reviews, references, and awards, is a mythical “will o the wisp” which drives more performers than would ever admit it, see Chapter Two.

The second reason is increased commercial marketability: ticket revenue, the opportunity to try out a show before a tour, and receiving an unbiased opinion in an objective, even cut-throat environment, all fall under this general rubric. For a serious promoter, the potential losses at the Fringe may be a good trade for buzz, or for learning what aspects of a show need to be improved.

The third reason for a company to perform at the fringe is for its educational value. Many school groups bring shows to the festival, primarily for the experience of performing at the festival. Not only do students learn to perform in a tough environment, they learn how to market their own show and they are exposed to all the other performances at the festival. Where else can a student see almost every
play they have read that school year in drama class in once city and within such a short span of time?

The fourth reason to brave the Fringe is simple enjoyment. Actors perform as a matter of tradition, or just as an excuse to attend the Fringe, visit Edinburgh, take a three-week holiday, see shows, and to go to pubs. Many people go "because everyone else is going." This reason seems to unite everyone who is cast in a show that an ambitious director, producer, writer, or actor decides to bring to the Fringe. A cast or crew member may not have had any professional theatrical ambition, but still be drawn to the Fringe by the promise of clubs and pubs. These four categories are not necessarily autonomous. Many companies may be performing for several reasons in the same year; or an individual may perform for different reasons every year.

Before looking at these four reasons, it is helpful to examine actor Rowan Atkinson’s experiences with the Fringe over the course of his successful career. In his interview with Michael Dale, (see appendix of Sore Throats and Overdrafts), Atkinson discusses the reasons he has gone many times to the Fringe. His career may be divided into three stages: before he had any acting ambitions; during his pursuit of an acting career; and after his success as an established professional with modest celebrity status. Atkinson eventually demonstrated his appreciation for the opportunities the Festival provided him, by serving on the Fringe Society board for three years in the early 1980’s.
In 1973, at age 18, Atkinson first attended the Fringe in a post-school production directed by his English master, Richard Elgood. He performed *We Bombed in New Haven* by Joseph Heller, at the Lauriston Hall. He also played the Fringe in 1975 with The Dundee University Theatre Group as Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, while performing a revue with another "guy at lunchtime at the Roxburgh Reading Rooms." Both times were before Atkinson decided that he wanted to perform professionally. Since he had no ambition to pursue a theatrical career, the first Fringe experience with his English master could be considered educational, while his University experiences more likely fall under the enjoyment category.

In 1976, Atkinson performed a revue in Edinburgh with the Oxford Theatre Group. It was his first time doing comedy on the Fringe. He had performed the revue in Oxford to a good response from the *Oxford Mail*. Press for his show was very good, "the next John Cleese sort of thing." So before going to Edinburgh that summer, Atkinson wrote to nine agents and sent them the *Oxford Mail* review. The agents who replied were David Wilkinson (also John Cleese's agent), and Richard Armitage. Armitage flew up to see Atkinson and they began working together. Atkinson was now going to the Fringe to advance his career as a performer, his performances there were a showcase for professional agents. This was the year that Atkinson met Richard Curtis, his writer. At the time of the interview with Michael

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Dale for *Sore Throats and Overdrafts* in 1988, Curtis had written everything Atkinson had performed. Thus, he also established a career-long partnership, an example of successful networking at the Fringe.

In 1977 Atkinson performed a one-man show. He and an actor from the Dundee University Theatre Group concocted a revue, which was to become the Oxford Revue for that year. Atkinson said that the first night was less than satisfactory and blamed it on his partner:

> It was his fault really, and I think he would accept the blame. It was full of huge long parodies of Brecht and the like, which, if you're going to get away with anywhere then Edinburgh will let you get away with it, but it wasn't really the stuff of popular entertainment. I'm always someone who's always preferred to entertain for people rather than to people. I thought it wasn't working, so I cancelled it for three nights, and we rustled together a new revue. …[That illustrates the Edinburgh Fringe technique,] not only the idea of changing things after just one night, but actually canceling two or three shows completely. Just showing the audience over the road into the pub instead of into your theatre because you haven't got anything to do for them.36

That show was the beginning of *Beyond a Joke*, a one-man performance given by Atkinson later that year in London. He attended in 1977 to increase his commercial marketability by trying out a new show, and discovered from Fringe audiences that it was not funny. In a few days, Atkinson rewrote and performed an entirely new

piece, which was more popular, and would gradually earn him a professional reputation.

In 1976 and 1977, Atkinson was still struggling to become professional. His main reason for attending the Fringe was for visibility, including winning awards, increasing popularity, building a portfolio, earning reviews, and networking with others. By 1979, Atkinson was a professional, but had not yet acquired the fame he commanded after doing *Not the Nine O'Clock News* on the BBC. Pierre Audi, Chris Naylor and Will Bowen, who Atkinson knew from Oxford, were converting an old factory space into a venue, which they called Wireworks. It was an old empty factory, and Will Bowen, who designed all of Atkinson's shows at that time, took on the job of converting it into a theatre.

It was the dirtiest, grimiest, lousiest place to work in. It involved 40 or 50 tons of scaffolding to be erected by everyone, including me. I tried to muck in because I was very keen on truck driving at the time and I'd just got my heavy goods vehicle licence, so I was very taken with the idea of carting 50 tons of scaffolding around! Will Bowen virtually single-handedly built up the auditorium. A great feature of Edinburgh is the all night session. You go to the Oxford Theatre Group planning meetings when they're trying to do four shows and get them all on in 18 hours, and someone comes up to you and says 'Your technical rehearsal is at three.' You know that they mean 3 a.m. and not 3 p.m. Sure enough, you have to be in the theatre at 3, work for 2 1/2 hours and then be out again because at 6 *The Lorenzaccio Story* was coming in instead! Unbelievable. And I
remember the Wireworks was like that. Grimy, dreary nights when you could hardly keep your eyes open trying to build another staircase out of this jumble of old scaffolding.  

The show was a success; *The Scotsman* bestowed a Fringe First award, the principal writing prize at the Fringe Festival. Atkinson was able to attract to his show many important people from the BBC, who were there for the Television Festival. The Television Festival started in the late 70's, and by 1979 television executives were in Edinburgh in great numbers. Atkinson already knew that summer that he would be doing *Not the Nine O'Clock News* for the BBC in the fall. John Lloyd, eventually the producer of *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, saw him at the 1977 Fringe, which Atkinson thought was the most important to his career. However, 1979 was the year in which he had his most "obvious high profile success" at the Fringe.

In 1980, after doing two very successful series of *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, he returned to the Fringe. Atkinson was now quite famous; he recalls that in 1980 he met with cynicism.

I didn't go back [after the 1980 Fringe] to Edinburgh until 1986, six years on, because there was incredible cynicism. You know, the *Festival Times* and all these kind of things populated by 18 year-old journalists. They will tend, like the record press, to praise anyone who's unknown and pour buckets of excreta over anyone who is known. Indeed that's how most of our media thrive and that was the first time I'd experienced the backlash of fame. In

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terms of the rest of the country, I was still just budding but in terms of the Fringe I was virtually a failure.\textsuperscript{38}

It was during these last two years that Atkinson’s motives changed to making money, and increasing his commercial marketability.

I think I'd experienced the Fringe at the two extreme ends, of being able, and perhaps keen to exploit it for the massive commercial audience which you can find there, you know, if you are popular. I mean there are a huge number of people wanting to see something, and if you're there and you're well known and, you've carved a niche already, then you can go and make a reasonable amount of money. That was probably my thinking in the last two times I was there ('79 and '80).

At the same time I've known it at the very other end. Coming to Edinburgh in '73 with that play which no one remembers was probably the thing that gave me a taste and the inspiration to want to do what I now do; more than the later things, and so I felt a sort of guilt about some of the motivation later on in my apprenticeship and I felt very much for the predicament at the other end of the scale because I remember what a tremendous, genuinely good and inspirational thing it was to go to the Edinburgh Fringe, just as a schoolboy. There are so many school groups who, like us, never played to more than a few people and therefore I suppose felt some guilt for my changing attitude towards the Fringe. It made me try and think again about

what it was like to be at the bottom of the pile.  
It is a very high hill: it's very steep slope.\textsuperscript{39}

Probably the primary reason that performers go to the Fringe is to increase visibility for themselves or their organizations. This includes the desire to be discovered, win awards, increase popularity or recognition, build a portfolio, receive reviews, or to network with other thespians.

Edinburgh in August; a city drips with ambition. 
If you want fame to find you, there is no better marketplace.\textsuperscript{40}

The Fringe recognizes outstanding achievement with a substantial number of awards highlighting merit in diverse areas. \textit{The Scotsman} Fringe Firsts are prestigious awards given to the best new drama that has not been performed more than six times within the United Kingdom, and are designed to encourage new writing. There is no set number of awards given out each week; it may be four; it may be ten. If \textit{Scotsman} reviewers see a lot of shows they think deserve recognition, they will award more. If they do not see any worthy shows in a week, they may not award any. These reviewers generally make it to all eligible shows, although they do not necessarily publish a review for every show they attend. At the end of each week the winners are announced and listed in \textit{The Scotsman} with a shortened review and a


\textsuperscript{40}“The best career advice for all those thousands of Fringe actors dreaming of fame and fortune: Gerrrroff!” \textit{The Scotsman}, August 12 1998, Festival section, 4.
photo. Occasionally the award has been presented to enterprising productions that
do not fit within established guidelines, such as a comedy revue.

The Perrier Award for Comedy is for the funniest and most original revues
and stand-up performances. To be eligible, a production must be running in Week
Three of the Fringe and be at least fifty minutes in length. The winner is awarded a
cash prize of £7,500 and a run in a London West End theatre. Perrier also sponsors a
Newcomer award for the best "first-timer" within these categories.

The Tap Water Awards started in opposition to the Perrier Awards, which the
Bongo Club boycotted in 2001 to protest the policies of Perrier parent company
Nestle. The award seeks to promote “genuine fringe performers with something
original to say, who are being increasingly sidelined by the commercial nature of the
Fringe.” The “So You think You’re Funny?” award has been hosted by the Gilded
Balloon since 1988, and is sponsored by Five and Paramount Comedy. The judges
start scouting for new stand-up talent from mid-May at various clubs around Britain
and Ireland. The Dubble Act Award recognizes the best comedy duos.

A new comedy award is named for legendary stand-up comedian Richard
Pryor, the Richard Pryor Award for Ethnic Comedy. A panel of judges shortlist
shows by ethnic comedians that demonstrate the same kind of innovation and
fearlessness as Pryor. For the first two years of the award, until his death in late
2005, Pryor himself judged the winner via recordings. The award includes a cash
prize intended to encourage and reward new diverse comics.
"Angels" and "Devils," nominated by The Herald's team of critics, are awarded to all disciplines and to participants in all of the different Festivals in Edinburgh for outstanding and exciting work. “Devils” are presented to companies which overcome problems during the Festival.

A Herald Little Devil was presented to Festival director Brian McMaster in recognition of the tribulations he suffered when no fewer than three baritones announced that they would be unable to fulfill Festival engagements and had to be replaced.41

The Stage Awards are adjudicated by The Stage’s festival reviewing team, and aim to recognize outstanding work by individual actors, by awarding a “Best Actor” and “Best Actress” award, and companies as a whole, “Best Ensemble category.” Total Theatre Awards presented by Total Theatre Network honors the best of physical and visual theatre performances and is sponsored by University College Winchester. The Carol Tambor Edinburgh to New York Award is an annual theatre event launched in 2004 that takes “exciting” Edinburgh shows to New York. The promoters of the award hope to allow New Yorkers the chance to see some of the best works from the Edinburgh Fringe. Jack Tinker Spirit of the Fringe Awards are presented in honor of Jack Tinker, a lifelong supporter of the Fringe, and recognize outstanding talent and creativity.

The WR Foundation Award promotes the staging of quality new writing for theatre on the Edinburgh Fringe by awarding £5,000 towards the staging of the production at the Fringe. The award was created by Willy Russell and Tim Firth. The Actors Centre Award from the Actors Centre in London aims to provide small-scale companies presenting new work help with on-going development opportunities and a chance to perform in a West End space.

The Amnesty International U Win Tin Freedom of Expression Award, named after the imprisoned journalist U Win Tin, rewards and celebrates a theatre company whose production makes significant contribution to “the public’s greater awareness and understanding of human rights issues.” The Allen Wright Award is named after Allen Wright the Arts Editor for The Scotsman that established the famed Fringe First Awards. The award is to encourage young journalists writing about the arts.

A company that obtains a good review can boost its income and audience numbers, and thus increase its overall visibility. It may also benefit a company to try out a show before a pending tour, or to receive an objective opinion outside its hometown. At the 1998 Fringe, I interviewed Ben Capland, a director for Tall Stories, a London based theatre company. That year at the Fringe, Tall Stories produced: VMW - Virgin Mother Whore, a new dark comedy from Toby Mitchell; X, a tale of murder and monogamy; Rumpelstiltskin; and Alice and Mr. Dodgson.

wherein "Mr. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) takes the real Alice, now grown up, back to Wonderland."⁴³ Capland believed that by performing at the Fringe, the company would advance its reputation, and that this would allow it to obtain a larger grant from the Arts Council. I also interviewed Will Hanford, manager of Velvet Jacket, a new theatre company presenting two large outdoor shows at the Fringe. This was the first big event for the company. It premiered Hogfather by Terry Pratchett and adapted by Adam Speers, and performed best selling horror novelist Clive Barker’s Crazyface, a "newly published, disturbingly dark comedy in which the eponymous hero struggles through Elizabethan Flanders with the great secret of the Western World: chocolate."⁴⁴ Hanford believed that performing at the Fringe was a good way for the company's name to become established, and acquire reviews.

Because we thought it would be a good way to get our name known - because it's an easy way to get reviews done, as there are so many press about, and also there is lots of audience. And the main aim of doing the Fringe was to get ourselves known - to establish ourselves and to get some good reviews…⁴⁵

An article from The Independent in 1996 stated that one in six performers on the Fringe are students, and that this is the largest demographic after professional performers.


The Edinburgh fringe has become an annual pilgrimage for dozens of university and college theatrical types, who often arrive with the names of yesterday's fringe stars ringing in their ears.46

The third attraction of the Fringe for many companies is education. A large percentage of Fringe performers are students. Why would a secondary school come to the Fringe? As performers or as crew, students learn how to put on a production for an international audience and for tough critics, how to work on a tight schedule, how to work in less than ideal conditions, and how to market a show. Professional educators must believe that the Fringe offers a valuable experience since student performing groups are usually funded through their schools. It is an experience few students could have at home. Beyond the active learning onstage and backstage there are opportunities to learn about the interpretation of dramatic texts. Productions of most canonical plays read during the school can be found at the Fringe. There are almost always several versions of Macbeth. An instructor can use this opportunity to teach about the variety of production concepts that can be applied to one script.

Hilary Strong, a past Fringe Society administrator concurs that the educational experience of performing at the Fringe is invaluable:

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46 Zaidi, Najmus-Sabah, “Darling, you were utterly obscure; The annual pilgrimage of thespian hopefuls to the Edinburgh fringe is about to begin. Najmus-Sabah Zaidi looks at the stars who made it there, and talks to one troupe that plans to make 1996 its year,” The Independent (London), 1 August, 1996, 16.
Hilary believes strongly that the festival provides a unique opportunity for student drama groups. "What's great about Edinburgh is there are no forms to fill in, and it's not a lottery."

"If it goes badly it can be a rotten experience but if it goes well students gain a unique opportunity to learn all about performance," she says.47

The fourth category, attending the Fringe for enjoyment, focuses on the thousands of performers participating in the Edinburgh Festival ritual. Performing is also a good excuse for a three-week holiday to see new shows, and enjoy the attractions, such as the pubs. Kevin Mullaney went to the Fringe in 1998 with a group called Baby Wants Candy, performing The Musical, an improvised one hour musical based entirely on the first title suggestion from the audience. Several of the Chicago-based cast members were also part of Second City, the popular Improv troupe known as a launching pad for actors to move on to the popular American television program Saturday Night Live. Mullaney said his company came to enjoy the festival as a vacation, and did not expect to be discovered.

The way I've always told people who are interested in coming to the Fringe, to keep their expectations low, to view it as a cheap vacation, a party, because it's so hard to -even if the show does well - to make back all the money that you put into it. It's much worse coming from

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47 Zaidi, Najmus-Sabah, “Darling, you were utterly obscure; The annual pilgrimage of thespian hopefuls to the Edinburgh fringe is about to begin. Najmus-Sabah Zaidi looks at the stars who made it there, and talks to one troupe that plans to make 1996 its year,” The Independent (London), 1 August, 1996, 16.
America especially with a cast of any size, because of the plane fare that ends up being the biggest expense. . . . But you shouldn't view it only as that, it still has this potential to be this really amazing thing career wise, it's little bit like boot camp for the entertainment industry because most of us in Chicago unless we are like a union actor working in a large scale production you aren't going to make very much money in acting - if at all. . . .So when you come here to the Fringe, you're given a press list of maybe 80 or 90 different television, newspapers, radio, magazines that might be interested in doing stories on you. You are out there selling your show everyday, which again you don't do in the States. It's no good to go out on the streets and give people leaflets for shows - doesn't work. So it's like really intense as far as doing theatre. The opportunity, the upper end of what you can do here- it only happens to a few people, but there is always that potential of - if you're a stand up for instance, people all the time get much better gigs coming out of the Fringe than coming into the Fringe, or plays that win Fringe Firsts or can go onto have other productions in other cities or actually move to London, which happens.48

The consensus seems to be that this is a good attitude to have at the Fringe:

participants should go first for enjoyment, the prospect of being discovered, and the possibility that performers and companies will increase their marketability through networking at the festival are good goals, but harder to attain.

NO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, COMPANIES ARE ON THEIR OWN

The second characteristic of the Edinburgh Fringe is that every performer or group bears a financial risk, "surviving or sinking according to public demand."49 Since no one is given a personal invitation and anyone can perform at the Fringe, the only restrictions are financial or self-imposed. This section will establish that the Fringe operates as a market economy. I will give a brief definition of what a market economy is, and demonstrate how the Fringe corresponds to this definition.

In chapter fifteen of *Human Action*, economist Ludwig von Mises defined a market economy:

> The market economy is the social system of the division of labor under private ownership of the means of production. Everyone acts on his own behalf; but everyone’s actions aim at the satisfaction of other people’s needs as well as the satisfaction of his own... the system is steered by the market. The market directs the individual’s activities into those channels in which he best serves the wants of his fellow men. There is in the operation of the market no compulsion and coercion. The state, the social apparatus of coercion and compulsion, does not interfere with the market and with the citizens’ activities directed by the market... the state creates and preserves the environment in which the market can safely operate.50


Fringe performers must individually produce, distribute, and exchange goods or services. There is no institution which artificially subsidizes their presence and performances at Edinburgh; if the show is popular, it may make a profit. If it is not, it certainly will not. Performers take the risks, assume the responsibilities, and are free to choose within the boundaries of price where and when they will perform. The theatre-goer in Edinburgh enjoys a range of offerings which is truly staggering. There is only minimal governmental interference dictating what the performing companies may produce or where they can perform.\(^51\) However, it is interesting that performers who attend the Fringe Society's Annual General Meeting often call for controls on who performs and what is performed, usually to further benefit their own productions.\(^52\)

There are laws that allow governmental organizations to intervene in certain circumstances, and the Edinburgh City Council does have a level of financial involvement in the Fringe. For instance, police have the authority to close shows that do not comply with public decency laws, or that could potentially cause a riot or citizen protest over noise. If children or animals participate in a production, there are laws that the company must observe. It is a criminal offense to place posters in a

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\(^{51}\) Shows must meet a minimal decency law; in recent years this has ceased to be enforced at all. Performance spaces must meet safety and fire regulation to obtain a theatre license. See Chapter Three.

\(^{52}\) Some Fringe performers are concerned about the London comedy clubs taking over the Fringe, and want them banned. However, the Fringe Society points out that participation fees would be much higher if it was not for the large advertisements the comedy groups buy in the Fringe program and the commissions the Fringe box office earns from professional comedy shows.
variety of public places, such as trashcans, vacant buildings, trees, light posts, or bridges. Companies must remember to pay performing rights to the playwrights and music composers, as well as paying taxes on products, services, and any income. However, these restrictions are minimal and, for the most part, companies can make production, distribution, and exchange decisions themselves.

HOW A PRODUCTION GETS TO THE FRINGE

After a company decides to perform at the Fringe, it usually contacts the Fringe Office, and is added to the mailing list. The many services provided by the Fringe Society through the Fringe office begin here, with three booklets that detail how productions should go about bringing a show to the Fringe: How to Do a Show on the Fringe, How to Sell a Show on the Fringe, and How to be Fringe Safe.

Starting each December, the Fringe Office regularly sends out monthly bulletins, which provide current information and reminders of group deadlines. The Fringe staff members are also available by phone, fax, e-mail or in person at their office in Edinburgh to answer specific questions, offer advice, and to help solve problems. The Fringe administration holds meetings in Edinburgh, London, and in other regional cities in the United Kingdom, which allows groups to meet in advance, speak with venue managers, and discuss plans with the Fringe staff in person. The first mailing includes the publication How to Do a Show on the Fringe, a monthly bulletin, and a venue list. The Fringe's helpful information is indispensable to new groups. It is rare for a company to proceed without the valuable information made
available by the Fringe society, and those who do are much the worse for it in terms of expectations of venues and understanding of Fringe economics.

After receiving the Fringe Society's mailing a company must find a venue in which to perform. The first mailing contains the *Spaces* booklet, listing all available venues. It includes contact details for each venue manager, as well as vital statistics for the various theatres in each venues, such as stage size and seating capacity.

Costs for the venue vary greatly depending on the seating, location, and amenities. The Fringe’s book, *How to Do a show on the Fringe* advises performers:

> A very approximate guide would be to pay £100 per two hour slot per day per 100 seats. Thus a theatre which seated 150, rented for 2 hours per day (a normal slot) would cost around £900 per week (6 days). This may be as high as £1,500 per week, or as little as £500 per week, depending on its exact location, the time of day that you are performing, the week or weeks that you have chosen and what facilities are offered as part of the rent, (e.g. ticket printing, venue publicity, quality and quantity of lights, sound etc.).

Some venues charge by time slot, by box-office split or by a box-office split with a guarantee. Box office splits generally tend to be around 60/40 in favor of the

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53 *How to Do a Show on the Fringe*, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 1998), 11. In *Sore throat and Overdrafts*, Michael Dale gives an estimate of venue costs from 1984. “On average, the rental of an already equipped venue will be roughly £40 per slot per 100 audience capacity. Some are more, some are less, but in 1984 a central venue like Riddles Court (capacity 90) £260 for a six performance week in afternoons, including tickets and some publicity which was a good deal. The 260 seat Pleasance Theatre cost £750 for six performances with a 7 p.m. start. At this rate, a group would be required to sell 60 tickets at £2.00 for each performance to pay the cost of the Hall – a high proportion," (Dale, 60).
performers.\textsuperscript{54} A box office split with a guarantee means that the performers pay either a flat fee or a box-office split, whichever is greater. In addition to rental fees, some venues may charge commission on tickets, generally 5\%, or may have mandatory group advertising (in the £300-£500 range), or may charge for rehearsals, and additional lighting. Groups may also have to pay Value Added Tax (VAT) of 17.5\% on the rental fee depending on the tax status of the venue.

Venue searches start in January and continue until the deadline for the Fringe Program entry in late April. However, the few venues that have a selection process, such as the Pleasance and the Gilded Balloon, do not give offers of acceptance until March. If a company wants to try for a slot at these venues, they have to risk not getting a good time slot at other venues who book as groups apply. This application process at the "super" venues creates a mad rush toward the end of March when companies that were turned down try to find the best time slots that are left in other venues. The first year we ran Venue 123, we did not get our venue until March, but we were still able to fill most of the time slots because of this rush of last minute companies that have been either turned down from a "super" venue, or made the decision to go in late Spring.

Once a company finds a venue, a time slot, and confirms the details with a contract, it must consider its entry in the Fringe Program. This will be the single

\textsuperscript{54} The 60/40 split is in favor of the performer. This means that 60\% of the money earned through ticket sales will be given to the performing company, and 40\% of the ticket sales will pay for the venue "rental."
most important advertisement for the show. The Fringe Society charges a “Fringe Programme Fee,” which must be paid to get an entry in the program. For 2006 the discounted fee is £226 plus VAT (with VAT the total is £265.55) for those who apply by the early deadline, £300 plus VAT (with VAT the total is £352.50), or £126 plus VAT (with VAT the total is £148.05) for shows just performing one night.

Each company must then write a forty word blurb that they feel will attract the largest audience possible. The Fringe Society informs the companies in advance that they have a responsibility to make sure that text and advertisements in the program are not shocking or offensive. However they do not give guidelines, because they believe that what is unacceptable changes over time. Advertisements that contain nudity are discussed by the Fringe's Management Committee, and, if deemed inappropriate, will be sent back to the company for an alternative advertisement. Blurb entries that contain strong language may be edited and returned to the company for approval, or asterisks are used. The Fringe Society is careful about potentially defamatory text, which could result in a court ruling ordering all the Fringe programs to be destroyed, at great cost to the Society.55

The Society has made available market research study conducted on the Fringe program in 1996. The study found that audiences were happy with the format of the program, but "cynical" about the copy. The survey reported that audiences thought the blurbs had "too many superlatives," were "off-the-wall" and

"pretentious," while being "non-informative." Therefore the Society suggests that companies choose its words carefully.\textsuperscript{56} Here are a few examples of blurbs from the 2005 Fringe program under the Theatre heading.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{How to Do a Show on the Fringe}, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 1998), 26.
Figure 2 - Page 176 from the 2005 Fringe Program
MARKETING COSTS

A group must also plan its marketing strategies. *How to Sell a Show on the Fringe* states, “There are around five hundred shows per day during the Festival and they are all competing for the same audience.”\(^{57}\) What a group spends on marketing and publicity varies greatly from one to another. Of course, the amount spent on advertising does not necessarily determine the size of the audience. Some groups who gave little forethought on how to market their show do extremely well, even sell out a production, and others, which have spent a good deal of money, have small audiences. The Fringe Office advises groups to think of a figure that they “regard as ‘reasonable’ – and then double it! An average cost would be somewhere between £500 and £1,500.”\(^{58}\)

The Fringe Program is one of the most important places to advertise and a listing is covered in the participation and show fees paid to the Fringe Office. There is also the option of display advertising. The Fringe charges for sizes from one-eighth of a page to a half page. The prices range is from £528 plus VAT for a one-eighth page, up to £1,170.30 plus VAT for a half page. Display advertising can also be bought in various other publications such as *The Scotsman*, *The List*, and *ThreeWeeks*, all of which have extensive Fringe coverage.


Leaflets and posters are what most groups first associate with their marketing campaign. After making a design, or paying to have one made, groups must consider how many to print. *How to Sell a Show on the Fringe* advises:

Posters: 1,200 (maximum), 800 (average), 400 (minimum)  
Leaflets: 12,000 (maximum), 8,000 (average), 4,000 (minimum).  

Distributing 8,000 flyers in only a few weeks can be an enormous task, and there are professional companies who will help with poster and flyer distribution. Edinburgh Arts and Entertainment (EAE) offers this service year round, but is particularly

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active during the Fringe. EAE maintains around 2,000 poster sites in Edinburgh during the year, and approximately 6,000 sites during the Festival. In 2006 EAE’s fees for distribution were: Budget distribution, 300 posters and 3,000 flyers, £325; Standard distribution, 500 posters, 5,000 flyers, and two hours of hand to hand distribution, £540; Deluxe, 700 posters, 7,000 flyers, five hours of hand to hand, and an internet listing, £810; The Works, 900 posters, 9,000 flyers, ten hours of hand to hand, and an internet listing, £1,060. These prices include VAT and the Tidy Tax, which EAE charges everyone to clean up the posters after the festival. In addition to EAE, other small companies usually form during the Fringe to distribute flyers by the hour. However, the most effective flyering tends to be when performing companies can talk with potential audience members personally and convince them to attend. Besides distributing flyers on High Street (the Royal Mile), actors usually carry a leaflet with them to give to anyone they meet during the course of the day.

PRODUCTION COSTS

In addition to the above expenses, a group also has to pay for its production costs. Royalties can be very expensive for a three-week run at the Fringe, especially when the group is paying for a space that seats over 100, but only four audience members attend. Many groups try to keep sets, props, and costume costs to a minimum. It is because of production expenses that the Fringe has become a breeding ground for the one-man show, and has a history of developing this type of act. Yet this savings on costumes and travel has its drawbacks: a one man show has
only one person to cover the total costs and do all the flyering, which can be exhausting. Numbers can be beneficial, and it is therefore also common to see groups of ten to thirty performing large cast shows such as musicals.

Sets, props, and costumes need to be transported to the Fringe, which can be expensive depending on how far a group has to travel. Insurance may be important depending on the value of the costumes, set, and properties, and how essential they are to the production. Some outdoor productions pay for rain insurance to cover the potential loss of income from shows cancelled due to rain. Groups also have to pay for travel to Edinburgh, living expenses, and accommodations, which may include a separate charge for gas, electricity, and telephone use.

In *Sore Throats and Overdrafts*, Dale writes:

> Any group that comes out of the Fringe with smaller losses than it envisaged can be deemed to have done well. Any group that makes an overall surplus has either done remarkable business or has got its sums wrong.  

In 1998, in Week 3, Will Hanford of Velvet Jacket Theatre Company, mentioned that his company was "close to even," since they were only "£500 to £1,000 pounds down." He explained, "Out of £25,000 to be only£500 down is great." However, an American group, Baby Wants Candy, described their expenses as

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... a cheap vacation, a party, because it's so hard to - even if the show does well - to make back all the money that you put into it. It's much worse coming from America especially with a cast of any size, because of the plane fare that ends up being the biggest expense.  

Each group must pay a modest box office commission to the Fringe Society. The Fringe Office provides a central computerized box office for all Fringe productions, with several satellite offices during August in major bookstores throughout the city. In June the Fringe Office takes ticket orders for shows, and provides a way to buy tickets in advance. Satellite box offices take orders, and venue box offices open in August. Since venues can only sell tickets to their own shows, the Fringe Office is the only place where audiences can buy tickets for a variety of shows in multiple venues.  

Audiences buy about one-fourth of their tickets at the Fringe Office. In 2003 the Fringe Office sold 337,270 tickets with a face value of over £2.8 million. The Fringe Office charges a commission of 6% (down from 7.5% in the previous years) plus VAT on that commission, equal to

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63 The exception is venues that are connected to the Fringe box office.

64 Though this is difficult to confirm since venue box office sales are nearly impossible to track.
1.31% of the tickets value, and deducts this amount from the box office check that is sent to each group at the end of September.\textsuperscript{65}

UNCONVENTIONAL VENUES

Although Chapter Three looks more closely at the all important entrepreneurial venues at the Edinburgh Fringe, a chapter which attempts to give some idea of the atmosphere of the Fringe should mention just how unconventional Edinburgh Fringe theatre space can be. A Fringe production can occur anywhere: in a castle, a gymnasium, a church. Performances have occurred on a park bench, in a motorcycle sidecar, or inside a phone booth. These eccentric venues bring a special atmosphere to the Fringe, compelling companies to be innovative which, in turn, forces audiences to perceive theatre in new ways.

\textsuperscript{65} VAT of 17.5% on the 6% commission equals 1.05% of the tickets value. The total commission and tax deducted would equal 7.05%.
A show that took place in an odd venue was Arthur Smith's *The Inverleith Putting Green*, which actually occurred on the putting green. Hilary Strong, the 1998 Fringe Director, mentioned it in our interview.

When I went to see Arthur Smith's show, I thought this is exactly why I like the job [of Fringe Director], because it was such a great piece of entertainment. And it was so involving for everyone taking part in it, and it was quite anarchic. I mean, you had local kids riding around on their bikes being awful. And, you know, there was this one kid who he detained to a certain degree. So, he [Arthur Smith] got us all to give him money on the way out. And this
boy's made fifty pounds out of people giving him fifty pence, and everything. And, you know, it's totally unsuitable really, and that's what's so nice about Arthur. He's funny, but he's just on the edge as well. And it was a brilliant night, and just great fun.66

The List's preview with Arthur Smith elicited the following explanation: "It's an event more than a theatrical production. It's hardcore promenade street theatre with a putting love-story intertwined. There'll be lots of strange things happening." When The List interviewer asked him what the sort of strange things, he replied, "Well, it's a bit of a f**king shambles at the moment. I may be importing a virgin from the Isle of Man to sacrifice." When asked if there was a plot, he responded, "There's a story about a 19th century Scotsman…," at which point, The List reports, he just "trails off."67

In our interview, Strong also praised Iron Grid's Gargantua. It received a five star review from The Scotsman, and took place in "The Underbelly."68 The Scotsman described the performing space as "a descending series of magical tunnels and


68 This site specific work was the first use of the space that was then known as “The Underbelly,” but it is now a thriving venue, also called The Underbelly, or more accurately with their sponsor, The Smirnoff Underbelly.
caverns between Victoria Street and the Cowgate. In an eccentric venue such as The Underbelly, the space itself can add considerable atmosphere to the production.

Figure 5 - Edinburgh Fringe Society on the Royal Mile

THE FRINGE SOCIETY

This section will demonstrate that the Fringe Society also operates as part of the Fringe market economy, by not intruding on the performing companies and by operating solely to fill the needs of its customers. The Society receives very little

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69 The Scotsman, August 13, 1998, Festival Section, 8.
government funding, and thus suffers minimal government intrusion. In the second half of this section, I will give a brief history of the Fringe Society, showing how the Society evolved as a provider of services to Fringe participants, while not interfering in their business or performances.

The Fringe Society, although a registered charitable organization, is minimally subsidized by government grants. Only about 9.5% of the Fringe Society's £850,000 budget comes from grants. At the 1998 Annual General Meeting of The Festival Fringe Society, Hilary Strong, the then current director of the Society, pointed out that the Edinburgh City Council currently grants the Fringe £19,000, the Scottish Arts Council allows £22,000 for the Fringe (primarily for Fringe Sunday), and the city provides the Fringe Society rent free offices equaling about £40,000 per year. In return, the Fringe fuels the Edinburgh economy by pumping £28 million into the city every year. That means that every household in Edinburgh invests sixteen pence in the Fringe each year, and every year has a £140 return on that 16 p. investment - an 875% return.

Conversely, the International Festival receives about £1 million from the Edinburgh City Council, and another £1 million from the Scottish Arts Council. Figures gathered in 1996 on the economic impact of the festivals clearly demonstrate that it was the Fringe, followed by Hogmanay (the Scottish New Year celebration), and not the International Festival, which significantly brought money to the city of

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70 This subsidized rent was to expire in 1997, but was extended to 2007. Prior to receiving the extension, the board considered purchasing the property for £500,000.
Edinburgh. These figures were then released to the public in such a way as to mask the fact that the International Festival brings in substantially less money to the city by adding the income of all the festivals together.

The Fringe Society is quite unlike other arts organizations; because it receives such a low percentage of government grants, it could survive if these grants were terminated. The Fringe Society’s funding comes from the valuable services it provides to performers. These services include a central box office, information such as bulletins, publications, meetings, guidance, and advice. In addition, there is publicity: Fringe Program, Web Site, Fringe for Kids, Daily Guide, Fringe Sunday, and a press office. As long as the production companies value the Fringe Society's service and can pay enough to cover the costs associated with these services, the Fringe Society can survive.

Michael Dale points out in his 1998 book Sore Throats and Overdrafts, that the Fringe could function without any grants. In 1988, 84% of its income was earned. Arts organizations which rely on grants for a large percentage of their budgets face the possibility of closure when the grants are withdrawn. Dale contrasts this with the Fringe Society’s finances:

There is no question that the automatic payment of large grants to organisations can make them complacent, with no pressure to adjust their thinking in line with direct results as in

71 Hogmanay is Edinburgh's New Year's festivities.

commerce. Naturally, performing bodies and non-earning outlets of entertainment, such as galleries, need grants very badly, but a service organisation like the Fringe can obviously increase its charges in line with its services, in order to cover a deficit.\footnote{Michael Dale, \textit{Sore Throats and Overdrafts}, (Edinburgh: Precedent Publications, 1988), 57.}

Because the Fringe Society receives most of its income from performing companies, it is anything but complacent. Every year new ideas are implemented to improve the Fringe Society's service to its customers. For example, in the 1960’s performance sites were always hard to find; there never seemed to be enough. In 1969 the situation improved when school halls were used for the first time. However, John Mulligan, the Fringe administrator, suggested that companies should share venues more often, which would divide the cost of lighting, sound, and rental fees. This allowed venues to stay close to the center of the city, gave more groups places to perform, and supported the fringe’s awesome growth. It also fostered the crazy Fringe environment of ten shows a day with a ten minute turn around between shows, including set changes, lighting changes, and getting the audiences in and out. This venue structure distinguishes the Fringe from other festivals.

More recently the Fringe Society began publishing a touring guide to link booking agents to companies which want to tour before or after the Fringe. The guide not only helps the booking agents but also advertises productions that are

ready to tour. Prior to the availability of the guide, companies spent considerable sums of money trying to attract agents.

The Fringe Society is flexible enough to adjust when conditions change. The Fringe Club was a subsidized night club, theatre, comedy club, and bar for Fringe performers. For a small fee of about £6 in 1997, a performer could meet with other performers for bargain drinks, and enjoy a variety of free theatre and comedy. Non-performers were charged about £7 per show, which included minimal access to the rest of the club. In 1998 after the club had become financially non-viable, the Fringe Club was changed from an entertainment mecca for performers to a small storefront dedicated to help meet their needs. The club now offered professional advice along with a series of training and networking opportunities, not only with the Fringe staff but also, beginning in 1998, with the National Theatre Studio and Actor’s Equity. Performers could sign up for master classes, debates, or a trade show, and the club offered a fax machine, photocopier, and a computer for their use. This practice ended in 1999, and now the Fringe Society keeps an expanded press office instead.

HISTORY OF THE FRINGE SOCIETY

Because the Fringe Society is the organizing force of the Fringe, it is useful to understand how this Society changed from a loosely affiliated group of college students, to a massive permanent organization. An understanding of how the Society took responsibility for various services, and how it charged performers for these services will show why the Fringe has grown so successful over the years. Alistair
Moffat, second administrator of the Fringe, wrote a history *The Edinburgh Fringe* which covers the years 1947 to 1977. The following information is primarily taken from his book, published in 1978.\(^{74}\) My experiences with the Society since the late 1990's will also show the ever widening net of services it provides, while abstaining from unnecessary interference in production.

Ever since 1947, Fringe performing groups have operated independently, finding venues, running their own box offices, and financing the endeavor. Shortly after 1947, a local business, John Menzies, which primarily sells newspapers and magazines, compiled and published a program titled “Other Events.”\(^{75}\) In 1954, C. J. Cousland, an ambitious Edinburgh printer, convinced most of the Fringe groups to advertise in one of the first Fringe programs. This program was titled “Additional Entertainments,” and Moffat describes it as being a “patchy publication with a strange cover motif.”\(^{76}\)

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\(^{74}\) Moffat is the best narrative source for the early history of the Fringe Society. He was the second administrator, and thus had contact with the first administration. The Society's first office at the Royal Mile Centre (used until August 10, 1977, when it acquired its year-round office at 170 High Street), had a leaky roof and frequent flooding. This according to Moffat destroyed many of the records necessary for the book he wrote. Even Michael Dale's book on the Fringe, *Sore Throats and Overdrafts*, relies almost entirely on Moffat's history of the Society's beginnings. (However, as Dale's book is not strictly an academic work, he does not properly list his sources; he quotes *The Edinburgh Fringe* extensively in his account of the Society's early history. After reading the two books, it is obvious this section of Dale's book is just a shortened version of Moffat's work.) Therefore, the Society's collection at the Glasgow University Library does not have much information on the first Fringe Society administration. Moffat's book is the best source available.

