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# Fringe first-weekend attendance jumps 19 percent

18 sold-out shows, spike in Web traffic launch Minnesota performing arts festival



Above: *Parry Hotter and the Half-Drunk Twins* presented by Empty S Productions as part of the 2009 Minnesota Fringe. The show sold out all three of its scheduled performances during the opening weekend of the festival.

## THE BASICS

16th annual

Minnesota Fringe Festival

Thursday, July 30  
through Sunday, August 9

162 different shows

22 locations in  
Minneapolis and St. Paul

Tickets: \$5-12 plus  
a \$4 festival admission button

[fringefestival.org](http://fringefestival.org)

MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL — Minnesota Fringe Festival, the Midwest's largest performing arts festival, opened with a remarkable 19 percent jump in attendance over last year's event, the festival announced today.

Preliminary numbers for the first four days of the annual eleven-day performing arts festival—Thurs., July 30 through Sun., Aug. 2—show that 16,814 tickets were issued, a massive increase over last year's 14,133 tickets.

"I'm elated, absolutely," said executive director Robin C. Gillette. "We're issuing tickets hand over fist. It's been an astonishing opener."

Of this year's 162 productions, nine companies sold out their first performances and a total of 18 performances sold out. Among the sold-out shows are Bring Your Own Venue productions—a Fringe program dedicated to site-specific work—and two shows at Gremlin Theatre, Fringe's first St. Paul venue.

Traffic to the festival's Web site, [fringefestival.org](http://fringefestival.org), increased 46 percent. By 11 a.m. today, the site had received over 1,400 audience-submitted show reviews, well on pace to eclipse last year's total, and previous festival record, of 2,200.

"The people of Minnesota have really hooked in to this year's festival," Gillette said. "We've been working very hard all year round to increase our outreach efforts and make Fringe the most accessible, affordable and welcoming performing arts event in the region."

"The response and the engagement has been extraordinary on every level, from our volunteers to ticket buyers to our sponsors and the press," she said. "And, honestly, adding this many more people to Fringe's world makes it that much more fun."

Minnesota Fringe, celebrating its 16th year in 2009, runs through Sun., Aug. 9 at 22 different venues in Minneapolis and St. Paul. More information at [fringefestival.org](http://fringefestival.org).

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## Fringe opening weekend sold-out performances

Thursday, July 30

*Projectile Thinking* presented by Stages Theatre Company with Jon Ferguson (first performance)

*Parry Hotter and the Half-Drunk Twins* presented by Empty S Productions (first performance)

*Two Short Operas: Mr. Berman's Bath-Size Bar and There's a Mastodon In My Backyard* presented by the Dead Composers Society (first performance)

Friday, July 31

*Parry Hotter and the Half-Drunk Twins* presented by Empty S Productions

Saturday, August 1

*2 Sugars, Room for Cream* presented by Shanan Wexler & Carolyn Pool Productions

*June of Arc* presented by Sandbox Theatre (first performance)

*Harold Pinter's The Dumb Waiter* presented by Paul von Stoetzel (first performance)

*Rumspringa the Musical* presented by Best Weird Dog (first performance)

*Joanie Luvs Chachi and So Do I (Redux)* presented by M. Ziegler Ensemble

*Squawk* presented by Walking Shadow Theatre Company (first performance)

Sunday, August 2

*Jurassic Dork* presented by Jonas Goslow

*Allieteral Selection: The True Tale of a Wayward Wallaby* presented by Jane McGough

*Re:Trace* presented by Ready at Will (Raw) Dance Collective

*Parry Hotter and the Half-Drunk Twins* presented by Empty S Productions

*Two Short Operas: Mr. Berman's Bath-Size Bar and There's a Mastodon In My Backyard*

*Two Short Operas: Mr. Berman's Bath-Size Bar and There's a Mastodon In My Backyard* presented by the Dead Composers Society

*Animal Cracker Genocide* presented by Ben San Del (first performance)

*The Flickering Wall* presented by Illusion Theater

*Your Lithopedion* presented by Opium, Fireworks and Lead (first performance)