

“This Beer Festival Has a Theatre Problem!”: The Evolution and Rebranding of the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival

BRIAN BATCHELOR

The Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival was founded in 1981 on the premise that a non-adjudicated, first-come first-served structure combined with bare minimum administrative and financial backing could offer artists and companies a degree of creative freedom not previously seen in Canada. This first festival sold about 7,500 tickets to its forty-five different productions (Brown 88). In 2011, the Edmonton Fringe celebrated its thirtieth anniversary; this iteration of the festival sold 104,142 tickets to its 140 indoor shows (Nicholls, “Fringe Director Exits”). Brian Batchelor examines and traces the first thirty years of the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival through the concept of branding. In particular, he considers how the Edmonton Fringe differentiates itself from other forms of Edmontonian and Canadian theatre; how the Fringe functions as a festival within Edmonton’s arts ecology and urban imaginaries to influence the city’s civic brand, and to attract funding and sponsorships; and how artists within the festival brand themselves and their theatrical products. Batchelor then locates and describes the festival’s beer tents as spaces that illustrate how the Fringe itself has become a theatre ecology colonized by globalized capitalism, producing a creative and economic model that ultimately promotes not just a safer, commercial(ized), and non-innovative theatrical aesthetic but also in fact affirms a neoliberal, entrepreneurial form of theatre practice.

Le festival international Fringe d’Edmonton a été créé en 1981 avec l’idée qu’une structure sans jury opérant sur le principe du premier venu, premier servi et exigeant un minimum d’appui administratif et financier pourrait offrir un plus grand degré de liberté créatrice aux compagnies et aux artistes canadiens. La première année, le festival a vendu environ 7 500 billets et comptait 45 productions différentes (Brown 88). En 2011, le Fringe d’Edmonton fêtait ses trente ans et vendait 104 142 billets pour 140 spectacles intérieurs (Nicholls, « Fringe Director Exits »). Dans cet article, Brian Batchelor examine les trente premières années du festival international Fringe d’Edmonton sous l’optique de la création d’une image de marque. Dans un premier temps, Batchelor cherche à voir comment le Fringe d’Edmonton se démarque des autres formes de théâtre à Edmonton et au Canada; comment il fonctionne au sein de l’écologie des arts et des imaginaires urbains de sorte à participer à l’image de marque de la ville et à s’attirer un appui financier et des subventions; enfin, comment les artistes opérant au sein du festival créent une image de marque pour eux-mêmes et pour leurs productions théâtrales. Dans un deuxième temps, Batchelor situe et décrit les tentes où l’on vend de la bière au festival, des espaces qui illustrent comment le Fringe est lui-même devenu une écologie théâtrale colonisée par le capitalisme mondial, ayant produit un modèle créatif et économique qui, en fin de compte, promeut une esthétique théâtrale plus sûre, plus commercial(isé)e et moins novatrice qui, en outre, appuie une pratique théâtrale néolibérale et entrepreneuriale.



In 1982, the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival was established through a \$50,000 grant bestowed by the City of Edmonton to Chinook Theatre (now Fringe Theatre Adventures), under Artistic Director Brian Paisley. Chinook Theatre aimed to produce a theatrical component to the city's Summerfest activities, which already included popular folk and jazz festivals (Leiren-Young). Inspired in part by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edmonton's Fringe was fueled by a general dissatisfaction with Edmonton's theatre scene: "playwrights, actors, designers, and directors, were, in general, unhappy and impatient with the 'insular nature' of the established theatres—'big and small'" (Paterson 47). Unlike the Edinburgh Fringe, however, the Edmonton Fringe Festival would, for a minimal application fee, provide participating companies with a production venue, technical staff, ticket printing, box office management and front-of-house personnel, and advertising both in a printed Festival Program Guide and on the Fringe grounds. Each company would retain 100 percent of ticket revenue garnered for its production and be completely responsible for artistic content. Most importantly, the Edmonton Fringe Festival would accept productions on a first-come, first-served basis to keep selection uncensored and non-juried and to create a true equal-opportunity venture for artists. At the festival's first incarnation, entitled "The Fringe, a Theatre Event," audiences attended forty-five productions in five venues, and ticket sales numbered approximately 7,500 (Brown 88).