\(^{75}\) Moffat does not give a date.

In the meantime, Edinburgh University students in International Student Services had set up a reception center in 1951 across from the Gateway Theatre, at 25 Haddington Place, for students attending the Festival or performing at the Fringe. However, the performers still had needs, including ticket sales, publicity, and accommodations, which had not yet been provided. In 1953 *The Scotsman* called for some form of coordination between the unorganized Fringe groups:

> If the Fringe were organized they could do much to help the Magistrates of the city as well as maintaining the standards and atmosphere of the Festival. More immediate problems for them, however, concern the sale of tickets for their shows, advance publicity and hall accommodation.  

It took the Fringe groups a while longer to get together but a meeting was finally held in 1954. *The Scotsman* reported:

> With the purpose of organising the Fringe events, a conference of interested parties is to be held at the Moray Knox Arts Centre in the Canongate this morning. The aim is to set up an “official” unofficial festival. The position of the promoters of Fringe events has, it would seem, reached a crucial point, and if nothing is done, it may well be that the Fringe in the future, with the exception of resident players, may consist of amateur productions.

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The situation at the Festival was summed up by one producer when he said: “We are cutting each others throats.” A comment from a spokesman from another company was: “What we require is a small organisation to act as a brain for the Fringe.” Suggestions which it is understood will be put forward at the conference this morning include the need for a central booking office for unofficial events and the placing of multiple newspaper advertisements.

The London Club Theatre Group, however, do not believe that the answer is to be found in the groups getting together “merely to be more official.” This would result, they feel, in an alternative organisation being set up which would simply increase the rift between official and unofficial festivals. They think that any move towards the unofficial festival must come from official bodies [the International Edinburgh Festival], and they have declined the invitation to this morning’s meeting.\(^79\)

The London Club Theatre Group had aspirations to be part of the official International Edinburgh Festival, but the other groups did not think this was an option.

In 1955 Edinburgh University students set up a central box office in a University building off Chambers Street opposite the Adam House, along with a restaurant for performers that stayed open until 11:30pm. The students claimed that the reason the box-office lost money the first year was because not all of the Fringe groups used the facilities. The London Club Theatre Group was one of the

companies that did not use the central box-office. Students continued to run the facilities, which were primarily patronized by student performing companies. In 1955, these student companies included groups from Durham, Oxford, Birmingham, and Edinburgh universities. Not all the groups used the services of the central box-office, nor were they all included in the Program initially, but by 1959 it became imperative to use these services or risk the impression that your group was not performing at the Fringe.80

The Oxford Theatre Group’s director, Michael Imison, called a meeting of Fringe groups on Aug. 29, 1958. It was attended by only eight amateur groups, which Moffat believed was due to Imison’s misjudgment of the temper of the Fringe. Moffat adds an August 30 report from *The Scotsman* to back up this claim:

> A suggestion by Mr. Imison that the proposed society should attempt to gain recognition by the Festival Society did not go down well with the other delegates. “We don’t want recognition” was the general consensus of opinion.

> “But why do we want to be recognised by the official Festival Society?” asked Mr. Piers Haggard, president of Edinburgh University Dramatic Society. “Recognition would bring ties. And we could so easily get swallowed up in the big machine that works in George Street and the Usher Hall.”81

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Even at this early stage companies were wavering between wanting to be recognized by the International Festival and wishing to protect the independence awarded them by the Fringe.

Moffat attributes the fact that no professional companies attended to a “curious slip-up in distributing invitations to the meeting.”\textsuperscript{82} However, professional companies apparently supported the idea of forming a Fringe Society. Charles Baptiste of Rutherglen Repertory Company spoke to \textit{The Scotsman} on September 8, 1958:

\begin{quote}
“Whether you are amateur, semi-professional or professional, it is a question of putting on something worthwhile, of putting on a high standard of production and performance which will be accepted by a high standard of audience. To do that,” he went on, “you require co-ordination behind it.”\textsuperscript{83}
\end{quote}

By the end of 1958, the Fringe Society was organized. A list of objectives had been drawn up, office bearers were elected, and all groups who intended to perform on the 1959 Fringe were asked to contact Ian Cousland, the Society’s secretary.\textsuperscript{84} Michael Ismison from The Oxford Theatre Group, and the man who initiated forming a society in 1958, became the first president. The main purpose of

\textsuperscript{82} Moffat, Alistair, \textit{The Edinburgh Fringe}, (London: Johnston & Bacon, 1978), 43.

\textsuperscript{83} Moffat, Alistair, \textit{The Edinburgh Fringe}, (London: Johnston & Bacon, 1978), 43.

\textsuperscript{84} Cousland was also the printer who started one of the first programs in 1954.
the Society was to print a complete program, maintain a central box office, offer information, and run a club.\textsuperscript{85}

The Fringe Program was the Society’s primary concern. Beginning in 1959, the program produced by the Fringe Society had from 24 to 32 pages, depending on the number of groups participating.\textsuperscript{86} Each group which paid its membership to the Society was asked to provide details of performances to be included in the program. The membership fees in 1961 were £10 for a returning group and £11 for new groups. Moffat points out that this money was intended to cover the expenses of the Fringe Society, but that it came to “represent the cost of being included in the Fringe Programme.”\textsuperscript{87}

The International Festival had a “Festival Club” and the Fringe Society decided to replicate this service for its members. The "Festival Club" was a place for artists invited to the International Festival and their public to socialize, eat, and drink at all hours of the day. In 1959, the Fringe Club opened at the YMCA on South St. Andrew Street from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. The club included, as Moffat somewhat sarcastically noted, a “spacious lounge,” and a place for food and soft drinks, since the YMCA prevented the sale of alcoholic beverages. The new Fringe Club also sponsored a series of morning lectures by visiting celebrities. The YMCA also

\textsuperscript{85} Moffat, Alistair, \textit{The Edinburgh Fringe}, (London: Johnston & Bacon, 1978), 44.

\textsuperscript{86} Moffat does not state how many pages there were the first year. The pages were divisible by four, since they used a layout that used of one sheet of paper to print four pages.

\textsuperscript{87} Moffat, Alistair, \textit{The Edinburgh Fringe}, (London: Johnston & Bacon, 1978), 47.
housed the Fringe Box Office and sold tickets for fringe shows. Other places, particularly bookstores, such as the Edinburgh Bookshop and Rae Macintosh, sold tickets, but the Fringe Box Office offered the most variety. The Society charged a 5% commission on all sales and this fee was used to pay for the Box Office staff. Mrs. Alice Tulluch worked at this YMCA box office and was still there when Moffat completed his book in 1978.

Another service the Fringe Society grew into was the publication of advice for companies coming to Edinburgh. The first publicity secretary of the Fringe Society wrote a leaflet entitled “Fringe Without Tears” to warn groups about the difficulties. He discussed many of the basics, including: how to hire a venue, obtain a theatre license, market a show, and print tickets. The leaflet advised performers that attending the Fringe would not be easy, and was not often profitable. The Fringe guides printed today retain this warning.

It’s not a myth – some shows sell no tickets at all.\(^\text{88}\)

Most Fringe venues have very limited dressing room and storage space, so be prepared to share or make alternative arrangements.\(^\text{89}\)

It is much more practical to budget for 20-30% capacity and be pleasantly surprised if you do better, than for 80% which only the most


\(^{89}\) How to Do a Show on the Fringe, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 1998), 9.
successful productions can hope to achieve. Of course, some groups do very well with audiences...

There are various ways of obtaining financial support for your production – all very hard to achieve.

The Fringe Society is an information center, responsible not only for informing the performers but also their audiences. The Fringe Program contains a large and varied amount of information that the public has to work through to make a decision about what show to attend. The Fringe Society attempts to help the audience members without recommending any one show above another. Audience members are directed towards newspaper reviews and make their own decisions. This makes the Fringe Society distinct from other self-promoting festivals.

The Society was made up of four main volunteer offices, President, General Secretary, Publicity Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition, there were representatives of the various Fringe groups from the beginning:

The policy of the Fringe could derive directly from those who used it and needed it. This practice prevented the Society from drifting from its role as a giver of advice and information. It could have become an ordinary promoting festival which made up its programme by inviting groups. It remained as

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Most of the first management positions were held by people who had participated in a Fringe production before becoming involved with the Society.

In the mid-1960’s the Fringe grew so rapidly it became a strain on the volunteers. The Society hired Andrew Kerr, an Edinburgh solicitor, for advice on how to structure the Society for future growth. Kerr advised the Society to become a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status. A board of directors would be needed in addition to the committee, which would, in 1971, replace the committee altogether. This new organizational structure would make the Society eligible for grants and more attractive for donations, and since groups could become members, they would be able to assert their opinions effectively within the organization. In 1967 Kerr began drafting the Memorandum and Articles with the Inland Revenue for charitable status, but it took a considerable time and was not completed until May 22, 1969, when the Society was officially incorporated as “Festival Fringe Society Limited.”

By 1969 the Fringe had grown to 57 groups performing more than 100 shows. Most of the work during the year was still done by volunteers who donated their time. At the 1970 Annual General Meeting the groups, as Moffat recalls, “more

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93 The first chairman was Lord Grant, a prominent figure in the legal profession, and a director of Scottish Opera. He was chairman until his death in a car crash in 1973.
or less demanded that a professional administrator should be appointed."94 Earlier that year the companies applied for a revenue grant to the Scottish Arts Council for an administrator's salary, but were rejected. However, the board decided that it needed a professional administrator and devoted its available funds, £700, to hiring a part-time administrator. They hired John Milligan in December 1970 for a three-days-a-week appointment starting that January.95

An article from a 1975 edition of *Festival Times*, a publication that was put out during the Festival by Edinburgh University students, quotes Milligan’s views on the democratic nature of the Fringe, for both performers and audience members:

> So, we have this unique event where anybody can realise their [sic] plans of making their own choice on their initiative at their own risk, and it has gathered about it an audience which has its own ways of reckoning risk and exercising choice. The audience votes with its seats, sometimes chancing upon a gem, sometimes suffering a lulu.96

The article also recorded Mulligan's views of the new Fringe administration:

> The artists come first and the Fringe Society has lit upon a model co-operative in an area endemic with individualism, falling-out, collapsed brotherhoods and movements. It has succeeded because it looks after the public and

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95 Milligan was a teacher of art who had worked for the Scottish Arts Council and had been a researcher for the BBC series *Scope*. (Moffat, 83.)

the artists look after themselves. This laissez-faire has not produced a lazy fair, quite the reverse, and it is clearly more Art and more successful than many a festival of (dare I say it) recreation and leisure which lacks the magic ingredient – people.\(^97\)

As the first administrator of the Fringe, Mulligan was careful to treat all groups equally, while efficiently presenting these groups to the public, and set up the principles of a democratic Fringe. These principles of equality, efficiency, and democracy were to become essential to the future success and growth of the Fringe.\(^98\)

The Fringe continued to grow rapidly and, since a professional administrator took over the organization, has suffered a dip in participants in only one year out of the last twenty-seven.

Companies must take a considerable financial risk to perform at the Fringe. But it is this risk that also allows the freedom for any company to perform almost anything they please. Despite collectively organizing the Fringe, the Fringe Society does not financially help the performers, but neither do they take away the companies right to perform as they choose. The Fringe Society itself, almost financially independent from government subsidies, has more freedom to change and evolve with the needs of the performing groups.

Since the Fringe Society derives most of its income from the people who use its services, the policies of the Society are derived from those same people. Because


\(^98\) Moffat suggests that these principles are the missing element in other Arts events.
the Society is independent financially, it is also efficient and able to encourage more companies to take the risk of performing at the Fringe, which will in turn increase the number of artists supporting them. It is in this positive upward spiral of independence, both of the artist and the Society that encourages the continual growth of the Fringe, and what has contributed to its current record numbers.

The Fringe Society, an organization founded by performers and the theatre community for the purpose of aiding artistic community has more than succeeded. In any given year it sells through its principal service, the box office, between one fourth and one third of the total tickets sold at the Fringe. In 1973 the Fringe box officer alone sold 42,990 seats to 1,386 performances. By 1988 it sold 121,686 seats to 8,743 performances, and in 1997 it sold a staggering 206,532 seats for 15,612 performances.

For most theatre professionals accustomed to some kind of government or corporate sponsorship and to touring guarantees, the set up of the Fringe appears to be a recipe for disaster. Performers are not given invitations, strange and unconventional theatres are used, and companies must not only obtain their own funding, but through the payment of fees, support the Fringe Society. There are plenty of groups that fail but failure, while a frequent visitor to Edinburgh, has not claimed the Fringe itself. The Fringe grows every year.

This section has attempted to determine those essential structures which help the Fringe grow and succeed. The absence of any central ruling authority inviting
participants, in effect, determining whose shows are worthy of support and whose
are not, is essential to the success of the Edinburgh fringe. If there is no such central
authority, then performers who come to Edinburgh must be prepared to support
themselves and pay their own way. This grim fact does not deter performers, but
ensures that Edinburgh is jammed each August with dedicated, even fanatically
ambitious people. This is what gives the Fringe its exhilarating atmosphere of
experimentation and naked hustle. This also has contributed to the success of the
Fringe Society as a coordinating, not coercing, institution whose first concern is for
the performers.

One of the biggest factors in the success of the Fringe is the absence of
government funding. Despite receiving very little government funding, the Fringe
generates huge revenues for the city of Edinburgh. The strength of the Fringe lies in
its anarchic nature. Because each company sinks or swims according to their own
merit, the Fringe relies on a survival of the fittest. An essential precept of a free
market, as important as freedom from interference, is the freedom to fail. Every year
in August the specter of failure stalks the Fringe, devouring weak companies and
mismanaged venues, but making the Fringe festival stronger.

The companies which come to Edinburgh each August could be considered
the evolutionary shock troops of creative theatre. They are uninvited, they must use
unconventional spaces, and they are by nature risk takers. This has led to an
environment of creativity and discovery which has promoted innovation and
international success. It is only in an atmosphere of voluntary exchange and instant adaptation that a phenomenon like the Fringe

The Fringe Society could be described as an extension of the do-it-yourself ethic. Despite the anarchy inherent in the festival, a pocket of order has been created by the performers themselves. The Society was begun by actors, for actors, and has served the Fringe ever since. Because the Fringe Society receives little government funding it is forced to be responsive to its customers, the performers. If it does not continue to adapt and to provide excellent service, it will cease to exist.
CHAPTER 2 – FRINGE AND MYTHS

Fringe is a funny name for it. It makes the festival sound like a haircut. And in some ways it is like one: it's risky, it involves edges, and if it starts to go wrong you can't leave or you will end up looking even worse. In other ways it is not. For example, I never got a haircut that made me tired and exhilarated and inspired and humbled. Maybe I just don't have the right barber.99

The preceding chapter described how the Edinburgh Festival Fringe works by isolating essential characteristics which contribute to its success. This chapter will broadly investigate the international perceptions and influence of the Edinburgh Fringe by looking at the international fringe phenomenon. To begin, this chapter will investigate some myths about the fringe and explain why these ideas have the character of myth, not mere misconception. This will be followed by an examination of the term “fringe,” and how it is used throughout the world. This chapter will examine the importance of the fringe myths to the spread of non Edinburgh Regional

Fringes, or NERFs, especially in Canada and North America. Finally, it will look at the tendency of fringes to grow fringes of their own.

PART ONE - MYTHS OF THE FRINGE

If you want fame to find you, there is no better marketplace [than the Edinburgh Fringe].

Wesley Monroe Shrum’s Fringe and Fortune: The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art is written from the perspective of the critic. A large portion of his book is not about the Fringe itself, but considers the Fringe in the larger context of his study of criticism in high and popular art. Fringe and Fortune contains a chapter entitled “Myth of the Fringe.” Shrum argues that his myths are “…not abstract, free-floating idea systems but frameworks of situated, locally produced discourse.” That is, he locates the myths within the Edinburgh Fringe environment. Shrum is interested in the visitors experience during the festival. He describes an arts festival as an extended system of interaction experienced on both the personal level of artists, reviewers, and audience members and also a vicarious and collective level. He tells us that vicariously the festival is experienced through “tales told, myths,


expectations, and plans made and unmade." To illustrate this, Shrum quotes Miles Kington’s sardonic summary of the popular perception of the Fringe:

> When the Fringe started in 1948, there were only four performers: Alan Bennett, Dudley Moore, Peter Cook, and Jonathan Miller. They were doing a new play by a hitherto unknown writer called Tom Stoppard. On the strength of a Scotsman review, the show played to packed houses and transferred to London’s West End. Now, a million people flock to Edinburgh each year and poster the city while the BBC and assorted scouts comb the talent at the Assembly Rooms for the next John Cleese and Derek Jacoby.

None of this is true - apart from the presence of talent scouts.

Despite the intimidating definition of Fringe myths he offers above, the fact is that Shrum is disappointingly imprecise when treating Fringe myths. Once he briefly raises these ideas and dismisses them, he goes on to examine the processes at the Fringe that generate critical text. By using Kington’s summary – deliberately filled with outrageously bad information - in a section dealing with Fringe myths,
Shrum places all the myths he treats on a level of basic falsehood and misperception. He should not have been so careless. Shrum’s brief consideration of two widespread myths – that a Fringe performance can be the turning point in the career of an artist and that the average audience at Fringe shows is only seven – demonstrate that Shrum understands that some factually incorrect ideas about the Fringe are more than simple misinformation.¹⁰⁵

This is a shame because Shrum’s idea of Fringe myths is an excellent tool for understanding the appeal and continued growth of the Edinburgh Fringe. There are important Fringe myths in the truest sense of the word, and Shrum has identified two of them without giving them their due. By mixing these important myths with mere misperceptions he robs them of their importance and neglects the ambiguity, value, and the power which a myth has and a mere error in fact lacks.

In this chapter, three fringe myths will be examined, the fame myth, the “tiny audience” myth, and the new works myth. In each case the term myth is used very deliberately. The three myths under consideration are too widespread and influential to be mere mistakes or misperceptions; they are not mere wrong ideas about the Fringe. Like any myth, the three fringe myths are ambiguous, simultaneously more and less true than a more prosaic fact. Their ambiguity extends to the practical impact of these myths. They may do some damage by obscuring facts vital to understanding the Edinburgh Fringe’s success or an actor’s prospects there. These

myths are also responsible for promoting much good by creating affirmative legends of the Fringe’s cultural construction, influence, and exportability. All three of these fringe myths will be analyzed in all their ambiguity, and this chapter will demonstrate that these myths have had a profound impact not only on the Edinburgh Fringe, but on fringe festivals all over the world.

**THE FAME MYTH**

Shrum repeats the myth, which can be found all over Edinburgh in August and in much of the popular and scholarly press on the Fringe, that the Fringe is a good spot for an actor, playwright, or production to be “discovered.” This myth has been fueled by stories of Tom Stoppard’s success with the 1950’s Fringe production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Equally familiar are the success stories of the satirical troop that became *Beyond the Fringe*: Alan Bennett, Dudley Moore, Peter Cook and Jonathan Miller.

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106 Alistair Moffat debunks the myth that Stoppard was “discovered” at the Fringe. He points out that Stoppard had already written a novel and several radio plays, and had his first play *A Walk on the Water* staged in Hamburg and Vienna in 1960. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* had already been performed as a one act play by the Questor’s Company in 1964 in Ealing, before Stoppard rewrote the play with two acts. The Royal Shakespeare Company even commissioned a third act, although they never performed the work.

Moffat also points out that *The Scotsman, The Sunday Times* and *The Glasgow Herald* gave poor reviews to the show while it was at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Only Ronald Bryden’s review in the *The Observer* gave a favorable notice, but Bryden had read the script and “placed it” with the Oxford Theatre Group to perform. Moffat goes on to say that he does not want to detract from “Stoppard’s achievement or Bryden’s ability to recognize a good thing when he saw it. The point is that the Fringe did not ‘discover’ Stoppard or his play. None of the other critics liked it, so that the glare of publicity that the Fringe brings to new plays cannot be said to have helped. It was rather the fact that the Oxford Theatre Group had the intelligence to use the play and the Fringe provided them with a ready opportunity to put it on when professional companies turned it down.” After the Fringe, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* transferred very quickly to the National Theatre and to Broadway. Moffat, Alistair *The Edinburgh Fringe*, 70-72.
Najmus-Sabah Zaidi’s article in *The Independent* is typical in “calling the roll” of Edinburgh break through successes:

Alan Bennett escaped life as an Oxford academic after appearing in a revue there in 1959. Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie won the Perrier award in 1981. Harry Enfield found work writing scripts for Radio 4's Week Ending as a result of his fringe efforts. Ask an expert to mention household names who started as student performers in the fringe and the response is likely to be a weary, "Find me one who didn't." …

Richard Ingrams, former editor of Private Eye and now editor of the Oldie, who started in the festival in the early 1960s with a late-night revue, *From Jacqueline With Love*, and another the following year, claims that all he can remember is "having a great time." …

Ben Elton appeared in four plays at Edinburgh while studying at Manchester University…. By Alan Bennett's own account, his success at Edinburgh came fairly easily…. the following year he was asked to appear in a revue with Jonathan Miller, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore. The four later went on to perform in *Beyond the Fringe* on Broadway…

Rowan Atkinson, on the other hand, was hoping for a respectable career as a sound engineer or cameraman. …

Paul Scott, now a successful actor and director,
went to Edinburgh with a production of *Moll Flanders* in 1985…

A recent article publicizing a new project called “Fringe Reunited,” which is a database that hopes to connect past fringe performers while helping to “revive memories of past successes and embarrassments,” offers a similar list:

The roll-call of people who have appeared on the Fringe, often early in their careers, includes Maggie Smith, Tom Conti, Simon Callow, Rowan Atkinson, Tom Stoppard, Hugh Grant, Jude Law, Rory Bremner, Graham Norton and Robin Williams. Fiona Shaw, now one of Britain's most established classical actresses, appeared on the Fringe in 1982 as a student in a production of *Woyzeck* directed by Deborah Warner, the start of a long collaboration.

Acts as diverse as the musical comedy trio Fascinating Aida and the poet John Hegley have appeared as has almost every comic you care to mention. In 1991 alone, Eddie Izzard, Jack Dee, Lily Savage and Frank Skinner were the contenders for the prestigious Perrier Prize.

And successive troupes of Cambridge Footlights have become household names. From the team of Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Jonathan Miller and Alan Bennett who created a storm in 1959, to the 1981 cast of Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Tony Slattery and Emma Thompson who won the inaugural Perrier Award, the route from

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107 Zaidi, Najmus-Sabah, “Darling, you were utterly obscure; The annual pilgrimage of thespian hopefuls to the Edinburgh fringe is about to begin. Najmus-Sabah Zaidi looks at the stars who made it there, and talks to one troupe that plans to make 1996 its year,” *The Independent* (London), 1 August, 1996, 16.

Cambridge to Edinburgh has proved productive for comedy and straight drama.

Neil Mullarkey, a Comedy Store Player whose Fringe appearances included a double-act with Mike Myers, said the website was a great idea.\(^{109}\)

The Fringe Society even posts a list of famous people who participated at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This list does not, however, specify the importance of the Fringe performance to the actor’s career. Their list:

Big Names who have performed at the Fringe
- Robin Williams
- Rachel Weisz
- Mike Myers
- Susan Sarandon
- Adam Hills
- Jude Law
- Hugh Grant
- Franz Ferdinand [rock band from Glasgow]
- Bills Hicks\(^{110}\)

Like any good myth the fame myth is based upon observable phenomena. The people listed above are successful. A few of them even owe this to the Fringe, but it is a small number compared to the massive number of participants, hopefuls, wannabes and dreamers who crowd Edinburgh each summer. Jim White’s article for the *Guardian* gives a more realistic viewpoint:


Much is made by the Edinburgh mythmaking machine of the comedians, actors and singers picked up and launched on the road to fame every year. Much is made of the way the city becomes awash with television producers wearing black and visiting the toilets in groups of three, who, allegedly, are there to spot the talent. This is the festival's enduring con: for every Graham Norton and Peter Cook, there are roughly 12,938 who haven't got a hope, 12,938 who are doing not much more than boosting Edinburgh's economy by spending three weeks up there, 12,938 who will be playing to the desperately unimpressed, the desperately disappointed, and, in their third week, just the desperate.  

Of course the numbers as of 2005 are closer to 16,910 performers, of which only a handful will go on to stardom. But the vital part of this myth is the chance that there is a chance. And despite the appalling odds, compared to the national lottery with which the United Kingdom has developed a national obsession, actors reckon their chances seem pretty good. It is this slim chance, this big dream that lures actors, playwrights, and other creative people to spend their money at the Edinburgh Fringe.

For the idea of the Fringe as a path to fame to be something more statistically substantial than a myth, some percentage of actors participating in the Fringe should

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have gone on to experience some measure of professional success and fame. This would not need to be a large percentage, like 50%. In fact, 1% would be more than adequate, but the number of Fringe famous does not even approach 1%. An article in January of 2005 estimates that the number of participants over 58 years of the Fringe is in the region of 350,000 performers. If a mere 1% of Fringe participants achieved fame, the list would run to 3,500. Needless to say, there is no list anywhere suggesting hundreds of actors and writers have gone on to fame from Edinburgh, to say nothing of thousands. At most one finds lists of 9, 11, or even 30 or so famous people as the above lists indicate. Of the 30 famous names above, not every success owes his or her renown to their discovery at the Fringe.

Shrum understands this. He writes of one company who gladly blew three years work and thousands of pounds in exchange for one good review in the Scotsman – and felt themselves well compensated. But if the odds are dramatically against discovery, fame, and fortune at the Fringe, if on one level it borders on silliness to chase one’s dreams this way, like any good myth there is a truth which redresses, indeed transcends, the less important misperception of the odds. The ambition to be discovered and “make it” on the part of the many has provided a place for the worthy few to achieve exactly that. Most of the participants

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do not make it; the Fringe always does. As Andrew Eaton, the arts editor for *The Scotsman*, says: "Even if most people won't have a shot in hell, you come here in the hopes of being discovered, and every year just enough people get discovered that it maintains everybody's faith."  

The myth of the Edinburgh fringe as the portal to fame has helped motivate the international fringe phenomenon. It both stirs the desire to create new theatre festivals and the desire on the part of artists to participate in them. For example, FringeNYC hosted the first performances of the edgy musical *Urinetown*. Other festivals and venues had turned down *Urinetown*. FringeNYC accepted the work, which has gone on to great success. On the “Success Story” page of FringeNYC’s website, *Urinetown* features front and center. Once a festival can be associated with a popular and visual success story, it will draw more shows willing to take a chance.

As Shrum has observed, good reviews are a powerful motivator even when fame and fortune prove more elusive. If a promoter does not sign a company or an actor immediately to a West End run in London, there are still reviews to take home. The challenge is to get a good review. Even if a private company does not get a West End run, the company can work to garner further respect and increase audience

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115 McKinley, Jesse. “Endurance Reaps Rewards At the Edinburgh Fringe.” *The New York Times*, Section E; Column 2; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Drama as Sport For culture Die-Hards, 26 August, 2004, 1.

attendance on tours by getting good Festival reviews. The Edinburgh Fringe Society kept statistics on approximately how many reviews were published in 2005, as well as some other Press statistics:

Press

1. 3825 reviews in 2005, 200 up on 2004
2. 1456 articles year round, 592 of which were for August
4. The Press Office logged a great number of articles, particularly lots of quality international coverage, dealing with overviews of the Fringe to funding issues. Fringe news made several front pages, including front page on the Metro and Evening News for programme launch, and also Mail on Sunday for Fringe Sunday.

Numerous front-page banners covered Fringe shows too. The absence of a big Hollywood star (e.g. Christian Slater, 2004) seemed to result in more shows gaining publicity in the run up to the festival.

5. The main themes covered in the press this year show wise were –

War on Terror, (Manifest Destiny, My Pyramids, Omar Marzouk, Yesterday Was a Weird Day)

Glamour, burlesque, circus, large productions (La Clique, Balagan, Jump, Go Go Burlesco)

Accreditation: A total of 1685 press and promoters were accredited this year, breaking down in to 947 press and 738 promoters. Overall, this figure was a 2.5% increase on accreditation on 2004, with press numbers down slightly. This could be due to a sharp decrease in
representation from the BBC, no doubt because of much publicised job cuts earlier this year. International press grew in number to 136, which is reflective of the work of the travel tourism press officer, as well as the growing coverage due to more shows touring.117

Statistically that is only 17.85 performers per accredited member of the media, and 22.91 performers per talent scout, promoter or producer – or 10.03 performers per media, scouts, promoters and producers combined. Not all media are out to make stars of every show that happens to amuse them, but the chances of a review in one form of media or another is pretty good.118 The Scotsman used to take pride in reviewing every show eligible for the coveted Fringe First award. It cut back reviews several years ago, however, they still use more than 30 critics during the festival and review more than 700 shows.119 (That is nearing 40% of the shows, or 23.33 reviews per critic.) But when The Scotsman cut back, other newspapers (The Guardian and The Herald) started increasing their reviews. It was around this time that the online sites started seriously reviewing works. There are also Fringe specific papers which grew to fill the gap. ThreeWeeks originally started in 1996, and now


118 Some of the writers accredited by the Fringe Society as “Press” are there to write feature articles on the Fringe phenomena, from airline magazine featurettes, to “ain’t it wacky” first person reportage. Not all of these press passes are issued to writers doing serious reviewing.

119 McKinley, Jesse. “Endurance Reaps Rewards At the Edinburgh Fringe.” The New York Times, Section E; Column 2; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Drama as Sport For culture Die-Hards, 26 August, 2004, 1.
claims they review “more or less every show at the festival.” In 2005 according to their web site, the primarily student reviewers covered in excess of 1,250 shows in 25 days, and plan on doing more reviews in 2006. So everyone has a fairly good chance of being reviewed in *ThreeWeeks*. Statistically overall with 3,825 reviews of the Fringe in 2005, each of the 1,799 shows should have received 2.12 reviews.

**THE TINY AUDIENCE MYTH**

Another myth that Schrum discusses is the “tiny audience” myth. Here again, Shrum does clarity about the Fringe a disservice by grouping this myth, which he knows to be important, in with mere errors in fact. Like the fame myth, the “tiny audience” myth is important in keeping the Fringe faith alive. Shrum relays that it is common “knowledge” that average attendance at a Fringe show is seven. The number is much higher. According to the Fringe Society, it is 51. However, the “tiny audience” myth is repeated frequently in the press:

> 'An average audience for the fringe is three people,' says Jenny. 'We have been regularly attracting 40 in a 60-seat venue.'

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120 ThreeWeeks website: http://www.threeweeks.co.uk (They’ve also recently grown to also cover the Brighton Festival).

121 ThreeWeeks and Edinburgh Network website: http://www.edinburghnetwork.co.uk/about/index.html.

"It is one of the hardest festivals I've ever been to to get a crowd," Gill reveals. "The average audience in Edinburgh is three. For the last two years I've been working at it, then I put everything I've learned into place this year, and it worked."\textsuperscript{123}

'We're averaging about 45 people per show, which is excellent, especially when you consider that the average audience for a Fringe show is four,' she said.\textsuperscript{124}

She cites the problem of the Edinburgh Fringe, which is three times larger than Adelaide's but where the average audience totals five.\textsuperscript{125}

Yet despite this daunting number, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" surpassed all expectations, performing to a sold-out audience of 360 seats in a festival that has an average audience of six people per show.\textsuperscript{126}

This year the official festival's 70 shows will be matched by 1,100 on the Fringe. The average

\textsuperscript{123} McMenemy, Lauren, "Merri makes it," \textit{The Advertiser}, Features, 24 October, 2002, 64.

\textsuperscript{124} Landers, Fiona, “COTTINGHAM theatre group the Harland Hamstrings are celebrating their most successful year at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival,” \textit{Hull Daily Mail}, News: Ents: Theatre, 19 August, 1999, 22.


audience at one of the latter's 9,800 performances will number six.\textsuperscript{127}

Ivan Penaluna, originally from the north of England, makes the Canadian Fringe circuit sound like paradise compared to the original Edinburgh Fringe where you're competing with more than 1,000 shows. The average audience is four to six people, the entry fee is 2,200 pounds and the producers take half the gate (in Canada, performers pay a much smaller entry fee and get all the money from ticket sales).\textsuperscript{128}

With such diversity and abundance, it is no surprise the average audience size for the 1992 Fringe was eight people.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{The Fringe Programme} is a phone book-sized booklet of 224 pages featuring roughly 1700 shows. Add to this the Edinburgh Festival, the Book Festival, the Film Festival, the TV Festival, the Jazz Festival and a new Art Festival, and it's little wonder that the average audience size for a fringe show is [unofficially] 10.\textsuperscript{130}

Either way, \textit{Puppetry of the Penis} and \textit{The Lady Boys} stuff their venues to the rafters year after year.

\textsuperscript{127} Renton, Alex, “EDINBURGH PREVIEW / Time to catch the gossip train; Alex Renton and Sarah Hemming pave the way for the annual festival jamboree,” \textit{The Independent} (London), The Sunday Review Page, 17.

\textsuperscript{128} Fuller, Cam, and Jennifer Jacoby-Smith, “Fringe characters: Colourful performers take centre stage at Fringe,” \textit{The Star Phoenix} (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan), Lifestyle, 4 August, 2005, C1.


As Shrum points out, this myth has the useful function of consoling statistically underperforming shows. This tiny number is not a mere error in fact; it is a foundational myth which ensures the continual growth and success of the Fringe. Because of the low expectations, performers with low attendance do not feel so bad and performers with only a dozen audience members feel they are doing quite well. Many of the quotes above are from actors reporting to their home town about their success. Using the myth of the tiny number allows them to feel accomplished even if they only averaged 45 audience members themselves. Readers will believe that the company played to more than the average audience, when in reality they were under the actual average. The myth serves a greater good. The performer who did not get a TV contract or a West End run, indeed who dramatically underperformed in terms of tickets sold, is likely to go back next August. Thus the Fringe continues to grow.

This “tiny audience” myth also promotes non Edinburgh Regional Fringes. Adelaide and various Canadian fringes use this myth as a way to argue that they offer a better opportunity for performers than the Edinburgh Fringe. Even in this instance, the myth is positive in its influence on imitation fringes. It allows these other fringes a chance to grow by taking in companies without the finances or the

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fortitude to take on Edinburgh. And it probably does not actually hurt Edinburgh, the companies that “took the easy way out” may eventually take on the bigger challenge.

The persistence of this myth owes in part to the fact that it is closer to the truth than the fame myth. Even though the average audience is actually much higher than six, when the Fringe Society and the media state the correct number they point out that this higher average number conceals the fact that some big name shows and popular comedians fill spaces that hold 300-600 seats. This raises the average substantially. The Fringe Society website gives performers who care to enter Edinburgh with their eyes open a “reality check,” before they decide to come.
Reality check

- The average audience size at a Fringe show is 51 people and average ticket price is £8.78. Bear in mind that this includes all the large venue shows and that there are a couple of companies who only get a few people in the audience for the whole run

- Travel and living expenses mount up, performers consider themselves lucky to break even; losing money is more likely

- The attention span of the Fringe audience is short. Most shows run from 50 minutes to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Fringe audiences often stack their days at the festival to see up to five different shows a day

- If you don’t know what your show is about chances are it’s going to be a hard sell to the press, promoters and your potential audience

- Don’t under-estimate the importance of grass roots promotion of your show. Edinburgh in August is a cluttered marketplace - be loud, be visual, get noticed

THE NEW WORKS MYTH

The Fringe's true claim to fame is as the most democratic arts festival in the world. More than

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a measure of success, it is a celebration of the art of creating.\textsuperscript{133}

The greatest and most far reaching myth of the Fringe is that Fringe performances are overwhelmingly new, even edgy theatrical works. This myth is so widespread that it has shaped how many have come to define fringe festivals. As is the case with the other myths, this is not a fact. The new works myth does not stand up to the analysis I have conducted of productions staged over the last ten years of Edinburgh Fringe programming. However, this myth is reinforced by the other Fringe myths and is useful both to the Edinburgh Fringe and even more the non Edinburgh Regional Fringes which have grown up around the world. This section examines the kernel of truth in the new works myth and its inter-dependency with the other myths, its factual inaccuracy, and suggests why so many classics and familiar works are performed at the Edinburgh Fringe.

The myth of the Edinburgh Fringe as the path to fame has reinforced the “new work” myth. Tom Stoppard’s \textit{Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead}, and the ensemble work of Cook, Moore, Bennett and Miller in \textit{Beyond the Fringe} were both new works “discovered” at the Fringe. This is not the only well-known incident in Fringe history which tends to inflate the idea that new works are predominant. At the heart of the Edinburgh Fringe, historically, is the Traverse Theatre. The Traverse is one of the most important theatres in the English speaking world for nurturing new

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{The New York Times} quote from \textit{How to Sell}, 1998, back cover.
works. Indeed it calls itself “Scotland’s New Writing Theatre.” Part of its program is to continue to promote cutting edge drama year round in Edinburgh and keep the “spirit of the Fringe” alive.134

Most people who know about the Edinburgh Fringe have heard of the Scotsman “Fringe First” award, given to outstanding new works in “physical theatre” and in theatre. This award is prestigious and what “old Festival pros” dream of winning for their production. The award is well known in Britain partly because new works which are recognized with this honor give it pride of place in all future promotion. The award is important enough to The Scotsman that they arrange all of their Fringe coverage around it, making it a priority for their reviewers to see eligible new shows. New works, not the classics, pick up the majority of the reviews and headline articles during the festival. Reviewers want to exalt as many new works as possible in case one becomes successful; what critic does not want to be credited with “finding” important new work?

If the new works myth is predominant at Edinburgh among participants in the Fringe, it has embedded itself even more in the perceptions of those outside Edinburgh. Some of the other festivals using the term “fringe” have adopted a policy of accepting only new works, such as the New York fringe, and the former Philadelphia Fringe.135 A new fringe in Columbus, Ohio imitated the New York

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134 http://www.traverse.co.uk.

135 Now the Philly Fringe, it is divided into two festivals. One is juried, the other is not.
fringe and accepts only new works. The London Fringe (UK) is not really a festival, it is more London’s “off Broadway.” However, along with borrowing the word “fringe” it has also contributed to the new works myth by promoting edgy material outside the West End. This new works myth is very important in defining the term “fringe” in its theatrical usage. This chapter will demonstrate that importance below.

Before demonstrating both the factual inaccuracy of the new works myth and how it is ultimately helpful to the theatre world, it is worth looking at some typical quotes from the press which perpetuate the myth.

You hurl your sleep-deprived self through crowds, from a brilliant performance in one spot to a dud in another, knowing that if you stay awake long enough, listen close enough to the ground, you'll find fresh, invigorating work to rave about for months. In August, the place to find the world's best subversive and unknown theater before it is reviewed off-Broadway is right here.

"People think of fringe festivals as where the new theater is happening," said Greg McGill, artistic director of MadLab Theatre, a Columbus troupe... "The word fringe leads you to believe that shows will be on the edge, off the mainstream," said McGill, who traveled to the New York festival last year...

136 Not to be confused London, Ontario’s relatively new Fringe (http://www.londonfringe.ca).


138 Grossberg, Michael. “FRINGE BENEFITS: First Columbus festival to showcase cutting-edge theater, dance, visual arts.” The Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), 9 May, 2005, Pg. 1C.
The largest arts festival in the world, a magnet for half a million visitors, still remains supreme as an explosion of creative energy.\textsuperscript{139}

Again and again, it emerges that the Fringe is the original Darwinian struggle, an information gene pool in which much is rubbish, but where the original and the startling will rise swiftly to an audience's attention in a way that is not possible elsewhere.\textsuperscript{140}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{new_works_vs_non_new_works.png}
\caption{Average New Works over Ten Years}
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\textsuperscript{139} Financial Times quote from \textit{How to Sell a Show on the Fringe}, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 1999), back cover.

