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## NEWS RELEASE

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# THE FRINGE FACTORY CRANKS OUT RECORD ATTENDANCE PRODUCES HIGHEST TICKET SALES IN WINNIPEG FRINGE HISTORY

WINNIPEG, JULY 26, 2009 – From July 15-26, the **FRINGE FACTORY** operated on full power as the **22<sup>nd</sup> annual Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival** mass produced 12 days of original, unjuried theatre. Factory foreman **Chuck McEwen** and his crew of Fringe staffers and volunteers worked overtime to meet the demands of a record year. Paid attendance at the 2009 festival reached **81,565**, up 8,843 from last year's final attendance of 72,722, breaking the record for the highest overall ticket sales in Winnipeg Fringe history and for any Canadian Fringe Festival. Over **\$530,000** was returned to the performers, an almost \$50,000 increase from last year's revenue of \$480,243.

"The **FRINGE FACTORY** has always been about producing the highest quality of original live theatre on a large scale, and this year that product has met with an overwhelming response," said Executive Producer Chuck McEwen. "We are so grateful to all of the extraordinarily talented performers who brought their unique brand of performance to both the indoor venues and the Outdoor Stage, for the enjoyment and entertainment of our dedicated Fringers."

Attendance at the MTS Outdoor Stage in Old Market Square (a.k.a. Head Office) dipped a bit from last year with a final total of over **70,000** (including the record-breaking **53,810** who helped celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kids Fringe), down almost 18,000 from last year's total of 88,000. "Despite a few days of rain and cold weather, Fringers donned their hard hats and headed down to Head Office – the hub of Fringe activity and home of Kids Fringe – to take in the quality entertainment on the Outdoor Stage," added McEwen.

On behalf of the festival, McEwen thanked the **809 volunteers** for keeping the machines running at **FRINGE FACTORY**. "Our volunteers were certainly put to the test this year in the face of record crowds. As always, they met the challenge with strength, grace and plenty of good humour. We thank them for their tireless efforts. We also acknowledge everyone else who greased the wheels at **FRINGE FACTORY** – sponsors, funders and the media for their contributions to an exceptional festival."

During the finale of **FRINGE AFTER DARK: The Night Shift** with hosts **Ken Rudderham** and **Tim Cranwill** on the final evening of the festival, Rory Runnells of the Manitoba Association of Playwrights (MAP) presented the **Harry S. Rintoul Memorial Award for Best New Manitoban Play** to **Joseph Aragon** for his musical **Bloodless: The Trial of Burke and Hare**. Joseph received \$500 from MAP and a Superpass for the 2010 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival. This is the second time Joseph has received the Harry S. Rintoul Award – the first was at the 2003 festival for *The Unlikely Sainthood of Madeline McKay*.

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