In 2011, the Edmonton Fringe celebrated its thirtieth anniversary with "Fringeopolis," which offered over 1,200 performances in forty-three venues. It was the Fringe's largest festival to date and "broke all box office records by selling 104,142 tickets to its 140 indoor shows in the course of 11 days and nights" (Nicholls, "Fringe"). Despite this growth the festival continued to offer artists a venue, production times, technicians, ticketing, and publicity space, and ensured that artists received all ticket proceeds. As had been the case since 1995, there was much more demand for production spots than available spaces; the shows that did appear in the festival venues had been chosen by the Fringe's lottery system. This particular draw featured 100 allocated spots: thirty international, thirty national, and forty from the Edmonton area (fringetheatre.ca). "Fringeopolis" also included two beer tents, a wine and Internet café, a KidsFringe recreation area, numerous outdoor stages, busker acts, and food and artisan vendors, and featured, for the first time, "Sustainival", an eco-conscious carnival consisting of classic rides and arcade games (fringetheatre.ca). The Fringe's plethora of entertainment options, in addition to its proximity to Whyte Avenue, one of Edmonton's primary retail, restaurant, and nightlife districts, also helped it set attendance records for the number of people attracted to the site: about 576,000 people visited the Fringe's grounds over the course of its run ("Fringe Fest Hopes"). While theatre remains the festival's primary focus, the fact that fewer than one in five visitors to the site attend an indoor show suggests that the festival now plays a different role within the city of Edmonton.

This paper examines the first thirty years of the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival and traces the history of the Fringe through the concept of branding. In particular, it considers how the Edmonton Fringe (known to locals as "the Fringe") brands itself; how the Fringe works within Edmonton's arts ecology and urban imaginaries to influence the

city's civic brand; and how artists within the festival brand themselves and their products.¹ Edmonton's Fringe was the first in North America and is the model that other cities have followed in creating their own Fringe festivals.² While its attendees tend to be residents of Canada, or more specifically Edmonton (and audience demographic statistics are hard to find), the Edmonton Fringe becomes *international* in that it allows its localized audiences the chance to see a variety of innovative international artists, thereby bringing into contact transnational artist and audience communities. Thus its municipal and corporate supporters see the festival as being internationally minded while also celebrating the local. The festival, founded on the idea of fostering the creation of innovative and creative theatrical work, has grown since its inception into a larger community event in which theatre is but a part. By folding ancillary elements and non-theatrical performances into its experiential brand, the contemporary Fringe Festival evolved into a municipal event that then became an arts initiative for corporate and governmental branding. However, this evolution effectively changed the nature and reception of the Fringe: the Edmonton public began to perceive it as more of a municipal party than a theatre event.

Although this transformation has been an organic one, it has nevertheless had larger artistic and social consequences. In order to discuss these, I triangulate a history of the festival's development in Edmonton with a discussion of how the Fringe has branded itself as theatrically and spatially *different*. I then explore the manner in which the Fringe has become a theatre ecology, colonized by globalized capitalism, which ultimately promotes not just a safer, commercial(ized), and non-innovative aesthetic but also in fact affirms a neoliberal, entrepreneurial form of theatre practice. As a Bar Manager during several incarnations of the festival, from 2005 to 2010, I became intrigued by the number of patrons who did not come to the grounds to see theatrical performances, or who did not even know that the Fringe was a theatre festival. This article, and its title, was inspired by a running joke that my fellow staffers and I came up with during our time in the beer tents. Furthermore, I had participated in the festival as a director, producer, and stage manager, and wanted to investigate in detail its artistic and social relationships with the Edmonton public and its artistic and commercial roles in Edmonton's broader theatre milieu.

