

Toronto Fringe Will Return just over \$27,000 to the 52 Companies of the Fringe Collective

This digital Fringe experience surpassed all expectations and rallied the worldwide community behind our independent artists

July 13, 2020 (Toronto, ON) The Toronto Fringe's first ever digital festival, the Fringe Collective, wrapped up yesterday after offering 12 days of digital programming to Fringe lovers across Toronto and the world, **with over 42% of viewers being non-local**. The festival featured pre-recorded video, audio, and written content from 52 companies that were slated to be part of the 2020 Toronto Fringe Festival.

Each participating company of the Collective will be given an **equal share of the \$27,000 box office profits, which amounts to just over \$500 for each company**. This box office return comes from the sale of 1,364 Act Passes (which were Tip-What-You-Can) and 126 Membership Passes (which were \$100). The artists showed incredible resilience and flexibility and took risks with new platforms and media types. While recognizing that the scale of this post-festival payout is not the same as a regular festival box office payout, the Toronto Fringe is thrilled to be able to financially compensate the artists in some way for their hard work.

At the midpoint of the festival, upon the launch of Act 3, **the Toronto Fringe announced that 100% of the proceeds would flow to the artists**. Originally, the festival planned to reserve a 30% cut to cover the administrative costs of running the festival; but the overwhelming community support for the artists inspired the staff and board of the Fringe to pay that generosity forward, and to further invest in the indie artists this organization serves.

"As I was tracking the donations I saw how our 30% could go so much further if shared amongst all of these incredible artists, it just felt like the right thing to do," **says Executive Director, Lucy Eveleigh**. "And of course this follows our mandate of usual Fringe Festivals, to return 100% to the artists, and I really wanted each company to walk away with \$500! They have all worked so hard and have been so ready to go on this adventure with us, and I believe we succeeded. I am so impressed by the level of commitment of these artists and they deserve as much as we can give them."

Over the course of the 12-day digital festival, videos were viewed 9,444 times, **which amounts to a cumulative 69 days, 20 hours, 55 minutes and 14 seconds of viewing**. Audio files were listened to 1,120 times. (Full data on downloads for written scripts and excerpts is being compiled and will be shared soon.) Fringe is pleased to see that, for the first time ever, festival content has crossed borders. **A spectacular 42% of Fringe Collective audiences tuned in from outside of Toronto**, and 16.4% were from outside of Canada (United States, United Kingdom, Mexico, Australia, and Ireland being the top digital visitors).

Fringe's popular patio, POSTSCRIPT, also migrated online this year and offered a series of free live-streamed events spread over the 12 days of the festival. All six events are archived on Fringe's website for continued viewing, at <https://fringetoronto.com/collective/postscript>. Highlights include:

- **A “Pitch Your Next Fringe Show” session**, featuring dozens of Fringe Collective companies that will be joining Fringe again in 2021. Each company took turns on a live-streamed Zoom chat, with 30 seconds to give their show’s elevator pitch to a group of dedicated Fringe-goers: theatre producer Derrick Chua, long-time Fringe donor Neville Austin, and Artist Advisory member Miquelon Rodriguez. The panel, along with other members of the community, voiced their excitement for the 2021 Fringe Festival – which may go down in history as the most joyful (and well-rehearsed) festival of all time!
- **Stories from the Fringe**, featuring BIPOC Fringe artists Bree Ali, Rita Shelton Deverell, Chloé Hung, Aaron Jan, Tabby Johnson, and Monica Ogden, and hosted by Tanisha Taitt, Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre. During this event, panelists shared their stories about interacting with the Fringe as artists of colour, and offered glimpses into the racism some had experienced at Fringe in Toronto and across the country. This panel left us with their collective wish for the future of Fringe to become more inclusive and welcoming to BIPOC artists.
- **KidsFest Story Time with ASL Interpretation**, featuring members of Fringe staff reading their favourite children’s stories, and accompanied by ASL interpreters from Tekaliwatheta and Phoenix the Fire.

POSTSCRIPT Live(Stream) events have been viewed 4,547 times as of the publication of this release.

Fringe and major sponsor Steam Whistle Brewing paired up to surprise audience members with giveaways and prize packs throughout the festival. One highlight: each patron that purchased a Fringe Collective Membership pass was entered into a draw for a Steam Whistle prize pack. The lucky winner was paid a surprise visit by the Steam Whistle delivery team, to bring a little bit of the POSTSCRIPT patio to their doorstep. Thank you to Steam Whistle Brewing for continuing their commitment to Fringe, especially during such extraordinary times.

What’s Next for Fringe?

A few weeks ago, Toronto Fringe announced the **cancellation of the 2021 Next Stage Theatre Festival** due to public health unknowns and variables in the coming months. The Fringe has committed to creating a community event during Next Stage’s original dates (January 21-24, 2021) and the leadership team will begin to assess how this event could best serve the industry. Please look out for a survey in the fall.

In the coming weeks, Toronto Fringe will also be **undertaking an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion audit** of the organization, which will become the bedrock for our 2021-2023 strategic plan.

And teens aged 13-19 (or their parents) should be advised that a **free workshop series called My First Fringe: Imagining Our New World** will take place July 27 - August 14, 2020. This series of 6 virtual two-hour workshops will include creation, direction, design and producing workshops from established and practicing theatre artists in Toronto, such as Aaron Jan, Kanika Ambrose, and others. Participants of My First Fringe will become part of a knowledge and space-sharing experience with other youth and established artists, and will leave with a deeper understanding of how to launch future Fringe (or indie) shows. Participants will also be

guided through a mock application process to the 2021 Toronto Fringe Festival, so they are prepared to submit in the fall. More details coming soon and interested youth should apply [here](#).

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