\textsuperscript{140} Simon Fanshawe, \textit{The Times} quote from \textit{How to Sell a Show on the Fringe}, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 1999), back cover.
The impression of the Fringe as a bastion of new work is widespread. Though the Fringe is heralded for its novelty, in my decade at the Fringe I have attended my share of productions of Shakespeare, Wilde, Moliere, and Mamet. This made me wonder how many new shows are actually produced at the Fringe? This section will concern itself with researching what type of shows were actually produced at the Fringe over a ten year time period, 1995-2005; to illustrate this graphically, I have put together various charts as above and in the appendices.

My research covered ten annual programs produced by the Fringe office during the last ten years. These programs have several classifications - children’s shows, comedy and revue, dance and physical theatre, music, music and opera, talks and events, visual art, and theatre. This research concerns itself only with the section on “theatre.” These programs accurately list over 95% of the shows being performed at the Fringe. With an entry deadline of late April, however, there are some shows that miss the deadline. Except for these relatively rare exceptions, the program is one of the best sources to research past Fringe productions, and the only one that allows a short description of each production, a 40 word “blurb.”

The program indicates which shows are new works, so that critics who are involved in conferring awards such as the Scotsman Fringe First award are aware of them. Companies are qualified if their show has been produced fewer than 6 times in the United Kingdom before arriving at the Fringe. Before 2000, new works could be identified in the program by a star placed next to the title. Now new works are
identified as “World Premier,” “European Premier” or “UK Premiere.” Eligibility is petitioned by the companies themselves on their Fringe Program entry forms; it is confirmed before awards are conferred. The star or premiere indications will be a reliable gauge that a production is new, though occasionally revivals of shows that have never been produced in the U.K. qualify for these indications. For example, Asylum Theatre Company produced Samuel Beckett’s *All Strange Away* at the 1998 Fringe. This production was marked with a star because it had been produced fewer than six times in Britain, but it is hardly a new work.

My database contains the names of 5,435 plays gathered from Fringe programs over the last ten years. In the ten years I studied, 1995-2005, the Edinburgh Fringe was not dominated by new works; new works barely outnumbered productions of non new works in most years. For eight years of the ten year period 1995-2005, the ratio between new and non-new works is fairly constant, with new works leading by a slight margin of between 52% to 59% of the total. In 2000 only 37.9% of plays produced on the Fringe were new and in 2001 that number stays depressed, at 42.4%. The average percentage of Fringe First eligible shows in the theatre category for the ten year period is 53.6%, leaving 46.4% for non-new works. When, on average, new works outnumber non new works by only 7.2%, it is not reasonable to define the Edinburgh Fringe in terms of new works. Certainly there are a lot of new works at the Edinburgh Fringe, but that is because there are a lot of plays being produced at the Fringe. The aggregate number of new works looks huge,
on average over the last ten years 291.4 new works were produced each year, but
when one considers there are an average of 252.1 classics or revivals, the
significance of this number reflects more on the size of the Fringe than on the
newness of its productions.
Companies at the Edinburgh Fringe are producing works by established playwrights; in fact, they put on productions by Shakespeare more than any other single author.\textsuperscript{141} Why are so many “classics” being produced? As a venue manager I advise companies bringing new works to the Fringe to promote their work in terms of material audiences already know. When potential audience members with limited time and money have 1,799 shows to choose form, they are more likely to take a chance on a show which promises some resemblance to work they know they like. By relating a new show in the Fringe Program to something audiences have heard of, whether it is a movie, a famous person, a TV show, or Shakespeare, the show becomes more familiar and audiences feel comfortable with novelty. Companies producing canonical plays, on the other hand, can count on a certain number of enthusiasts of Shakespeare, Brecht, or Beckett buying tickets.

Another reason that companies perform classics is because of the potential to attract school groups. Every year the Fringe Society lists the core Scottish and English reading curriculum to inform companies which shows school children are most likely to attend supplement or fulfill course requirements. Some companies hope for larger audiences and even opportunities to perform in nearby schools if they produce a play on the reading list.

\textsuperscript{141} See Appendix for the playwrights most produced at the Edinburgh Fringe, 1995-2005.
ANNUAL CHART OF PREVIOUSLY PRODUCED PLAYwrights

(This chart only includes playwrights who have three or more productions in any given year.)

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Figure 9 - Annual Chart of Previously Produced Playwrights

Another reason canonical works are often produced is because school groups, particularly younger school companies, are more conservative in the plays they choose to perform. Schools participate widely in performing at the Fringe. Teachers no doubt feel that it is an educational experience for their students to produce Shakespeare and other such works. At Rocket Venues, most student groups below
the university level produce “classics,” or at least a new works heavily influenced by a classic author or story. Even university student productions are largely based on well known authors. The educational aspect of the Edinburgh Fringe is one that most writers ignore. Former Festival Director Hilary Strong tried to correct this in her conversations with the press. The numbers school groups add to the Edinburgh Fringe are substantial.

Fringe director Hilary Strong is keen for the Fringe to provide the missing experience for young actors between drama school and fame, a gap provided in the past by rep or Theatre- in-Education.142

Hilary Strong, director of this year's Festival Fringe, agrees that the Edinburgh experience is invaluable…. the festival provides a unique opportunity for student drama groups. "What's great about Edinburgh is there are no forms to fill in, and it's not a lottery. If it goes badly it can be a rotten experience but if it goes well students gain a unique opportunity to learn all about performance," she says.143

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143 Zaidi, Najmus-Sabah, “Darling, you were utterly obscure; The annual pilgrimage of thespian hopefuls to the Edinburgh fringe is about to begin. Najmus-Sabah Zaidi looks at the stars who made it there, and talks to one troupe that plans to make 1996 its year,” The Independent (London), 1 August, 1996, 16.
Having examined these three significant Fringe myths and having written mostly of their usefulness to the Edinburgh Fringe, this section will examine the impact these myths have had on the international development of Non Edinburgh Regional Fringes, or NERFs. These newer Fringes, which have grown up in North America, Europe, and Asia, all look in some way to the Edinburgh Fringe. However, their idea of the Edinburgh Fringe is often composed as much of myth as of fact.

Before discussing the importance of these three myths to the NERFs, it is necessary to examine what “fringe” means to those brave souls who seek to imitate Edinburgh’s success by establishing a fringe festival where they live. There are usually substantial structural differences between the non Edinburgh festivals which call themselves fringes and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. However, I do not plan to compare the NERFs to the Edinburgh Fringe then simply excommunicate all NERFs that do no adhere with sufficient rigidity to the structure of the original; that would be an exercise in empty nominalism. I will examine the beneficial impact that the Edinburgh myths have had on the organizers of NERFs. It may be that the NERFs would grow faster, be bigger or become more profitable if they adhered more closely to the actual structure of the Edinburgh Fringe as opposed to being guided by Fringe myths. However, the Fringe myths are inspiring to many, particularly to
founders of fringe festivals, and without these myths some NERFs might not have been founded at all.

It is necessary to examine the definition of “fringe” both in popular context and according to the festival websites and survey answers I have received from various NERFs around the world. This treatment of the concept of fringe as it is found outside Edinburgh will owe a debt to Erika Patersons’ research on the beginnings of the Canadian Fringe, as well as Amy Lane’s research on the American Fringe. A survey of these fringe definitions and conceptions will show that the Fringe myths have had a powerful impact on defining what a fringe is and on motivating the foundation of NERFs. It will also show that a concrete, non mythical definition of Fringe common to all NERFs, beyond the vaguest definition as “a bunch of shows in one city for a short time,” is pretty hard to defend. The myths are at least as important as the facts.

In examining the definitions of the Fringe, one begins with a dictionary definition of the term. The following is from the concise *Oxford English Dictionary*:

**fringe**

- noun 1 a border of threads, tassels, or twists, used to edge clothing or material. 2 chiefly Brit. the front part of someone’s hair, cut so as to hang over the forehead. 3 a natural border of hair or fibres in an animal or plant. 4 the outer or marginal part of something. 5 before another noun not part of the mainstream; unconventional: fringe theatre.

- verb provide with or form a fringe.
— DERIVATIVES fringing noun fringy adjective.

ORIGIN Old French frenge, from Latin fimbria ‘fibres, shreds’. ¹⁴⁴

Note that the concept of the Fringe as “unconventional” in this particular definition is connected with the term “fringe theatre.” This is not true of entries in other dictionaries, such as the American Heritage Dictionary or The Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary. There is nothing directly implying “unconventional.” The American Heritage definition only uses “A marginal, peripheral, or secondary part.” ¹⁴⁵ While the Webster-Webster Unabridged Dictionary only uses “something that is marginal, additional, or secondary to some activity, process, or subject b: a group with marginal or extremist views.” ¹⁴⁶ In American dictionaries one finds the idea of fringe being associated with the marginal or peripheral, and it is in an English


¹⁴⁵ The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000, http://www.bartleby.com/61/96/F0329600.html. States: “NOUN: 1. A decorative border or edging of hanging threads, cords, or strips, often attached to a separate band. 2. Something that resembles such a border or edging. 3. A marginal, peripheral, or secondary part: “They like to hang out on the geographical fringes, the seedy outposts” (James Atlas). 4. Those members of a group or political party holding extreme views: the lunatic fringe. 5. Any of the light or dark bands produced by the diffraction or interference of light. 6. A fringe benefit. VERB: 1. To decorate with or as if with a fringe: The weaver fringed the edge of the scarf. 2. To serve as a fringe to: Ferns fringed the pool.”

¹⁴⁶ The Webster-Webster Unabridged http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/fringe states: 1 : an ornamental border consisting of short straight or twisted threads or strips hanging from cut or raveled edges or from a separate band 2 a : something resembling a fringe : EDGE, PERIPHERY -- often used in plural <operated on the fringes of the law> b : one of various light or dark bands produced by the interference or diffraction of light c : an area bordering a putting green on a golf course with grass trimmed longer than on the green itself 3 a : something that is marginal, additional, or secondary to some activity, process, or subject b : a group with marginal or extremist views c : FRINGE BENEFIT”
dictionary that the term has now grown to accommodate the definition of
“unconventional.” It is remarkable but not surprising that in a dictionary produced in
Great Britain, the example of unconventional work so familiar as to serve as the
exemplar is “fringe theatre.” The Edinburgh Fringe is, after all, the epicenter of the
arts there.

Wikipedia is not, of course, an ideal resource for scholarly work. Even
Wikipedia’s founder has complained that its articles can be of varying quality,
contentious, and interested because of the open source nature of contributions.147
However, because this online open source encyclopedia is written collaboratively by
people from around the world, it is a wonderful resource for tracking the evolution of
a concept such as fringe theatre. One of its specific definitions for “fringe” is: “The
fringe is a term used to refer to non-mainstream or ‘fringe’ theatre, where
experimental forms of stagecraft are performed. The Edinburgh Fringe, one of the
Edinburgh festivals, is the world's largest fringe festival.”148 Therefore, in a
constantly updated online reference work, “fringe” is not only directly related to
theatre, but associated equally with the Edinburgh Fringe and with experimental
theatre.

Perhaps the best way to understand how fringe is defined is to poll the people
whose opinions will have a disproportionately powerful influence; the founders and

147 “Why Wikipedia Must Jettison its Anti-elitism,”

staffers of Non Edinburgh Regional Fringes (NERF). One of the questions sent out to fringes around the world was “What does the word ‘fringe’ mean to you?” The answers reveal that the fringe myths are more powerful than the structures of the Edinburgh Fringe in the imaginations of NERF personnel:

Beyond the usual. 149

Edgy. 150

Edgy, free, creative, imaginative, cutting edge, original. 151

Artists on the edge of mainstream; artists experimenting in their chosen art-form; artists without mainstream support (be it financial or artistic). 152

Unjuried performing arts festival (a blend of co-op and Fair trade Art). 153

Our festival is very specific to new work – meaning unpublished. We want to give those

149 Jarvis, Sharon, Hamilton Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

150 Moffat, Pauline, Indianapolis Fringe Theatre Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

151 Stricker, Miki, Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

152 Thomas, Jo, Brisbane Festival Theatre Fringe answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

153 Hechtman, Jeremy, Festival St Ambroise Fringe De Montreal answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
playwrights an opportunity to showcase their work.\textsuperscript{154}

For the purposes of our festival, a style of – and a way of viewing – contemporary alternative and experimental theatre.\textsuperscript{155}

Generic phrase for the arts event, perhaps less mainstream, very creative, intimate spaces, open access.\textsuperscript{156}

Fringe means – 100\% UNJURIED – 100\% UNCENSORED – 100\% ACCESSIBLE FOR ARTISTS AND PATRONS – 100\% OF THE BOX OFFICE TICKES GO DIRECTLY T THE ARTISTS PRODUCING THE SHOWS.\textsuperscript{157}

Alternative, up and coming, vibrant, eclectic, experimental, fun.\textsuperscript{158}

Fringe for me covers a range of works that are not usually found in the mainstream fare. I see “Fringe” from a pluralistic point of view: e.g. Community fringe, avant-garde fringe, special-interest, group-fringe and a fringe festival that covers different disciplines from theatre, dance, sonic, celluloid, spoken word etc…. Better still

\textsuperscript{154} Barlup, Jennifer, Columbus Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

\textsuperscript{155} Munsil, Janet, Victoria Fringe Theatre Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

\textsuperscript{156} Wears, Carole, Fringe Praha (Prague Fringe in English) answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

\textsuperscript{157} Marshall, Beth, Orlando International Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006. (All capitals are in the original, and presumably meant for emphasis.)

\textsuperscript{158} Reynolds, Ben, Swansea Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
if there are works that combine the different disciplines in innovative and challenging ways.\textsuperscript{159}

The outer edge of something. In the theatrical sense, it is an important place for artists and thinkers on the edge of the norm (e.g.: the monoculture) where ideally unconventional and revolutionary ideas can brew, and new forms of artistic expression can be born. Unfortunately it has recently been co-opted by corporate interests and needs to be reclaimed.\textsuperscript{160}

Note the prevalence of fringe myths in the answers provided. A few of my surveys did demonstrate a greater familiarity with the way the Edinburgh Fringe works. John Wilson of the Buxton Festival Fringe defined fringe as, “An open Festival associated with a formal Festival. A Fringe does not select, censor or differentially promote any entry.”\textsuperscript{161} Freya Waterson of the Melbourne Fringe offered a definition of fringe which reflected a close familiarity with Edinburgh’s fringe structure:

For us the word ‘Fringe’ is a double edged sword – on the one hand it is all about risk taking, promotion of emerging artists and art and the challenging contemporary notions of authority and audience. On the other hand, the word ‘Fringe’ can denote that the content is less than something else, not quite as good, or just plain bad. The Melbourne Fringe is an open access festival, so this means anyone can be involved

\textsuperscript{159} Tan, Alvin, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

\textsuperscript{160} King, Donovan, Montreal InFringement Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.

\textsuperscript{161} Wilson, John, Buxton Festival Fringe answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
and it is a forum for all artists – the good, the bad, the new and the old and everything in between.162

It is useful to consider the relationship between how people in the theatre world conceive of a fringe festival and the development and structure of actual non Edinburgh Regional Fringes. While most festivals acknowledge that the Edinburgh Fringe is the reason they use the term “fringe” and that ideas about Edinburgh’s Fringe helped inspire the creation of their own regional fringe, the structures of the Edinburgh Fringe which have helped it succeed year after year are not always carefully copied. There are several reasons for this. Some NERF founders are enamored of one particular concept they believe is essential to any fringe festival, so they concentrate on just that concept. Sometimes festival founders misunderstand essential characteristics of the Edinburgh Fringe and proceed on the basis of that misunderstanding. For some NERFs, it is not practical to imitate the Edinburgh Fringe too closely, so they build a festival according to their immediate needs. It is often a combination of these factors.

HISTORY OF TERM FRINGE

The term “fringe” in its theatrical sense was first used in relationship to the Edinburgh Festival in a 1948 review by Robert Kemp who was writing for the *Edinburgh Evening News*. Previously the term used to describe the shows not

162 Waterson, Freya, Melbourne Fringe Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
invited to the official festival, was “festival adjuncts” or “semi-official.” Kemp
used the term “fringe” in describing a production being performed in Dunfermline
Cathedral, north of Edinburgh across the Firth of Forth in Fife County. “Round the
fringe of official Festival drama there seems to be more private enterprise than
before….” Thus, the term first referred to a location – around the geographic
Fringe of the official festival. Thereafter, the adjuncts became known collectively as
the Fringe. Once Robert Kemp used this term “fringe” it caught on because the
alliteration – Festival Fringe - sounded so much more appealing than “adjunct,” and
“semi-official.”

CANADIAN FRINGE

There are approximately 80 fringes around the world. Some are older than
the Edmonton Fringe, such as the bi-annual Adelaide Fringe which started in 1960,
and the Brighton Fringe which started in 1966 (originally under the terms “umbrella”
or “open” festival). The Canadian Edmonton Fringe is important and a good
example of a NERF because it is also fairly old, and it has had the greatest influence
on the North American concept of fringe. Edmonton’s fringe claims to be
“Recognized internationally as one of the best and most successful Fringe Theatre

164 Bain, Alice, The Fringe: 50 Years of The Greatest Show on Earth, (Edinburgh: The Scotsman
Festivals in the world and as one of Canada’s foremost festivals…” Those behind the Edmonton Fringe were also instrumental in creating the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF), which in turn spawned many new festivals across Canada and the US.

The following brief history of the Edmonton Fringe is derived from Erika Paterson’s dissertation on the beginnings of the Canadian Fringe, from the CAFF’s “Fringe Theatre Adventures” web site, and from a speech Miki Stricker gave at the Theatre Shop Conference in Dublin, Ireland, in September 2005, which he generously attached to the survey he returned to me about the Edmonton Fringe.

In the winter season straddling 1981 and 1982, an organization in Edmonton called Summerfest (which dispensed funds for summer activities in the Edmonton area) had a crisis that compelled them to cut their grant for the annual “Shakespeare in the Park” to half the usual amount, subsequently forcing the organization that produced the event to cancel the program. Because of the crisis, they now not only had a negative relationship with the local theatre community, but they had no summer theatre program. They needed to find an event for under $50,000 and restore their relationship with the local theatre community.

165 http://www.fringetheatreadventures.ca/index.php/festival/content/C29/.

166 Paterson’s dissertation used the 1981 date, while Strickler’s speech says 1982. The first Fringe happened in 1982, so I believe the discrepancy takes place in the winter prior to the summer of 1982, which would straddle both years, making both accounts accurate.

167 Paterson explains that Summerfest had issues with their artistic advisors awarding funds to events that were in their own interest. In addition that same year the city cut back on the funding for Summerfest.
At that time, Brian Paisley was Artistic Director of Chinook Theatre, a small theatre company that performed for young audiences. Brian Paisley was asked by Summerfest to come up with a solution. Later in an interview with Paterson, Brian Paisley explains that his solution was not entirely his own idea; he thought it was a natural extension of the Edmonton theatre community.168 “All the ingredients were in place; a strong theatre community, a good student population, a dead summer season, and a general feeling of dissatisfaction with established ways of producing theatre.”169 Paterson points out that there were three things that influenced Paisley’s proposal to Summerfest. He had attended the Edinburgh Fringe several years earlier, he thought the character of the Old Strathcona district in Edmonton created the perfect atmosphere for a festival, and he saw an opportunity to address the “dissatisfaction with the status quo among local theatre artists.”170 Summerfest asked Paisley to start a theatre festival in August and entrusted to him a small $50,000 budget with the simple instruction, “go.”171

Paisley wanted to bring the Edinburgh Fringe to Edmonton, but to add a

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171 Stricker, Miki, Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
uniquely Canadian flavor. Strickler points out that this was a new concept for Canada. Not only would Edmonton’s be the first Fringe in Canada, or North America for that matter, but that:

Until that point, very few Canadian artists had the financial means by which they could produce their own work. Canadian actors fought over the few roles that were available through the large regional theatre companies. Canadian playwrights had a very difficult time getting the artistic directors of the regional theatre companies to even look at their work. Independent productions were a rarity, those few independent productions that did occur tended to stay in “safe” artistic territory mostly out of the simple need to sell tickets. Until the early 1980s almost nobody in Canada was creating self-produced, experimental, or even Canadian work for that matter.

That all changed with the Fringe.

The Edmonton Fringe Festival turned the Canadian Theatre landscape on its head. The Fringe demonstrated that theatre can be produced anywhere in found spaces, not just in big brick buildings with cushy seats. The Fringe provided all artists, regardless of their experience with the same opportunities. The Fringe enabled artists who had been previously marginalized by the theatre community to develop their craft and bring new forms of theatre to life. By way of example, many internationally-renowned Canadian artists including puppeteer Ronnie Burkett, horror-clowns Mump & Smoot, One Yellow Rabbit Theatre, and playwright Stewart Lemoine credit the Edmonton Fringe with giving them their earliest opportunities for creating their work. The Fringe proved that Canadian artists had voices that deserved to be heard.172

172 Stricker, Miki, Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival answers to author’s questionnaire, January, 2006.
Paisley’s version of the Edinburgh Fringe was not meant to be an exact copy of the Edinburgh Fringe. There was no parent festival like the Edinburgh International Festival around which his NERF could arrange itself. Because the grant stipulated that the Edmonton Fringe had to come together that very summer, Paisley could not wait for the artists to spontaneously arrive and start performing. He also felt he could not invite artists to come without setting everything up for them. Paisley was flexible; he inverted the decentralized and entrepreneurial structure of the Edinburgh Festival and used part of his initial $50,000 government grant to hire venues, lighting equipment and technicians. He also printed and distributed the program. At the same time he decided not to do one of the primary things the Edinburgh Fringe Society does, provide a centralized organization to sell tickets. The companies would sell their own tickets at the door and keep all the revenue.

The Edmonton Fringe exercised an important influence on the growth of NERFs by creating a fringe that was not attached to any official festival. Whereas the term was once related almost entirely to location of the shows arrayed around an original parent festival, “round the fringe of the Official Festival,” beginning with the Edmonton Fringe the term evolved from its original meaning towards another characteristic of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The aspect of the Edinburgh Fringe that the Edmonton Fringe and the Canadian Fringes which followed began to
emphasize is its openness and accessibility to all artists. This concept of accessibility has become central to how people understand fringe theatre.

In 1998, with the creation of the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals, the concept of accessibility became foundational to the idea of Fringe Festivals in North America. The CAFF is an organization whose roots lie in Brain Paisley’s attempts to advise other cities in Canada, which were attempting to duplicate his success at Edmonton.\textsuperscript{173} According to the CAFF web site, these early fringes started meeting annually in 1990 to “talk about their respective Fringe festivals, swap ideas and to share resources.”\textsuperscript{174} After several years the group had concerns about other festivals calling themselves “fringe” that did not adhere to the principles they thought were most important.” The Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals officially registered as a non-profit on September 26, 1994. The organization took on the following mandate:

- To safeguard the integrity of Fringe Festivals as outlined in the four minimum criteria
- To recognize that the health of all member Festivals is important to the Circuit and therefore the artists’ health as a whole
- To encourage communication and cooperation between member Festivals thereby fostering the continuity of our guiding principles.\textsuperscript{175}


\textsuperscript{174} http://www.fringefestivals.com/history.htm.

\textsuperscript{175} http://www.fringefestivals.com/history.htm.
In 1998 the CAFF went a step further to protect their vision of “fringe,” and had the term “fringe” and “fringe festival” trademarked in Canada. They hoped to ensure that any festival in Canada using the term “fringe” as part of its title must first obtain membership to the CAFF and abide by the CAFF mandate and the four “guiding principles.”176 After 1998 there arose in Canada, and to a lesser extent in North America, a bifurcation in conceptions of fringe theatre. Those that base their festivals on the Edinburgh Fringe and those that adhere to the Edmonton Fringe and the CAFF.177 While most Canadian Fringes still cite the Edinburgh Fringe as part of their history, they also maintain that they are historically in line with Edmonton. According to their web site, in early 2006 the CAFF had 25 members, including six NERFs from the U.S; the organization has affiliated three new fringes in the past year.178 The organizations which belong to the CAFF are all required to follow the CAFF mandate. Because of the copyright maneuver in 1998, the CAFF mandate can be seen as an attempt to coerce a definition of fringe for all of Canada, so it is worth examining in some detail.


177 There is also a circle of Australian/New Zealand/ and Asian fringes influenced by success of the Adelaide Fringe. For example on the Melbourne Fringe website the first paragraph of their history shows that they were influenced directly by the Adelaide Fringe. “Born in part from the demise of the Pram Factory, the need for Melbourne Fringe became clear when it was noticed that the vast majority of artists presenting work at the then fledgling Adelaide Fringe were from Melbourne.” (http://www.melbournefringe.com.au/corporate/2006/about/history)

CAFF MANDATE

In 1998 the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF™) copyrighted the word “Fringe” and “Fringe Festival” in Canada so that any use of the term “Fringe” or “Fringe Festival” in reference to a theatre festival in Canada, must follow and abide by the CAFF mandate. What follows is the justification CAFF provides for this on their web site:

The first Fringe in Canada was the Edmonton Fringe Festival which was established in 1982. Hoping to provide a direct link between theatre artists and their audiences the festival adapted a simple formula that was created by the Edinburgh Fringe Festival over 50 years ago. The main principles were to provide all artists, emerging and established, with the opportunity to produce their play no matter the content, form or style, and to make the event as affordable and accessible as possible for the members of the community. The Edmonton Fringe aimed to have a wide variety of artists participate while empowering audiences with the ability to decide for themselves the truly great productions from the good, the bad and the gloriously disastrous... Performances ranged from the classics to new works and sketch comedies to dance... The tremendous success and growth of The Edmonton Fringe Festival soon led to the creation of Fringe Festivals right across Canada and the United States with each festival having their own unique and distinctive flavor yet all dedicated to the Fringe philosophy of accessible, inexpensive and fun theatre-going…

As the years went by there was growing concern that the ideals and principles that were originally inherent in a Fringe Festival...
(accessibility to all, a return of 100% of the box office proceeds back to the artists, selection of participants in a unjuried manner) were becoming more and more muddled by other theatre festivals that referred to themselves as being a “Fringe” but who chose not to abide by these principles.

In order to preserve these “Fringe” ideals and principles these producers came together to form the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals and created the four guiding CAFF principles that are still in place today:

1. Participants will be selected on a non-juried basis, through a first-come, first served process, a lottery, or other method approved by the Association.

2. In order to ensure Criteria One (above), the audiences must have the option to pay a ticket price, 100% of which goes directly to the artists.

3. Fringe Festival producers have no control over the artistic content of each performance. The artistic freedom of the participants is unrestrained.

4. Festivals must provide an easily accessible opportunity for all audiences and all artists to participate in Fringe Festivals.

On September 26, 1994 the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals was officially registered as a non-profit organization with the following mandate:

To safeguard the integrity of Fringe Festivals as outlined in the four minimum criteria

To recognize that the health of all member Festivals is important to the Circuit and therefore the artists’ health as a whole
To encourage communication and cooperation between member Festivals thereby fostering the continuity of our guiding principles.

In 1998 CAFF successfully applied to have the terms “Fringe” and “Fringe Festival” trademarked in Canada to ensure that any theatre festival in Canada who wishes to call themselves a “Fringe” would obtain membership in the association and agree to abide by both the CAFF mandate and the four guiding principles. \(^{179}\)

CAFF MANDATE COMPARED TO THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

The CAFF is a good example of what fringe has come to mean, and how different this conception is from the “conditions on the ground” at the Edinburgh Fringe. When comparing this “mandate” to the Edinburgh Fringe from which it had supposedly been derived, there are interesting differences. In fact, the mandate is shaped by substantial misconceptions.

The first point of the mandate is that “Participants will be selected on a non-juried basis, through a first-come, first served process, a lottery, or other method approved by the Association.” Certainly the Edinburgh Fringe is not formally juried; the Edinburgh Fringe Society does not approve or disapprove any productions. There is selection at Edinburgh, however, which is far more rigorous than the CAFF’s lottery or “first come, first served” basis. The real selection at the Edinburgh Fringe is done by the venue managers. While opportunity and enthusiasm

\(^{179}\) http://www.fringefestivals.com/history.htm.
have conspired to make an enormous amount of space available for actors each August, performing space is still finite. Venue managers choose who will get slots in their venues; once space and time slots run out they must stop accepting shows. Sometimes there is a formal process at the venue level of jurying shows, notably the Traverse and the Assembly Rooms. For other venues this is more a logistical matter – when do productions apply for time slots, can they afford the time slot they want, do they conflict with other productions at a given space, *et cetera*? It should be noted, however, that if a show is not selected by a venue it still has options. A production can take its business elsewhere, found their own venue, or join the legion of performers utilizing the free space of the street.

The lottery/first come first served method advocated by the CAFF limits the size of those NERFs which follow their mandate. If the Edinburgh Fringe had observed such a limitation it would not be nearly the size it is now. This is no small consideration; the sheer monstrous size of the event is often cited as the reason for the Edinburgh Fringe’s success and influence. Why must a new fringe use a first come, first served process or a lottery process? Usually because the organization that started the fringe organizes and runs all performance spaces, and thus has a logistical limitation in this area. The only exception to this is what some Canadian Fringes call “BYOV,” (Bring Your Own Venue). See the role of the entrepreneurial venue in Chapter Three.
Through its lottery, the CAFF mandate disallows multiple shows from any one company. This is quite foreign to Edinburgh procedure, where single companies often bring multiple shows. This lottery also allows only a specific number of performances for each show (often eight performances) and they are scattered at different times. The CAFF drafted this regulation out of a concern for fairness since each company is paying the same amount.

The second portion of the mandate requires that “In order to ensure Criteria One (above), the audiences must have the option to pay a ticket price, 100% of which goes directly to the artists.” The wording of this is baffling – are audiences normally deprived of their option to pay by being coerced into “freebies?” Chuck McEwen, an officer of the CAFF, clarified this provision:

… artists should receive 100% of the ticket price paid for by the patron for at least one ticket price. For example, the “at-the-door” ticket price (where a patron purchases a ticket at the theatre in person) is returned in full to the artists. When the mandate was written I don’t believe that any member festivals were yet selling advance tickets but the wording of the mandate foresaw the possibility of requiring some type of surcharge to provide advance sales services for the benefit of the patrons and artists.180

It is strange that the CAFF should have fixated so upon potential service charges being taken out of ticket sales. Acting as a central clearing house for advance ticket sales is one of the premier services offered by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. The Society charges 6% at the moment, but in the late 90s it was as

180 MeEwewn, Chuck, email to author, April 13, 2006.
high as 7.5%. Neither companies nor venue managers at Rocket Venues have ever complained about this charge. The attitude predominant at Edinburgh is that this is a reasonable charge for a helpful service. Even if an audience member in Edinburgh does not buy a ticket in advance and pays at the door, most venues at the Fringe also have a 60/40 split with 60% going to the artists. Thus the CAFF’s mandate in this regard has no basis whatsoever in what happens at the Edinburgh Fringe.

This CAFF requirement is not practical. Because the mandate requires 100% of the ticket money to go to the artist, financing the infrastructure of CAFF NERFs becomes needlessly complicated and has the potential of forcing dependence on outside financing. Paying to participate in CAFF fringes seems simple. Participation in CAFF fringes is paid for by an upfront fee. A company that wants to perform at the typical CAFF fringe will first fill out an application and send it in with the application fee. For example, in Toronto companies pay $660.00 plus an additional $20.00 as a processing fee. The applications are often drawn by lottery on a specific date (sometimes turned into a local fundraising event for the fringe). Applications that are not accepted will receive their $660.00 back, but the $20 processing fee will be retained by the fringe. Those that are accepted then, have prepaid the $660 fee that will often include a set number of performances often scattered over multiple time slots so that everything is fair. At Toronto, this $660 cost covers: a venue with basic lighting and sound with one lighting “special,” a technician, a front of house manager, front of house volunteers; box office support and tickets, inclusion in the
fringe program and all other publicity, and the right to 100% of box office revenue. Apparently the fees charged to the productions to participate in the fringe are not high enough to pay for the infrastructure of the CAFF festivals, necessitating baroque financial maneuvers to maintain the principle of 100% of every box office going to the productions.

Some fringes charge patrons for the infrastructure of the fringe in ways other than taking a percentage of ticket sales. One example is that many CAFF fringe organizations charge for buttons or badges, sometimes call “passports” that an audience member must buy and wear before purchasing tickets, as well as prior to attending any performance. This rule adds another hurdle for an audience member. If a local audience member wants to attend only one performance, it could make them reconsider as this greatly increases the cost of a single ticket. For example, the Toronto Fringe charges $5.00 for buttons, and the tickets for shows are $8.00. This would be an increase of over 50% for one ticket. By making a fetish out of avoiding service charges for tickets, the Toronto Fringe contradicts its mandate to be accessible to audiences.

Another tactic some CAFF fringes have used is charging a fee for tickets purchased in advance. This fee is officially on top of the cost of the ticket, and again therefore not technically diverted from the ticket price. Using the Toronto Fringe example again, they charge $2.00 on top of every $8.00 ticket purchased in advance. So technically it is not an additional fee, and audience members who purchase tickets
at the door are able to get tickets for $8.00. But since approximately 50% of the
tickets are sold in advance at a cost 25% higher than the original cost, it could also
be seen as a 20% ticket commission on a $10 ticket. Or in a different calculation,
assuming it is exactly 50% of the tickets sold in advance at $10, and 50% sold at the
doors for $8, it is still a 10% ticket commission on all tickets. Does this additional fee
affect consumer purchase habits? Would more tickets be purchased overall if it did
not seem more expensive to buy in advance? Badges, higher entry fees, and the like
are not “technically” coming out of ticket costs, but taken as a whole these CAFF
practices seem like little more than gestures meant to pacify actors with a sense of
grievance about service charges or tokens allowing them to feel like they are finally
being treated with respect.

This mandate of returning 100% of the box office money to the artists can
have consequences not immediately evident. The problem is that the financing must
be secured from sources other than the artists the NERF organization is purported to
serve. Wherever this money which keeps the NERF afloat comes from must
ultimately become the organization’s most important “customer,” since that will be
where the fringe will turn in order to continue receiving financial help. Government
funding and corporate sponsorships are not closely related to the services a fringe
organization proves for its artists. In fact, it may find itself distracted by the needs of
its patron. Outside funding can put an organization at risk if the party providing
funding arbitrarily decides to withdraw these funds as is often the case with
government funding and corporate sponsors. Therefore, a fringe organization that relies heavily on outside funding can be the best at what it does and still fail or close down if funding is withdrawn. Chapter One explains how the Edinburgh Fringe Society remains responsive to the companies and venues at the heart of the Fringe by not chasing after government and corporate revenue. This service to the performing company comes directly from the Fringe Society’s history of performers banding together to help themselves. It is obvious then that these longstanding Edinburgh Fringe participants would write a charter for their society which focused on their distinct needs. It is much more difficult to work out what the important priorities are for a central organization of a fringe when that fringe does not evolve, but is created out of whole cloth.

The third CAFF mandate reads, “Fringe Festival producers have no control over the artistic content of each performance. The artistic freedom of the participants is unrestrained.” This does little to distinguish the CAFF fringes from any other; censorship is not very popular with arts festivals. The rule does imply that it is normal for some sort of censorship to be imposed at other fringe festivals. At Edinburgh, this is certainly not the case. Councilwoman Moria Knox would make headlines by periodically attacking a show on the Fringe - in 1993 she denounced the Jim Rose Circus Sideshow - but generally speaking there is little censorship in Edinburgh. There is none enforced by the Fringe Society. Sometimes Fringe shows have to be moved, for example impresario and sometime venue manager Richard
Demarco one year rented a Catholic Church for his productions. The church barred a production of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (complete with nude scene), but this was a case of the landlord, not the Fringe Society or the venue manager, turning out a work.

The final CAFF mandate reads, “Festivals must provide an easily accessible opportunity for all audiences and all artists to participate in Fringe Festivals.” Given the logistical limitation imposed by an entirely centralized structure combined with a rigid adherence to the second mandate, this mandate can never be realized to its full potential.

**FRINGE IN AMERICA**

In her dissertation on the development of American fringe festivals, Amy Lane analyzes the earliest American fringes, those in Seattle, Orlando, San Francisco and Minneapolis, which were modeled on the Canadian fringe system. Like the Canadian fringes, these American fringes primarily emphasized their unjuried selection and their open access (again chosen primarily by lottery). Lane argues that these original American festivals also based their success on the “risk-taking adventure that the audiences are asked to engage in.”181 The New York Fringe (FringeNYC), and later the Philadelphia Fringe turned these ideals upside down.

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This is because FringeNYC decided to adjudicate their Fringe.\textsuperscript{182} This prompted howls of protest from the earlier North American fringes, to the extent of demanding that FringeNYC change its name since it cannot be a “real” fringe. FringeNYC addressed these complaints by arguing that New York City audiences are more discerning, thus selection fulfills the needs of their particular community. Lane summarizes this shift in the definition:

\textit{… the New York International Fringe Festival shifted focus from the community spirit of democracy at the core of the four original American festivals, and turned instead to the promotion of “fringe” works, meaning innovative, edgy, or alternative. With this one stroke, the concept of fringe festival had been radically altered in America from a philosophy promoting accessibility to a quality promoting artistic innovation.}\textsuperscript{183}

While the Philly Fringe also began with an adjudicated festival they soon discovered the need for an unjuried version of the festival.\textsuperscript{184} According to Lane, the city government in Philadelphia had long discussed bringing an international festival

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\textsuperscript{182} Lane points out that none of the founders of the FringeNYC had ever gone to Edinburgh. The Present Company (John Clancy was Artistic Director) was told its show \textit{Americana Absurdism} should go to Edinburgh, but because it was too expensive they opted to start their own fringe in New York. The only member of the group to have ever been to any fringe before starting his own was Jonathan Harris. He had been a founding member of the Seattle Fringe.


\textsuperscript{184} Lane points out that the founders of the Philly Fringe, Eric Schoefer and Nick Stuccio, had previously attended the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This is the first American Fringe to be modeled on the Edinburgh Fringe as opposed to the Canadian Fringe.
\end{flushright}
to the city; the founders of the Philly Fringe convinced the city to “bypass the international festival idea and concentrate exclusively on developing a fringe festival.” This is interesting because what eventually evolved is a festival called a “fringe,” but which is adjudicated; alongside this adjudicated festival developed a section of the festival – also called “fringe” – which is not adjudicated. The latter allows any number of people to join (unlike the other non-adjudicated fringes which have to have a lottery to limit participation). In this sense, the latter portion of this fringe is much like the Edinburgh Fringe; it also resembles the Edinburgh Fringe since it has branched off an official program. In fact, it further mirrors Edinburgh in that the latter fringe at Philadelphia has since developed its own offshoot festivals which run at the same time (much like Edinburgh’s Book Festival, Film Festival, et cetera).

The two festivals in Philadelphia are now distinguished by two distinct names. The adjudicated festival, as of 2006, is called the “Live Arts Festival.” Artists are invited and do not have to pay, but are given a portion of the box office, including a guarantee. Note the importance of the new works myth:

Live Arts is a 16-day, curated festival that focuses on cutting-edge work in all performance genres. The Live Arts Festival presents contemporary, edgy, challenging, alternative, and provocative work.186


The festival which most resembles Edinburgh’s Fringe and is open to everyone has retained the title “Philly Fringe.” The “Philly Fringe” is now described on their website as follows:

The Philly Fringe is open to anyone who wants to perform and who can find their own venue. We do not invite anyone to perform, nor do we present or produce Fringe shows. If you decide to present your work in the Philly Fringe, we simply ask in the spirit of the original Edinburgh Fringe that you challenge yourself to be an "artistic pioneer," pushing your work to new levels of artistic expression and presentation.187

FRINGES OF THE FRINGE

Because the fringe myths often exercise a more powerful influence on the imagination than the structure of the Edinburgh Fringe itself, and because these myths are more ideological than they are practical, every NERF has the potential of spawning its own “fringe of a fringe.” Outside Edinburgh, this leads to the semantically exotic situation in which NERFs, which were never geographically fringes of larger festivals but started under the CAFF or to encourage new works, inspire rebel festivals which are located near the parent fringe. What we have then is a fringe of an original fringe that was never geographically a fringe of anything. Naturally, those “fringes” that do not have open acceptance for every production that

applies to participate have the greatest chance of acquiring a fringe of their “fringe.” However, even a Fringe like Edinburgh’s that has a parent festival and is open to absolutely anyone can develop a “fringe of the fringe.” Edinburgh’s Fringe has spawned two. Economics or politics usually give rise to such disagreements.