The Fringe as an Alternative Mode of Theatre Creation and Production

From its inception, the Fringe's theatrical brand has been predicated on difference: a mode of theatrical production that utilized an alternative, unburdened artistic production process, leading, in an ideal situation, to an innovative and creative theatrical product. Edmonton's Fringe was founded as a rejection of and/or a response to dissatisfaction with Edmonton's then exclusive theatre scene and its juried and tightly controlled (top-down) theatrical processes. That is, the Fringe began as an institutional critique of Edmonton's theatre scene. According to Albertan theatre practitioner and prolific Fringe producer Kenneth Brown, theatre artists in Edmonton at that time operated at the behest of many power brokers— from artistic directors to funding bodies to season subscription holders—who controlled and mediated the artistic process and product: stakeholders propagating institutionalized structures that restricted the creation of new and exciting work (91-92). These artistic and

administrative structures follow sociologist Bruce Willems-Braun's note that, in the form of top-down theatrical production, "the economics of production limit what can be produced; rationalized systems of government funding and so-called 'peer' evaluation limit the possibilities for writing and performance" (80). The goal of the Edmonton Fringe, then, was to free up the artist to create whatever he or she wanted, unburdened by the mediating forces and strictures of theatre production found in Edmonton's other theatres. Additionally, while the Fringe was created as an antidote to theatre bastions, such as the regional Citadel Theatre, it was also a response to the "8-o'clock syndrome" (Godfrey) that their seasons facilitated, whereby, to paraphrase Brian Paisley, audience members ate dinner at home or at a local restaurant, attended a "tedious" show, returned home, and "paid off the baby-sitter," all without engaging in meaningful discussion (qtd. in Paterson 52). That is, the Fringe was developed to foster the creation of *interesting* theatrical works that inspired discussion and dialogue. Indeed, the early incarnations of the Fringe provided a "structure for independent theatre production" in which theatre companies were able to work "outside the *established* ideological and material structures for producing theatre" (Paterson 29). In order to accomplish this goal, Paisley felt it important that the artists be as free and as innovative as possible: "I needed to create a 'no excuses kind of theatre event' and then say, 'Here is everything you need, now do whatever you want'" (qtd. in Paterson 51). This model allowed Fringe productions to bypass the need to obtain corporate sponsorship and/or governmental funding to cover their operating costs, since the Fringe's administration acted in this regard.³

For theatre artists, the Fringe provided a form of arm's length or rather "hands-off" funding: "freed by its very paucity of resources, [the Fringe artist] is less restricted by the cultural agenda of corporate sponsors and governmental funding agencies" (Brown 110). The Fringe therefore operated as a democratized theatre structure "whereby any sort of top-down influence has been removed from the artistic process" (90). Importantly, and unlike Edinburgh, Edmonton's model eliminated for its artists the pressures of finding a venue as well as of locating technical equipment and staff. The Fringe would therefore act as an administrative and technical body that relieved artists from these pressures, thereby attracting artists who were doing "interesting, entertaining and challenging work" (101). Accordingly, the Fringe's theatrical brand was established around this notion of theatrical difference based in administrative and therefore artistic freedom: an alternative form of theatre based on a theatrical free market and administratively and technically convenient model of production.

From Theatre Festival to Municipal Party through Artistic and Spatial Difference

The Edmonton Fringe's administrative and creative model proved popular with both artists and crowds. By 1986, the Fringe included 140 performances on thirteen stages and 120,000 site visitors, with artist and audience interest in participating in the festival fueling its growth (Brown 88-89). However, despite this surge in attendance numbers and community enthusiasm, the Fringe had not yet emerged as a premier municipal event, as it was but one of many festivals that occurred during the summer season. Municipal leaders agreed at the time that Edmonton's top cultural event was Klondike Days (K-Days), which, for three years in a row (1986 to 1988), had taken in three times as much municipal and provincial funding as that offered to the Fringe (Nicholls, "Fringe Needs"). K-Days, an exhibition and heritage

celebration modeled loosely after the Calgary Stampede, was a ten-day-long festival founded in 1962 to celebrate Edmonton's cultural ties to the historical Klondike gold rush (Chalmers). The municipal government's preference for K-Days reflects its own attempt to brand Edmonton the "gateway to the North," a billing that Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Montreal were also competing for (Zeigler). K-Days, as a festival celebrating Edmonton's heritage, was better positioned to contribute to this civic urban imaginary. Urban imaginary here refers to the ever-emerging production of the city as a spatial and imaginary entity, the result of the "individually and collectively lived experience of the city, (re)produced by [those that] work, dwell in, and move across urban space" (Edinsor and Jayne 24). In 1989, the city reallocated money from Edmonton's other festivals (including the Fringe) in order to compensate for a K-Days budget shortfall. One Edmonton alderman claimed that "Klondike Days is our most important festival," and then-Mayor Terry Cavanagh reasoned that it was acceptable to cut funds to the other festivals because Klondike Days had larger attendance (MacDonald). Despite its success, it appeared that, to Edmonton's municipal government, the Fringe was still just a theatre festival and not an integral part of the city's cultural imaginary or its municipal brand.

