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Midwest Fringe circuit formed

Kansas City, Minnesota, Indianapolis, Chicago festivals
announce unified touring application for performing artists

MINNEAPOLIS — Fringe festivals in four Midwestern cities today announced a touring lottery for artists to perform in Fringes throughout the summer.

Kansas City Fringe Festival, Minnesota Fringe Festival, Indianapolis Theatre Fringe Festival and Chicago Fringe Festival are the participating organizations.

Two available tour slots will be drawn at a public lottery to take place in Minneapolis on Jan. 8, 2010. Selected producers are awarded standard performance slots in each of the four festivals.

Applications are available starting Mon., Nov. 16 at fringefestival.org. The application deadline is Fri., Dec. 31, 2009.

"Each festival has its own personality because each festival reflects the energy of its city," said Minnesota Fringe executive director Robin C. Gillette. "The idea is, Fringes won't stand in the way of that energy. Whatever else might be different, all Fringes exist to connect audiences to artists on a direct, personal, unfiltered level."

Although rules vary slightly among the four festivals, the core idea of a Fringe remains the same: An uncensored, easily accessible, rapid-fire performing arts festival that minimizes the financial investment artists and audiences must make to participate. The 2010 circuit starts in Kansas City on July 25 and ends in Chicago on Sept. 5.

This marks the first Fringe touring application within the United States. Festivals associated with the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals have had a touring application for many years.

"The Midwest is ready to have a Fringe circuit," said Gillette. "It makes sense for us to band together to do this as a service to artists. If your application is drawn, you're in, and your summer is set. This circuit makes summer much easier for these arts entrepreneurs to organize."

Participants' production fees for each festival range from \$225 to \$500, depending on number of performances requested and technical requirements. A majority—65 to 100 percent—of box office receipts are returned to individual producers, depending on box office performance and festival rules. For audiences, top ticket prices range from just \$10-12.

Minnesota Fringe, the oldest of the four, celebrates its 17th anniversary in 2010. Both the Kansas City and Indianapolis Fringes were founded in 2005, and 2010 is Chicago Fringe's inaugural year.

In 2009, nearly 65,000 tickets were distributed to over 1,300 individual performances at the Minnesota, Kansas City and Indianapolis festivals.

CONTINUES

The Midwestern Fringes represent four of a growing number of U.S.-based Fringe festivals. In 2010, over 20 such festivals are expected to take place in the United States, from New York to Orlando to Hollywood. A full calendar of all U.S. Fringes and more details about the Fringe movement in the United States is at fringefestivals.us.

About the festivals

Kansas City Fringe Festival

Kansas City, Mo.: July 25–Aug. 1, 2010

In 2009: 53 companies, 17 venues, 6,250+ tickets

More information at kcfringe.org

Minnesota Fringe Festival

Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.: Aug. 5–15, 2010

In 2009: 162 companies, 22 venues, 46,000+ tickets

More information at fringefestival.org

Indianapolis Theatre Fringe Festival

Indianapolis, Ind.: Aug. 19–29, 2010

In 2009: 52 companies, 6 venues, 12,000 tickets

More information at indyfringe.org

Chicago Fringe Festival

Chicago, Ill.: Sept. 1–5, 2010

2010 is Chicago Fringe's inaugural year

More information at chicagofringe.org