THE MONTREAL INFRINGEMENT FESTIVAL

A recent fringe of a fringe is the cleverly titled Montreal inFringement Festival; inFringement’s founder justifies this schism financially and ideologically. He was participating in the St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival in the summer of 2001 with a show called, Car Stories. Apparently Car Stories annoyed a key sponsor of the St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival, The Gazette (a Can-WEST Global publication). The paper threatened to not only withdraw sponsorship, but halt all reviews of Montreal Fringe shows in its publication. This followed the producers of Car Stories “playful attempt” to charge a Gazette critic, followed by a “satirical critique” when she refused to pay. The St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe, as well as the CAFF (Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals) both sided with the corporate sponsor. The Car Stories producers breathed deep the fumes of moral outrage, and under their potent influence stepped out to form a rebel festival. The inFringement website justifies this rebellion and dates it to the Car Stories incident: “Since then, efforts have been made to stop this branding and ownership of our culture and to put the fringe back into the hands of the artists and the community. From this, the
inFringement Festival was born in 2004 and is now growing rapidly. Join the inFringement and reclaim your culture!!

The founders of inFringement chose that name to vigorously protest the CAFF trademark of the words “Fringe” and “Fringe Festival:”

Unfortunately, this international festival of anything-goes DIY theatre has recently come under threat from corporate interests: the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF) has trademarked the word "Fringe" and begun restricting its use for artists. It is now common to see the festivals heavily endorsing (and even being named after) corporate interests and charging the artists they supposedly support “registration” fees ranging from $400 to $600. Once a popular people's festival of creative resistance and expression, it is now a co-opted commodity with a corporate agenda. A Fringe™.

It is not certain how using public money to fund a summer festival in Edmonton back in 1982 constituted “creative resistance.” However this is another example of the attractiveness of the fringe “new works” myth. The “other side of the story” is captured in a 2005 article by Raina Delisle of the Ottawa Citizen:

Rumours circulated that the Gazette, a major sponsor of the event, would halt festival coverage and withdraw funding. Gazette management denied the rumours, and Fringe producer Jeremy Hechtman said his decision to


show the troupe the backstage door had nothing to do with the ticket confrontation, but rather complaints about noise.¹⁹⁰

Politically the group that started the inFringement Festival is not only against the trade marking of the name, but also opposes the heavy involvement of corporate sponsors. Indeed the local fringe is called St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe to advertise St. Ambroise brand beer from the McAuslan Brewery; the naming rights were extended to the brewery in return for their extensive sponsorship of the Montreal Fringe’s profitable beer tent. Regardless of whose version of the Car Stories episode one accepts, it is clear that Montreal’s festival has a fairly significant corporate footprint. This is not an entirely uncommon practice, however. The M1 Singapore Fringe Festival is sponsored by M1, an East Asian cell phone service provider. Nor is corporate involvement unique to NERFs. While the Edinburgh Fringe Society has never sold naming rights, many of the most important venues have accepted large levels of corporate sponsorship; for example, the Underbelly is now the Smirnoff Underbelly. If done cautiously, this does not have to be a bad thing; the problem comes when a fringe or a venue mistakes a brewery or other sponsor for their customer. Certainly if sponsorship intrudes on any given fringe or venue’s core principles, like 100% accessibility, that would be unprincipled.

In addition to their political opposition to copywriting the term Fringe™ and Fringe Festival™, and their concern with the “threat from corporate interests,” inFringement have an economic grievance with the Montreal Fringe. They object to the fact that the Montreal Fringe had been “…charging the artists they supposedly support “registration” fees ranging from $400 to $600.”\(^{191}\) Knowing how much it costs to go to Edinburgh, this sounds like a bargain. Registration fees for the Edinburgh Fringe program are upwards of £300 ($450-$600 depending on the exchange rate at the time). This does give you assistance from the Fringe Society, copies of the *How to*... book series, and an entry in the Fringe program and web site. Unlike the Montreal Fringe, however, it does not include the venue costs, which can range from a few pounds to a few thousand pounds.

It seems like the opposition to corporate involvement in fringe theatre is largely rhetorical. If inFringement wants to keep costs down for participants, one of the best ways would be to cultivate more, not less, sponsorship. Even the inFringement Festival implicitly acknowledges this through its use of “responsible” sponsorship. If inFringement ever decides the corporate sponsorship they have is not “responsible,” none of their other options are going to be ideal. These are donations, fundraisers and government money. All money has strings attached, and while inFringement may do well securing “responsible” sponsors, everyone has to deal with the fact that the customer is ultimately whoever is providing the most money. If

\(^{191}\) http://www.infringementfestival.com/history.html.
it is not the participants, then at some point any fringe very heavily invested in other funding will risk prioritizing the patron providing that revenue stream over the performers.

EDINBURGH FRINGE’S THE "FRINGE FRINGE SOCIETY"

The Edinburgh Fringe is not immune to radical criticism and rival fringes; in 1987 it spawned the “Fringe Fringe.” Because the Edinburgh Fringe has a parent festival and is open to absolutely everyone, the Fringe Fringe was motivated not by a desire to see particular performers admitted but by economic concerns. In a press release, the Fringe Fringe argued that they would allow companies to “circumvent the red tape of the official Fringe Society.” They promised to “attract all those performers who have been defeated by the high membership fee (£200) and early closing date (May 1st) for the Fringe.” The heart of their complaint against the Edinburgh Fringe Society was that they believed, “The Fringe is no longer a ‘Fringe.’ It has become a piece of bureaucratic machinery which exercises a

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192 Davison, Brian and Edinburgh Fringe Society Ltd. Undated press release by Davison with attached letter by Edinburgh Fringe Society, 26 June, 1987, STA Lb 2/12, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland

193 Davison, Brian and Edinburgh Fringe Society Ltd. Undated press release by Davison with attached letter by Edinburgh Fringe Society, 26 June, 1987, STA Lb 2/12, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland
stranglehold over all publicity by the production of an official Fringe Programme and Daily Diary.” 194

The Fringe Society defended itself:

We [the official Fringe Society] said that our view was that anything in Edinburgh during the Festival time not promoted by the Festival Society was Fringe, and we had no monopoly. We tried, however, to offer an administrative package in exchange for a fee and our record showed that we had always been adaptable and inventive in shaping the package to the needs of the Fringe as it developed. Of course, a brochure about a small part of the Fringe was bound to be smaller than our own. If bureaucracy meant producing details of shows and tickets, etc, by a particular time, then certainly the Fringe Society was bureaucratic, but it was quite obvious that there had to be some rules in any co-operative venture. Our experience in the past had been that groups running their own publicity found it very difficult to attract audiences in what must be the most competitive market place in the world. Great efforts were made to minimize the participation fee and the accounts were public and would show that this was so. 195

The irony is that Davison, the Fringe Fringe founder, vigorously promotes his Fringe Society programs. He charged £60 pounds to participate, even though his program did not have nearly the distribution of the Fringe Society’s bulletin.

194 Davison, Brian and Edinburgh Fringe Society Ltd. Undated press release by Davison with attached letter by Edinburgh Fringe Society, 26 June, 1987, STA Lb 2/12, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland.

Davison admitted “Ok, we don’t have anything like the resources of the Fringe proper, but then we don’t charge £200, and our own brand of publicity is pocket-sized rather than waste-paper bin sized!”

An internal memo from Fringe Society board member Owen Dudley Edwards, a reporter for the *Irish Times*, to Mhairi Mackenzie-Robinson, the Fringe Administrator at the time, gives an idea of the spirit in which the Fringe Fringe was received. Edwards approached Brian Davison on the subject of the Fringe Fringe out of an initial fear that his true purpose in starting the movement was to confuse advertisers and intercept business and funds meant for the Fringe Society. He satisfied himself that Davison was honest, but was unimpressed:

I am now absolutely convinced of the *bona fides* of Mr. Brian Davison… I would describe the conduct of him and his associates as crassly insensitive, egregiously childish and childishly egregious, thoroughly idiotic, and revelatory of the most absurd form of self satisfaction…

I have also to say that the “Fringe Fringe” is, so far as I can see, quite likely to involve itself in complexities which it will be beyond its administrators power to control, and that the Fringe could well find itself rescuing its *soi disant* rivals from the consequences of their own folly and inexperience…. My opinion, therefore, is that the “Fringe Fringe”… has foolishly embarked on a course of conduct likely to get it into difficulties… I think it got involved on a I-can-do-that-too-Daddy-it’s-quite-easy-to-drive-
a-car-I’ve-often-seen-you-do-it level, and has
deluded itself about the lack of need for
deadlines…and for overhead.197

The official Fringe Society thought there was no case for legal action, but its internal memos betray irritation at the attitude of Davison and the other Fringe Fringe organizers for taking such an adversarial stance toward the Society, along with the concern over the similarity in names. The official Fringe Society concluded in their memo that they will sell tickets for the group if asked, since they considered the little breakaway fringe to be a participating group at Edinburgh like any other. Sensibly, the Society decided that the Fringe Fringe ought to pay like everyone else for the benefits the Fringe Society make available….198 This policy proved the wisest. By 1988, Davison concluded in an internal Fringe Fringe summary of the previous year’s events that, “…we learnt that [the official Fringe Society Program] is indispensable both to companies and audiences. We would advise all companies that can do so to get an entry in the program.”199 Davison penned a letter to Mhairi Mackenzie-Robinson in January of 1988 asking for a meeting to co-ordinate with the Society, while insisting, “we feel that even though we appear to be weakening by

197 STA Lb. 2110, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland.


199 STA Lb 2/13, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland.
stepping-down from an aggressive ideological position, that we can do more by offering purely practical help to companies and that this position is more realistic. »

A more recent attack on the current state of the Edinburgh Fringe has come from the Free Fringe Group. The Free Fringe sets up opportunities for performers to perform without renting space, and in lieu of a ticket price take up an audience collection. The Free Fringe is extremely critical of the enormous financial expenditure required for actors participating at the Fringe, but rather than blaming the Fringe Society for the woes of actors, Free Fringers have begun attacking the Edinburgh Fringe venues. Their attacks and the much maligned but vitally important institutions of entrepreneurial venues at Edinburgh will be included in Chapter Three.

200 STA Lb 2/12, Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow Library, Glasgow, Scotland.
CHAPTER 3 – EDINBURGH FRINGE VENUE MANAGEMENT

Chapter One described those structures essential to the size, endurance, and yearly operation of the Edinburgh Fringe. Chapter Two examined what the term “fringe” means outside of Edinburgh to the people who matter the most to the proliferation of fringe festivals, those involved in founding or directing new fringe festivals. It is clear that the myths about the Edinburgh Fringe which have contributed to how fringe festivals are defined and how widely they have spread are seldom grounded in the way the Edinburgh Festival Fringe actually operates. If those myths are widespread and influential despite not being grounded in fact, there is an institution which is vital to the Edinburgh Fringe but which has not inspired widespread imitation. This is the entrepreneurial venue manager, who despite his importance to the continuing growth and vitality of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is misunderstood inside Edinburgh.

This misunderstanding in Edinburgh seems to become incomprehension when the Fringe is exported abroad. Entrepreneurial venue management is very little used in fringes outside Edinburgh. There are approximately 70-85 fringe theatre
festivals around the world.\textsuperscript{201} Less than 10\% of fringe theatre festivals (9.7\%) adopted the Edinburgh model of entrepreneurial venues in which independent venue managers rent space to performing companies. Most NERFs plan performance spaces and times for every participating company.

The Boulder Fringe, in Boulder, Colorado, is a good example of how much central control is typical of fringes without entrepreneurial venue management. The application explains that: “The Fringe organization arranges space, funding, educational programs, marketing, and community engagement.”\textsuperscript{202} In other cases, NERFs tolerate entrepreneurial venues but do not encourage it, or even discourage their growth. The Canadian Fringes are a good example of this. Under a principle they call BYOV (Bring Your Own Venue) the Canadian Fringe allows a small percentage of shows to set up their own venue. However, they charge productions the same amount for participation in their fringe festivals whether the company takes advantage of the centrally planned venues or follows the BYOV policy. Financially it is pointless to do this since the most expensive service provided by the Canadian Fringes is the venue space they provide. For example, the NERF at London, Ontario, charges $550.00 for a production to participate in the Fringe whether a company uses the performance space the London Fringe makes available or not.

\textsuperscript{201} The reason this number is not more precise is because some fringe festivals disappear, others take their place, and some are poorly organized or have a minimal web presence. It is hard to keep track of them all from year to year.

\textsuperscript{202} www.boulderfringe.com.
There are a few fringes which have something closer to Edinburgh style entrepreneurial venue managements. Not surprisingly, all of these fringes resemble that of Edinburgh in that they have parent festivals, and most are located in the United Kingdom. These are the Bath Fringe Festival, The Brighton Festival Fringe, and the Buxton Festival Fringe. Outside of the United Kingdom there are a handful of others. Two are in Australia: both the Melbourne Fringe Festival and the Adelaide Fringe Festival have entrepreneurial venue managers. In southeastern France, the Avignon Public Off, allows entrepreneurial venue management. In the United States, only the Philly Fringe has this form of venue management. It seems strange that, while the fringe phenomenon continues to spread, one of the most vital structures of the Fringe, the entrepreneurial venue manager, has scarcely been imitated.

The venue manager is not much better understood in Edinburgh, where he or she is often demonized as an exploiter who makes a large profit off the backs of the companies who come to the Fringe to perform. This is not correct. My research and practical experience suggests that the structure most responsible for the Fringe’s ability to grow each year is the entrepreneurial venue. These risk-takers are prepared to provide a service which would be hard to manage centrally. They have both booms and busts, success and failures, but the end result is plenty of space is provided for performances.
Because this institution is little imitated and little understood, I will examine the contributions of these entrepreneurial venues. I will look in detail at how they work and at the enormous year round effort which goes into running a Fringe venue. My research will examine the variety of venues and organizational structures at these venues. Finally, my research interviewing key venue managers has provided me insight into how venues begin and grow, and why anyone would take the risk and endure the enormous stresses of managing a venue at the Fringe.

THE VENUE MANAGER AS EXPLOITER

…the big venues, the Underbelly, the Pleasance, the Gilded Balloon, the Assembly rooms. As far as I am concerned, these guys are the Bourgeoisie, they own the means of production and they then ask us to trade and sell ourselves to be able to access to the means of production….

Kieran Butler, *Che Guevara on the Fringe*, 2005

The term “vulgar Marxism” was coined by Marxist critics to characterize those they thought were too influenced by the deterministic aspects of Marx’s “scientific socialism,” or who interpreted Marx’s determinism in a simplistic way. In what might best be called “pedestrian Marxism,” Australian comedian Kieran Butler offers a radical critique of the fringe over the course of a walking tour in the heart of the festival as part of his free show in 2005. At the heart of *Che Guevara on* ...

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the Fringe, is Butler’s application of his brand of truly pedestrian Marxism to the economics of the Fringe. He asks the audience to imagine that they have leapt forward in time to 2017. The Fringe has been taken over by McDonald’s, which controls it through a monopoly on performance space, “McFringe Venues.” The Edinburgh Fringe is dominated by corporations. How could this have happened? By “returning back in time” to 2005 and going on a brief walking tour, Mr. Butler proposes to show in the present how the corporations seized the means of production.

The class enemy in Mr. Butler’s pedestrian Marxism is the venue owner. The proletariat is composed of the thousands of performers at the Fringe, nearly all of whom have to pay substantial rentals to venue owners, in the form of box office guarantees, to be able to secure performance space at the Fringe. Where once Friedrich Engels, in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, told horror stories of the poisonous conditions of the toiler during the Industrial Revolution, now Butler laments the intolerable treatment of actors.

Artists are losing money hand over fist, mainly because of the massive amounts of guarantees they are being asked to sign up for by contract around April …each year, usually they have to put forward 50% of their guarantees, these guarantees go somewhere between four grand and six grand. Shows can sell out at this

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festival and the people who are doing them can still lose their money and artists going bankrupt at the end of the fringe is not uncommon and I have the sneaking suspicion that the public don’t actually know that.\textsuperscript{205}

When the tour winds through the Royal Mile where actors frantically flyer for their shows, Butler, with a wink and a nod, calls it “a scene of degradation and desperation as shocking as anything you saw on the Make Poverty History campaign.”\textsuperscript{206} But the victims of venue villainy are not only the wretched actors, Butler argues that the audience, also, is suffering from the “new corporatism” of the Fringe.

If you talk to people who have been around the fringe for ten of fifteen years… they talk about this thing called the fabled spirit of the fringe… you used to be able to come here ten years ago with 20 quid in your pocket and see three or four shows in a day because everyone was charging you three or four quid then…\textsuperscript{207}

Naturally, the actors are not to blame for the rise in ticket prices:

\begin{itemize}
  \item …of course capitalists moved in and saw that there was a quick buck to be made and so now the high prices the artists are charging for the
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Butler, Kieran, \textit{Che Guevara on the Fringe: The Tour}, video recording of performance by author, August, 2005, Hi-8 mm recording, Edinburgh, Scotland, author’s archive.
  \item Butler, Kieran, \textit{Che Guevara on the Fringe: The Tour}, video recording of performance by author, August, 2005, Hi-8 mm recording, Edinburgh, Scotland, author’s archive.
  \item Butler, Kieran, \textit{Che Guevara on the Fringe: The Tour}, video recording of performance by author, August, 2005, Hi-8 mm recording, Edinburgh, Scotland, author’s archive.
\end{itemize}

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shows are brought about by the fact that the venues are asking such massive rental and guarantees and advertising dollars just to participate in what is supposed to be a fringy arts festival.208

Part of Butler’s walking tour is a visit with folk musician and longtime Fringe comedian Peter Buckley Hill. Hill is best known for his free show Peter Buckley Hill and Some Comedians. The show changes night to night throughout the festival, but the format is the same; Hill hosts different comedians who want to perform in a causal atmosphere then “pass the hat.” Frequently these are very successful performers who are selling out their own shows. Hill’s part in Che Guevara at the Fringe is to add to Butler’s indictment of the venues as part of his political platform; he is sometimes a candidate for a seat on the board of the Fringe Society.

What I don’t know is that there is an evil fat cat capitalist lurking at the top… but I think someone is getting rich of the backs of the workers... I haven’t got the data to prove that. It’s likely that the money has been swallowed up in the expense of rigging those venues. 209

Mr. Hill uses Che Guevara at the Fringe as a platform for his campaign. He criticizes the board of the Fringe Society because only two performers sit on the board of fourteen. This angers Buckley Hill because he believes that the performers


are the wretched of the Edinburgh earth and he understands that the voluntary nature of the Fringe means that the money risked by the performers is what makes the Fringe go:

I do know this: The only thing that makes the Fringe happen is the money paid in guarantee by the performers themselves, that if the venue owners are not making a profit, they are certainly not making a loss because that loss is guaranteed by the performers. We provide the artistic input we also provide the financial input end of story.210

On his website, Hill laments that it costs him £3,000 a year in losses to perform at the Fringe, but rejects abandoning his voluntary “pass the hat” method for selling tickets like other productions.

The prices at the Fringe are appalling and it would be terrible to be associated with them. I hope everyone realizes that despite these very high prices the money does not find its way into the pockets of the artists themselves, many of whom make very substantial losses. The Fringe itself has lost its way, and unfortunately I see no willingness by the Fringe management to help make it any different. Perhaps it deserves to die; the public can be expected to take a gamble on shows at less than five pounds, but surely not at nine?211


211 http://www.buckers.co.uk.
Certainly Hill is sincere. His efforts to gain a seat on the board of the Fringe Society to represent performers and his willingness to practice as he preaches by doing shows without charging up front for tickets prove this. His involvement in the Free Fringe movement gives an even clearer indication of his willingness to stand by his convictions. The Free Fringe movement is the best possible evidence that there are many in Edinburgh each August who think that the Fringe has lost its way. Like inFringement in Canada, the Free Fringe is a fringe of a fringe. Like inFringement, it combines an opportunity for performances with an airing of grievances. The Free Fringe website explains itself by first launching a salvo at the venues:

The problems that have arisen for performers and audiences... are partly down to the Fringe's popularity, and also down to promoters and venue owners who have continually upped the cost of hiring spaces, and who have secured more and more locations, making it a closed market for performers finding spaces. The open arts festival that anyone can take part in is now an open arts festival that anyone can take part in as long as they can afford it. In recent years the costs associated with bringing a show to the Fringe have continued to spiral, due to the increased 'cashing in' on the festival's success - from venues charging high prices for acts to perform, to people who supply accommodation increasing their prices by just as much. Acts risk thousands of pounds each year in the hope of being discovered and becoming successful, but very few do.²¹²

²¹² http://www.laughinghorse.co.uk/freefringe.htm.
The Free Fringe also perceives patrons of Edinburgh Fringe shows as victims of rising costs.

Along with high venue costs, ticket prices have also risen and alienated Fringe-goers and locals. Fringe-goers have blamed artists for the high ticket prices, when it is usually the venue that sets these prices, often against the wishes of performers. Audiences are now no longer willing to experiment and see the new shows, and the new acts that the Fringe is meant to promote because it is too expensive. Audiences have had to make a choice, and they would understandably rather spend their money on a safe-bet and see already established acts. These acts that are already likely to break even or make money, making the gap between the big-name acts and the majority of Fringe shows wider every year.213

The history of the Free Fringe is wrapped up with Peter Buckley Hill’s free performances; the website traces the evolution of the Free Fringe to Peter Buckley Hill and Some Comedians. However, it has expanded considerably since a deliberate attempt to set up something of a counter festival in 2004. Once again, venue managers are the villains: “…after Peter's previous venue had been taken over by another promoter, and as is often the case in Edinburgh this promoter tried to use the venue to make large personal gain by charging acts an obscene amount of money to perform there, Peter was moved to a new venue.”214 Together with the Laughing

213 http://www.laughinghorse.co.uk/freefringe.htm.

214 http://www.laughinghorse.co.uk/freefringe.htm.
Horse Comedy club, a group of comedy managers and promoters, Hill began to offer free shows at a small pub called Lindsay’s. In 2005 and 2006, he has been able to add Canons Gate, the venue he could not afford in 2004, since the venue manager there “had not lived up to the empty promises that he made to the owners, and who had failed in his attempt to make money of the backs of acts by charging them silly money to perform there.” In 2005 the free fringe offered “22 shows for the price of none.”

It is not just the indefatigable Buckley Hill who grumbles loudly about the venues. While he is the leading figure attacking entrepreneurial venues and venue mangers at the fringe, the complaint is not unusual. Both the vox populi and the best informed Fringe experts, insiders, and media people are concerned about costs. The difference between their respective analyses is that vocal performers like Buckley Hill are most likely to make simplistic denunciations of venue managers while admitting, as he has, that they know virtually nothing of the economics involved. One place to find such simplistic critiques is on the internet bulletin boards of performers who frequent the Fringe. The following comments were posted on the bulletin board for “Chortle,” the web portal for comedians. These are typical comments about the entrepreneurial venues at Edinburgh which can be heard on the


216 http://www.laughinghorse.co.uk/freefringe.htm.
Royal Mile, in the dressing rooms, and wherever performers gather in Edinburgh in August:

.... doesn't it seem odd that virtually no performers make money on the fringe, regardless of quality? We all know of people who are going to make a four figure loss even if they sell out every night\(^{217}\)

Seems to me that everyone is out to make their money and so the people at the bottom of the food chain get dicked... the performers who will be told that the worth of the festival is in the exposure they receive and the punters who get told that you're bound to see some crap and you have to take the rough with the smooth... \(^{218}\)

It is, after all, a glorified trade-fair. The big winner is (and has always been) the venues. Do people have any idea how much of the cash they pay on the door for each show is going to the performers? I think not.\(^{219}\)

Perhaps a bit more sophisticated critique comes from Anthony Thorncroft’s overview of Edinburgh in August for the Financial Times, “Fringe Benefits and


other Pleasures: Edinburgh in August.” Ten years ago Thorncroft was already lamenting that, “The involvement of Big Business has unsettled the glorious anarchy of the Fringe but has not overwhelmed it - yet. There are now three dominating Fringe venues: the Assembly Rooms, the Gilded Balloon and the Pleasance, which have created a structured and highly capitalised network. You must be able to offer high guarantees to command performance space in these warren-like buildings.”

In 1999, as part of an editorial which attacked the Fringe Society’s adjustment of the Festival Fringe away from the calendar of the International Festival, The Herald demonstrated both the stupendous costs of running the big venues and how few people understand these costs. The move was a hardship for the Assembly Rooms, one of the largest and the most prestigious of the Edinburgh Fringe venues, because they tried to straddle both schedules; “This gesture lost it a small fortune and left it in hock to the city council with whom relations were already pretty rocky.” Typical of those involved in the Edinburgh Fringe down to the comic at open mic, the Edinburgh Council demonstrated that they did not understand the economics of venue management, “The council has a long-standing bee in its bonnet about this venue, convinced that Assembly is raking in vast profits and

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221 Herald, Sept 2 1999, 17.
refusing to cough up a fair share.”\textsuperscript{222} The scale of the Assembly Rooms operations and expenses, as reported to \textit{The Herald}, are staggering,

As an ex-Assembly board member [explained] that every single meeting was devoted to how to keep the show on the road given the astronomical set-up costs involved. What is being rented out in essence is the shell of a venue into which £800,000 of permanent equipment needs to be installed and another £350,000 found for staff and temporary rigging costs. Add to that £400,000 pumped into in-house productions and it gives a pretty poor impersonation of a milch cow. This year it broke the £1m barrier at the box office and that plus sponsorship, bar profits, hundreds of small, and one exceptionally large donation, hauled it back into the black.\textsuperscript{223}

The Edinburgh Council’s incomprehension of the risks involved led them to punish the Assembly Rooms by putting their space up for bids to other managers. This was an injustice because they had built the venue up “…from scratch over 19 years and …made it’s name with mixing innovative drama with the inevitable comedy.”\textsuperscript{224}

\textit{The Herald} are not alone in feeling unsettled over the costs while having a better understanding of the economics of the entrepreneurial venue. Paul Gudgin, Director of the Fringe Society, has also lamented the high cost of venue space during

\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Herald}, Sept 2 1999, 17.
\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Herald}, Sept 2 1999, 17.
\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Herald}, Sept 2 1999, 17.
the fringe. In fact, the article in the August 24, 2000 *Stage* implied that Gudgin’s grievance was more with the Edinburgh Council, landlord of some of the most important venues like the Assembly Rooms, than with the entrepreneurial venue manager.225 Christopher Richardson, longtime Fringe Society activist and director of the Pleasance, the largest Fringe Venue, has also warned the Edinburgh Council about rising costs:

[Richardson] highlighted a recent study in to the economic contribution of Edinburgh’s festivals which found that they contributed £135 million to the Scottish economy, with the Fringe ‘this little herbaceous border’, responsible for £70 million of the total. Yet the event receives just £700,000 in public money, relying on the willingness of performers to sustain a loss to continue. Citing a figure of £10,000 to stage a show, Richardson added; ‘It costs heaps of money. Some accommodation costs have gone up 15 per cent this year, so somebody’s doing well out of it.’ And while acknowledging that most participants invested in the Fringe in the hope of recouping it if they became a star later, he added, half-jokingly: ‘You only have to look around this room to see it – no one’s doing particularly well.’226

In a June 2003 editorial for the *Scotsman*, producer Guy Masterson ruminated over these rising costs, and the measure of blame to be parceled out to venues.


Masterson airs the typical gripes: “Every year it is the same. “Edinburgh’s too expensive. The venues charge too much. Rents are extortionate. Ticket prices are too high.”

He agrees:

Even though Edinburgh gives herself over to become the Festival City, it does so at a price. Rents skyrocket, bar and food prices skyrocket. The city, suddenly catering for a million tourists, puts its prices up. These costs and risk factors, which are passed down to the artists - the very people that make the festival work - are becoming too high.

He also concludes that “venues charge too much.” However, he approaches all these costs with some nuance. Prices, Masterson argues, are “spiraling.” There is blame, but there are no villains. His concern is that the present trajectory of that spiral is so high that at some point the Fringe itself will be ruined as the massive phenomenon it is now.

Venues charge too much because their rents are high. Ticket prices have to go up to cover the rents. Artists not only have to cover the venue rentals but their production costs as well, the main of which is accommodation. It is a strange world where a three bedroom student flat (with all that that implies) in the New Town can fetch more than £3,000 for the month. Venues’ only revenue comes from the artists, whose only revenue is from ticket sales, whose only possible guarantee is a strong critical and audience response. What the entire event is

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predicated on, therefore, is the faith and belief of the artists, which, if stretched too far, will simply not be able to take the risk. And then where will the Festival be?229

Are the entrepreneurial venues bourgeois exploiters, then? Are they the enemies of the spirit of the Fringe? Do venue managers make huge profits on the backs of actors? Are the venues themselves simply victims of spiraling prices? If the risk is so high, and the expense so intimidating, why on earth does anyone want to go into this business? I have demonstrated that the independent venues are at times misunderstood, even demonized by Fringe regulars in Edinburgh. That alone is justification enough for a chapter explaining how these venues operate and the challenges they face. But they are also absolutely vital to the Edinburgh Fringe and deserve scholarly consideration.

WHAT A VENUE MANAGER DOES

To understand what a venue manager does it is best to examine her tasks over the course of a year. What services does she provide? How great a financial risk does she undertake? How burdensome a task is it to run a venue at the Edinburgh Fringe? It would be a revelation to many of those most hostile to the entrepreneurial venues to see what goes into managing one. This is an intensive, year round effort and not just an August project. In the following pages I will provide an outline of

what a venue manager does over the course of a typical year. This is not meant to be a manual for a venue manager, but to illustrate in detail and by examples from large and small venues, the work that goes into the service an entrepreneurial venue manager provides.

THE VENUE MANAGER’S YEAR

The Fringe Society’s publication *How to Do a Show on the Fringe* gives specific answers as to how a company goes about producing a show at the Fringe. Wesley Shrum’s *Fringe and Fortune* spends a good portion of a chapter on the specifics about reviewing and reviewers at the Edinburgh Fringe. My research indicates that there is no resource which explains in detail the year-round process of running a venue.

First an aspiring venue manager must secure a building. This seems simple because the Fringe Society publishes lists of available spaces. The publication of available spaces used to come in the form of a substantial list compiled by the Fringe Society. In the last few years they have converted the list into a booklet, called *Spaces*. *Spaces* lists not only available buildings, but maintains listings of venues prepared to rent hourly space to productions.²³⁰ Performers and managers use it as a

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²³⁰ Many venues either rent the performance space, or work on a split basis with a guarantee in exchange for the performance space. Since most split arrangements usually require a guaranteed amount as part of the contract with the company, despite not being technically a rent, often ends up operating similarly to a rent. Therefore, to simplify the wording, and for reading ease, the term rent will refer to both actual rental arrangements, and the box office split arrangements which use a guaranteed amount paid in exchange for the performance space.
reference. There are always buildings listed by landlords with the Fringe Society because they want someone to run an existing venue or convert a part of a building into performance space. However, these spaces are not always the most desirable, which is why they are still available. Less desirable spaces include those that are priced too high, not centrally located, or not exclusively available.

Not exclusively available means that these spaces cannot be leased for the duration of the festival because of conferences, weddings, or other commitments that compromise the uninterrupted use of the space. It also concerns spaces which are not available to a potential venue manager for the full 24 hours each day. For instance, a dance club might offer its floor space during the day, but expect a complete tear down of the theatre at night so the dance floor can by used. Hotels have big boxy conference spaces that can be converted into theatres, but many hoteliers expect managers to convert and reconvert these spaces several times. This is because hotels schedule space on weekends to weddings and other events planned well in advance. Booking around these events guarantees lost profits for the venue manager and grumbling from the companies. Nothing is more discouraging for venue staff than taking down a theatre and putting it back up several times.

Usually the best buildings are used year after year by other venue managers. They are rarely “on the market.” Sometimes the best unutilized space is rendered unavailable by the landlord’s unrealistic idea of what it is worth. For instance, over the course of the festival a hotel might want to charge the daily wedding hire rate.
This is unrealistically expensive, especially since the hotel has little to do in the space once a venue manager takes it over. Whereas for each wedding one must deal with a new bride and wedding planner, a thorough cleaning, setup and teardown, there is very little that a hotel will have to do physically once a venue manager takes control of the space. Hoteliers often do not see it that way, and they price themselves out of the market.

Another way to secure a building is to find a suitable space and try to convince the owner of the building to rent it. An aspiring venue entrepreneur has to be very careful about this as bad landlord can destroy a business. In 2001, the Royal College of Surgeons sought out Rocket Venues to convert the College’s substantial hall in Edinburgh into a Fringe venue. Rocket Venues sent off the usual landlord/venue manager contract and the College cashed the check. When representatives of Rocket showed up at the Hall to convert it to a venue during setup week, they were barred entry until they agreed to a different contract giving the landlord censorship rights over all performances. This outrage had to be resolved with solicitors. When the venue finally went up it had cost Rocket thousands in legal fees, overtime benefits for staff, and compensation to performing companies who did not get to do their technical rehearsals.231

The most recent horror story regarding faithless landlords is that of the now-defunct Purple Venues. In 2005, they used a hotel space which changed hands...
during the off season. During the selling process the new property owners agreed to continue the contract with Purple Venues. When the sale was complete, however, the new landlords claimed no knowledge of the contract. This despite the fact that Purple Venues management had been at meetings with the previous owner and the new owner and had discussed the transition. The new owners of the hotel surprised the owners of Purple Venues in May, after the Fringe Program deadline. The venue managers were able to save themselves from lawsuits by helping all their clients find alternate venue spaces. Instead of feeling litigious toward the young venue managers, most of the companies felt sorry for them.

Many spaces fail to make the conversion to fringe venue not because of anyone’s bad faith, but because landlords do not understand the concept of renting to a fringe venue. Many landlords who list their buildings in *Spaces* end up pulling out once they realize what is involved. They worry about venue managers bringing in scaffolding or trussing, the hours a venue might keep, the content of shows, crowds, and about keeping their good reputation. This concern can range from an individual landlord fretting over a venue not respecting his high standards of cleanliness, to making sure vulgar or blasphemous shows do not upset the proprietors of a corporately owned building such as a church hall.

Since the Lord Chamberlain’s censorship was lifted in 1968, just about every show censored at the Fringe has fallen foul of venue landlords, not the government. While some landlords may want to have a say over the content of performances in
their building, this can cause serious problems for a venue manager during the Fringe. For example, if a contract leaves a building owner the ultimate right to censor any show without explicit instructions on what they will censor, a venue manager’s clients could face censorship just before, or even during the run of their show. A venue manager could thus be responsible for refunding the rental fee and possibly face legal liability. A venue manager might even find himself trying to relocate a show: a logistical nightmare. To avoid this, the contract between the landlord and the venue manager must have explicit standards as to what will not be tolerated. Thus fortified, a venue manager can both notify applying companies of these standards and include this information in each contract between the venue manager and the performers. Productions can either look elsewhere, or fairly be expected to censor themselves in line with the agreed upon standards. A company which chooses to willfully violate clear standards after signing the contract is not entitled to help from the venue manager or the landlord.

The best way to illustrate the enormity of the venue manager’s year round task is to look at what he or she has to do, month by month, once a property has been secured. It is best to have secured a property by early Fall, so that the venue can be listed as available for August productions in the *Spaces* book. The deadline for this listing is usually late November. If a manager secures his building after November, the Fringe Society’s website keeps up-to-date on new venues and available spaces right up the all important April deadline.
NOVEMBER

It is not enough simply to have secured a space by the November *Spaces* deadline. The information requirement for the spaces listing is exhaustive, so the first round of planning has to be finished simply to fill in the form. This information includes: venue name, contact information, venue statistics, programming description, venue description, application procedure, considerations description, application deadline, disability access information, marketing information, print run of program information, box office facilities information, staffing information, capacity of theatre information, technical details, slot length information, facilities description, space information, type of deal information, proposed charges information, and comments on the space.

DECEMBER

A venue manager who has run a space before may have some bookings from returning groups. Inquiries to established venues begin as early as August. December is a good time to consolidate the requests of early bookers and long-standing clients. For a new venue, December is a time for planning and finding key staff members since bookings are very unlikely to come in until the *Spaces* book is published in early January.
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

Spaces is usually mailed out to companies in early January. Once companies receive this book, they generally start making inquiries. If a venue manager’s policy is to book shows on a rolling basis, as opposed to booking everything on a set date, he will start sending out offers right away. However, while some companies might book as soon as they receive an offer, decisions are slow during this part of the year. Experienced companies hold out to weigh competing offers from several venues. Some venues offer quite specific slots, but at such an early phase most venues issue offers with a tentative time period adjustable according to future bookings.

Different venue managers book shows in different ways. C Venues, a substantial Fringe venue, offers a general time slot within a five hour period, to be adjusted precisely at the end of the booking process. Some venues have slots in ready increments. Paradise Green Promotion’s Augustine’s Venue books in two hour time slots (with very limited variation). Some venues, like Rocket Venues, book in five minute segments.

Companies need to book according to when during the course of the festival they plan to perform, as well as selecting the time of day. Most venues book by the week (week 0, week 1, week 2, week 3 and bank holiday weekend). Sundays are set aside as the switch over days. However some venues, like Universal Art’s Hill Street Theatre, divide the festival into two sessions with one Wednesday turnover between the two eleven day sessions. Paradise Green Promotions, which started
with the Sunday off schedule eventually concluded that Sunday turnover was not a
good business practice, and now schedule week one as Monday to Sunday (7 days),
dark on Monday, week 2 as Tuesday to Sunday (6 days), dark on Monday, and week
3 Tuesday to Monday (7 days).232 Many venues, such as the Pleasance, encourage
productions to run all three weeks because it takes that long to build an audience.
Because the Pleasance is in a position to be more selective, it is reasonable for them
to insist upon this expensive commitment. Smaller venues do not expect that
companies will be able to afford to perform all three weeks. School groups
performing as an educational experience, for example, do not need to build an
audience the same way a professional touring company would.

Week 2 is usually overbooked in those venues which schedule by the week.
Companies like to book for two weeks, either weeks 1 and 2, or weeks 2 and 3. In
addition there is a one-in-three chance that productions booking only one week will
request week 2. Venues that book by the week have to deal with not only the issue
of an over booked week 2, but also the fact that they have to find two shows of the
same length to fit on either side of week 2 bookings when they book weeks 1 and 3.
Some venues deal with this issue by charging a higher fee for shows just booking
week 2 by itself, hoping to encourage shows to migrate to weeks 1 and 3. This
additional charge also helps cover the possibility that because of a sole booking in
week 2, a slot might go entirely unbooked in week 1 or 3.

232 Even though the weeks are different lengths (week 2 is one day shorter), they actually still charge
more for week 2 to help combat the week 2 overbooking issue as discussed in a few paragraphs.
Venue managers that book by the week often charge more for shows running only one week, no matter which week that is, because of the extra expense in dealing with three separate shows in the same time slot. It is much easier to do tech and coordinate with one show running all three weeks. For example, instead of booking one rehearsal for a particular time slot, the venue manager must now squeeze three rehearsals in – one for each week’s company. A different production in a given time slot for each of the three weeks also means that the venue manager must oversee three entries in the venue brochure, correspond with three companies for contracts and other necessary information, and do three times more paperwork after the festival. However, a possible advantage of booking three separate shows might be that the venue is busier. If one theatre had ten slots during the day and they do a new show each week, they would have 30 different shows in their program instead of just 10. This increases the chance of a prestige-building hit show. However, that good review may not do companies performing for a single week much good; by the time the review comes out they might have only one performance left.

