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2011 Fringe applications, new lottery system announced

Midwest Fringe circuit returns; attendance up 22 percent in 3 years

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL — Minnesota Fringe's lottery system is getting a few tweaks this year. Producers applying to the 2011 performing arts festival now select which of three venue tiers they would like.

Fringe, one of the largest performing arts events in the Midwest, determines its annual lineup by lottery. New this year, applications are separated into three drawings determined by venue size. For those not selected in the initial lottery, three waiting lists will be drawn for each tier.

"Our hope is that by splitting the lottery into venue tiers, applicants will begin to focus on the logistics of their productions right off the bat," said executive director Robin C. Gillette.

"It's important that we provide the right resources to each of our producers based on what their goals are as producers and as artists," she said. "By having applicants think about the nuts-and-bolts of their show up front, we think the new lottery will help everyone out."

In previous years, venue assignments were made later, based on the producers' answers to a questionnaire. A single waiting list was compiled from anyone not selected in the initial lottery.

Applications to the 2011 Minnesota Fringe Festival are due at 5 p.m. Central on Fri., Jan. 28, 2011. A nonrefundable application fee of \$25 is due at the time of application; production fees range from \$300 to \$600.

The 2011 lottery will be held on Mon., Feb. 7, 2011 (location to be determined). The 2011 Minnesota Fringe takes place in Minneapolis-St. Paul from Thurs., Aug. 4 through Sun., August 14.

"After a record-setting 2010, we're definitely excited for 2011," Gillette said. "Our attendance and the number of applicants to the festival have been increasing steadily, and we've been able retain the vast majority of that growth."

Since 2008, festival attendance has grown 22 percent.

Growth of audiences has meant a significant uptick in receipts: Since 2008, gross box office receipts increased by 24 percent and Fringe's payout to participating producers has increased 28.9 percent. Over \$1 million has been paid to producers in the last five years.

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Midwest Fringe circuit lottery

Four of Fringe's roughly 160 slots will be filled by companies participating in the Midwest Fringe circuit. Minnesota Fringe along with its sister festivals in Chicago, Kansas City and Indianapolis, is holding this lottery for touring artists for the second year running.

Applications for the circuit lottery are due at 5 p.m. Central on Thurs., Dec. 30, 2010. A drawing will be held in Chicago on Sat., Jan. 8, 2011, to determine the circuit participants.

Increasing ties with Greater Minnesota

Fringe staff members are planning outreach trips to Fargo-Moorhead, Duluth, Rochester and Northfield. These trips, which are meant to recruit artists and audiences from greater Minnesota, are repeats of outreach visits from the last several years.