However, the financial and artistic success of the Fringe, and its growing audiences, had an unintended consequence that enhanced the Fringe's brand within the city: audience lineups. Because tickets were only sold one hour prior to show time, audiences had to line up to attend the performance they were interested in. This social gathering became a notable element of audience members' Fringe experience and increased the festival's public visibility. According to Paisley, the lineups themselves helped to shape the festival as a broader cultural event: "Scheduling a number of shows in a number of indoor venues may create a festival, but providing for a continuous carnival atmosphere between theatres, in the parks and on the streets, creates a community celebration" (qtd. in Paterson 153). The lineups, in turn, attracted artists from other productions who would pitch their shows to potential audience members. At the same time, musicians were drawn to the waiting crowds, setting the roots for the street performer spectacle that would become a major festival component. In the festival's third year, the Fringe closed down 83rd Avenue from 103rd Street to 104th Street to traffic, and this area became the nexus for the Fringe for the next three decades (fringetheatre.ca). This carving-out of territory would go on to demarcate the Fringe as more than just a theatre event within Edmonton but a proper, full-blown street festival. In 1985, the festival established a single stage to cater to outdoor side-performances and, in 1986, it added a second stage. By 1989, "the streets had become an event of their own" (Paterson 153).

Furthermore, in 1986, artisan and food vendors set up booths, expanding the list of offerings on the grounds (153). The gathering crowds and street events attracted a number of families, and so in order to incorporate this larger audience, the Fringe started KidsFringe (initially sponsored by Crayola) at a nearby school park, incorporating "a petting zoo, the Animaze, the Nylon Zoo and the Crayola Craft Tent" (fringetheatre.ca). These additions not only added to audiences' different options for activities during the Fringe, but also, more importantly, spatially ordered the Fringe's brand within Edmonton's urban space and civic imagination. Willems-Braun states that this transformation of urban space into "festival space" is a defining feature of the Fringe Festival as a social phenomenon (78). This (albeit temporary) spatial differentiation furthers the notion of difference on which the Fringe is

branded: the Fringe is differentiated from the rest of Edmonton in terms of space that is itself also defined by the difference of theatrical process and product. The differentiation here also allows for the otherwise paradoxical notion of a *fringe* that is centrally located within Edmonton. Here, the festival's distinct spatiality and its additional outdoor events "expand its accessibility," allowing a public not interested in theatre but willing to experience the festival to participate (Willems-Braun 97). Thus Fringe audiences were presented with a space or grounds differentiated from the urban spatiality that existed there throughout the year and offered various kinds of experiential engagement therein.

As the festival cemented itself within Edmonton's urban and cultural landscapes, it also became known as much for its carnival atmosphere as its presentation of alternatively produced theatre. Accordingly the Fringe became, oddly enough, a single, cohesive event defined by a multiplicity of differences—different productions and different kinds of Fringe experiences, some theatrical some not, all on offer and occurring within a differentiated urban space. Indeed, the Fringe itself used this concept of difference to attract audiences and further its experiential brand within Edmonton, describing the performances and subject matter its artists tackled during the 1994 festival as "loopy" and "earnest" and "lunacy" (Dambrofsky). Interestingly, the very theme of that year's festival celebrated this notion of a whole made from multiple parts: "Frankenfringe." Willems-Braun argues that it is precisely the indeterminacy found within the mixing of artistic and spatial differences, as well as the mulling of crowds, which makes Fringe festivals a popular community event (81). Theatre scholar Douglas Arrell compares the Edmonton Fringe event to a "single, multifaceted artwork" (24). For Arrell, the Fringe served as a postmodern art experience in which choice reigns supreme so that the variety of performances collectively "subvert each other, so that after seeing five incredibly diverse shows [. . .] one tends to float free from any standards, artistic or social, and simply enjoy the 'play of differences'" (24). This notion can be observed in the myriad show posters that plaster the Whyte Avenue area during the festival: a collection of differentiated theatre offerings that, as a total assemblage, produces and marks the Fringe's imaginative space within Edmonton. Accordingly, not only does the Fringe offer Edmonton audiences a different sort of urban experience, it also makes this difference accessible to multiple demographics. In marking itself as a unique event within Edmonton by differentiating itself both spatially and selling itself in terms of the variety of (different) events it offers, the Fringe shifted its image as both a theatre and a municipal festival.