MARCH

In March, booking begins in earnest; venues typically set a mid March deadline. This is when longtime clients will firm up their spots, and when the majority of new applications will come flooding in. There is more than one way to deal with the high volume of applications: some venues book on a rolling basis, and some do all the basic bookings at once. In the latter system, a venue might set an
application deadline and then look through all the applications at once and assign them time slots. This is the easiest way to chart the time slots for shows. If a venue manager decides to take applications on a rolling basis, she has to try to plan in advance how to coordinate with future applications. The venues that tend to book all at once are larger venues like the Pleasance. These prestigious venues wait until mid-March to do all their first round bookings, and then fill in the gaps through late April. Many productions who want to perform at a prestige venue will wait to apply to other venues, or try to stall answering another venue’s acceptance until hearing from their first choice. Even after being selected some companies must choose between a poor time slot at a major venue and a good time slot at a smaller venue.

This makes for a frantic mid-March; once a company discovers they did not make their first choice venue, there is a mad dash to find another slot. Even without the gamble companies take on a prestige venue, March is busy. The Fringe Society’s early program entry is in very early April; companies need to have settled on a venue by this date to save approximately £100.00 on the brochure entry fee.

A venue manager who is not swamped by bookings may also want to put in an order for technical equipment in late March. The order does not have to be finalized for a few months, but basic arrangements should be made with the hiring company. All theatrical gear in Edinburgh is rented out during August. Most hiring companies secure equipment from other locations around the UK long in advance, and equipment hire is a major expense for venue managers.
April is the busiest month paperwork. The Fringe Office’s early deadline and final deadline for inclusion in the all important fringe program has, for the last decade, been sometime in April. The final deadline typically falls in the third week of April. Both deadlines have been creeping forward over the years. In 1987 the “Fringe Fringe” started in part to protest the early due date for the program - May 1st; in 2006 program entries were due on April 19th.

If companies do not keep to this deadline their production will not be listed in the official Fringe Program; this is an insurmountable obstacle to decent attendance at a show. With 1,799 shows happening at once, a show not listed in the program will be ignored by most fringe goers. Flyering is no help; all the shows that are listed in the program are also handing out flyers. Worst of all, reviewers who use the Fringe Program to select the shows they will write up will rarely consider an unlisted show.

A listing in the Fringe Program consists of the time and dates of the performances, the name of the company and of the production, and a forty word blurb describing the show. The blurb needs to be punchy and interesting to attract patrons. If a company applies after the April deadline their show will not be in the program, but it can still be entered into the daily schedules, have an entry on the web site and tickets can still be sold at the Fringe Society box office. The cost for these
services is the same whether a company gets a program listing or not, so it is best to meet the program deadline.

The program deadline entails another job for venue managers who wish to assert more control over their clients; many managers fill in each company’s program entry form. Entries in the program used to be arranged by company name first, and then by show title. Several years ago this was changed so that listings are now alphabetical by show title. When the entries were sorted by company name, it was typical of a venue to help some companies save money by listing the show under the venue heading. With the program redesign, this is less popular, but there are still some venues that fill in the forms and enter them for the companies. This allows the venue to be a primary contact for the show, and also gives the venue each show’s box office money. Venues usually arrange a percentage split with each production (with or without a guarantee) and they need to make sure they have access to the box office takings from the Fringe Office to collect their portion.

Another deadline that looms during the first few days of April is for display advertising in the Fringe Program. Display ads are offered on a first come first served basis. Applications are available in mid-March, and are accepted until April 5th (2006 date). Companies applying for this form of advertising need logos and box office numbers from their venue managers in time to design the ad. Some venues will take out a half page advertisement and list all the shows in their venue, and some
will buy a larger advertisement and split it so several of the shows in their venue can advertise at a cheaper rate.

Venues that want corporate sponsorship should arrange this by the program deadline as well. It is not unusual for venues to have corporate sponsors. The Underbelly sold “naming rights” to Smirnoff Vodka, and became the Smirnoff Underbelly. The Assembly rooms had a similar deal with the Observer newspaper. The Pleasance prefer to have companies performing in their venue use their logo incorporated with the logo of a major sponsor on all flyers. Major sponsors will want their sponsorship reflected in as many advertisements as possible, and feature ads in the Fringe Program are looked at by thousands of theatre goers. Smaller venues which accept sponsorship “in kind” rather than substantial financial payments can frequently arrange sponsorship later. “In kind” sponsorships are typically donations by a corporation of their product in a way which is helpful to a venue. Donations often include beer, liquor, soda, or snacks for the venue’s café, or fun handouts to give to patrons of a show.

MAY

In early May the Fringe Society’s final proofs are sent out. First companies receive the proofs of their show listings, while venues receive proofs of their venue entry. After all the companies have proofed their listings, the venue is able to proof a compilation of all the shows for the venue listing. Productions do not get to proof
their blurbs at this point, only the show title, company title, and performance dates, times and prices.

This is also the month that many venues will start working on their own venue publicity. This will include putting together a venue brochure, adding show blurbs and pictures to the venue web site, and gathering information from companies to compile a press release to coincide with the Fringe Society’s program launch in early June. Independent publicity put together by a venue has to be done in time to go to a printer.

Theatre License applications are also due in early May. A scale plan must be included with the application. The plans need to show the seating, layout and positions of the stage, gangways and passages and their widths. They must set out all doors with the direction they open, all exits, toilet facilities, stage, scaffolding and step construction, all areas accessible to the public, the electrical supply, any unusual staging arrangements. Venue managers must include a key to symbols used and a title block with the name of the venue and the person responsible. Once the application is lodged, it is necessary to schedule inspections with the authorities to be conducted at least 24 hours before the first performance is scheduled to start.233

May is a good time for a venue manager to start hiring her lower level staff. Staff is one of the venue manager’s biggest challenges and often the single largest

233How to be Fringe Safe at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 2001), 3-5.
expense. At this point I will examine both the upper echelon of a venue’s staff and the staffers hired for the simpler jobs in August.

Beside the venue manager position, the most important upper level venue jobs are the booker (if the venue manager does not do the booking), the head technician, the financial manager (again, if not done by the venue manager) and the publicist. Even if a venue manager is doing a large portion of the work by herself, it is often necessary to have some sort of assistant in March and April to help with bookings. Help with the publicity and press information in May is good, since putting together the brochure and web site is very time consuming. Most venue managers work a job besides running their venues, and need help with the most time consuming or technically demanding aspects of running the venue.

A trustworthy and competent technician is a valuable asset for a venue manager. Because most fringe venues are constructed just for the festival and come down after August, a good technician needs to be good at theatre design as well as having some experience in building stages, lighting and sound. There are some venue managers who are themselves technicians. Hartley Kemp at C venues is trained in lighting design and designs the many theatres he manages. Christopher Richardson of the Pleasance has his own theatre design consulting business. Even with technical experience, a venue manager is very busy and needs to hire someone to help oversee technical work. The best technicians know more than just one area; they can work with lighting, sound, staging, scaffolding, audio and video. A head
tech at a venue must be electrician, carpenter, architect and artist. He or she must also have good management skills since a large portion of a technician’s time is dedicated to managing a crew and communicating with the venue’s clients. If a venue is doing well enough to pay, the head tech will be the highest paid staffer after the venue manager. His assistants, usually students involved in theatre at their colleges or universities, must be able to assist him and know what to do on shifts when he is away.

The most important task of the publicist is to make the venue’s official brochure and web site. Next to the Fringe Society’s program, a good venue brochure is the best form of publicity. A customer going to one show in a venue will pick up the program and learn of others she might like to see. Perhaps the most difficult portion of making the brochure and web site is gathering information from clients. Often they are unreachable or not computer savvy enough to send graphics and text. Starting in 2006, the Pleasance and Assembly Rooms are using an online database to gather this information, this will help if their clients are able to upload the information correctly. Publicists’ other jobs might include offering companies promotional advice and assisting with press releases. During the Fringe an able publicist may also hype particular shows in a venue or make hay out of a tabloid-worthy event.

Many venue managers will pay upper level workers such as technicians more than other staff, especially because their commitment starts earlier in the year. For
shorter term and simpler jobs such as ticket-taker and café staff, compensation varies widely. Venues that pay more have an easier time finding staff. Very large venues like the Pleasance and Assembly Rooms pay even ticket takers and café staff an hourly wage. These venues have a higher percentage of local Edinburgh staff and their hiring is completed earlier. Smaller venues tend to offer less cash, and lure workers with housing, food, or other incentives. These workers are often backpackers, students on break, vacationers, and others passing through Edinburgh in need of extra money and somewhere to stay. Often they are Germans, Poles, and other central or eastern Europeans traveling in the United Kingdom to see the sights and work on their English. Many are Australian and New Zealander backpackers on their post-high school “walkabout.” Some staffers performed previously at the Fringe with a school group and want an opportunity to return to the Festival without the huge expense a performer shoulders. Most venue staff are there primarily to experience the Fringe and need to make just enough to do this cheaply. They accept far less than an hourly wage, which is a good thing because most small venues could not operate otherwise.

Low paid venue staffers receive other compensations. They do not pay to see shows in their venue. They have a unique work experience. August venue staff often gain a sense of belonging. Staff show up just prior to the start of the Fringe to build the theatres. More than just getting to know the other staff as coworkers, they tend to grow close to them because of the long hours and hardships during set up
Staff for those venues that provide housing live together in close quarters. Once companies arrive venue staff get to know a large number of people (casts, techs, supporting members) in a short amount of time. After only being in the city for a couple of weeks a staff member can walk down almost any street in Edinburgh and run into new friends.

Housing is a major concern to anyone who will be in Edinburgh in August. It is vital to those venues who offer a place to sleep and a small stipend instead of regular pay that housing be secured. If a venue hires individual flats for their staff they often start booking by May. Landlords usually make spaces available for booking sometime in May, but one can often start searching prior to this. If a venue manager uses student accommodation like university dorms, she may have a standing order with the university. A shrewd venue manager will have booked good student housing the previous August.

JUNE

In June a venue manager might still be arranging staff, tech rentals, and continuing to organize press and publicity. In early June the Fringe program is launched and those who are part of various donation schemes get a few days to buy tickets prior to the box offices opening to the general public. Once the program is launched, press may start inquiring after specific shows with “buzz.” Venue managers also need to co-ordinate with the Fringe Society what percentage of tickets will be sold at the central box office.
JULY

In late July venue staff arrive to start assembling theatre spaces. Most venue managers are not local, so they must “move” to Edinburgh. The higher echelon of venue staff often have to be provided air fare so that they can get to Edinburgh for set up.

Planning for set up week is complicated because the time available is extremely short; usually there is only a week or two to set up the venue. The week needs to be carefully planned to make sure everything is done correctly and on time. Theatres have to be built on time for rehearsals and pass all fire, electrical and public safety inspections before the first performance. If any aspect of set up runs late, this triggers logistical problems and can require rescheduling companies’ rehearsal time or refunding on a per diem basis all performance time companies lose. If enough money is lost this could constitute a serious financial setback. Late set ups do not enhance a venue’s reputation. Smaller logistical problems can cause staff to have to put in longer hours just before the venue opens to the public.

Venues that have operated in previous years have a certain amount of gear that they must get to the venue before work can begin. Venues such as Komedia, from Brighton, truck gear up from their year-round facilities. Others, such as C Venues, keep equipment in storage containers during the year. These containers are trucked to the venue and set down right by the door for set up week. Paradise Green Promotions, which runs Greyfriar’s Kirk House and Augustine’s, rents almost all
their equipment. What equipment they do own is hauled up from a board member’s garage.

A venue might have professionals come in and set up any raked seating or staging, or they may have hired steel decking or similar to be assembled by staff. Often, venue crews need to make custom staging or raked seating custom to the location. This is often made of wood. In the past scaffolding was used, but more recent licensing laws require a certified scaffolder to assemble anything made of scaffolding on which people stand. This legislation does not apply to scaffolding assembled above a stage or seating area designed to hold lighting or curtains. Amateurs can still assemble these, subject to inspection.

Often assembling a temporary theatre involves making certain concessions to the property owner. First staff must be careful not to damage the building. An article in the *Stage* implied that the Assembly Rooms had to practically cover the building in bubble wrap before setting up.234 For other buildings this often means that nothing can be attached to the ceiling. Sometimes nothing is allowed to touch the walls. If rigging, seating, or staging is allowed to touch the walls, there must be a way to protect the walls from cosmetic damage. This usually means lighting structures must be built from the ground up. Occasionally a venue manager can convince the landlord to put in structures that are either permanent (such as the lighting grid installed by the Pleasance in Lady Glenarchy’s Church), or to install

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hang points at which rigging can be easily installed. Often, in fancier spaces and especially in historically listed buildings, no such accommodation is possible. Flooring poses another potential hazard to the crew building a theatre. Easily damaged flooring (wood) often needs to be covered before any work can be done in the room.

If a company assembles their own staging, they may put off installing hired electrical gear like lighting and sound equipment until last to save on rental costs. The companies which do the most business with venue managers in Edinburgh are Stage Electrics, Black Light and Northern Light. Black Light and Northern Light are local Edinburgh firms, while Stage Electrics is based in Bristol. Renting equipment for a long period of time from these companies is a major expense. To determine what is worth buying instead of renting, a venue manager needs to make a calculation based on how many years she intends to run her Fringe venue. If a company has set up a venue just to promote their own show and do not plan to be back, they should rent everything as cheaply as possible. For venues returning perennially to the Fringe, it makes more sense to buy a piece of equipment than to rent it; however this requires capital. First time venues, even if the manager means to be back, are not likely to buy much equipment.

Sound equipment is cheapest. Even a shorter term venue might buy their own sound equipment, especially since it is easier to find used. Some sound equipment can be bought for the equivalent of two August rentals. The ratio of
renting to buying is different for lighting equipment, partially because it is more
difficult to find used. For lighting equipment it takes around five years of renting the
equipment before buying becomes more economical. Of course one advantage of
renting is that when the equipment fails, the company will fix it. When a venue
owns their equipment, they are responsible for fixing it. During the fast-paced
Fringe, a rental will often have to replace a broken item until it can be repaired,
eliminatign the savings.

The expense of equipment rental is best illustrated by the fact that Aurora
Nova saves money by shipping their own trussing, lighting and sound equipment all
the way from Germany. Trucking equipment in is clearly part of the expense for
everyone. Since every last bit of the equipment in Edinburgh is rented out in August,
the local firms have to bring in large amounts of equipment from other companies
across the UK. Stage Electrics, headquartered in Bristol rent out large portions of
their stock for the Edinburgh festival despite the £300 pound transport fee for
delivery. Augustine’s (or Paradise Green Promotions) hires their equipment from
the University the founders used to attend and truck the material up to Edinburgh.
They get a slightly better deal on the equipment while helping their alma matter.
Assembly Rooms seems to own most of their equipment.\(^{235}\)

Set up week requires long hours from venue staff. Smaller venues do not
divide staff into shifts until after the festival starts – during setup week it is “all

hands on deck.” Some larger venues might work set up in shifts, but these shifts run for 12 hour blocks so work can continue around the clock. Set up includes a lot of dirty and grueling physical work: lifting platforms, climbing tall ladders with heavy lighting equipment, moving equipment from one location to another, sawing, hammering, and sliding under platforms. There is dull monotonous work as well, such as sewing and ironing hundreds of meters of black fireproofed fabric, entering hundreds of shows into the box office computer, and painting black meter after meter of staging. For a venue manager the hardest task is coordinating many new staff members with little or no experience. Training that many people “on the job,” keeping them focused, and keeping track of everything happening in all the various theatres is a monumental task. The manager usually relies on experienced staff to help lead.

Since many of the individual tasks which comprise building a theatre are sequential, that is, one must be completed before another task can be started, a manager’s careful planning often goes awry when an aspect of the build gets off schedule. Even if everything goes to plan inside the venue, if any suppliers do not arrive on time, this can cost a venue manager valuable time. Staff that were hired before August might stop showing up, so a venue manager might be short staffed.

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236 This depends on the venue location. If the venue is in a residential neighborhood or hotel, certain types of set up (sawing, hammering, scaffolding) might not be able to occur in the wee hours of the night. Some venues require janitors to be scheduled for overtime hours, so a venue may not be able to afford to work after a certain hour, or if there are not sufficient janitors, or janitors who want to work late hours, their may not even be the option of working late hours.
until she can set to the task of finding new workers. Set up week is usually when unbudgeted expenses “rear their ugly head.” Cash flow is a serious issue during setup because everything needed to set up a venue requires payment in advance or on delivery. Even the Pleasance has to have board members advance money during set up week.

Inspectors enforce safety regulations, so all venue managers have to be careful to build “by the book.” The book is *How to be Fringe Safe*. The Fringe Society publishes it so that there are no surprises when government inspectors tour a venue, every manager knows the rules she needs to follow. These rules can be quite exacting. They govern the width of an aisle (1.2 meters), how far apart seats are allowed to be in a theatre (400mm), how high steps can be (150 mm maximum), the minimum width of a step (280 mm), how far the first the first row must be from a raised stage (1.4 meters), width of seating for each person (500mm wide with arms or 450 mm without arms), the maximum divergence to an exit route (15 meters), et cetera. Considerations like these, small as they may seem when considered individually, add up to a tremendous challenge.
Figure 10 - Rocket Venue banner being installed before the festival by "Specialist Rope Access Installation Professionals."
Inspections need to take place at least 24 hours before the first performance. The various inspectors who need to view the space include officials concerned with public safety, electrical, police, fire brigade and environmental and consumer services. The nice thing about Edinburgh in August is that inspectors lay aside the sort of bureaucratic ferocity one expects when dealing with government regulations. Malcolm Kennedy, the public safety inspector, is typical of the Edinburgh approach. He spends a good deal of time telling those who have failed inspection how to resolve problems. Venue 123 faced failing an inspection in 1996 because risers that came with the building were not large enough to safely accommodate chairs. The typical bureaucratic answer would have been for the inspector to demand that the business conform to code, then move on to the next inspection. Kennedy stopped, brainstormed with staff, and suggested using fire-resistant cushions on the narrow risers instead. This was a cheap and safe solution that also added tremendously to the atmosphere of the theatre. Electric inspectors are also very helpful, offering to double check cabling, etc, before venues “power up” the first time. If any of the inspections fail, inspectors are always willing to come back again so that the venue manager can fix the problem. Inspectors will come early if a venue manager wants to clear work in advance.
Even before inspections are completed, the companies begin their rehearsals in the venue space. Some venues allow blocks of four hours for rehearsals, others give the exact amount of time hired for regular performances. Part of the reasoning for this is that if all shows wanted to rehearse on the Sunday before they start on Monday, there would only be enough time in the day to book for the exact amount of time they hired on Monday. If there are longer rehearsals than this, the bookings could go well into the middle of the night and start early the next morning. Indeed some venue have rehearsals around the clock to be able to fit them all in before the shows start. Ideally a venue will leave a morning slot open for an emergency rehearsal. For instance if a company’s plane comes in late on Sunday, they might miss their scheduled rehearsal and need to rehearse the morning their show starts.

A large majority of the venues offer previews in “Week 0,” which is the week prior to week one of the festival. Most venues are operating at less than full capacity during preview week, which helps the staff become accustomed to their task before Monday of week one, when everything is in full gear. Previews are also a good way for companies to get coverage for their shows before all the other shows start competing for the different prizes and recognition available during the festival.

All but the smallest venues offer some sort of press and publicity service. Some venues post good reviews on boards outside the venue, others work closely with the press to make sure shows are reviewed. Some venues will add links to
reviews on the venue website. Most venues will handle press tickets at the door, while allowing the Fringe to handle the majority of pre-show press tickets. Some larger venues only allow press to get press tickets through their own press office. It is difficult to not show favoritism when there are so many shows to present. The Underbelly’s web site reads, “… obviously we cannot promise coverage for all 100 shows.” A venue must promote itself. This in turn helps all its clients. A venue brochure and website are necessities for all but the smallest of venues. The main difference between a large venue and a small venue is the print run of the brochure. The joint Assembly Rooms and Pleasance brochure has a distribution of 250,000, while a smaller venues print less: Quaker Meeting House has a distribution of 3,000, and Paradise Green prints 8,000.

The Performing Rights Society “collects and distributes license fees for the public performance and broadcast of musical works.” A venue manager is responsible for any music performed in her venue. Most contracts between a venue manager and a company will legally pass this responsibility on to the performing company. Several years ago the Performing Rights Society worked out an arrangement with the Fringe Society to aid in the collection of these payments. The Fringe Society distributes and collects forms from every show on the Fringe. In


238 Spaces, (Edinburgh: The Festival Fringe Society, 2001), 8, 63, and 69.

239 http://www.prs.co.uk.
these forms a show must indicate what music is being used in the performance. Shows that indicate on the form that they are performing a musical, original music, or music that was composed as part of the original script of a play do not have to pay anything to the Performing Rights Society, but they do need to pay or make arrangements with the composer directly. Plays that use copyrighted music, even if it is just while audience members are filing in, have to pay a fee to the Performing Rights Society. In exchange for the Fringe Society processing the charges for the Performing Rights Society, they have negotiated a lower fee that is deducted from a company’s box office receipts at the Fringe box office. Interestingly, this percentage is only from the Fringe box office sales, and not the venue’s box office sales. This percentage has been 3% of the Fringe box office sales, plus the usual 17.5% value added tax on that 3%. (This means that a total of 3.525% will be deducted from the total receipts of only Fringe box office sales: 3% will go to the Performing Rights Society, and 0.525% will go to the government for taxes). Venue managers distribute these forms to the companies then return them to the Fringe Office.

Each venue sells tickets at their property for shows in their venue. The more established venues have sophisticated box offices connected directly to the Fringe Society’s central box office. Smaller venues use an independent box office system. Those connected to the Fringe box office can coordinate Fringe and venue box office sales. Venues that do not connect by computer to the Fringe box office system must call to stop ticket sales at the Fringe office an hour before each performance. During
this call the box office manager will find out what the sales were for the day’s showing. By stopping sales, they will then also be able to sell the remainder of the Fringe’s ticket allocation at the venue box office. For example, the venue box office manager would call the Fringe box office (a special dedicated number for this purpose only) at approximately 1pm, and stop tickets for a performance of *Hamlet* that was to start at 2pm. If the theatre that *Hamlet* was performing in sat 100 seats, the Fringe’s typical allocation would be 50% (minimum 25%). That means they have 50 tickets to sell and the venue has 50 tickets to sell. When the box office manager calls, she may find out that the Fringe’s box office has sold 6 full price tickets, 8 concession tickets (discounted tickets typically for children, students, pensioners and the disabled), and 1 press ticket. She will also usually find who got the press ticket and what publication he is from. She will then subtract the total tickets sold (15) from the Fringe allocation (50), and add the additional 35 (50-15= 35) tickets to the venue’s box office allocation for audience members to purchase at the door (50 venue allocation + 35 from Fringe allocation = 85 tickets to sell at the door).

Another way a venue manager might sell tickets, however antiquated it has become for anyone save the lowest volume venues, is to pre-print all the tickets for every show in advance. This used to be the way tickets were sold prior to affordable computerized ticketing systems. Ideally ticketing by hand is done in a book format with a double ticket stub, one half is kept in the book and the other is given to the
audience member to be collected upon entry into the theatre. There are services that print tickets in advance for a fee, but this is expensive. A 100 seat capacity space for a three week run could use up to 2000 tickets. Printing all 100 tickets for each day is wasteful since the Fringe box office generally has a 50% allocation and since few shows come close to selling out every day.\(^{240}\) Shakti of the Garage International venue received The Herald’s “Little Devil” award in the year 2000, which is given to those who endure and survive considerable suffering at any of the Edinburgh Festivals. She won this award because between Tokyo and Edinburgh the airline lost her baggage containing all the hand made tickets she had prepared in advance for her venue. Shakti only had one night in which to recreate all the tickets by hand with a staff member.\(^{241}\)

During the festival a venue manager has to manage not only the box office, the accounts, front of house staff, technical aspects of the shows, public safety, disabled access, cleaning duties, press and publicity, back stage storage and changing rooms (which during the festival are often heavily packed and used by multiple performers), a large number of low paid staff, accommodation problems, appreciation parties for staff and/or performing companies, and additional health,

\(^{240}\) This could mean 40,000 tickets for a small two theatre venue if both were 100 capacity spaces. Purchasing tickets could cost in the region of 2,000 pounds if tickets were only 5 pence each.

\(^{241}\) “Shakti, dancer and promoter at the Garage [International Venue], each year supplies books of hand-made tickets to performers at her venue as a cost -saving device. Made in Japan, they were lost in transit this year and she and her colleagues sat up all night on the eve of this year's Fringe making replacements.” (Bruce, Keith, “With the Angels - and the Devils,” The Herald (Glasgow), 15 August 2000, 14.) NOTE: The arch angel award that year was given to Richard Demarco.
safety and fire inspections, but many also run a café or a bar. Once the festival is underway the venue manager’s focus, though still largely on the companies, has to shift toward the other venue customers, the audience members. Not only do tickets have to be sold and taken, cues formed, and so forth, but most venues dedicate some staff to selling food and drink. Larger venues even have multiple bars. The Underbelly in 2006 will have five separate bars: Belly Dancer, Jelly Belly, Beer Belly, Belly Laughs, as well as a new yet unnamed bar at the “Udderbelly” – a new tent venue in the shape of their logo, an upside down cow. These bars employ between thirty and forty staff members.

In addition to managing all aspects of a venue, the manager has to deal with the daily crises which crop up all through August. These range from complaints from artists (if a show is not selling well actors typically blame the venue) and complaints from audience members about shows or about late seating policies to serious problems like equipment failure, exhausted staff, staff who hate each other, landlord problems, power outages during performances, and fire alarms going off during performances. Venues often have to help with logistical problems companies may have such as costumes and sets getting lost with luggage, passports lost or stolen, problems with customs, injured or sick actors causing cancellations or requiring a quick replacement by venue staff. Loud shows in one theatre can often disturb another show in the same building and shows which run late cheat the
productions which follow out of performance time, causing hard feelings. 

manager Hartley Kemp recites a litany familiar to any Fringe venue manager:

> Basically, I think it’s the same every year actually, and you get better at solving [some things] and sometimes circumstances change and then this scale of difficulty gets worse. Essentially you’re turning spaces, which were not used as theatres in the rest of the year, into temporary theatre spaces, and it’s never going to be as finished as a permanent venue. There’s always going to be drawbacks in the layouts of the building and the space that’s available. You’re always going to have run-ins with your landlords. If they just let you get on with it, they’re not going to be happy with the building at the end, because something will be trashed, or sometimes they’ll be the kind of landlords that want to get really involved and come round every day and see how you’re doing ….

> You can build a relationship with landlords from year to year. You can learn from your mistakes about how things are received or whether things go down well or not, but there’s always going to be landlord issues, because it’s not your own building.

> There are always going to be licensing issues, because you are creating a space on a timescale, so even if the plans are all approved and it looks good on paper, you might find when something’s built it doesn’t quite work like that, and there isn’t always time to get exactly what you want to achieve.

> There will always be staff training issues, because you’re bringing together a large number of people, some of whom, a lot of whom, maybe haven’t worked with each other before, who may not be very comfortable with what they’re supposed to be doing. In fact, the bigger we’ve
gotten, the more we’ve kind of had to address these kind of issues…

There will always be issues with programming because you’re programming against a deadline, which is the Fringe deadline, and if you haven’t gotten groups by the end of that deadline, it’s very hard to get a group after that stage.

Then once you actually get the venues open, there are issues with the members of the public turning up late, being difficult, complaining about service. That might be a justified complaint or an unjustified complaint, and I think all those issues and problems are all, to a certain extent, the same every year.

SEPTEMBER

After the Fringe is over there is the matter of taking down the theatres and restoring the spaces to their pre-Fringe condition. Usually this has to be done in less than four days (the Tuesday after the Bank Holiday Monday until that Friday). All lighting and sound equipment need to be taken down and stored or returned to the rental company. All the raised staging, raked seating, chairs, curtains, scaffolding need to come down and stored or returned. After everything is out, the venue has to be cleaned and scrubbed and any damage must be repaired. Hopefully, the landlord will be fair and return your deposit, but he may decide he will use it to resurface the floor or redecorate.

After the festival the last job for the year is putting together the final box office reports and making sure all the finances are in order. Those using the Fringe box office system should be able to do this quickly, while those using older methods
have a more difficult task. Venues which charge on the basis of box office guarantees might need to wait until the Fringe box office reports are completed before they can finalize their own overall box office statistics. Some venues require that all the Fringe box office money goes through the venue manager (this is often the case when a split with a guarantee is involved). The venue manager then calculates the total amount of the Fringe box office and the venue box office, subtracts the venue’s portion of the split or any moneys due the venue, and then sends the rest of the money to the theatre company. If the venue has had a bad year financially, this is a very difficult time. The venue manager may need to find money to pay her clients the box office receipts owed to them. In financial disasters, venues sometimes fold, leaving debts to suppliers and companies unpaid. Tic Toc venues, once a “vital force on the Fringe” anchored to a year round theatre in Coventry, went bankrupt leaving companies without their box office money.242 Tactic Theatre Co-operative, which ran Tic Toc in Coventry, folded with debts of almost £1 million. In a domino effect, Fringe Promotions Limited, a separate company which was owed £12,000 by Tactic Theatre Co-operative also had to go bankrupt leaving £8,000 owed to theatre companies for the box office payments. Many of the small theatre companies that were owed money by Tic Toc had to forgo the next trip to Edinburgh, cancel productions in the Fall season, or not produce any new plays at all

for the following year. Christopher Richardson, who is often attacked by critics of
the large venues for being profit oriented, says, “if the venue goes down, then
everybody is just gone. So the one thing that cannot make a loss is the venue, which
is why costs have to be absolute, you have to make money. … It doesn’t have to
make a lot of profit. A penny will do.” 243 If a venue goes under it is a disaster for
everyone involved.

VENUES AND VENUE MANAGERS

Fifty-nine years on, the Fringe is now much
more professionally organized and tends to
revolve around venues who promote mini-
festivals of theatre, comedy, cabaret, music,
dance and exhibitions. 244

In 2002, I interviewed several venue managers at the fringe to learn
something about the history of their venues. These venue managers were also asked
to talk about how they see their venue, and whether they thought their venue filled a
particular niche or specialized in any particular type of show. I also talked to them
about why they go back to Edinburgh year after arduous year. I asked each venue
manager what they do the rest of the year; even though running a venue is a year
round task, it is almost never a venue manager’s only job. I inquired after only very

243 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape
recording, Edinburgh.

244 Pleasance Application packet for 2006.
(http://www.pleasance.co.uk/edinburgh/efiles/Pleasance_application_2006.pdf.)
basic financial information. Asking for more detail than that would present an ethical problem for me. Because of my involvement with Rocket Venues I am, in addition to being a researcher on the Fringe, a business competitor with each of my interview subjects.

The four venues I have selected to discuss are typical venues, chosen because they are good illustrations of how various sizes of venue work. I interviewed the manager of the Quaker Meeting House, the smallest venue covered by these interviews with only one 60 seat theatre space and a small café. I chose this venue because Pat and Phil Lucas are a good example of landlords that run their own venue. Next in size is Paradise Green Promotions, which runs four theatre spaces in two venues –Augustine’s and Greyfriar’s Kirk House. They are typical of a venue run by a group on a voluntary basis. Their operation is permanently organized along the lines most typical of venues just starting or in their first few years. C venues has moved beyond its early stages as a student run venue and is now a large conglomerate of many properties.  

C venues is staffed heavily by student volunteers, but the upper levels of C venues staff could now be considered

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245 I will use the term venue conglomerate in referring to multiple venues using one management team and more than often one overall title. For example, C Venues uses a similar but different name for each of their venue locations: Co2, C too, C electric, but they are all run by C Venues which is run by Hartley Kemp. Another naming method that is employed is to use the original title along with some locational reference. For example, several venues have used the name of the venue with the @ sign followed by the location as it is titled during the rest of the year: Rocket @ Demarco Roxy Art House, Rocket @ St.Johns, Gilded Balloon @ Teviot. Or the venue might just use the name and the location together: Sweet ECA (Edinburgh College of Art), Sweet Grassmarket. Or just the venue name and a title relevant to the location, while not actually being what the space is called during the year such as, Pleasance Courtyard (various buildings are used around a central parking lot owned by Edinburgh University), Pleasance Dome (part of which is an Edinburgh University Students Union).
professionals. For some of these upper level staffers, C venues work is a year round paid job, and for others might be a three to nine month position. Finally, I will consider the venue which is one of the largest on the Fringe, the Pleasance. After Assembly Rooms (1981) they are now the oldest venue management group still operating under the same name (1985). The Pleasance is also considered one of the three major venues on the Fringe partially because of its enormous size and because of a brochure sharing arrangement between Assembly Rooms, Pleasance and the Gilded Balloon; the Pleasance will thus be our example of one of the “big three” venues.

THE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

The Quaker Meeting House on 7 Victoria Terrace in Edinburgh has been a venue since approximately 1990, but has been managed by Pat and Phil Lucas since 1995. When Pat and Phil retired from teaching, they were looking for a churchwarden’s job, and the Quaker Meeting House in Edinburgh was available. It made sense to them since they were Quakers and Pat had been born in Edinburgh. They are paid as wardens during the year, but not extra during the festival despite the additional long hours. Pat and Phil had both been educators prior to retirement. Phil

246 In 2005 the Pleasance was eclipsed by C venues in number of show titles (C venues had 170, and Pleasance had 150), but the Pleasance still has more venue spaces (18 versus C venues’ 14), and sold more tickets (250,000 versus C venues’ 140,000).

247 This brochure arrangement has now changed to be just Assembly Rooms and Pleasance, as the Gilded Balloon now partners with the relatively new venue group, Underbelly, for brochure collaboration.
is an ex-Baptist minister, who then became a Primary School Head Master; while Pat had taught courses such as French and German in Secondary school, and later Primary French. Both had very little theatre experience before taking on this venue management role. Pat had taught a little music, and Phil had directed a few school productions. To both, venue management had been a steep learning curve, but they work with a committee of other Quakers who all contribute their “various useful gifts.”

“Everybody does their bit.”

The Lucases manage the venue as a Quaker outreach and witness. They hope that people will learn more about Quakers by stopping in to see a show or by performing in the building; they joke that people will learn the denomination is “not quite dead… so in a way it’s just telling folk that we’re here, but it’s good fun.”

The Quaker Meeting House operates as a non-profit charity, and because the church considers the venue a ministry the Lucases do not necessarily have to make a profit or even cover all their expenses. The main goal at the Quaker Meeting House is to ensure a welcoming and friendly place, and for the wardens themselves to enjoy the experience; “When we stop enjoying it, we’ll stop doing it.”

Their specialty is youth theatre, “partly because the Fringe office

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248 Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

249 Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

250 Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

251 Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
directs them in our direction because they say they will be well looked after here."\textsuperscript{252} They do not generally do stand up comedy, and tend to look for things which "join in with our Quaker way of living and ideas."\textsuperscript{253} They are also careful without being censorious, about swearing and nudity. It is permitted if vital to the plot, but not if it is gratuitous or for shock. Shows are selected by committee each year with a view toward a balanced program.\textsuperscript{254}

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Quaker Meeting House\textsuperscript{255}}
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\textsuperscript{252} Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

\textsuperscript{253} Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

\textsuperscript{254} Lucas, Pat, of Quaker Meeting House, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

\textsuperscript{255} http://quakerscotland.gn.apc.org/edinburgh/edinburgh.jpg.
PARADISE GREEN PROMOTIONS

Paradise Green Promotions consists of two venues, Augustine’s and Greyfriar’s Kirk House. Each venue has two spaces in it, Augustine’s has a theatre that seats 110 and one that seats 105, while Greyfriar’s Kirk House has a 60-72 capacity studio and a 40 seat studio. Those who started the venue are all from the Bradford University Theatre Group (BUTG). The venue grew out of a desire to take a show to Edinburgh in 1995. Paradise Green Promotions is managed by committee. I spoke to Colin Fine, Richard Chapman, and Fiona Gooderson. Colin Fine, who did the majority of the speaking at the interview, explained how they started. “We… decided rather than just bringing a show up, since there’s almost no chance at recovering our costs that way, that we’d run a venue as well.”\(^\text{256}\) Tim Hawkins (of Komedia) had just given up Greyfriar’s Kirk House so it was available in 1995.

That first year, Greyfriar’s Kirk House was run primarily by people involved with the Bradford University Theatre Group.\(^\text{257}\) While managing the venue, they were also involved in productions by the university group. Thomas Sanford was one of the managers of the Greyfriar’s Kirk House that year. Then the following year in 1996, Thomas Sanford, Richard Chapman and Colin Fine formed a partnership as

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\(^{256}\) Fine, Colin, of Paradise Green Promotions, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

\(^{257}\) Bradford University Theatre Group is housed in the Theatre in the Mill, and some of the managers at Greyfriar’s Kirk House were employed by the university through their positions at Theatre in the Mill, but also involved with the Bradford University Theatre Group.
In 1997, they incorporated as a non-profit company limited by guarantee in English law, and called the company Paradise Green Promotions. Once they incorporated, they went from the original three managers to a company with board members ranging from four to six people. Thomas Sanford and Colin Fine have always been on the board, while Richard Chapman left in 1998 and then rejoined in 2001.

In 1996 and 1997, they ran Greyfriars Kirk House with a full program in both spaces. In 1997, they thought, “we’ve got this cracked,” and they started to look for another space. Their landlord told them that Augustine’s might be looking for somebody to manage their space during the festival. Previously Augustine’s had been a Fringe venue a few times, but every time it had been a negative experience for the landlord.

The management of Paradise Green Promotions were able to make it a better experience for the landlord, and have continued to maintain a very positive relationship with the parish priest, Reverend Mitchell Bunting. Fine explained the relationship by sharing that the Reverend has them call him “Bungie,” and in Paradise Green’s first year in the space, 1998, he even presented a kid’s show called *Bungie the Clown*. On Sunday mornings during the Fringe, Reverend Bunting uses Greyfriars Kirk House is designated by the Fringe Society, who number all the venues, as venue 28.

their theatre set up for church rather than asking for a “tear down” at the end of each week. This is an enormously helpful accommodation which shows the church’s acceptance of the venue management and an understanding of the Fringe. Colin Fine illustrates the good relationship between venue and landlord with the following story:

I remember that first year someone knocked a wash basin off the wall in one of the toilets, and so we got a plumber to fix it. One of the church officers was almost angry with us for spending our money getting someone to do it, when he knew perfectly well we could do it ourselves! (laughter) Just lovely….

The Lucases at the Quaker Meeting House are not alone in deriving great pleasure from running a venue. Colin Fine says, “We’re doing it because we love theatre. If it isn’t fun then we shouldn’t be doing it. If it is not fun for the staff we shouldn’t be doing it.” Richard Chapman says he loves it because he is able to meet people from all over the world, and would not get to meet these people in his normal job. The managers at Paradise Green Promotions all expressed enthusiasm over their standing invitations to visit people all around the world.

The managers of Paradise Green Promotions brought interesting experiences to their venue management company. Thomas Sanford ran his own computer

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hardware and software business before starting the venue; he is also pursuing a PhD in electronic satellite imaging. Colin Fine had been on the committee of the World Science Fiction Convention in 1987, which he thinks gave him some experience, however unusual, preparatory to running a venue. His career is in computer software, but he is often involved in theatrical productions – for example, in 2000 he acted in five shows and directed one and in 2001 lit three shows. Richard Chapman has a Master’s Degree in Foreign Relations, but since 2002 has been teaching technical theatre in Leeds to sixteen through nineteen year olds.

In some ways, these other careers have served as a limitation to growth. The board members think that Paradise Green Promotions has reached the point that if the venue grew any larger it would require someone to run the company full time. For the same reason, the venue has never attracted major corporate sponsorship. Paradise Green has only attracted small in-kind sponsorships for the café on occasion. The board members feel that it would require a more experienced professional to get substantial sponsorship, and they have not had anyone on their board excited about pursuing that option.

To set itself aside from the larger venues, Paradise Green Promotions does not do comedy. “We turn down stand-up comedians. When we get somebody applying to do a sketch, we hum and haw a bit. We have had some sketch shows occasionally, not recently.”262 They would like to present dance, but their spaces are

not particularly suited to dance since their largest space is carpeted. Mostly, Paradise Green books theatre, children’s shows, and smaller musicals. When asked about how they want to be viewed as a venue they replied, “… Friendly is what we want to be.”263 When asked what makes their venue different from others Richard Chapman responded, “We’re mad.”264 And Colin explained,

What makes us different from a lot of venues, is the combination of being almost entirely voluntary people, and therefore, doing it for love… considerable technical expertise and experience, and focusing on theatre. [as opposed to comedy] … We’ve got a vegetarian café as well.265

Paradise Green Promotions is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. They are staffed exclusively by volunteers, save for the office assistant they have hired for a few weeks in the spring since 2000. During the festival, while staff do not receive any cash, they receive accommodation and free entrance to all the shows, as well as some free food at the café.


For companies they offer a “no-nonsense package.”\textsuperscript{266} They charge their companies a fixed rate up front “no complicated box office splits,” and then the companies receive the entire box office. Also they claim to not charge extra for publicity “like you may find at some other venues.”\textsuperscript{267}

In 1996, Thomas and Colin put some of their own money into the organization, and made a small profit. This continued in 1997. However, in 1998 they lost six thousand pounds, which they were still paying off in 2002. They claim this was due to adding their second venue that year and because they believe it was a poor year for all the venues at the Fringe. They admit they could have paid off the debt earlier, but some of the extra money has gone towards improvements like a computerized box office.

Paradise Green Promotions hires equipment for Greyfriar’s Kirk House from Theatre in the Mill which is used by the Bradford University Theatre Group. This is the theatre the founders were involved with when they first came to Edinburgh. Fine explains that Paradise Green prefer to pay their substantial equipment rental to their local theatre so the theatre can upgrade more often. Chapman agrees this is a win-win situation for both Paradise Green and Theatre in the Mill. When it makes financial sense they purchase items instead of hiring them; purchased equipment is stored during the year in Fine’s garage.

\textsuperscript{266} http://www.paradise-green.co.uk/companies/introduction/what-we-offer.html.

\textsuperscript{267} http://www.paradise-green.co.uk/companies/introduction/what-we-offer.html.
In 1999 Paradise Green opened up the company to membership to interested people beyond just the board members. To be eligible to become a member, an applicant must have either been a director, been on the staff for at least three years, or have been invited by the board. The only advantage of being a member is, in the event of a contested election, members decide the composition of the board by a vote at the Annual General Meeting. Members are often asked to help when directors are too busy. Board Members have a stricter policy and have to do a lot of the work since the venue is ostensibly run by the board. In the past one had to live in Bradford to serve on the board. This has been extended geographically to York, about a forty-five minute drive from Bradford. In 2002, half the board members were in Bradford and half in York, and thus board meetings alternated between Bradford and York.

Figure 12 - Greyfriars Kirk House

C VENUES

C venues was started in 1992 and is run by Hartley Kemp. Prior to starting C venues, he had been coming to the Fringe for three years working as a production manager for venues like the Pleasance. While he was at university studying history, he thought it would be a great opportunity to take a whole group of university friends to Edinburgh to run a venue and do their own shows. Their first space was the


C venues is generally spelled with a lower case v in their publicity material, so this paper will attempt to retain this capitalization.
Oversea House on Princes Street. It had been a run by another organization for a few years, but had gone bust. C venues has grown to titanic size since, controlling multiple properties with multiple venues at the heart of the Edinburgh Fringe. C venues claims that in 2005 they had the largest program on the Fringe with over 170 different productions, 100 of which were premieres. C venues now operate 14 theatres each August.

Like Paradise Green Promotions, the roots of C venues lie in the desire of student groups to perform without paying the entire cost. For the first two years C venues was basically a student company from Oxford that happened to run its own venue. The first year, when Kemp was only 20, the company brought up six of their own shows and rented out the rest of the time slots. One of the shows they did that first year and have done ever since was *Shakespeare for Breakfast*. When Kemp left Oxford, since the venue was not funded by the University and did not have official connections to it, Kemp decided to carry on running the venue himself. It was at this stage that he split the fledgling business into two specific companies: C venues, which manages venue spaces for companies to perform, and C Theatres, an in-house theatre company that continues to perform *Shakespeare for Breakfast* each year, along with a kid’s show.

The group from Oxford came up with the name “C venues” because it stood out from other venue names; they did not want to be known by the name of their building or location like most other venues at the time (Pleasance, Assembly Rooms,
etc.). Also, C venues’ first building, the Overseas House, is usually associated with retired clergy, soldiers and civil servants. Kemp says that this did not fit the young and exciting image they hoped to portray. “C” worked as a name because it sounds like the verb “see,” and one can “see” theatre performances. It was vaguely reminiscent of the space because the Overseas House ends in “sea,” another homonym, but mostly “C” was “short and it’s sweet and it’s funky, and you can have C on it’s own or you can have it appended to something else.” In fact many still referred to the venue as the Overseas House for the first few years, but as C venues expanded to other properties and Kemp became more interested in branding, the C has appeared on every property, used in the same font, with as much exposure as possible. Kemp has taken a great deal of trouble to use the C in creative and interesting ways. When he moved his venue headquarters from the Overseas House to Adam House on Chambers Street, he transferred the “C” with him. Adam House is now the location of the C venue. Their other properties are all given memorable C names; C too, C cubed, C central, C electric, Co2, and C underground.

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Hartley Kemp explains why he has been a venue manager for so long, and why he does it.

I think everyone running venues at the Fringe is doing it because deep down they enjoy it and they want to do it, and nobody is really making that much money out of it. …The reward is creating the spaces, finding the staff, seeing them work together, seeing the companies work together, seeing different people, meeting different people, feeling the buzz. The reward is seeing people saying to other people or on
people’s website or chat rooms, ‘Hey, you need to go see C venues. They’re really great.’

Kemp does not downplay the hard work of the enterprise, as he explains why he enjoys being a venue manager.

I do enjoy working hard. I enjoy setting myself challenges. I enjoy creating things and making things out of nothing. I think the thing about theater and the arts is that all the time you are making something that is greater then the sum of its parts. You bring people together, and opportunities together and you build something that can really be quite wonderful if it works. That’s the same thing whether you are making a sculpture or painting or putting on stage shows or working on film or you know, running festival venues. It’s the same kind of process where you’re actually making something which you can’t make on your own. You need loads of people and you need loads of input to achieve, and I like that process.

Kemp explained that he has two demanding jobs, working as a lighting designer and running C venues; in July and August C venues becomes a full time job. For the first few years, it was easy for Kemp to run C venues himself, but as it grew he had to take on another person to help part time. This additional help also

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frees him up to do more lighting design during the year, “so I can earn a living.” Kemp likes working the two different jobs because as he says lighting design allows him to be very creative visually, while the venue management allows him to “stretch the other side of my brain” with organization and management. Kemp has toyed with the idea of building a permanent space during the year, but claims that he really enjoys experimenting with different theatre layouts every year. This way he is never stuck with one plan - if a theatre design does not work he can redesign it for the next year.

Kemp equates running a venue with running any small business. “If you’re the boss, then you can decide when you’re working and when you’re not, but then besides that, sometimes you know you have to work because you know something has to happen and you’re the only one to do it. I’m very much the sort of person who is happier running my own business than to be working for someone else. The lighting I do is even on freelance. … I’ve got a four year old daughter, and one of the nice things about being able to work form home is that I can spend loads of time with her.” Kemp also says his two jobs compliment each other because C venues is steady at certain times, while lighting work can be sporadic.

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Ambition and professionalism probably best sums up the character of C venues. Kemp is justly proud of the size and scope of C venues, and of their efficiency. At one point he told me, “We’re generally quite good at building venues and getting them licensed… We’ve never ever not opened a venue on time.” At another point he insisted, that C venues wants their range of clientele “to be very broad,” and expressed some satisfaction that a greater proportion of companies at C venues every year are professional companies: “…if we were running a venue for eleven years or so and we’re still just doing student groups, we wouldn’t be going anywhere.” Kemp says his goal is to program, “the best of everything at the Fringe.” Kemp thinks that successful programming at the Fringe is about creating a balance between shows that are intrinsically good, shows that are going to attract major attention, productions that are going to sell a lot of tickets, and shows that seem worth doing because you want to develop a promising show or an up and coming company which is producing it. C venues tries to cover many genres and makes an effort to program unconventional performance art and visual arts. Kemp


278 Kemp, Hartley of C venues, interview by author, 15 February 2002, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

hopes that C venues can be about capturing the “essence of what the Fringe should be about, which is stuff that maybe you’re not going to see somewhere else.”

C venues is a company limited by shares and listed with Company House under “C venues limited.” Hartley Kemp does well enough financially that he can pay himself for C venues work, but profitability took a long while to develop. The first year nobody was paid so that the venue could cover expenses. Kemp explains that financially there are “up” years and “down” years. There are years when you have to invest, especially when you take on a new venue, because there are extra costs the first year. C venues budgets on the basis of guaranteed income that is receivable. Kemp does not budget for amounts that are not guaranteed because if these sums do not come in there is a risk of insolvency. Because of this, C venues has never been unable to pay actors their money from the box office takings. Kemp takes personal pride in always being able to pay all the productions their box office take, pay off all the venue’s bills, and be ready to “attack the next year.”

Like any venue, C venues has had good and bad years; there have been some years in which losses were carried forward, but these have been balanced by years with surpluses and no unpaid creditors, so C venues has been fortunate in that regard. As of 2002 C venues has never had a major sponsor, though they have had some minor sponsors

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over the years, usually goods in-kind or discounts from suppliers in exchange for advertising. They also have people who donate or lend small bits of equipment, and people who give small amounts of money for several years in a row. C venues does not receive any government money because, “English people aren’t very interested [in granting money to] people who go off to Scotland to run venues.”

THE PLEASANCE

Christopher Richardson started out his professional life as a school teacher. In 1984 he took six months off from teaching. “I used to wake up in my classes when it was boring and the teacher was talking. I realized that was me. I decided to do something else.” While in London someone told him he should check out a little theatre in Edinburgh. Richardson went up “rather reluctantly” to see it. When he viewed the space that would eventually be Pleasance Courtyard, he saw more than just the large parking lot surrounded by various buildings. He describes his first reaction to it as “full of cars, full of wind, full of rain, but full of potential.” He envisioned the parking lot as a courtyard filled with audience members getting a drink and waiting to see shows. He knew the Edinburgh University buildings surrounding the courtyard would make great theatre spaces. The Pleasance opened


283 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

284 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
up that first year, in 1985, with a 250 seat theatre which is now called Pleasance One, and a cabaret bar with a stage around a fireplace that could accommodate up to a hundred. When asked how he had the finances to start the venue, he says, “We did it on a wing and a prayer.” If there was any money put into it, it was his own from his teacher’s salary, but there was not much of that since he had just taken off two terms without pay. The best purchase he made that year was a Mac 128K computer that did everything for the box office, to graphics and posters.

Richardson had to fight to get rid of the cars outside, so he could turn the parking lot into a courtyard for the audiences. At first Richardson tried putting up sculptural obstructions so the cars could not park, but Edinburgh University objected when drivers complained. Finally, they agreed to keep the cars out, if the Pleasance, in effect, bought parking tickets for every parking space, for the whole of the festival. He still does. The first year went rather successfully with an £18,000 gross turnover resulting in a £200 profit.

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285 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

286 This is the first Macintosh that Apple produced. It was first brought out in 1984, and retailed for $2,499. The first round did not even include the 128K identification on the machine. When a 512K machine was introduced in October for $3,000, this is when Apple started identifying the lower priced version by marking it with 128K. In computer history, this particular computer was a significant contribution. “Equipped with 128 KB RAM, 64 KB ROM, a 3.5” 400 KB floppy drive, a 1-bit 512 x 342 pixel b&w monitor, a mouse, and a couple applications (MacWrite, MacPaint), the Macintosh was destined to change the face of computing forever - it not only created the Mac look and feel, it also inspired Microsoft Windows and several other windowing interfaces.” (http://www.lowendmac.com/compact/128k.shtml.)
The second year Pleasance staff extended to an old Quaker Meeting House in which they put a 150 to 200 seat theatre. A little more often than every other year thereafter Richardson found a new space near the courtyard to turn into a theatre. For the next ten years the Pleasance sank everything into these regular expansions and did not make a profit. After ten years Richardson jokes, he did “foolishly” start to make a profit, which he immediately invested into creating the Pleasance in London. Now that the London Pleasance has been open for ten years, Richardson hopes he will finally start to make a profit.

Figure 15 - The Pleasance Courtyard

287 http://www.pleasance.co.uk/edinburgh/about
When expanding, Richardson looks for what are, in Fringe terms, small to medium sized venues. He thinks the 60 or 100 seat theatres are much better than the larger ones, since a small space is more likely to be packed by an audience. The effect on performers in a full 60 seat theatre is much better than a larger space that is empty. Such a space is best for new works, Richardson says, because there is already so much worry trying to get the work going and taking care of the troupe; a company with a new work should not have to sweat over filling a large hall. For even a really good comic, it is much better to try out new material in a full house.

In 1992 the Pleasance joined together with the two other largest venues operating at the Edinburgh Fringe, the Gilded Balloon and the Assembly Rooms, to do a joint brochure. “If you buy potatoes, you might as well do it in one sack if you’ve got lots of families around you…. It will be much cheaper.” Richardson admits that he knows he gets a lot more coverage than the other venues, which might seem unfair, but argues that the Pleasance work for it, and always capitalize on it. He makes no apology for this, or for the expansion of the Pleasance over the years:

I really believe that if somebody had not taken the bull by the horns a long time ago, the Fringe would have, I think, fizzed out. It just wasn’t viable.289

288 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

289 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
Richardson remembers what the Fringe was like before entrepreneurial venue managers started to professionalize available performance spaces. His memory does not resemble the romantic recollections of anti-venue activist Peter Buckley Hill. Richardson recalls seeing spaces with rain coming in, theatres with stages that were swaying and buckling, and theatres where audience members could not see the stage if they were anywhere but the first row. The “improvised simplicity” some romanticize, Richardson remembers as emergency lights powered by car batteries with cables hanging out. If the batteries did not catch fire the acid would drip from them. Richardson felt there was a better way of doing business, a way a few pioneering venues tried, with varying degrees of success. One approach was taken by the now defunct Circuit venue. The Circuit was a series of tents. Richardson jokes that these tent venues were like cheap hotel rooms. They sounded like the person in the tent next door is having a better time than you. Sometimes audience could hear the show in the next tent over better than the show they paid to see. He remembers a comic named Malcolm Hardy who somehow managed to drive a back hoe through one of the tent walls into another, while the other had a show running. “It was an exciting time.”

With the arrival of the Assembly Rooms, Richardson reckons William Burdett-Coutts showed how a professional fringe venue ought to run. Richardson credits Burdett-Coutts with establishing a quality multiple theatre venue. Richardson

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290 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
admits he would not run the Pleasance with the same severity the Assembly Rooms operates, but praises Burdett-Coutts for being extremely efficient and always doing what he says he is going to do. “He charges the price for the job, and that’s what you’ve got to do. You’ve got to sell.”

Richardson runs the Pleasance first and foremost because he loves to do it. Initially Richardson was not interested in running a venue, but after trying it the first year he found he enjoyed it. He liked working with young people, some of whom he had taught in school. He enjoyed their enthusiasm. When asked how running the venue has changed his life, Richardson says that it has just taken it over. Running a place like the Pleasance, he feels, is not that different from running a school (though he jokes that no one would ever let him run a school). As he was looking towards his eventual retirement, which finally came at the close of the 2005 Fringe, Richardson worried that could not keep up the sort of energy required to run the Pleasance for the long hours required, but he was enthusiastic about the people who would be carrying on his work. As early as 2002 his staff was taking over more and more of the day to day running of the venues. “I have some input, but it’s nothing like before. I don’t write out every contract. I don’t write out every press release. I

291 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

292 He explains that this has not been as big a change at it might seem, because he has lived a late night existence and has always enjoyed having lots of people around him.
don’t have to do all those things. It’s a question of keeping the team happy. Trying
to keep the things personal, I try to get around to every venue everyday.”

I feel better in [Edinburgh] in August, then in any other place in the world. I would hate not to be here. And when they put me out to grass finally, I will feel very depressed. I’ll come out in my wheelchair, and see what’s going on, or perhaps see it on my television. I’ll be very depressed because it’s a great place to be.

The Pleasance consumed the bulk of Richardson’s time year round. However, his extensive theatre building each summer has opened another opportunity to him. After Richardson quit teaching, he joined with an architect friend and they started a theatre consultancy, wherein Richardson has designed a number of theatres. He designed a theatre in Cheswick, the Opera house in Jersey, and a theatre for a school.

Well over a million pounds can pass through the Pleasance over the 25 days of the Fringe, but it takes between 25% to 40% of that to assemble the venue. Much of the rest of that money is spoken for because of the 60/40 box office split with performers. Richardson is a careful steward of that money because he knows how people who can ill afford to take a big loss will be hurt: “If the venue goes down then everybody is just gone. So the one thing that cannot make a loss is the venue,

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293 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.

294 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
which is why costs have to be absolute, you have to make money. …It doesn’t take have to make a lot of profit. A penny will do.”295 This is why Richardson makes no apology for having comics perform at the Pleasance. A lot of venues, including the Quaker Meeting House, Paradise Green, and Rocket Venues will not present comics in an effort to preserve the original character of the fringe as a theatre oriented phenomenon. Comics, however, pay the bills and, in an enterprise as large as the Pleasance, bills have to be paid.

Richardson recounts one story where a show had accidentally been left off the accounts. This was a serious problem because the show had done very well and made a lot of money - which meant that Richardson owed them a lot of money. He had to sell his car to cover the debt. Richardson says even now that the chairman of the board has to put up money in July to help with the cash flow, since venues have to pay for everything up front, but do not receive all their income until the last day of the festival. He has tried to carry this spirit of simplicity into the advanced growth of the Pleasance, and prides himself on the fact that the contracts to perform in his venues are still only one page long, albeit in smaller type.

It is clear that much of the bitter criticism of the Fringe venues is misguided and inaccurate. My interviews with Fringe mangers at every level confirm this. There are not large fortunes being made by exploitative venue managers. Most have to keep another job to make a living through the year. These managers are providing

295 Richardson, Christopher of the Pleasance, interview by author, 25 August 2001, mini disc and tape recording, Edinburgh.
a service vital to the continued success of the Fringe at great financial risk to themselves. They are compensated for this risk less by large profits and more by certain intangibles. At each phase of venue management, from the church which offers space for outreach to the Pleasance super venue, managers are motivated by their enjoyment of running a Fringe venue. These managers get a feeling of belonging to an arts phenomenon unique in the world. They have an opportunity to spend time with young people. They watch a social unit come together for 25 days each August which forms long-lasting friendships. The year-round effort which goes into these venues is very much a labor of love for those involved.
CONCLUSION

It has been the aim of this study to demonstrate how the Edinburgh Fringe works by examining in detail the unique characteristics and atmosphere of the Fringe, the hard work required of participating companies, and by surveying the structures which undergird its longevity. These structures are the Edinburgh Fringe Society, the entrepreneurial venue, and the thousands of performers who flood, uninvited, into Edinburgh each August. By demonstrating how and why companies participate in the Fringe despite the substantial financial risk and other challenges, this thesis has demonstrated why the Fringe continues to attract tens of thousands without issuing official invitations. Chapter Three proves that the temporary venues which spring up in late July each year to accommodate thousands of productions are also risky financial ventures embarked upon by entrepreneurial managers motivated less by profit and more by a desire to be part of the lively heart of the arts in Europe. The Fringe Society coordinates venues and performers by offering services, such as an advice manual and an official program that has grown to several hundred pages per year.

Absent to all this entrepreneurship is a central power. No one invites companies to the Fringe, they raise the money and take the trouble because they want
to participate. Government grants do not dictate who performs nor the content of performances, Edinburgh in August is open to all, but offered to no one. The Fringe Society exercises some authority as a central coordinating body, but not naked power. What authority the Society possesses has accrued to it because over the last five decades it has faithfully provided needed services. And yet, despite providing services to thousands in an event which diverts millions of pounds to the Edinburgh economy, the Society cannot command a performance, fine a company, or close a venue, indeed it chooses not to do so.

Even that institution most associated with the use of power and coercion, the government at all levels, loosens its customary restrictions every August and consents to this liberal spirit. The United Kingdom waives work permits for those participating in the Edinburgh Fringe. Edinburgh’s City Council also relaxes its regulations. Before performances begin, entrepreneurial venues must be inspected. That the city of Edinburgh finalizes over two hundred temporary theatre licenses in under one week suggests that the inspection process is cooperative, not adversarial. Before these two hundred licenses are approved, every venue must pass four government inspections to ensure its conformity to the city’s fire, electrical, health and safety, and theatre codes. Inspectors are sent out with an eye toward improving venues, not just collecting fines, and are expected to give advice, return to re-inspect, and instruct entrepreneurial managers in regulations and in the easiest ways to conform to them.
The proliferation of fringe festivals must be applauded by any dedicated enthusiast of the theatre, but it seems as though the decentralized structures of the Edinburgh Fringe have not traveled as widely as the Fringe myths. Based on how administrators of NERFs define “fringe,” the myth of the Edinburgh Fringe as a festival of edgy new works seems to be more inspiring to imitators than the structures of the Edinburgh Fringe which have sustained it and allowed for its extraordinary growth. While founders of non Edinburgh Regional Fringes profess admiration for the atmosphere of freedom and creativity at the Edinburgh Fringe, many do not seem to understand this atmosphere is not enforced by a central governing body, but it grows organically from the environment of freedom and entrepreneurship at the Edinburgh Fringe. The evidence suggests that few non Edinburgh Regional Fringes understand this. Much of what is unique about the Edinburgh Fringe flows out of what the Fringe Society and local government do not do. This may be a hard for some to accept, but Edinburgh could pay a heavy price if the structures of the Fringe are not better understood.

In an article in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, Fringe administrator Paul Gudgin warned the city of Edinburgh that it faces growing competition from other cities in the United Kingdom, such as Liverpool and Manchester.\(^{296}\) These cities plan to pour millions of pounds into cultural celebrations over the next few years.\(^{297}\)


According to the article, business leaders in Edinburgh back Gudgin’s plea for more financial support from the city for the Fringe Society, because the Fringe is “the most lucrative fixture in the city’s calendar of festivals and events.” The Fringe Society receives £40,000 in funding from the city council, and £25,000 from the Scottish Arts Council; the return these government bodies get for their investment is remarkable. The Edinburgh Fringe injects £75 million pounds into the Edinburgh economy (a 115,284.6% return on investment), as well as creating 1,380 full time jobs.

Community activists and businesses are understandably worried about Edinburgh losing its position as host to the largest arts festival in the world. Certainly the governmental investment of £65,000 looks small compared to the up to £2 million pounds other British cities are investing in their upstart festivals. The conventional wisdom would expect that Edinburgh government spend more money on the Fringe to preserve the city’s cultural preeminence. The conventional wisdom is mistaken. Government funding, while helpful, did not make the Edinburgh Fringe the important cultural event that it is, and it will not protect its prominence. It would be better to continue a policy of salutary neglect which has already demonstrated both success and staying power. The less the Edinburgh Council interferes the better.


off the Edinburgh Fringe will be. The more the Fringe Society serves and the less it regulates, the faster the Fringe will grow. Chapter Three demonstrated that the rules are frequently weakened or suspended during the course of the Fringe, permits are issued with greater leniency, inspections are made with an eye to helping venue managers rather than collecting fines. This sort of healthy neglect, this policy of light regulation and non interference is worth more to the Fringe than increasing sums of money which will undoubtedly come with strings attached.

The Fringe Society began as a project to aid performers and venue managers at the Fringe by providing useful services. Those using the services paid for them. The number of venues has expanded because venue managers have been willing to risk their capital to convert more space every year into theatres. Performance space is something companies at the Fringe are willing to pay for, and so entrepreneurial venue managers continue to offer more space every year. This study suggests that well intentioned central planning, even by the Fringe Society, cannot match this success: an increase in regulations, interference or central planning would most likely retard the future growth of the Edinburgh Fringe. The future of the Fringe should be left in the hands of those artists and entrepreneurs who voluntarily descend into the madness of Edinburgh every August because they love the arts, love the atmosphere, and love the festival.
APPENDIX A

FRINGE BOX OFFICE FIGURES FROM 1973-2006*

1973 - for 1,386 performances, sold 42,990 seats for gross £22,596.
1974 - for 1,645 performances, sold 54,539 seats for gross £31,717.
1975 - for 1,971 performances, sold 62,384 seats for gross £43,928
1976 - for 2,928 performances, sold 59,120 seats for gross £47,536.
1977 - for 3,561 performances, sold 72,649 seats for gross £61,093.
1978 - for 3,825 performances, sold 90,511 seats for gross £89,725.
1979 - for 4,180 performances, sold 92,387 seats for gross £111,526.
1980 - for 4,963 performances, sold 111,122 seats for gross £159,896.
1981 - for 6,484 performances, sold 126,183 seats for gross £216,618.
1982 - for 7,202 performances, sold 135,824 seats for gross £271,582.
1983 - for 6,886 performances, sold 127,716 seats for gross £286,382.
1984 - for 7,076 performances, sold 133,536 seats for gross £349,334.
1985 - for 9,424 performances, sold 133,965 seats for gross £375,464.
1986 - for 8,592 performances, sold 120,139 seats for gross £367,862.
1987 - for 9,156 performances, sold 123,394 seats for gross £417,954.
1988 - for 8,743 performances, sold 121,686 seats for gross £438,978.
1989 - for 9,347 performances, sold 146,181 seats for gross £629,428.
1990 - for 10,021 performances, sold 135,948 seats for gross £610,528.
1991 - for 9,170 performances, sold 134,578 seats for gross £677,205.
1992 - for 12,132 performances, sold 149,008 seats for gross £781,343.
1994 - for 14,807 performances, sold 165,970 seats for gross £980,876.

* From minutes of the 35th Annual General Meeting of Festival Fringe Society Limited held at Apex International Hotel, Grassmarket, Edinburgh, on Saturday 21st August 2004. Minutes from the previous year are always handed out at the AGM, so this became available at the 2005 AGM. Because the Annual Reports like the web site only lists the overall sales for the Fringe Office and venue box offices, which for 2004 was, “The Fringe 2004 presented 25,326 performances of 1695 shows by 735 companies in 236 venues. (2003: 21,594 performances of 1541 shows by 668 companies in 207 venues),” the TBA numbers will not be available until the 2006 AGM. (www.edfringe.com: Annual Report 2004)
1995 - for 14,416 performances, sold 177,323 seats for gross £1,082,160.
1996 - for 15,289 performances, sold 203,467 seats for gross £1,314,957.
1997 - for 15,612 performances, sold 206,532 seats for gross £1,388,783.
1999 – for 18,225 performances, sold 204,847 seats for gross £1,480,559.
2000 – for 17,833 performances, sold 196,016 seats for gross £1,479,198.
2001 – for 20,443 performances, sold 256,986 seats for gross £1,950,807.
2003 – for 21,594 performances, sold 337,270 seats for gross £2,832,186.
2004 – for 25,326 performances, sold TBA seats for gross £TBA
APPENDIX B

EARLY GROWTH OF THE FRINGE SOCIETY*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1985</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Fees</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>12,952</td>
<td>88,458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Club Fees</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>5,589</td>
<td>36,510</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ticket sale commission</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants - revenue</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17,700</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants - projects</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>15,127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest at bank</td>
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<td>2,451</td>
<td>5,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising revenue</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,729</td>
<td>23,829</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Inc. rent income,</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2,896</td>
<td>8,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchandising)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£1,615</td>
<td>£56,921</td>
<td>£245,093</td>
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<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
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<td>23,910</td>
<td>112,638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages &amp; Fees (Inc. Club)</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>19,135</td>
<td>74,232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office &amp; admin.</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>18,260</td>
<td>49,689</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£2,475</td>
<td>£61,305</td>
<td>£236,739</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL, DEFICIT FOR YEAR (excluding grants)</th>
<th>1969</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1985</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Office sales</td>
<td>not known</td>
<td>£111,526</td>
<td>£375,464</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of performances</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>4,180</td>
<td>9,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of groups</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation Fees:

- 1969 £10 plus £1 for new groups as “Registration Fee”
- 1979 £90 plus £10 for registration of new groups
- 1985 £140 plus registration fee abolished.

* Information from Dale, 24.
In Summer 2004 a major research study of the Edinburgh Festivals was commissioned. Funded by City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian, VisitScotland and EventScotland, the primary aim of the two-part study was to assess the economic impact that both the summer and winter Festivals have on Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scotland.

Here are some of the key findings:

**Economic Impact on Scotland**
- The Edinburgh Summer Festivals as a whole generate £135 million in Edinburgh.
- Of this the Fringe alone generates £75 million.

**Visitors**
- 65% of all visitors to Edinburgh said the Festivals were their sole reason or a very important reason for coming.
- 50% of visitors were influenced by the Fringe.

**Where people are coming from**
- 30% from Edinburgh.
- 28% from rest of Scotland.
- 27% from rest of UK.
- 15% from overseas.

**Attendance**
- In 2004 the Edinburgh Summer Festivals recorded attendance of just over 2.5 million (compared to 1.25 million in 1997).
- The Fringe generated just over half of these attendances.
Accommodation
- £76 million was spent by festival visitors with accommodation providers in Scotland.
- £49 million of this was spent in Edinburgh.
- Hotel occupancy was at 88% in August.
- 70% of this is attributable to the Festivals.
- 40% of hotels had to turn more than 200 people away.

Employment
- The Summer festivals create 2,500 full time jobs in Edinburgh, and 2,900 jobs in Scotland.
- The Fringe creates 1380 of these jobs in Edinburgh.

Tourism
- 47% of all Festival attendees were on a trip with at least one night away from home.
- The average length of stay of overnight visitors was 5 nights.
- Approx 100,000 Festival visitors stayed outside Edinburgh and the Lothian.
- 29,000 people who attended Festival events stayed in Glasgow.
- 29,000 people stayed in the Highlands and islands.
- 15,000 stayed in the old Central region.
- 8,000 stayed in the Borders.
- 6,000 stayed in Fife.
- 6,000 stayed in Grampian.

Publicity
- Media coverage generated by the Festivals has an advertising equivalency value of £11.6 million.
- Of this, the Fringe's contribution is £6.6 million (Fringe coverage represented 52% of the total).

Quality of Life
- It was widely acknowledged by residents that Edinburgh is a better place to live because if the Festivals.
- 90% of hotels believe having a variety of Festivals on at the same time adds to the overall appeal of the city.
- Edinburgh residents strongly agreed with this statement also.
The details of the Fringe's economic contribution to Edinburgh and Scotland are contained in the 2004 Annual Report for the festival. This year the festival was bigger than ever before selling over 1.25 million tickets for over 1700 shows. The Fringe contributed over £75 million to Scotland's economy in 2004, £70 million of which was in the local Edinburgh economy. Despite these staggering figures Fringe Director Paul Gudgin believes that 2005 is a crunch year in the event's 57 year history.

He commented: "Edinburgh now knows what it has to lose. With a report recently commissioned on whether we can stay competitive it's time for the Executive and the City Council to decide whether they are going to back this cultural and economic wonder or whether they'll wait until a crisis hits and attempt to bail the Fringe out when it may be too late."

Fringe Developments for 2004

The report also champions new Fringe initiatives for 2004. For the first time in it's 57 year history the Fringe has bought and owns it's very own Press and Performers Centre. The Centre facilitated over 2000 journalists, 1000 promoters and over 15000 performers in it's first year.

Fringe innovations were not confined to performers and the press as the public were treated to a new booking facility in Princes St Gardens. The Morse Fringe E-ticket Tent enabled bookers to book tickets online and collect them onsite avoiding the ever increasing queues at the Fringe Box Office on the Royal Mile.

With the completion of the National Galleries Playfair Project and the opening of the new Weston Link, the Fringe was able to relaunch performances on the Mound putting more shows on Edinburgh's streets.

Paul Gudgin Fringe Director added: "With over £70 million created for the local economy on a subsidy of £65,00, it's hardly surprising that cities throughout the UK and worldwide are keen to replicate the Fringe Effect. The difference, however, is that they are willing to put their hands in their pockets".
APPENDIX E

SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS*


Fringe: n. established, hedonistic, cutting-edge, challenging, anarchic, innovative, professional, entertaining, global

Last summer, Edinburgh's Festival attracted a paying audience on a par with the 2002 football World Cup in Japan and South Korea, and more than the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia; some 2.6 million people. It is estimated that the Fringe is responsible for a voracious 50% of the crowd.

Also on a par with large sporting events is our media presence; a recent Media Analysis Report confirms that the Fringe grabs 1.9 billion OTS with an AVE worth £6.6 million in the British media alone.

Our media rates however are entirely different. Please find examples of marketing opportunities at the Fringe for 2006 and beyond. We offer sponsorship (through awards, kids clubs, outdoor events, themed programming, mobile-rating, youth schemes, ticket promotions),

advertising (on-line, outdoor and in print) and

sampling (product placement, on-street sampling, pouring rights).

The Fringe team is proud of its track-record in creating effective and lasting partnerships which enhance business values, of managing award-winning sponsorship partnerships with a PR-led strategy and of delivering projects with proven results in enhancing attitudes, and increasing the bottom line.
APPENDIX F

2005 AWARD WINNERS*


The Fringe First Awards

Week One

East Coast Chicken Supper

Switch Triptych

Children of the Sea

The Devil’s Larder

Give Up! Start Over!

Week Two

The Exonerated

Guardians

Breakfast at Audrey's

Daniel Kitson: 'Stories for the Wobbly Hearted'

Basic Training by Kahlil Ashanti

Week Three

The Girls of The 3.5 Floppies
Screwmachine/Eyecandy

Broken Road

Chamber Made

Trad

---------

The Herald Angels Awards

**Week One**

Ren-Sa

An Oak Tree

Faust

The Devil's Larder

Absence and Presence

Francis Bacon: Portraits and Heads

Balagan

The Picante Quartet

**Week Two**

The Exonerated

Swan Lake (International Festival)

Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow Radio (International Festival)

Kate Royal (International Festival)

Magic Feet (International Festival)

Diana Loosmore and Jarkko Lehmus of Scottish Ballet (International Festival)
Mirrormask (Film Festival)

**Week Three**

Coelacanth

Scottish Dance Theatre : Luxuria

Evidence for the Existence of Borrowers

The Seagull (International Festival)

The Death of Klinghoffer (International)

Production company Feul

**Little Devil went to Edward Tenpole Tudor**

**ArchAngel went to Spiegel Gardens**

---------------

The Carol Tambor Edinburgh to New York Award

**The Devil’s Larder – Grid Iron**

---------------

The Perrier Award

**Laura Solon**

---------------

Perrier Best Newcomer

**Tim Minchin**

---------------

The Tap Water Awards

Children of the Sea: Theatrum
Halo Boy and the Village of Death: Westminster school

Cabaret Decadansse: Soma

Immortal2: No Fit State Circus

Owen O' Neill: Owen O' Neill: Chasing My Tale,

A Shut Up Comedy from Japan: Gamarjobat

Aurora Nova Venue Award for Outstanding overall performances,

Apocalypso Now: Rob Newman.

-------------

So You think You're Funny

1st - Tom Allan

2nd - Sarah Millican,

3rd - Joe Wilkinson

-------------

The Stage Awards

Best Actor: Phil Nichol

Best Actress: Saskia Schuck

Best Ensemble: The Corn Exchange

-------------

Total Theatre Awards... to be announced

-------------

Jack Tinker Spirit of the Fringe Award

Children of the Sea
The Dubble Act Award
The Pajama Men

----------------

Amnesty International U Win Tin Freedom of Expression Award
The Exonerated

----------------

Allen Wright Award (Sponsored by Shepperd & Wedderburn)
Allan Radcliffe and Chris Wilkinson

----------------

The Dupliquick Publicity Awards (The Zebras)
Dublin by Lamplight

----------------

Writers’ Guild of Great Britain and List Awards 2005
Dan Tetsell
Jason Manford
Trad

----------------

Mervyn Stutter's Spirit of the Fringe Awards
Music (and many years on Fringe)
Jane Bom-Bane
Nick Pynn

248
Directing and acting

David Sant (Adam Buxton, Milk, Steve Oram in Denim, Joanna Neary and Katies Brand and as an actor in Peepolykus "All In The Timing")

Acting

Kahlil Ashanti (Basic Training)

Tricklock (The Glorious and Bloodthirsty Billy the Kid)

Acting, comedy (and many many years on Fringe)

Phil Nichol (Zoo Story, The Odd Couple plus own stand-up show and compere Lat and Live)

Comedy and Music (and many years on Fringe)

Priorite a Gauche

Special Theatre Award

Children of the Sea

------------------

Malcolm Hardee Oy! Oy! Award

The Reggie Watts Tangent,
APPENDIX G

WHO LOVES THE FRINGE?*


65% of all visitors to Edinburgh say the Festival is their sole reason or a very important reason for coming…

Last summer, Edinburgh’s Festival attracted a paying audience on a par with the 2002 football World Cup in Japan and South Korea, and more than the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia; some 2.6 million people. It is estimated that the Fringe is responsible for a voracious 50% of the crowd.

Punters
- young, lively and affluent audience with spending power in excess of £70 million.
- evenly split male/females, predominantly aged 25-43.
- 2/3’s in full time employment
Participants

- 14,000 performers, writers, producers, directors, technicians…
- 1,200 press from the UK and International
- 1,000 promoters and talent spotters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>% 02</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24 yrs</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 yrs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44 yrs</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of residence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Edinburgh</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From rest of Scotland</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From rest of UK</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From overseas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

HISTORY OF THE FRINGE*


11 Oct 2005

We may be approaching the 60th Fringe but lets not forget the years gone by. Here you can look at our history since 1947 right up to the present day. The dates form the facts of the Fringe Society story - a story which is far from over.

1947
Eight theatre groups turn up uninvited to the first Edinburgh International Festival. The inn is full so they check in at venues away from the big public stages. The first Fringe has been born. There is no central box office, no Fringe Programme, no advance publicity – the interlopers just arrived.
1948
Robert Kemp of the Evening News unknowingly coins the name that is to later describe the largest and most famous festival in the world: 'Round the fringe of the official Festival drama there seems to be a more private enterprise than before... I'm afraid some of us are not going to be often at home during the evenings'.

1951
Edinburgh University Students open a drop-in centre at 25 Haddington Place. Used by many early Fringe performers, it provides cheap food and a bed for the night.

1954
Fringe groups hold their first meeting. 'We are cutting each other's throats,' says one producer. Joint box office and publicity are given high priority as a cure for this calamity.

1955
Edinburgh University students set up a central box office and café in part of the Old College. By this time the student limb of the Fringe is already established with Durham, Oxford, Birmingham and Edinburgh universities represented regularly. Thirteen groups attend.

1958
The Festival Fringe Society becomes organised. A constitution is drawn up, a brochure with all non-festival shows published, tickets sold centrally, a club set up and information given. Artistic vetting is to have no place in the societies aims, a decision which remains central to the development of the Fringe.

1959
The first Fringe Club, box office and information bureau opens in the YMCA in South Andrew Street. The Fringe is expanding. This extract from a Fringe questionnaire made out by Lee Puppet Show in 1959 shows early concerns as to its size: 'The festival business this year was not up to the previous eight festivals done by this theatre. Reasons: 1. The official festival did not attract the type of visitor it had done in the past. 2. The Fringe was too big. There was not room for three puppet companies at this time.' There are 19 groups in total.
1962
The Fringe Bulletin warns: 'Competition is intense – we expect the number of Fringe Groups to increase to 34 - against last years 28.' The festival Fringe Society is run entirely by volunteers and board members meeting in each other's flats. There are complaints from Edinburgh University that the university exchange is receiving more calls than they can handle, and could the committee speed up the installation of the Fringe telephone?

