

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 20, 2012

FUNDY FRINGE FESTIVAL approved by Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals
Former Theatre on the Edge Summer Festival to be replaced by Fringe Festival

SAINT JOHN – The organizing committee of Fundy Fringe Festival is pleased to announce that Saint John's newest summer festival has been approved by the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF). CAFF has twenty-three members - seventeen in Canada and six in the U.S. Only festivals that abide by CAFF guidelines can use the trademark names "fringe" and "fringe festival" in Canada.

The inaugural festival will be open to local, provincial and national performing arts companies and will take place August 21-25, 2013. Festival co-chair Sandra Bell says *"we chose these dates specifically to dovetail with the Island Fringe Festival in Charlottetown and the Atlantic Fringe Festival in Halifax. By doing this we are creating a Maritime fringe festival circuit that will attract more performers."*

What is a fringe festival? Fringe theatre is the most democratic and accessible theatre in the world. Typically, fringe festivals include performing arts such as theatre, comedy and dance. Each festival follows a series of basic guidelines which can include low admission prices, selection of participants by lottery, no censorship, shorter performances, and 100% of the ticket revenue going to the performing companies.

Sandra Bell and Pauline Cronin, Saint John Theatre Company board members, initiated a project to identify a summer festival format that could prosper and grow into a destination event for Saint John after Theatre on the Edge summer festival was cancelled due to lack of funding. Their research into what was working elsewhere in the country led to the conclusion that Saint John is ripe for its own fringe festival.

Key uptown Saint John organizations and venues were represented at an information meeting held in September 2012 to discuss the summer theatre festival. It was unanimous that we should apply for "fringe festival" status. The festival was aptly named FUNDY FRINGE FESTIVAL. While Bell and Cronin worked on the application to gain CAFF approval, Saint John Theatre Company staff assisted them in the preparation of funding applications to municipal, provincial and federal government programs.

Festival co-chair Pauline Cronin notes *"the fringe festival brand is recognized worldwide and currently operates in several countries, but mostly in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is the original, biggest and most famous fringe festival. We're not sure that we can achieve the heights of the Edinburgh festival, but it's very encouraging to see that there are no limits to how great an event this could be."*

Fringe festivals typically include original, edgier material, small casts, non-traditional venues, simple tech and staging, and quick set up and tear down. There is significant reliance on festival volunteers and it is common for host cities to arrange billeting for the performing artists.

Fundy Fringe Festival will announce its festival committee and participating venues in January 2013.

Please direct sponsorship and media inquiries to: Pauline Cronin, Co-chair, Fundy Fringe Festival
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