



NEWS RELEASE
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BIG TOP FRINGE STARTS WITH A BANG



WINNIPEG, July 18, 2011 – The circus continues in downtown Winnipeg, and Fringe audiences just can't get enough of the Big Top. The ringmaster is pleased to announce that indoor attendance records have been shattered on three of the five days so far, with **33,029** tickets sold through Sunday July 17, up from **32,425** in 2010. Opening day attendance was up 18% over last year with **4,148** tickets sold, starting off the festival with a bang. While official outdoor attendance has yet to be tallied, Festival Producer Chuck McEwen is confident numbers are up again this year, with packed crowds in the Fringe Fairground (AKA Old Market Square) on Thursday at noon, and Friday and Saturday nights. At the halfway point of the festival, BIG TOP FRINGE is walking the tightrope to beating last year's total attendance record.

AT THE FRINGE THIS WEEK:

- The Best of Fest line-up will be announced Wednesday, July 20. Best of Fest shows run in the first two time slots on Sunday, July 24. Once again, 100% of Best of Fest tickets will be available in advance, with half the proceeds going to the performing company, and half going to the Winnipeg Fringe.
- The Manitoba Association of Playwrights will present The Harry S. Rintoul Memorial Award at the MTS Outdoor Stage on the last night of the festival. The award is given for best new Manitoban play at the Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival.
- The Big Top BIZ Noon-Hour Extravaganza continues to rock Old Market Square with noon-hour shows for the rest of the week, including Retro Rhythm Review on Wednesday and Frisco Fred on Thursday.
- Busker circles on Albert and Arthur streets, Kids Fringe every day from noon-6pm, a carousel of entertainment on the Fringe Fairground stage until midnight every night, merchants, vendors and much more!

With beautiful summer weather expected for the rest of the week, there is still plenty of time to run away with the circus. **All our regular venues are air-conditioned, so take a break from the heat and see some shows!** A limited number of Frequent Fringer and Buddy Passes are still available by calling the MTC Box Office at 942-6537 or in person at 174 Market Avenue. There are also plenty of great tickets on sale at the door and at advance tickets. For more details, please call **9-4-FRINGE** (943-7464) or visit www.winnipegfringe.com.

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