1966
Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is premiered by the Oxford Theatre Group.

1969
The festival Fringe Society is launched as a limited company at the home of the chairman, Lord Grant. Public funding to set up an office is immediately sought. There are now 57 groups.

1971
John Milligan the first Fringe administrator, is employed. The first steps to a more professional Fringe are being taken. 7:84 Scotland perform their first Fringe production at Cranston Street Hall, *Trees in the Wind* by John McGrath.

1972
The highly regarded Fringe First award is set up by the Fringe and *The Scotsman*, under Arts editor Allen Wright, to attract attention to the dozens of new plays being shown, many of which badly need publicity to boost dwindling audiences. In 1972, 45 new plays are premiered. Ten awards are presented in 1973.

1976
Alistair Moffat takes over as administrator. During his six years at the helm, the Fringe expands massively – 182 groups take part in 1972, rising to 494 by 1981.

1980
The annual competition for the Fringe poster design is launched in schools all over Scotland. The competition attracts around 3000 entries every year.

1981
New venues of all descriptions begin to pop-up city-wide during this period, among them the Assembly Rooms.
1988
A huge fund-raising campaign realises the move to custom-built Fringe offices at 180 High Street. Gerald Scarfe is commissioned to design the façade.

1989
The Fringe has a staff of four and a new press office. The NALGO dispute threatens to close down the entire Fringe, due to a selective strike by office staff in Edinburgh District council where they issue temporary theatre licenses. Behind the locked doors of negotiating rooms, the Fringe pulls through ten days before the festival begins.

1992
Technology makes the Fringe box office more user-friendly than ever before, rendering the famous queues up the High Street a thing of the past. There is nostalgia for the heady days of one man in his basement office sorting out the mile-high tickets, but for both public and performers booking in, things are much easier.

1997
The Fringe celebrates its 50th anniversary.

1998
For the first time, the Fringe commenced a week earlier than the International Festival. This was brought on by the fact that Fringe companies were finding it increasingly difficult to fill venues in the last week which ran into September.

2000
The Fringe became the first arts organisation in the world to sell tickets online in real-time. Over 4,500 bookings were made over the internet.

2001
The Fringe is still getting bigger. In 2001 over 600 groups from 49 different countries performed 1,462 shows in 175 venues across the city. On the first two days of the festival a "2for1" ticket initiative is launched increasing audiences over that weekend by 226%. Ticket sales soar to a record £6,636,093.

2003
Ticket sales hit the million mark for the first time (1.18 million)!

2004
...and they just keep selling (1.25 million)!

2005
...and selling (1.35 million)! We'll see you next year!
APPENDIX I

SAMPLE SURVEY SENT OUT TO NON EDINBURGH REGIONAL FRINGES
Dear Fringe Organizer,

My name is Xela Batchelder and I am finishing my doctoral research at the Ohio State University in the United States. You have received this questionnaire because I am gathering data from Fringes all over the world as part of my doctoral dissertation in Theatre. I really appreciate your time and commitment to filling out this detailed questionnaire. My purpose in gathering this information is to make a study of the structures of Fringe style festivals all over the world, with the hope that some patterns and phenomena will stand out as key to their success. Your willingness to contribute to this study by filling in this questionnaire will, I hope, contribute to a greater understanding of what helps theatre festivals succeed and what perils and pitfalls they should avoid. I do understand that some information is not necessarily right at hand; it is far better for me to receive a response which is incomplete here and there than to receive no response at all; please do not be discouraged if you have to leave some spaces blank. You have my deep personal gratitude for making the effort.

Please answer questions in Word (or other text editor) and email responses to: Email Address.

THANKS!

BASIC FRINGE INFORMATION

Name of Person Filling in this form:  
Miki Stricker

Title/position of person filling in this form: 
Festival Director

Title of your Fringe Festival: 
Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival
How do you pick your annual dates?
As we are the largest Fringe in North America, we serve as the lynchpin for the other festivals in the city, as well as the other Fringes in Canada. The city of Edmonton annually hosts dozens of festivals, and most of them fall during the summer months. We pick our dates to be in keeping with the local festival schedule. The other large consideration is the national touring circuit of Canadian Fringe Festivals. Members of the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals meet annually to establish future festival dates, so that artists can spend up to four months touring across Canada.

Number of days of festival:
11

How is the Fringe organization set up? (Charitable, LLC, Non-profit, etc.)
We are a not-for-profit organization with charitable status.

Does your fringe have a central administration (like the Edinburgh Fringe’s Fringe Society)?
Yes. The Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival is produced by Fringe Theatre Adventures (FTA)—a year-round theatre company. In addition to producing the Festival, FTA produces a season of Theatre for Young Audiences, runs a theatre school, and manages the TransAlta Arts Barns—a multi-use facility in the heart of the theatre district.

Are the staffers of this central administration paid or volunteers?
FTA has 12 year-round paid staff members. During the Festival, we employ ~200 people. We also rely on 1000-1200 volunteers annually during the Festival.

What does the word “Fringe” mean to you?
Edgy, free, creative, imaginative, cutting edge, original

SECTION ONE – HISTORY OF YOUR FRINGE

What year did your Fringe start?
1982

Who started it?
Brian Paisley
Why was it started?
(I’m cribbing this and the answer to the next question directly from a speech I gave at the Theatre Shop Conference in Dublin this past September, as I think it gives a good overview)
In the early 1980s, the city of Edmonton was blessed with a city council that was forward thinking and appreciative of the arts. During that time city council made a conscious decision to actively foster the growth of the arts in Edmonton, and created Summerfest. Summerfest’s mission quite simply, was to create festivals. In 1982 Brian Paisley was the Artistic Director of Chinook Theatre—a small theatre company that produced theatre for young audiences. Brian was asked by Summerfest to develop a theatre festival that was to be held in August on the city’s south side. He was given a modest budget and the simple instruction, “go.”
He wanted to provide emerging and established artists with the opportunity to produce their plays regardless of what the content, form or style might be. He wanted the event to be as affordable and accessible as possible for the general public. He wanted to develop a theatre festival that empowered audiences with the ability to decide for themselves which productions were great and which were…shall we say gloriously disastrous.

What basic principles was it started on?
Brian had visited the Edinburgh Fringe a few years earlier, and had fallen in love with the concept of an unjuried and uncensored theatre festival, where artists were given the freedom to let their artistic imaginations run wild. So Brian wanted to bring a Fringe to Edmonton. But, he decided to add a uniquely Canadian flavour to it.
Like the Edinburgh Fringe, the Edmonton Fringe would accept application from anyone. In the Festival’s early years, applications were accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Also like the Edinburgh Fringe, the Festival would not get any money from ticket sales. However, unlike the Edinburgh Fringe where artists were pretty much left to their own devices in terms of finding venues, the Edmonton Fringe would provide artists with a bit of a safety net—artists would pay a low flat fee to participate, and in return, the Fringe would take care of all of the aspects of theatre production that can be barriers to artists producing their own shows—things like venue and equipment rental, the hiring and payment of technicians, and front-of-house and ticketing services.
In short, Brian wanted to create an environment that was supportive enough so that the artists who participated in the festival could concentrate on what they do best—namely, create art.
It’s important to note, that until 1982, nothing like the Fringe Festival had ever been tried in Canada, or to my knowledge, in North America. Until that point, very few Canadian artists had the financial means by which they could produce their own work. Canadian actors fought over the few roles that were available through the large regional theatre companies. Canadian playwrights had a very difficult time getting the artistic directors of the regional theatre companies to even look at their work. Independent productions were a rarity, those few independent productions that did occur tended to stay in “safe” artistic territory mostly out of the simple need to sell tickets. Until the early 1980s almost nobody in Canada was creating self-produced, experimental, or even Canadian work for that matter.

That all changed with the Fringe.

The Edmonton Fringe Festival turned the Canadian Theatre landscape on its head. The Fringe demonstrated that theatre can be produced anywhere in found spaces, not just in big brick buildings with cushy seats. The Fringe provided all artists, regardless of their experience with the same opportunities. The Fringe enabled artists who had been previously marginalized by the theatre community to develop their craft and bring new forms of theatre to life. By way of example, many internationally-renowned Canadian artists including puppeteer Ronnie Burkett, horror-clowns Mump & Smoot, One Yellow Rabbit Theatre, and playwright Stewart Lemoine credit the Edmonton Fringe with giving them their earliest opportunities for creating their work. The Fringe proved that Canadian artists had voices that deserved to be heard.

**What are your Fringe’s claims to fame (if any)?**
The Edmonton Fringe created the Canadian Fringe model. The Edmonton Fringe is the second oldest Fringe Festival in the world, and the largest in North America. We were featured in Oprah Winfrey’s Magazine *O* in August, 2005. We have served as the launching point for many internationally renowned artists. Festival Director Miki Stricker was invited to represent Alberta Arts and Culture at a meeting and reception with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We also feature “the best green onion cakes” this side of Shanghai.

**SECTION TWO – PARENT FESTIVAL**

**Does your Fringe have a “parent” festival? (For example: The Edinburgh Festival Fringe was started by artists who were not invited to the Edinburgh International Festival)**
Although Summerfest served as the original umbrella organization for the Edmonton Fringe, the relationship only lasted until 1984.

If so what is the title of the Parent Festival?

If so, did your Fringe start the same year as the Parent Festival? (What year did the parent festival start?)

SECTION THREE – SHOW SELECTION

Are shows selected by committee, lottery or some other format, or is your fringe open to whoever wants to perform?
Indoor stage and outdoor stage artists are selected through a lottery process. Theatre for Young Audiences shows are also selected through a lottery. Bring Your Own Venue Artists (site-specific works) are selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Buskers/street performers are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Do student groups (school groups) perform? (Explain)
We often have student groups apply to participate in the Fringe. Whether they are selected in the lottery is up to the fates.

Do stand up comedians perform? (Explain if necessary)
Yes, see above.

Does your Fringe prefer that only new works be performed?
Our Festival is non-curated and non-censored. As such, we have no preference for the type of works that are presented.

Are classics performed, or are adaptations of classics performed?
Ditto.

Are there are restrictions or quotas with regard to geography (local/regional shows to national international shows? Are there any other quotas similar to this (new works to classics, works by national or regional playwrights, dance/theatre, theatre/standup)? What are they?
We operate with the following quotas for regular indoor performances: 50% local (within 50km of Edmonton); 25% Canada, 25% international. We also hold a separate lottery for the Theatre for Young Audiences Venue, where we select 6 groups for the “in” list, and an additional 6 for the “waiting” list (we can usually accommodate 7-9 TYA performances—it depends on their running times).
What types of genres/categories of shows to you accept? (Theatre, Dance & Physical Theatre, Musicals & Operas, Music, Workshops, Visual Arts, Film, Children’s Theatre)

Are they any you do not accept?
In terms of our indoor stage productions, we will accept any type production, provided that it can operate within the technical restrictions of the Festival (including having only 15 minutes to set up and strike their sets as performances are scheduled back-to-back).

SECTION FOUR – VENUES

Who finds the performance venues for the Fringe?
Members of the Festival staff, including the Festival Director, Production Manager and Venue Technical Director.

Are the Venues run directly by the Fringe, or by independent Venue Management?
The Fringe runs them.

Are the venues purpose built or converted from some other use for the duration of your fringe? If converted spaces, what types of spaces are converted?
We have a combination of established theatres and converted spaces. The converted spaces include school gymnasiums, community halls, an art gallery, and a now empty museum.

If your theatres are converted spaces, then who converts the space?
We hire technicians and a production staff to convert the spaces.

Do you use found space (ie courtyards outdoors) for performances? What kind?
In a sense—we shut down 5 city blocks and fill the space with two outdoor stages and a gaggle of busking circles (plus a KidsFringe area, three beer tents and a few dozen arts & crafts and food vendors).

Who manages the spaces?
The Venue Technical Director provides overall management of the spaces.

Who techs the spaces?
We hire two technicians per venue to run all of the shows.
Are Front of House staff paid, volunteers, or mixed?
Front-of-house at the venues are volunteers. Box office and cash room staff are paid.

Are Tech staff paid, volunteers, or mixed?
All of our technicians are paid. We are an IATSE Festival.

Do artists find their own venues, or does the Fringe help arrange it, or both?
The Festival finds venues for indoor productions, outdoor productions, Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) productions and busking/street performers. Bring Your Own Venue artists with site-specific work find their own venues.

SECTION FIVE – THE EXPENSES OF ACTORS AND COMPANIES:

Who pays for the performance space/slot?
The Festival pays for indoor, outdoor, TYA, and busking spaces. Bring Your Own Venue artists pay for their own spaces. All artists must pay a flat fee to participate in the Festival, which varies according to which category they are in (indoor, outdoor, etc.)

Do the actors receive pay? From who?
Indoor, TYA, and Bring Your Own Venue artists receive 100% of the revenue generated from ticket sales (minus the federal Goods and Services tax, and the withholding tax for international artists, if applicable). Artists set their own ticket prices, up to a maximum of $10. It is up to the individual performing companies to decide how they share the money amongst their cast and crew members. Outdoor stage and busking artists “pass the hat” to make money from the audience.

Who pays for the actors’ housing?
The Festival can usually provide billeting with local volunteers for out-of-town artists. However, billeting is done on a first-come, first-served basis, and we cannot guarantee that we’ll be able to find a home for everyone. Otherwise, artists must find their own housing.

Who pays for the set, costumes, and props of the show?
The individual theatre companies participating in the Festival.

Do companies bring their own techs? Do venues or your fringe provide techs?
We provide two technicians per venue, although theatre companies often bring a Stage Manager with them.
Who pays for the cost of printing tickets, ticket computer program, etc.? Is this a service centrally provided by your fringe or handled by each venue independently, or both?
The Festival handles all of these costs.

Who pays for the shows’ flyers?
Individual show flyers are the responsibility of the theatre companies.

If your fringe has a brochure, who pays for it?
The Festival produces a Festival Program Guide. We pay for the design and printing costs. We provide a free copy of the Program Guide to each theatre company and each volunteer, however everyone else purchases a Program Guide for $6.

Who pays for advertisements in the local print media?
We rely on media sponsorship for advertisements.

Who pays what for other types of marketing? (Web, Mailings, etc.)
Ditto. However there are certain marketing items we’ll produce (like our website or stickers) that we’ll pay for ourselves.

SECTION SIX – STATISTICS

In the following section I would love to chart the following annual statistics for each fringe separately over the years, and in groupings (US Fringes, Canadian Fringes, European Fringes, all international fringes, etc.). If you can gather this information for any number of years, or point me in a direction where I can find them out – that would be most helpful!

I need annual statistics for the:

1. number of different shows each year
In 2005, there were 151 different shows. The Festival also welcomed 50 busking acts.

2. number of different performances each year (say there are 10 different shows, but each performs 5 times – so 50 performances that year)
In 2005, we presented 889 scheduled performances on the indoor and BYOV stages. We had 236 scheduled performances on our outdoor stages. Since busking performances are not scheduled, we do not have accurate figures to deduce the number of performance hours, however, it would not be unreasonable
to state that during the 2005 Festival, between all of the busking pitches on our site, the total performance time for the buskers would be in excess of 1000 hours.

3. number of different theatre companies each year
151 theatre companies were able to present their work at the 2005 Fringe: 125 indoor stage productions, 13 Bring Your Own Venue Productions, and 13 outdoor stage productions.

4. number of tickets sold each year (overall) gross ticket income for all shows each year
In 2005, 70,205 tickets were sold. The Festival returned $581,951 directly to the artists in 2005. The average return to artists in 2005 was $4217, up from $3972 in 2004. Overall attendance at the 2005 Fringe was more than 520,000 people.

5. average ticket price for adults and students each year
The Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival is committed to remaining financially accessible for all patrons. As such, we have instituted a maximum at-the-door ticket price of $10 per show, with a $3 service charge on tickets sold in advance. Within that limit, artists set their own ticket prices for their shows. In 2005, the majority of groups set the “regular” ticket price at $10; The Festival encourages companies to offer concession rates for their productions, and 44 per cent did so, exactly equal to 2004 figures. Concession prices ranged from “free” to $9.00.

6. number of venues each year
13 indoor, up to 13 Bring Your Own Venue spaces, 2 outdoor stages, 14 busking pitches

7. number of different performing spaces each year (some venues have several theatre spaces in them)
12 indoor, up to 13 Bring Your Own Venue spaces

8. number of art exhibitions each year
0

9. number of shows in each genre/category each year (Theatre, Dance & Physical Theatre, Musicals & Operas, Music, Workshops, Visual Arts, Film, Children’s Theatre, etc, et al)?
It varies from year to year. But we always have 7-9 Theatre for Young Audiences productions.
SECTION SEVEN – FINANCIAL INFORMATION

I am looking for as many annual financial reports as I can get to help chart the amazing growth of Fringe Festivals over the years. The reason I want financial reports is not so much to dwell on the individual financial details of any particular Fringe, but so that I have some concrete way to show quantitatively the growth and expansion of the Fringe phenomenon. I am assuming that most Fringe organizations have to prepare this information for Board Meetings and such, and can easily email or snail mail me this information. I am hoping that this will save you a lot of time, as I assume it is easier to just mail out existing reports instead of answering a lot of specific financial questions. Please feel free to attach these in any format when you are returning this questionnaire, or send them to the address at the top of this form.

But first, it would help me immensely if you could answer briefly the following basic financial questions, though:

What are the sources of monies to your fringe? Do you receive public monies? What kind? Does your fringe receive financial help from educational institutions? Foundations? Public/Private partnerships? From the venues or companies participating in your Fringe? From ticket revenue? From participation fees of some kind?

We receive revenue from the following sources:

- grants from all three levels of government
- corporate sponsorships
- donations from individuals
- an administrative surcharge on advance tickets
- selling ads in the program guide
- selling the program guide
- souvenirs
- beer tents sales
- a raffle draw
- artist application fees
- food and arts & crafts vendor application fees
- loose change donation program
- fundraising event
- Casino funds

What is the ratio of public funding to private funding?
Roughly speaking, a third is public funding, a third is private funding, and a third is earned revenue.

Thanks again for your time!
APPENDIX J

COPY OF A PROGRAM FROM 1957 FOR THE SECOND WEEK*

* From the Demarco Archive. Date as determined by content.
The probability is indeed remote that the world will ever know finer music than that of Beethoven.

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Festival

WHAT’S ON

Every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this publication is correct. The publishers, however, cannot accept responsibility for errors that might occur.

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Memorial to Scots Greys, Princes Street, Edinburgh

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INTRODUCING

Festival Highlights of the Week

The beginning of the second week of the Eleventh Edinburgh International Festival finds the programme in full swing and the street crowded to capacity with both those who were shortly to leave the city and those who were about to arrive. There is, as before, a wide range of entertainment to choose from, from amongst both the leading and the official Festival performances.

In residence in the City at the present is the Barlow National Orchestra which was formed in 1919 by Professor R. J. B. Pollock and which has come to play a prominent role in the musical life of Germany. One of the artistic highlights of the week will be the performance on Monday of the Barlow National Concert performed by Professor Pollock, who is recognized throughout Europe as one of the greatest conductors on the continent of Europe. Also in the programme will be the Mozart Piano Concerto K. 459, a masterpiece of the kind of orchestration Mozart was developing in which the orchestra is no mere accompaniment to a brilliant soloist but assumes an importance of its own. Clara Hulse, the eminent violinist, will be the soloist.

The orchestra, whose repertoire is wide and includes the famous Beethoven String Quartet, also has a chamber orchestra known as the Concertgebouw Orchestra. This takes its name from a similar body of musicians who performed at the Beethoven Festival in 1904, one of the first musical gatherings of its kind in Germany. They will give a concert in the Usher Hall on Wednesday, when Bach's famous Fifth Brandenburg Concerto will be heard in a programme which also includes Mozart's Concerto for Three and Harp, a comparatively rarely heard work which, nevertheless, delicately embodies the ethereal atmosphere of the two solo instruments, a perfect chamber piece.

The world-famous soprano Victoria de los Angeles will sing with the Scottish National Orchestra on Wednesday in a performance of Berlioz's La Nuit d'Été, a melodious setting of six poems by Théophile Gautier. Conducting the concert will be Hans Swarowsky, who comes from Vienna and will be making his first appearance as the Orchestra's permanent conductor. At the conclusion of the week's orchestral events there is no doubt that the free Philharmonic programme by the Edinburgh Orchestra on Saturday night will be the most popular event. At this League of Nations' concert the well-known Serenade for Strings, the Overture to Rossini's and de los Angeles' and the Symphony Pathétique.

By way of contrast the Freemasons' Hall will witness this week a unique departure from the Festival's usual chamber music recitals. Anna Russell, who is now an American citizen, but was originally from London where she studied piano and singing, begins on Monday a series of late-night lecture-recitals. Some and Song in which, with deadly seriousness, she will delineate some of the grotesque and ridiculous musical pretensions which hamper much of our musical world. Miss Russell writes all her own words and music and has been described as "the foremost music critic of our time," and indeed, as those who have heard her long-playing records will testify, provides a hilarious front-man for the entertainment of the late-night audience.

In the Freemasons' Hall also, this week a rare musical event at which the Hollywood String Quartet can be heard performing the late Beethoven quartets. Formed only in 1946 this Quartet has, in an amazing and short time, acquired a reputation as one of the finest musical ensembles in the world—mainly through its recordings, by which this visit to Edinburgh is its first public appearance outside America. It seems likely that opportunities of hearing the Quartet in future will be small, however, for all its members belong to Hollywood film studios and find touring difficult.

In the Field of Opera this week Friday sees the first night at the King's Theatre of Rossini's Il Turco in Italia. No other composer has presented on the opera stage his own sense of the dramatic with more innovating results. Il Turco was written after Il Barbiere di Siviglia, but suffered about a century of neglect.
for it was in many quarters regarded as immoral. This production is a revival made at La Scala in 1955, and the sparkling humour and delightful music fully justifies the position of respect the opera now holds.

Anton Walbrook and Moira Shearer are the stars in the week’s dramatic highlight at the Lyceum Theatre, of Walther Hasenclever’s Man of Distinction. Hasenclever is the only playwright in the Festival’s contemporary drama season who is not still living. Tragically, he committed suicide in 1941 while fleeing from the Nazis, though his play, originally called Ein Renner Here, is an enchanting comedy of the twenties and bears no trace of the difficulties confronting the Jews in pre-war Germany. Produced by Denis Carey in an English translation, it concerns a naively young gentleman’s efforts to extort pecuniary reward by writing love letters to ladies of wealthy means. His plans are only upset when he accidently falls genuinely in love with one of them.

Continuing at the Assembly Hall all this week is the magnificent production of Jonathan Griffin’s The Hidden King, which, after its world premiere in the first week of the Festival, is undoubtedly the theatrical scoop of the year, and certainly not an event to be missed.

Ballet this week provides an exciting contrast to the classical repertoire of the rest of the season, for the African Ballet Company of Kenya Rodha will give nightly performances of ritual dances from French Equatorial Africa. A company totalling thirty coloured men and women, they have an astonishing vitality, and their thrilling jumble rhythms will be immensely stimulating to those who have never before heard them “live.” Booking is still open for this and several other events.

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**OFFICIAL FESTIVAL PROGRAMMES**

**Concerts**

**USHER HALL**

Sunday, August 25, at 2.30 p.m.

**SONG RECITAL**

*Victoria de los Angeles* and *Gerald Moore*

Songs by Scarlatti, A Scarlatti, Handel, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strawinsky, Ravel, Duparc and Spanish composers

Sunday, August 25, at 8 p.m.

**THE BAVARIAN RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Otto Klemperer

Suit 3 in D major: Bach

Pacquet for Stravinsky

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: Brahms

Monday, August 26, at 8 p.m.

**THE BAVARIAN RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Eugen Jochum

Soloist: Clara Haskil

*Overture: The Marriage of Figaro:*

Mozart

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in F major, K.581: Mozart

Symphony No. 7 in E major: Bruckner

Tuesday, August 27, at 8 p.m.

**CONVIVUM MUSUM**

*Chamber Orchesta of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra*;

*Overture: Tico Tico, Rezoum and String in C major: Bach*

*Brabonnay; Concert for Violin, Flute, Harpsichord and Strings in D major: Bach*

*Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra in C major, K.299: Mozart*

*Concerto for Oboe, Two Horns and Strings in D major, K.251: Mozart*

Wednesday, August 28, at 8 p.m.

**THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Hans Swarowsky

Soloist: *Victoria de los Angeles*

*Overture: Louis, No. 3; Beethoven;*

*Symphony: Mathis der Maler; Hinde

*Lee Naude d’Ete: Berlioz*

*Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92: Beethoven*

---

**Thursday, August 29, at 8 p.m.**

**THE PHILHARMONICA ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Otto Klemperer

Solosist: Anton Dermota, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau

*Symphony No. 9 in A major, K.201: Mozart*

*Das Lied von der Erde: Mahler*

**Friday, August 30, at 8 p.m.**

**THE PHILHARMONICA ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Rafael Kubelik

*Solosist: Rudolf Firkusny*

*Symphony: Variations, Op. 78; Dvorak*

*Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 4*

*”Don Giovanni”*, Martino

*First European Performance: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67: Beethoven*

**Saturday, August 31, at 8 p.m.**

**THE PHILHARMONICA ORCHESTRA**

Conductor: Eugene Ormandy

*Yichardowsky Programme:*

*Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 48*

*Fantasy Overture: Romeo and Juliet*

*Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74: “Pathetique”*
FREEMASONS’ HALL

Sunday, August 25, at 3 p.m.
JASON STARKER
The Suites for Unaccompanied Cello by Bach
Suol No. 5 in C minor
Suol No. 3 in C major

Monday, August 26, at 11 a.m.
ROBERT MASTERS’ PIANO QUARTET
Kirišio Andersen (Pianoforte),
Nannie Jamieson (Viola), Robert Masters (Violin), Murriel Taylor (Cello)
Quartet in G minor, Op. 25: Brahms
Quartet: Martinus

Monday, August 26, at 3 p.m.
SIR JOHN GRIEG
Shakespeare Revival:
The Age of Men
From the anthology by George Byrons
Part I: Youth
Part II: Manhood
Part III: Age
Sir John Grieg appears by kind permission of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford upon Avon

Monday, August 26, at 11 a.m.
ANNA RUSSELL
Satire and Song: A Musical Entertainment

Tuesday, August 27, at 11 a.m.
THE HOLLYWOOD STRING QUARTET
The Late String Quartets of Beethoven
Felix Slatkin (Violin), Alvin Dinkin (Viola), Paul Shure (Violin), Eleanor Aller (Cello)
Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130
Quartet in E major, Op. 81

Tuesday, August 27, at 8 p.m.
SONG RECITAL
LEON MARSHALL and WELDON KILBURN
Songs by Purcell, Schumann, Mahler, Dohnanyi and Britten

Wednesday, August 28, at 11 a.m.
ROBERT MASTERS PIANO QUARTET
Kirišio Andersen (Pianoforte),
Nannie Jamieson (Viola), Robert Masters (Violin), Murriel Taylor (Cello)
Quartet in C minor, Op. 60: Brahms
Quartet: Walton

Wednesday, August 28, at 11 a.m.
ANNA RUSSELL
Satire and Song: A Musical Entertainment

Thursday, August 29, at 11 a.m.
The Late String Quartets of Beethoven
Felix Slatkin (Violin), Alvin Dinkin (Viola), Paul Shure (Violin), Eleanor Aller (Cello)
Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130
Großes Fuge in B flat major, Op. 133

Friday, August 30, at 11 a.m.
RECITAL
JONI WOLVIN
Sonata in A major, Op. 28: Beethoven
Sonata in D major, Op. 132: Beethoven

Saturday, August 31, at 11 a.m.
The Late String Quartets of Beethoven
Felix Slatkin (Violin), Alvin Dinkin (Viola), Paul Shure (Violin), Eleanor Aller (Cello)
Quartet in A major, Op. 132
Quartet in F major, Op. 133

Saturday, August 31, at 8 p.m.
SONG RECITAL
ANTON DERMOTA and IRENE DERMOTA
Songs by Schubert, Schumann, Wolf and Strauss

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KING'S THEATRE

Monday, August 30, at 7 p.m.
LA PICCOLA SCALA
From the Teatro alla Scala, Milan
Il Trovatore
An opera in three acts by Felice Romani
Music by Giacomo Puccini
Conductor: Sir Richard Armstrong
Chorus: Northern Sinfonia

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Don Sebastian, King of Portugal
The Stranger
Don Diego de Briló
Dramatis Personae:
MICHAEL MACHAMMOUR
SEBASTIAN SHAW
The Rev. Daniel Dowie, John Young
John Douglas of Balderstone
MICHAEL ELDER
The Rev. Alexander Lindsay

GATEWAY THEATRE

The Edinburgh Gateway Company
in The Flowers of Edinburgh
by Robert McLeish
Jock Carmichael
Kate Mair
Lady ATHLSTANE
Lord Stanberry
TOM FLEMING
Charles Gilchrist
THE REV. DANIEL DOWIE
JOHN YOUNG
JOHN DOUGLAS OF BALDERSTONE
MICHAEL ELDER

CAPTAIN SIDNEY SINKIN
JOHN GAYFORD

Mistress Bell Baxter
NELL BALLANTYNE
Susie
SEENNA POW
BAILIE CLEG
GEORGE DAVIES

Thomas Aitcherleick, a nabob
DUNCAN MACRAE

The Rev. Richard Whytock
The General
BRIAN CAREY
Producer: James Gibson
Design: Peter Norris

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DUNCAN MACRAE
**Drama**

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Hugo Mosbey, ANTON WARDROCK
Liz Comper, MORA SHERRER
Hill Comper, ERIC PORTER
Captain von Schmettau, PETER BULL
Harry Comper, JOHN WARNER
Raper, ABBEY RICHARDS
Aline, PRINELLA SCALES
Fran Comper, VIVIANE COULETTE

Director: Denis Carey

Decor and Costumes designed by

Peter Rice

First performance:

Monday, August 26, at 7.30 p.m.

Subsequent:

August 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31, at 7.30 p.m.

Matinées:

August 28 and 31, at 2.30 p.m.

**Ballet**

EMPIRE THEATRE

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL SOCIETY

presents

Les Ballets Africains de Keita Fodeba

with Mamouh Camara, Alla-Bolone
Darius, Diene Doumboura, Madina, Fanta Diallo, Mansour, Laila Mioser, Nifoli Drno, Ousmane Bari, Lasji Camara, Dioua Doumbouya, Diallo, Balla Mioser, Marcelle Koopi, Manita Kante, Keita Mamboudou, Dieliman, Aliou Sissoko, Bakary, Martin Sylla, Saita Sylla, Lanceine, Ilel, Seny, Kadis

Production by Keita Fodeba

Decor and costumes by Bernard Dayle and Keita Fodeba

Part One: Call of the Tom Tom; Coundedon; Tara; The Water Carriers; Nanfou; Emian Adje; Sokok; Mimi; Allah; Dance of Ferekoro; Boundona; Cultivation; Kao; Lions and Panthers

Part Two: Kasa; Koosoyambe; Basiskolo; Sanfang; Zangbeto; Sidi Allah; Oulamou-Dou; Abedjani; Fire Dance; Gmaton; Work; Sara; Donoumba; Nina; Market Scene

First performance:

Monday, August 26, at 7.30 p.m.

Subsequent:

August 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31, at 7.30 p.m.

Matinées:

August 28 and 31, at 2.30 p.m.
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EDINBURGH, 2.
ONCE PREMIERE OF THE MOST EAGERLY AWAITED FILM OF THE YEAR—Paul Czinner's "THE BOLSHOI BALLET"—opens this second week of the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

Czinner's film—to be presented at a gala performance at the New Victoria on Sunday evening—is designed to delight cinemagoers and ballet enthusiasts alike. Czinner's aim has been to bring ballet to the screen with all the excitement and atmosphere of a living stage performance and let his audiences see the exquisite ballerinas Galina Ulanova and the other Bolshoi stars as though dancing at some great theatre occasion.

Ulanova, Raisa Struchkova, Nikolai Fadeychev and the other Bolshoi stars dance the acknowledged masterpieces of the famous company's repertoire. Cidelle is given in full and other dances include Ulanova's Dying Swan, the Spanish dance from Le Lac des Cygnes, the Wazhanzaka from "Faust," Spring Water and The Dance of the Turtles from the "Fountain of Bakhchisarai."

The music for the film is played by the Royal Opera House Covent Garden Orchestra conducted by Yuri Faler.

AN EXCITING WEEK

This week’s premiere opens a week during which Edinburgh will see the pick of the world’s new films. Outstanding among this week's international presentations are:

FRANCE—Geai Qui Doit Mourir

John Cassin's film is being hailed as one of the finest films to come from France in recent years. Lindsay Anderson describes this adaptation of Kazantzaki's novel, Christ with the Fishes, as "a work of great courage and outstanding interest...the story of religious and social conflict in a Greek village dominated by Turkish milita and a reactionary Orthodox priest."

RUSSIA—Carnival

This delightful contribution from Russia is full of good humour and fun. It makes no pretensions of being a "great film" and its carnival night performance at a factory club never attempts to be a cinema spectacle, but the joy of the piece lies in its refreshing humour. Here we see the Russians laughing at themselves. They laugh, for instance, at Communist bureaucrats, they joke about words like "collectivism" and "mass" and "economist." Thus, in its happy engaging way Carnival is perhaps one of the most significant Russian films of the year.

GERMANY—No Room for Wild Animals

"Wherever man advances the vultures follow..." In three years 100,000 wild animals were killed in the Zambesi valley to clear settlements for man. The commentary (in English) to this film embraces a passionate plea for the preservation of wild life. It is startlingly beautiful and will undoubtedly rank among the world's classics in this genre. The scenes of wild life in East Africa are quite unforgettable: the camera seems to move into the very heart of the animal kingdom and photographs its secrets, its customs and its humour and tragedy superbly.

KOREA—Wedding Day

A happy "must" for anyone. Already acclaimed at the Asian Film Festival as the year's best comedy, this delightful piece is enchanting not only because of its humour so skillfully and engagingly acted, but also for the way it lets us peer into Korean family life and customs, its homes and habits, its food and drink, and costumes.

JAPAN—Ascend of Manabasu

A line of 400 burdened porters each one a pace behind his fellow climbing step by step a steep and dizzy diagonal across a background of vertical rock. This film of a Japanese expedition on one of the world's mightiest peaks is characterized by countless shots of this kind, each one frighteningly memorable, bringing to the screen the excitement, the danger and the almost cruel fascination which drives men on to such endeavours.

WORLD PREMIERE FOR CHILDREN

On Saturday, August 31, youngsters are to have a Festival world premiere of their own when The Kid from Canada will be shown at the Cameo. Bernard Braden appears with his son Christopher and Alex. Mackenzie in this exciting film of pony-travelling in the Highlands of Scotland.

This is the first of the three Children's Film Performances to be staged at Edinburgh this year. On the following Saturday (September 7) programmes of children's films will be shown at the Gaumont and Regent cinemas.

SCHWEITZER'S LIFE

The third week of the Festival will open with a gala performance on Sunday, September 1, of Albert Schweitzer, a screen-biography of one of the most outstanding men of modern times. Dr. Schweitzer at first allowed this film to be made only on the understanding that it would never be shown until after his death, but he has now fortunately been persuaded to allow it to be released. It tells the whole story of his life, from his childhood and his decision to become a medical missionary, and shows in exciting detail every aspect of his work in his hospital at Lambaréné, where his devotion to the natives of the Gabon in French Equatorial Africa has made him world famous.
Programmes for the Week . . .

NEW VICTORIA
Clerk Street
Sunday, August 25
7.30 p.m.
World Premiere—
Tom Bohemian Ballet (Britain) with Galina Ulanova, Raisa Struchkova, Nikolai Fadeychev
Reserved, 10s. 6d.; Unreserved, 7s. 6d. and 5s.

CALEY CINEMA
Lothian Road
Sunday, August 25
7.30 p.m.
Champion (Japan)
Reserved, 7s. 6d.; Unreserved, 5s. and 4s.

THE CAMEO
Home Street, Tollcross
Monday, August 26
3 p.m.
No Room for Wild Animals (West Germany)
A feature-length colour film of wild life in Africa
6.15 p.m.
Films for Television
8.45 p.m.
It Isn't Easy to get Married (Yugoslavia)

Tuesday, August 27
3 p.m.
Wedding Day (South Korea)
6.15 and 8.45 p.m.
Le Mort en ce Jardin (France)

Wednesday, August 28
3 p.m.
Films for Television
6.15 p.m.
A Dance Programme
8.45 p.m.
Kinder Aufstand and ein General (West Germany)

Thursday, August 29
3 p.m.
Ghatam the Buddha (India)
6.15 p.m.
Art Programme
8.45 p.m.
Don't Turn Round My Son (Yugoslavia)

Friday, August 30
3 p.m.
Ascend of Manzuli (Japan)
6.15 p.m.
To be announced
8.45 p.m.
C'est qui Doit Mourir (France)

Saturday, August 31
10 a.m.
Children's Film: World Premiere—
The Kid from Canada starring Bernard Braden, Christopher Braden and Alex. Mackenzie
3 p.m.
Adam's Rib (Bulgaria)
6.15 and 8.45 p.m.
Carnival (U.S.S.R.)

Advance Booking
Tickets for all shows may be obtained in advance at Film Festival Ticket Office, 79 George Street (Phone: cal. 3520), daily, 9.30 a.m.—7 p.m.; Sundays, 10 a.m.—4 p.m.
Carnegie Cinema, Tollcross (Phone: ceni. 4203), daily (except Sundays), 10 a.m.—8.30 p.m.
No tickets returnable

ITALIAN FILM WEEK
There will also be a gala opening on the same Sunday of Edinburgh's "Festival within the Festival" — the Italian Film Week at which the latest productions from the great Italian directors will be shown. The film chosen for the Italian opening is Federico Fellini's "Juliet's Night.

WORLD T.V. EXPERTS MEET
Edinburgh's Film Festival further extends its interest in television this season.
On Monday and Tuesday of the coming week (August 26 and 27) film and T.V. personalities from many countries will be meeting in Edinburgh to discuss the use of film in television and to explore the possibilities for the exchange of television film material throughout the world.
FESTIVAL ‘FRINGE’

Music

ST. COLUMBA’S CHURCH
Johnston Terrace
MUSIC AT TEA-TIME
5.15 to 6.30 p.m.
Thursday, August 25

Madrigal Choir led by Ronald Johnson.
Robert Whittaker (bass) and John Whittaker (guitar).
An Elizabethan and Victorian contrast: songs, madrigals and anthems.

Thursday, September 5
Sheila Denon (pianoforte);
Recorder Group led by Fabienne Smith.
Music by Bach, Handel, Mozart and Hindemith.
Admission free. Silver collection.

ADAM ROOMS, George Street
Serenade Concerts. Eric Roberts String Orchestra. Sundays, August 25 and September 1, 10.30 p.m. till midnight. Coffee interval.

SALTIRE SOCIETY
Gladstone’s Land, Lawnmarket
Late night recitals. August 25 to September 7. Week nights at 10.30 p.m. Sundays at 8.30 p.m. Buffet supper.
Afternoon recitals on August 25 and September 1 at 5.30 p.m. Admission by ticket only.

ST. CUTHBERT’S PARISH CHURCH

ST. GILES’ CATHEDRAL
A series of three Recitals of the organ works of J. S. Bach will be given by James Lechert and Herrick Bunney on Saturdays, August 24, 31 and September 7, at 5 p.m., lasting one hour.

EDINBURGH REHEARSAL ORCHESTRA
An informal orchestral concert, open to all those wishing to make music during the Festival. Morning and afternoon rehearsals in the Union Debating Hall, Rooms for Chamber Music. Informal concert each week. Details from the Secretary, E.R.O., c/o University Union, Park Place, Edinburgh, 9.

Adam Rooms, George St., Edinburgh
25th August and 11th September
“A Charm of Serenades”
ERIC ROBERTS STRING ORCHESTRA

ERIKA ROTHWELL, Oboe (25th August)
BARRY MORRIS, Bassoon (1st September)

Three concerts of seventeenth and eighteenth century and contemporary British music from 10.30 p.m. till Midnight.

Coffee will be served in the interval.
Tickets: Adults, 7s; Children, 3s;
Atkinson & Prude Ltd., Rae Macintosh & Co., Paterson Ltd., and Methven Simpson Ltd.

Jazz Festival

ODDFELOW’S HALL
Foreston Road
Monday, August 26. to Saturday, August 31, at 7.30 p.m.

Organised by the Edinburgh Jazz Festival Committee, a series of six concerts will be given at the Oddfellows Hall, 14 Forrest Road.

Monday, August 26
The Vernon Jazz Band, including the Sandy Simpson Trio and The Arthur Baird Skiffle Group.
Relief bands:
The Climax;
The Regent;

Tuesday, August 27
McNair’s New Orleans Jazz Band, including McNair’s Skiffle Group.
Relief bands:
The Pasadena;
Farie Forsyth’s Jazzmen.

Wednesday, August 28
Charlie Gall’s Mainstreamers, including the Dave Jenkins and Ian Campbell’s Rock Spot.
Relief bands:
Jim Baskie’s Band and Skiffle;
Davenport’s Purists.

Thursday, August 29
Clyde Valley Stompers with Mary McGowan, including The Clyde Valley Skiffle Group.
Relief bands:
The Memphis;
Fallkirk Jazz Band.

Friday, August 30
The Nova Scots. Alan Mason’s Jazz Mews
Relief bands:
The Equired;
Storyville Jazz Band;
Delta Skiffle Group.

Saturday, August 31
Bob Craig’s Band. The Original Dixie Free.
Relief bands:
East Coast Jazz Band;
The Delta Jazz Band;
The Ayer Group;
Southsiders Skiffle Group.

Edinburgh Festival in the only permanent puppet theatre in Great Britain: “Ring and Ferry,” by Morna Elmhurst, a new puppet adventure play for children.
Performances: Monday to Friday. Tuesdays at 11 a.m. and 3.30 p.m.
Saturdays, 11 a.m. only.
Seats (£3, £6) can be booked at Methven Simpson Ltd., 55 Princes Street, or at Theatre.

Puppetry

THE LEE PUPPET THEATRE
Belgrave Mews, Edinburgh

Tickets for Edinburgh International Festival
The book that every lover of the Festival will want to have
Price, 5s., from all bookstallers.

EDINBURGH JAZZ FESTIVAL COMMITTEE
are holding a series of SIX CONCERTS

Monday, 26th August, till Saturday, 31st August
at 7.30 p.m.
in Oddfellows’ Hall
Programme covering all Six Concerts. Price 6d.
TICKETS 5½ and 3½ available from Patersons, Methven Simpson, Edinburgh; Cuthbertsons, Glasgow; Methven Simpson, Dundee, and from all Jazz Clubs.
**FESTIVAL 'FRINGE'**

**Drama**

**LAURISTON HALL**

Lauriston Hall. The Perth Theatre Company, the oldest of Scotland's repertoire theatres, which was formed in 1935 and which since then has won outstanding success—among its performances was a Royal Command performance at Balmoral in 1938—presents two plays *The Second Spring* by Wilfred Bentely and *Blood upon the Rose* by George Scott-Moncrieff at the Lauriston Hall. This, the first venture of the Perth Theatre Company during the period of the Edinburgh Festival, is already an outstanding success. Wilfred Bentely has been with the company as an actor since its inception and is now its producer. *The Second Spring,* a family play, is well written and well worth seeing. *Blood upon the Rose,* written by George Scott-Moncrieff, the noted Scottish author, has as its theme the Hungarian uprisings of 1956. This dramatic play had its premiere on August 22, and on August 27 the entire theatre is being taken over by the B.B.C., for the televising of the play. The production programme this week will be—Monday, August 26, and Wednesday, August 28, *The Second Spring*; Thursday, August 29, *Blood upon the Rose.* Friday, August 30, *The Second Spring*; Saturday, August 31, *Blood upon the Rose.* Evening performances are at 7.30, and there are matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.30 p.m.

**ST. GEORGE'S PARISH CHURCH HALLS**

Randolph Place, West End

Aberdeen University Dramatic and Masonic Societies present *The Eagle Has Two Heads* by Jean Cocteau. Nightly until Saturday, August 31, at 7.30 p.m. Matinees on Tuesday, August 27, and Saturdays, August 24 and 31, at 2.30 p.m. Tickets 5s. and 3s. 6d. from Rae Macintosh and Atkinson & Pryde.

**EDINBURGH ACADEMY**

Headmasters presented by Leighton County High School for Boys, Essex. Monday, August 26, to Saturday, August 31, at 7.30 p.m. Matinees on Friday, August 30, at 2.30 p.m.

**THE UNIVERSITY THEATRE**

Chambers Street

Edinburgh University Dramatic Society, in conjunction with the Edinburgh Graduate Theatre Group, present Peter Ustinov's latest play, *The Empty Chair,* in the University Theatre, Chambers Street, until September 7 at 9 p.m.

Tickets, 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 5s. and 6s. 6d., may be obtained from Rae Macintosh, George Street; Atkinson and Pryde, Stafford Street; and the Theatre. *Edin.*** GAL 3744.

**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, West End**

The Makars present Christopher Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners,* Nightly except Saturdays and Sundays at 8.15 p.m. Collection.

**REGENT HALL**

Abbeymount

The Irish Festival Players, who presented Sean O'Casey's *The Shadow of a Gunman* with such success last year, have again returned to the Regent Hall, Abbeymount. During the three weeks of this Festival they are presenting four short Irish plays—*The Rising of the Moon,* by Lady Gregory; *Apollo in Maurore,* by Richard Roeley; *A Pound of Demand,* by Sean O'Casey; and *Purgatory,* by W. B. Yeats. These plays will be presented nightly at 8 p.m., and tickets (prices 3s., 3s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.) can be obtained from Atkinson & Pryde Ltd., 16 Stafford Street; Methven Simpson, Princes Street; and Rae Macintosh and Co., George Street. Tickets will also be on sale on each evening of the performance.

**ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH**

Sunday, September 1. The Church Touring Group from the Gateway Theatre present *The Death of Adam,* by Terence Tiller at evening service.

**Theatre Tickets**

**Complete Advance Booking Service**

**FESTIVAL . FRINGE**

**TATTOO**

Atkinson & Pryde Ltd.

16 Stafford St., Edinburgh 3

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**“TAKE NOTE”**

Take Note is a monthly magazine on Scotland, price 6d. Order from the Scottish Tourist Board, 2 Rutland Pl., Edinburgh 1 (5s. per year sterling area or one dollar U.S.A. and Canada). Single copies from bookstalls in Britain.

**Gullan's Close**

The Oxford Theatre Group make a welcome reappearance during the Festival period in the Café Kirkl. Gullan's Close, just off the Royal Mile. This talented group, whose productions have created great interest in previous Festivals, will present for the first time in Britain Ugo Betti's *Corruption in the Palace of Justice.*

Ugo Betti, the Italian playwright, who died three years ago, enjoyed considerable fame on the Continent for his plays. *Corruption in the Palace of Justice* is one of the last he wrote.

Tickets 5s., 6d. and 3s. 6d., from Rae Macintosh and Co., 39 George Street.

**THE LITTLE THEATRE**

The Pleasure

The Scottish Community Drama Association (Edinburgh District) present a season of plays at the Little Theatre. Continuing nightly until Saturday, September 7.

From Saturday, August 24, to Wednesday, August 28, the production will be *Ghosts and Old Gold* by Reid Kennedy. This play depicts the lively exploits of a Highland relic.

From Thursday, August 29, to Saturday, September 7, the production will be *Frida* by Robert Kemp. This is a lively, entertaining comedy by the famous Scottish journalist and dramatist.

Performances each evening at 7.30 p.m.

Tickets, 5s., 3s. 6d. and 2s. 6d., can be obtained direct from the Little Theatre (Tel.: 32048) or from ticket agents, Atkinson & Pryde, 16 Stafford Street; Methven Simpson, 82 Princes Street; and Rae Macintosh, 39 George Street. Reduced prices are offered for block bookings.

**LITTLE THEATRE PLEASANCE = EDINBURGH**

The Scottish Community Drama Association (Edinburgh District) present a FESTIVAL SEASON OF PLAYS Each Evening at 7.30 p.m.

Saturday, August 17 to Wednesday, August 28

**GHOSTS AND OLD GOLD**

by Reid Kennedy

The lively exploits of a Highland relic.

Thursday, August 29 to Saturday, September 7

**FESTIVAL PEEF**

by Robert Kemp

"A capital" - comedy of cultural cures.

Tickets, 5s. 3s. 6d. and 2s. 6d., from Atkinson & Pryde, 16 Stafford Street; Methven Simpson, 82 Princes Street; Rae Macintosh, 39 George Street; and from Manager (Tel.: 32048). For reduced rates for block bookings apply to Theatre Manager.
Drama (continued)

CENTRAL HALL

Tollcross

David Turnbull and Francis Wakefield present Arlecchino, The Servant of Two Masters, a comedy by Carlo Goldoni, translated by Edward J. Dent, each evening to September 3. During the run there will be a late-night performance at 10.45 on Thursday, August 29.

The play is directed by David Turnbull, with setting and costumes designed by Helen and Patrick Guest and music for two guitars composed by Christopher Whalan.

Tollcross, Eric Francis; S whole, Fanny Carby; Beazley, Sheila Butler; Cl@Controller, Doreen Kidd; Florindo, Peter Moffatt; Tamburlaine, Terence Scoul; Doctor Lombardi, John Barrard; Stilzo, Jan Hendry; Brig-hella, Denis Lacey; Musala, Andrew Stewart; By, Barbara Everett; Big, Rosemary Mardy.

Carlo Goldoni was born in Venice in 1707 and this year marks the 250th anniversary of his birth. Goldoni wrote over a hundred comedies, The Servant of Two Masters being one of his earliest (written in 1743).

The Servant of Two Masters was written at the request of the actor Scarlotti, who suggested the subject, and himself played the principal part.

Opera

PREMASON'S HALL

George Street

Opera...Elie Mayet-Limann will give a series of Explanatory Talks on the Opera being presented by La Piccola Scala daily at 3 p.m. Talks are illustrated with piano and records.

Talks on La Sonnambula on August 26 and 29 and September 3.

Talks on L'Elisir d'Amore on August 27 and 31 and September 5 and 7.

Talks on Il Matrimonio Segreto on August 28.

Talks on Il Trovatore on August 30 and September 2, 4 and 6.

LAURISTON HALL - EDINBURGH

August 19, till September 7

PERTH THEATRE COMPANY

in association with the Scottish Committee of the Arts Council

THE SECOND SPRING

by WILFRED BENTLEY

BLOOD UPON THE ROSE

by GEORGE SCOTT-HONORÉFF


The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

(Dublin Branch)

presents

"An Edinburgh Fancy" 1957

24th—31st AUGUST

SCHEDULE

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in 18th Century and Modern Costume

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Dancers: ROBERT BUCHANAN, MARY MACINTOSH

Trio by WILSON'S SCOTTISH DANCE BAND

Royal High School Hall

Regent Road, Edinburgh

at 8.00 p.m. on SATURDAY, 24th AUGUST; on SUNDAY, 25th AUGUST, and on MONDAY, 26th AUGUST, all at 3.00 p.m. on AUGUST 29, 30, and 31.

Tickets, 8/- each

Midnight Performance, 7s. 6d.

Available from METHVEN SIMPSON LTD., Princes Street, Edinburgh.

FESTIVAL 'FRINCE'

Drama

ST. MARY'S HALL

St. Mary's Street, off Royal Mile

The New Drama Group Ltd., and the London Club Theatre Group present

The World Premiere of The Queen and the Wodden

A new play by Rosemary Anne Simson

Producer: Edward Burrows

Decor by Michael Trangmar

Until September 7

Nightly at 7.45 p.m.

Matinees on Thursdays and Saturdays at 2.30 p.m.

The London Club Theatre Group, a professional company specialising in the production of new plays, has been one of the leading theatre groups during the past eight Festival. Amongst its previous productions were the now famous two-character play Never Get Out and also the stage version of R. L. Stevenson's Ebb Tide.

Again this year the London Club Theatre Group are bringing a new play by a new playwright, The Queen and the Wodden tells the story of Queen Katherine, widow of Henry V, and Owen Tudor, their meeting, secret marriage and eventual paring.

The play is being produced by Edward Burrows and the decor is by Michael Trangmar, who were respectively the producer and designers for last year's great success Under Milk Wood.

Tickets—7/- 6d., 5/-, 4/-, and 3/-.

Obtainable from Rae Macintosh Ltd., 39 George Street, Alistair & Pryde Ltd., 16 Stafford Street; Methven Simpson Ltd., 83 Princes Street; or at St. Mary's Hall.

OXFORD THEATRE GROUP

present

CORRUPTION IN THE PALACE OF JUSTICE

by Ugo Betti

translated by Henry Reed

First Production in English

Nightly at 7.15 p.m.

LATE AGAIN

A new late-night revue

Nightly at 10.30 p.m.

GULLAN'S CLOSE, Canongate

Tickets 6/-, 6d. (Rever only), 5/-, 6d, 3/-, from Rae Macintosh, Alistair & Pryde, and the Theatre after 5 p.m.
FESTIVAL ‘FRINGE’

Song and Dance
ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL
Regent Road

An Edinburgh Fancy. The Edinburgh branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society present An Edinburgh Fancy, 1957, a miscellany of Scottish dance, song and verse in the Hall of the Royal High School, Regent Road. August 24 to August 31. Matinees at 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.; and 11.30 p.m. on the last night. Prize of £10 for the Best Group of Dancers. Tickets 3s. 6d. from Methven Simpson, Princes Street.

Entertainment in PRINCES STREET GARDENS

Organised by the Parks Department of the City Corporation, a series of daily concerts and periodic dancing displays will be held during the Festival period at the Ross Balnhand in Princes Street Gardens.

The programme will include:

Daily band performance at 3 p.m. by the Bands of the Royal Signals, Royal Scots and Grenadier Guards;
Scottish Country Dancing on Tuesdays, 7.30 p.m.; Old-Time Dancing on Thursdays, 7.30 p.m. Dancing on Thursdays, 7.30 p.m.;
Wednesday evenings—Dances of Dancing, etc.; Sunday evening—Sunday Serenade. Saturday, August 31—Invitation Brass Band Concert, with five English and four Scottish and one Irish bands.
Sunday, September 1—Masque Band Concert. Sunday, September 1—Festival Finale for Masque Military Band Concert.

Night Life
PALLADIUM THEATRE
Fountainbridge

THE IVVING LATE NIGHT REVUE

During a season of three weeks at the Palladium, Fountainbridge, Edinburgh, D. P. Chaudhuri presents a late-night Irish Revue, featuring outstanding scenes, sketches and numbers selected from his London success—The Being NonStop Revue.

ST. GEORGE’S PARISH CHURCH
The Randolph Place, West End

Aberdeen University students present a late-night revue, nightly till Saturday, August 31, at 10.30 p.m. Tickets 3s. from Rae Macintosh and Atkinson & Pryde.

REGENT HALL
Abbeymount

The Irish Festival Players, who during the three weeks of the Festival are presenting four Irish plays at the Regent Hall, Abbeymount, are also running an intimate late-night review at the same hall. It is entitled If You’re Irish... and those who know Irish humour can look forward to entertainment of the choicest variety. The show is built around John Mallory, the noted Irish comedian and mimic. This late-night review begins each evening at 11 p.m., and the prices of admission are 3s., 6d. and 2s. 6d. Tickets can be obtained through Atkinson & Pryde Ltd., 16 Stafford Street; Methven Simpson, Princes Street; and Rae Macintosh & Co., George Street. Tickets will also be on sale at the door.

CANONGATE KIRK HALL

Late Agins is the title of another late-night revue to be presented by the Oxford Theatre Group in the Canongate Kirk Hall in Gullan’s Close, off the Royal Mile. Previous presentations by this group have provided hilarious entertainment. If you want good after-dinner fun in the late evening don’t be late for Late Agins. Tickets, 6s. 6d., from Rae Macintosh & Co., 39 George Street.
1. KENNETH F. GIBB
85 Shandwick Place
Specialists in Scottish crafts, home and foreign pottery, wrought iron, prints, glass, modern flower arrangement holders, indoor plants, cacti, miniature gardens, Danish and German candles. Incorporated with this shop is a livestock department, where dogs, hawks, tropical fish and allied equipment may be purchased.

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Furnishing Specialists of high repute—curtains, loose covers, carpets and everything to make the home beautiful and comfortable. We are the sole Edinburgh agents for the local Thistle Pottery—so inexpensive, but so charming as souvenirs.

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Edinburgh's new Furnishing Store presents a display of household and electrical equipment which exemplifies the best in design and modern trends in the Scottish style of living. The decoration scheme of the store itself provides many practical suggestions for use in the home. For overseas visitors there are also many items of attraction.

5. THE EPICURE
15 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh's latest and foremost restaurant in the West End. Excellent choice of wines, spirits and cuisine to satisfy the most discerning of hosts. Private pre-theatre parties catered for.
Lunches, 12 a.m.-3 p.m.
Dinners, 6.45-10 p.m.

6. GEORGE COCKBURN
20 Shandwick Place
Specialists in antique silver, old Sheffield plate and jewellery. We are the largest exporters of silver from Scotland and send purchases throughout the world. Established in 1879.

7. BINNS LTD.
Princes Street
A large store with a commanding prospect at the West End. It is difficult to think of anything that you cannot buy here. Smart modern furnishings, travel goods, sports goods, book department, accessories for men, women and children—they are all here, and an export department for overseas visitors.

8. WEST END BOOKSHOP
John Menzies & Co. Ltd.
138 Princes Street
A well-known centre for books of every kind, current fiction, tourist literature, etc. There is also an excellent fancy goods department with all kinds of wares to tempt the visitor.
9 **THE LUCKENBOOTH**
126a Princes Street
One of the most attractive little shops where visitors may see and buy some of the nicest things produced in Scotland—kils and skirts in true clan tartans, Celtic jewellery of unusual design, cashmere and lambswool sweaters in twin sets and table linen embroidered with Scottish motifs.

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Scotland's favourite confectionery shop! A specialty is Edinburgh Rock in authentic Royal Stuart tartan packs. Full of exciting ideas for gifts and souvenirs from Scotland for the folks at home.

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Gieves, the renowned civilian and naval tailors, have for many years resided in Princes Street—which gives the key to the excellence of their men's outfiting. The best of everything from ties to tweeds, from sweaters to dinner-jackets, is to be found at Gieves—above all, fine tailoring.

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THE above sketch reproduced from "The Heart of the Capital," a brochure issued free by the George Street Association. It incorporates a map of Edinburgh, helpful to the visitor, and can be obtained from Hotels, Association Members and the Chamber of Commerce, 25 Charlotte Square.

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Looking across Princes Street Gardens to the Assembly Hall and the Castle
ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

MONET EXHIBITION.—An exhibition of paintings by Monet, sponsored by the Edinburgh Festival Society and arranged by the Arts Council of Great Britain, will be held daily in the Royal Scottish Academy, Princes Street.

ANNUAL EXHIBITION.—The 131st Annual Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of painting, sculpture and architecture will also be held in the Royal Scottish Academy.

Opening Hours:
- Weekdays, 10 a.m. till 9 p.m.
- Sundays, 2 till 5 p.m.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND, The Mound

EXHIBITION OF OLD MASTERS.—During the period of the Festival there will be an exhibition of Old Master paintings from Corstorphine House, lent by the Earl of Wemyss and March. Admission free.

Opening Hours:
- Weekdays, 10 a.m. till 6 p.m.
- Sundays, 2 till 5 p.m.

ARTS COUNCIL GALLERY

11 Rutland Terrace

MODERN TURKISH PAINTINGS.—The first comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Turkish painting to be held in Great Britain. It comprises about 40 representative pictures, and includes the work of such well-known Turkish artists as Fahrelnissa Zeid, Bedri Rahmi Eyvazoglu, Ahmet Dine, Hasan Kaptan and younger painters.

Opening Hours:
- Daily, 10 a.m. till 6 p.m.
- Wednesdays, 10 a.m. till 2 p.m.
- Sundays, 2 till 5 p.m.

Admission free.

THE WALL GALLERY

4 Lindsay Place

An exhibition of paintings by Rachel M. Smith will be held daily in this Gallery, which faces the gate of Greyfriars Church. Admission free.

Opening Hours:
- Daily, 10 a.m. till 6.30 p.m.

ROYAL SCOTTISH MUSEUM

KENNEDY-FRAER CENTENARY EXHIBITION.—An exhibition of personal items associated with Mrs. Marion Kennedy-Fraer, the collector and arranger of songs of the Hebrides. Admission free.

Opening Hours:
- Weekdays, 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.
- Sundays, 2 till 5 p.m.

ADAM HOUSE

Chambers Street

CHILDREN OF THREE CENTURIES.—An exhibition of child portraits, costumes, toys, furnishings, etc., of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Admission 1s. Proceeds to Dr. Barnado's Homes.

Opening Hours:
- Weekdays, 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.
- Sundays, 2 p.m. till 5 p.m.

THE SCOTTISH CRAFT CENTRE

Achensous House, The Canongate

An exhibition of a great variety of the products of Scottish craft workers is regularly staged in this historic centre.

Opening Hours:
- Daily (except Sundays), 10 a.m. till 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 till 5.30 p.m.

HUNTLY HOUSE

Canongate

FOLK ART EXHIBITION. Exhibitions of Czechoslovak Folk Art and Costume and of Scottish Arts and Crafts will be open in two of the Corporation museums—Huntly House, Canongate, and the Canongate Tolbooth respectively. The first (admission to Museum and Exhibition, 6d.) is sponsored by the Czechoslovak Embassy and the second (admission, 1s.) by the Scottish Craft Centre.

Opening Hours:
- Daily (Monday to Saturday), 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, 6 till 9 p.m.

THE SCOTTISH LYCEUM GALLERY

Achilles Crescent

CRAFTS EXHIBITION. An exhibition of Scottish crafts, including silverwork, glass, pottery, tweeds, basketry, etc., will be held daily.

THE REGISTER HOUSE

Princes Street

THE UNION OF 1707. This summer's Exhibition in the Dome Gallery of the Register House shows the original Articles of the Union of 1707, together with some of the minutes of the Commissioners who framed them and of the Parliament which amended them. In addition, many documents from private collections will also be on view.

The Exhibition will be open from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and 10 a.m. till 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays.

SALTIRE SOCIETY

Gladstone's Land, Lawnmarket

Seventeenth century house with painted ceilings, wall decorations and furniture of the period. Morning coffee and afternoon tea available.

Open 10.30 a.m. till 12.30 p.m., 2 till 5 p.m.

Sundays, 2 till 4.30 p.m.

Concerts, week-ends, 10.30 p.m.; Sundays, 8.30 p.m., by Saltire Group and other artists. Buffet. Admission by ticket only.

THE 1957 GALLERY

53 George Street

During the Festival this new, tiny Gallery is showing works by 12 well-known Scottish painters, including Gillies, Pollock, Eardley, Philipson, etc.

Wednesdays, 11 a.m. till 5 p.m.

Saturdays, 2 till 5 p.m.

Admission free.

HIGHLAND

HOME INDUSTRIES LTD.

In the new town

11a GEORGE ST.

Handwoven rugs, toilets, scarves and tweeds

Hannah Sinclair and Harris Garments

Pottery and Celtic Jewellery
THE MERCHANTS' HALL
21 Hanover Street
The Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh has organised an exhibition of paintings, gold plate, furniture, and documents belonging to the Company and its trusts. This exhibition is being held during the period of the Festival.

Apart from illustrating the history of the Company, the exhibition also portrays life in Edinburgh over the past 300 years. Citizens of Edinburgh and visitors to the city are cordially invited to see this exhibition. There is no charge for admission. Illustrated catalogue, price 1s. 6d., will be on sale.

21 Castle Street
Organised by the Sunday Pictorial, an excellent selection from the National Exhibitions of Children's Art is being presented during the entire period of the Festival at 21 Castle Street, Edinburgh. The proceeds of this Exhibition will be donated to the Edenderry Lodge Children's Homes. The Exhibition will be open daily, except Sundays, from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. Admission price is 1s., but school parties are allowed entry to the Exhibition free of charge.

BROWN'S COFFEE ROOM
(Edinburgh Branch)
37 George Street
Exhibition of Oil Paintings, "Highlands and Islands," by John Cook.

1857-1957
ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA
An Exhibition celebrating the Centennial of the American Institute of Architects will be held in the Andrew Grant Memorial Gallery, Edinburgh College of Art, from Monday, August 19, to Friday, September 6.
Weekdays, 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.
Saturdays, 10 a.m. till 12 noon

TRADITIONS IN TRUST
Royal Scottish Museum
Chambers Street
10 a.m. till 5 p.m. daily, except Sunday, until September 14.
Admission free.
The exhibition illustrates the work of The National Trust for Scotland and the places of interest under its care.

TEN YEARS OF THE EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
The Scottish Tourist Board has produced for the Edinburgh Festival Society a handsome book as an account of the first decade of the Edinburgh International Festival. Magnificently illustrated with more than 140 photographs, many of them in colour, this new book will form a perfect souvenir of the Festival since its inception.

The book costs 5s. and may be obtained from all newsagents and booksellers, or direct from the Festival Office, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, 1

ROXBURGH HOUSE
High Street
An Exhibition of family treasures, organised by the Edinburgh and Leith Old People's Welfare Council. Open daily from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m. until September 7. Tea and coffee can be obtained. Admission 1s.

PHOTOGRAPHIC
FACES AND PLACES IN BRITAIN
The Electricity Showrooms
130 George Street
An Exhibition of Photographs taken by the British Travel Association for use in publicising the tourist attractions of Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. These depict all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

ST. CUTHBERT'S HALL
King's Stable Road
Ninety-sixth Exhibition of the Edinburgh Photographic Society during the entire period of the Festival. The exhibition will consist of approximately 200 pictorial prints selected from entries from all over the world. Open daily (except Sundays) from 10.30 a.m. till 9.30 p.m.
CLUBS

WITH A WELCOME FOR VISITORS

THE FESTIVAL CLUB
34 George Street
Telephone: CAL 5707
The Festival Club, social rendezvous of the Festival, is located in the Assembly Rooms and Music Hall at 34 George Street.

The Club contains a first-class restaurant (with licence), snack bar, lounge, reading and writing rooms, reception and retiring rooms. Morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner are obtainable at reasonable prices. Dancing facilities, for dinners only, are provided in the dining room, each evening, except Sundays. (No extra charge.)

Within the Club there is a General Information Bureau where advice on accommodation, tours, etc., can be obtained. Information about other attractions in the city apart from the Festival is also available at this Bureau. All Festival visitors are invited to become members of the Club.
Season membership (valid for the entire period of the Festival), £1 5s.
Weekly membership (available from August 15th to 24th, August 25th to 31st, and September 1st to 7th), 12s. 6d.
Daily membership, 3s.
(For parties of ten and over daily tickets cost 3s. each).
Season ticket (25s.) holders may purchase up to a maximum of ten guest tickets so that they may entertain non-member friends in the club. These guest cards will each be available for any one day during the Festival period. Guest cards cost 2s. each and will be sold in books of five.

Registers for Overseas Visitors.—For the convenience of overseas visitors, Registers will be available for them to sign in the Festival Club. In this way it is hoped that patrons from overseas will be able to contact friends while they are in Edinburgh.

WOMEN’S UNITED SERVICES CLUB
12 Bruntsfield Gardens

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
Visitors to Scotland will find a welcome at Edinburgh International House, 127 Princes Street. The facilities include a spacious lounge overlooking Princes Street and Edinburgh Castle, Recreation Hall, Library, Information Office, television, dancing, licensed bars, snack bar, dining-room, and lobster buffet. Temporary membership at very moderate rates for one week or longer. The House is open seven days a week from 10.30 a.m. to midnight.

THREE WEEKS CLUB
Gartshore Hall, 114 George Street
Morning coffee, 10.30 to 11.30 a.m. to meet Festival celebrities (arranged by National Council of Women). Afternoon teas, 3 to 5.30 p.m. (including Sundays), with special Scottish home baking (arranged by Edinburgh Women Citizens’ Association).

ROTYRY CLUB OF EDINBURGH
North British Hotel on Thursdays at 12.45 p.m.

SOROPTIMIST CLUB OF EDINBURGH
Visiting Soroptimists please phone Club Secretary, Cal 6214.

SCOTTISH LATIN AMERICAN AMIGOS
37 Spottiswoode Road
Telephone: Edinburgh 55172
Latin American visitors will be cordially welcomed. Please give prior notification so that arrangements can be made.
The following Clubs and Organisations have placed their facilities at the disposal of Festival visitors:

VICTORIA LEAGUE HOUSE
59 Morningside
For British Commonwealth visitors. Residential and open to day visitors. Morning coffee, luncheons, teas and dinners. Reception and information office open daily, 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Cal 4146.

THE OVER-SEAS LEAGUE
Princes Street
All visitors from the Commonwealth will be welcomed in the Commonwealth Lounge in Over-Seas House, 100 Princes Street, during the three weeks of the Festival, and a voluntary hostess will be on duty to receive them and offer them assistance with general information about the Festival and sightseeing in and around Edinburgh.
A special welcome is accorded to visiting members of the Over-Seas League from the Commonwealth, and they are invited to make full use of the premises in Over-Seas House where lounge and all catering facilities are available, also bedroom accommodation.
Tel.: Edinburgh 30056-7.

EDINBURGH SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS
All Thistle Street
Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. Other times by arrangement.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
Offers a warm welcome to all visitors from the British Commonwealth and the United States of America. Hospitality and information services, 52 Heriot Row, Edinburgh. Tel. 32799.

Golf
The following Golf Clubs have offered the courtesy of their courses to Festival visitors: Robertson (Juniper Green)—free of charge, Raithfield Links (Davidson’s Mains)—except Wednesday, September 4, 3s. 6d. for one round, 5s. for one day; Saturday and Sunday, 7s. per round, 10s. for one day, Craigielaw Park—3s. per day, Kingsbarns (St Andrews)—free of charge, Liberton—3s. 6d. per round or day; week, £1. Merchants of Edinburgh (Morningside)—free of charge, Mungall—5s. per round, 7s. 6d. per day. Turnhouse—free of charge.
THE COMMERCIAL BANK OF SCOTLAND LIMITED

invites all visitors to Britain to make full use of the extensive banking facilities it provides. Information relating to Foreign Exchange, and on financial matters in which banking knowledge is helpful, is always available at the principal offices of the Bank. Further, a chain of Branch Offices covering the whole of Scotland gives every assistance to tourists.

General Manager:
Ian Wilson Macdonald
Head Office:
14 GEORGE ST., EDINBURGH

FOR ALL THAT IS BEST IN MOTORTING
16 and 32 SHANDWICK PLACE
CYCLES & MOTOR CYCLES
43-45 LOTHIAN ROAD
RADIO & TELEVISION
10 QUEENSFERRY STREET
DOMESTIC APPLIANCES
6 QUEENSFERRY STREET

And at:
GLASGOW · STIRLING · INVERNESS
ABERDEEN · DUNDEE · KIRKCALDY
HAWICK and NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

People who know about tweeds know about Gieves—and their exceptionally wide choice of the finest cloths, many of them exclusive. The range includes worsted, Cheviot, Shetland and Harris tweeds; Scotch homespun; Crombie fleeces; and of course the tailoring to do them justice.

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Tailors, Hosiers and Hatters since 1785
27 HANOVER ST EDINBURGH
Telephone: CAledonian 1466
27 OLD BOND ST LONDON W1
Telephone: HYDe Park 2316
Gardens to Visit

Under the auspices of Scotland's Garden Scheme a few visits to gardens near Edinburgh have been arranged. The gardens are opened in aid of the Scottish Queen's, Nurses' Benevolent and Educational Funds and the Gardens Fund of the National Trust for Scotland.

The foregoing are inclusive of all admission charges to gardens and transport. Unless specifically stated no meals are included. All bookings for these tours will be done from the Garden Scheme Desk, Festival Information Bureau, George Street, Edinburgh. Applications for tickets should be accompanied by remittance. Seats in coaches will be reserved.

Sunday, August 28
Tour No. 4
Leave Edinburgh 10 a.m. for NEVILSTON (Major and Mrs. Henderson). Return approximately 12.45 p.m.

Nevilston, which contains much of interest, is a delightful example of late 18th century architecture by Robert Adam.

Fare (including admission to the House), 6s. 6d.

Friday, August 30
Tour No. 5

Bel is a beautifully proportioned house with broad 16th century terrace gardens.

Fare, 7s. 6d.

Sunday, September 1
Tour No. 6
Leave Edinburgh 10 a.m. for FALKLAND PALACE (The National Trust for Scotland and Major Michael Crichton-Stuart) and *RINNISON HOUSE (Mrs. Purvis-Russell-Montgomery). Return approximately 3 p.m.

Falkland was the hunting seat of the Smart Kings, and the garden is on the site of the old royal garden. The gardens at Kinross, which run down to the shores of Loch Leven, contain fine herbaceous borders. Tea can be obtained at Kinross.

Fare (including admission to both houses), 7s. 6d.

Historic Houses
Open to the Public

THE BAINS, 15 miles west of Edinburgh, home of the Dalvay family for 350 years. Daily. S.M.T., has tour from Edinburgh, otherwise open Saturday and Sunday, 2 till 5 p.m. Special openings for parties by arrangement.

FALKLAND PALACE, Fife. Royal Palace completed by James V in 1540.

Open weekdays 11 a.m. till 5 p.m.

Enquiries about other places of interest to the National Trust for Scotland to:

5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.

Tel.: 39872
WHERE TO EAT
This does not pretend to be a complete list of every eating-place in town, but should
be of use to anyone who has to live here.

ABBOTSFORD
BAR and RESTAURANT
Easily reached from St. Andrew
Square, it is a popular haunt, famed
for its good food and drink. Quick snacks are a
specialty.
3 and 5 ROSE STREET
Phone: CAL 5276

The ALBYN
QUEEN STREET
EDINBURGH
The restaurant for people of
discrimination who like good
food and wine served sumptu-
ously in elegant surroundings
COCKTAIL BAR open until 11 p.m.
DANCING on Fridays and Saturdays
until midnight Tel: CAL 4977

The Aperitif
Frederick Street
Tel.: CEN 6866
BRIGHT AND GAY
The rendezvous of interesting
people
COCKTAIL BAR:
 Noon until 3 p.m. and 5 until 11 p.m.
RESTAURANT
Open until midnight
After-Theatre Suppers and
everything catering a specialty

ABBOTSFORD
Bar and Restaurant
3 and 5 ROSE STREET
Easily reached from St. Andrew
Square, it is a popular haunt, famed
for its good food and drink. The
beer is cool and the dishes excellent.
Phone: CAL 5276.

THE ALBYN
At the West End of Queen Street
Very elegant, charming period
decoration. Excellent food and a good
cellar. Cocktails room on the ground
floor is a fine place to pass the time.
The dining-room upstairs is discreetly
lithe and in good taste. Dancing
Friday and Saturday till midnight—
evening dress optional.

THE APERITIF
In Frederick Street
Small and compact; bright, young
and gay. Contemporary decor with
mural by Moir and Petrides.
Cocktail bar, food counter (hot, cold
and sea) and comfortable dining-
room. Book by telephone to make
sure of a table.

BEEHIVE
18-20 Grassmarket
Situated in the historic Grass-
market, Edinburgh's unique Inn and
Restaurant provides modern comfort
in an historic setting. Dinner Dances
every Friday and Saturday evening
during Festival from 8 till midnight.
Phone: CEN 7171. After 1 p.m. on Aug.
31, this will be CAL 7171.

CRAMOND INN
Cramond
Fascinating spot, in white-washed
village within city boundary, where
the River Almond meets the Firth of
Forth. Two bars, food counter,
restaurant. Good food. Old oak beam
atmosphere cleverly preserved. Open
peat fire.

DELICATESSEN HOUSE
192 ROSE STREET
This is a on the ground floor
where visitors may buy a wide
selection of continental foods. A
delicatessen shop adjoining the coffee bar.
*Licensed Premises

The Beehive
Situated in the historic Grassmarket,
Edinburgh's unique Inn and Restaurant
provides modern comfort in an ancient
setting. Dinner-Dances every Friday and
Saturday evening during Festival, from
8 p.m. to midnight.

13-20 GRASSMARKET
Phone: CEN 7171

Cramond Inn
at Cramond Village by the Sea
An intimate Inn
three centuries old
where
GOOD FOOD
AND CHOICE WINES
await your pleasure
A Blend of the old and new
Phone Edinburgh 7803 for table
reservations

DELICATESSEN HOUSE
192 ROSE STREET
(West End)
Telephone: Edin. 33992
*
COFFEE BAR
Continental Foods, Spaghetti
Ravioli, Various Salads
Hamburgers, etc.
Open-9.30 a.m.-11.30 p.m.
THE EPICURE
This first-class restaurant is ideally situated in the heart of the West End and offers an extensive menu, a comprehensive wine list, with expert service. The decor is intimate, combined with comfort, and caters for visitors from many countries.

THE GRAND
St. Andrew Street, overlooking junction with Princes Street
Beautifully appointed public bar at street level, comfortable dining-room and snug bar on first floor and cocktail bar and lounge one further up. "Grand" service cheerfully given brings satisfied patrons back to this central and popular rendezvous.

GEORGE'S RESTAURANT
53a Brougham Place (near the University)
George's has become the rendezvous for students and left bank types, who want to get away from "plain" cooking, but don't want to overspend. Continental dishes are the staple, but all tastes are catered for. Foreign wines served with meals.

HARP HOTEL
St. John's Road, Corstorphine, 12

MACVITIES
Princes Street, West End
Four floors again of coffee, lunch and tea rooms. Excellent menus, well prepared and served. Delicious specialities. The tea rooms at the Castle and the Sanctuary at Holyrood Palace are under the able management of Macvities.

THE MOCAMBA GRILL
154 High Street
Combining American fast service with Continental cuisine. Here you may try your steak grilling in the open kitchen—first of its kind in town. A Danish blue sandwich, black coffee and cream or a full dinner receive the same personal attention of the proprietor of this attractive new restaurant.

STAFFORD ESPRESSO BAR
For coffee in the contemporary manner, in surroundings to match, the place is the new Stafford Espresso Bar.
Remember the number: one-O-one Shandwick Place.
*Licensed Premises.

GEORGE'S RESTAURANT
Open 7 Days to 1 a.m.
Braised from Prince's Street
Meat, 19, 11, 15 and 18
Continental and British Cooking
Plate Paté — Cavier — Swiss —
Frankfurters — Gouda — Vienna —
Schlacht
Italian Spaghetti a Speciality
Foreign Wines served to Table
Three-Course Luncheon, 3s. 6d.
Individual Accoutrement by Foreign Chef
23 & 23a Brougham Place
(between Tollcross and Meadows)
Tel. FOU 6872

The Mocamba Grill
American fast service grill in the heart of the famous Royal Mile, specialising in 3-minute grills.
9 a.m. till midnight
Including Sundays
Italian and French spoken
154 HIGH STREET
EDINBURGH
Tel. 23966

The Stafford Espresso Bar
OPEN 10 a.m. to MIDNIGHT
Quick Snacks with Coffee Espresso
In Comfortable Contemporary Surroundings
101 SHANDWICK PLACE

The SHAKESPEARE
* The haunt of visiting stage personalities. Enjoy a first-class "pub-like" lunch after a morning concert or before a matinee. Usual licensed hours. WIN DESIGNER AVAILABLE.
* LOTHIAN ROAD
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