The problem, however, is that the public and the media came to appreciate the Edmonton Fringe more for its ancillary events and for its particular brand of difference than as a festival heralding alternative theatre. In 1991, *Globe and Mail* reporter Christopher Dafoe observed that "The Fringe is a street scene, a hangout, a summer fair, a circus" and that it is "clear that not all those people flock to Old Strathcona to see theatre" ("Is the Scene"). In commenting on the Fringe's carnival atmosphere, he highlighted the outdoor acts, stating, "There are street entertainers—jugglers, musicians and mimes—who probably draw more crowds than does any one play." In 2002, the fashion and lifestyle magazine *Flare* featured the Edmonton Fringe in an exposé on summer fun in Canadian cities and emphasized not the festival's theatre, but rather its party atmosphere and proximity to a popular shopping district: "This festival throws one of the best parties around and Fringe activities centre [sic] around Whyte Avenue between 103rd and 104th Streets" (Ashbee, Palmer, and Wild).

Theatre, Food, or Beer Festival? Selling and Consuming Artistic and Spatial Difference

By 2008, local journalists started to lament as much as acknowledge these ancillary elements. *Edmonton Journal* columnist Todd Babiak states that too many people “equate Fringing with hanging around in the beer tents, or watching a street performer or two, buying a leather bracelet or eating a plate of bhoona” and pleads for Fringe-goers to “ACTUALLY SEE SOME PLAYS” (“Scared”). Babiak’s comments here reflect Willems-Braun’s observation that audiences experience the Fringe as a form of fetishized difference, marked out through sensory reception: “the fringes are felt, heard, smelled, and most pervasively seen” (92). Notably, it is *not* the Fringe’s theatre that festivalgoers sense here. Even in the face of record numbers at the 2011 festival, outdoor activities continued to function as most attendees’ primary Fringe experience. *Edmonton Journal* reporter Marta Gold remarks on that festival’s record-breaking opening weekend numbers and asks festivalgoers what attracts them to the festival. One states, “I’ve never actually seen a play [. . .]. We come to eat elephant ears and walk around, just to get some sun.” Another patron responds that, “It’s just a really nice day so it’s good timing to come and check it out,” and adds, “I find it quite entertaining with the street performers, and I do like the little artisans too.” While Babiak seems to feel more optimistic regarding the number of people actually seeing plays, he still equates the Fringe with eating and drinking: “They will come to the theatre district, and not only to eat bhoona and linger in the beer tent” (“Fringeopolis”). Rather than offer Fringe-goers an alternative or utopic spatiality within which theatre plays a key role, the festival commodifies differences, “making it [theatre] something that can be consumed by those for whom distinction is derived from its consumption (and who have the leisure and resources to do so)” (Willems-Braun 92). In expanding to outdoor spaces and folding those secondary elements—the street performers, artisans and vendors, and KidsFringe—into the total festival, the Fringe evolved from a theatre event into a larger municipal, family-friendly party ultimately defined by the production, selling and therefore objectification of spatial and experiential difference within Edmonton’s urban imaginary.

This notion of consumption can be spatially mapped out in the festival’s beer tents, which operate as sites and spaces of consumption but also metonymically stand for the consumption of the Fringe; paradoxically, they also contain the Fringe’s political and socially interventionist potential. Beer tents became one of the Fringe’s primary draws and are largely responsible for creating the Fringe’s carnival atmosphere. Initially, the festival’s producers erected the beer tents out of the need to create a communal space for the crowds of boisterous Fringe-goers and, at the same time, with the intention of fostering a relationship between artists and audiences (Paisley, qtd. in Paterson 151–52). The beer tents therefore serve as a locus for the Fringe’s diverse publics, a gathering point for the people who come and take in the festival. