

Toronto Fringe Announces Digital Festival this Summer, July 21 – 31, 2021

Calls for Digital New Play Contest, Digital Adams Prize for Musical Theatre, and Digital 24 Hour Playwriting Contest Now Open – and Digital Lottery Opening Soon

February 24, 2021 (Toronto, ON) The 33rd annual Toronto Fringe Festival will once again be a platform for independent artists to showcase their work, earn some money, and move forward through this difficult year in community solidarity. Like a typical Fringe Festival, artists will have a chance to create any work they desire with complete artistic freedom and be supported by the robust operations of the Toronto Fringe staff and board.

The Digital Toronto Fringe Festival dates have been shifted from June 30 – July 11 to **July 21 – 31, 2021**. During the festival, Fringe companies will present pre-recorded video, audio, and written pieces for audiences to enjoy as part the **Fringe On-Demand** series. Audiences will access content on fringetoronto.com with the purchase of an affordable and accessible membership pass. An additional **Fringe Primetime** series will offer audiences a chance to experience the thrill of a live and interactive Fringe show online.

This year will not be a stop-gap. The Digital Fringe will be a celebration of the Fringe Movement, with the only difference being its location: online. The Digital Fringe will connect to the worldwide Fringe community and widen the networks of indie artists in Toronto, offer practical solutions for access measures and involvement of Deaf and disabled artists, and implement recommendations from an ongoing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Audit. The Digital Fringe will prove that the Fringe spirit can live anywhere – whether you log in from your cozy apartment or from a blanket on the beach. Fringe lives everywhere, and this community won't let a pandemic get in the way of uncensored self-expression. The Fringe lives on.

After considering an outdoor festival for Summer 2021, the Toronto Fringe has decided to move forward with a digital festival to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Fringe has recently signed The POST Promise, a self-declaration of a business' commitment to implement the five key steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. ([Learn more.](#)) Making this decision now also offers certainty to festival artists, who would find it difficult to navigate major changes any later in the production process.

All artists who were selected to be a part of the 2020 festival have been offered the chance to opt-in to the 2021 Digital Fringe Festival. Some have accepted a slot, while others have decided to defer to a planned in-person 2022 festival. **The remaining slots are available to new applications, and a Digital Lottery will be held this spring to fill them.** Like any [CAFF lottery](#), anyone and everyone is encouraged to apply. More details will be released soon regarding festival requirements and how to apply. Artists may bookmark [this page](#) if interested.

At this point in the pandemic, Toronto Fringe has a proven track record of creating exciting and relevant digital experiences. Last summer, during the first wave of the pandemic, Toronto Fringe presented The Fringe Collective. That event was an urgent solution to the crisis facing the performing arts community. Fringe was proud to raise \$28,000 in donations for the artists in the Fringe Collective. In January, Toronto Fringe presented the Next Stage

Community Booster – a boost of energy, creativity, and friendship for those enduring an isolated pandemic winter – which resulted in 13,000+ pageviews on the Fringe’s website in only 10 days.

This summer, the organization is poised to do it again: use its nimble and innovative organizational structure to support independent performing artists, which are the artists who have been hardest hit by this pandemic.

Now Open: Announcing the Digital New Play Contest, the Digital Adams Prize for Musical Theatre, and the Digital 24 Hour Playwriting Contest

The Toronto Fringe is excited to be able to offer artists the chance to have some fun, practice their craft, and win some prize money this spring. These contests are some of Fringe’s most beloved programs, and to be able to offer them in this pandemic year will surely boost the moods and morale of many in the indie theatre community. These programs would not be possible without the support of our contest partners, who believe that these valuable programs should be moving forward, in a safe and innovative way, regardless of the state of the pandemic.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their play or musical rises to the new challenges of performing live and engaging audiences on digital platforms. The winners of each of these contests will be offered a performance slot in the **Fringe Primetime** series of the 2021 Digital Toronto Fringe Festival, as well as production and financial support. Details on each contest below, and more details about **Fringe Primetime** coming soon.

New this year, Fringe has waived the \$35 application fees to all the contests below. Applicants may decide to select a donation level when applying. Funds collected will be used to administer the programs.

The Digital New Play Contest

Sponsored by the Aubrey & Marla Dan Foundation

Do you have an idea for how to make a digital space come to life? Can you imagine a way to use a digital platform (Zoom, etc.) to bring people together for a live theatrical experience? At a time when so many of us feel isolated, this prize calls for applications that bring people together and push the boundaries of what’s possible online.

Your script should be unique, original, and well-suited to the online environment. You should address how this piece will be performed digitally, live, in real time, on a digital platform of your choice.

This contest for playwrights guarantees the winner a free spot in the **Fringe Primetime** series of the 2021 Digital Toronto Fringe Festival, as well as **prize money of \$2000**. Applications are now open and close at noon on March 19, 2021. [Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

The Digital Adams Prize for Musical Theatre

Sponsored by the Pat and Tony Adams Freedom Fund for the Arts

Singing and Zoom – they don’t always go well together. But what if they could? What if you’re the person to solve this riddle? We want to hear from aspiring the Lin Manuel Mirandas in our community and pose the challenge: can a musical thrive on a digital platform?

We encourage artists to submit scripts for musicals that can be performed live, online. You may use the application form to tell us more about how you would pull this off and you may propose the online platform that works best for you. However, we will also consider innovative proposals for pre-recorded pieces.

This contest for composers/playwrights guarantees the winner a free spot in the **Fringe Primetime** series of the 2021 Digital Toronto Fringe Festival, as well as **prize money of \$3000**. Applications are now open and close at noon on March 19, 2021. [Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

The Digital 24 Hour Playwriting Contest

Supported in memory of Penny Arthurs

This contest challenges new and experienced writers to create a script in 24 hours while incorporating four secret elements that will be announced shortly before the contest begins. New this year, we will accept submissions from small groups or collectives, so sign up with your creative BFFs and start to hatch your plans! It's a great way to (digitally) connect with the friends you haven't seen much of this year.

The winning script will be offered a live, digital staged reading as part of the **Fringe Primetime** series during the 2021 Digital Toronto Fringe Festival, as well as **prize money of \$500**. If your script is selected, Fringe will also hire and compensate the creative team needed to perform your script (actors, directors, etc.).

Applications are now open and close at noon on March 19, 2021. The 24 hour writing period starts at 5:00pm on Saturday, March 20 and finishes at 5:00pm on Sunday, March 21. [Click here to learn more and apply.](#)

The Digital Lottery for 2021

As mentioned above, Toronto Fringe will be holding a lottery for digital spots in the festival. Stay tuned to Fringe's newsletter and social media to learn about developments. Interested artists may bookmark this applications page for updates: <https://fringetoronto.com/get-involved/artists/fringe/digital-lottery>

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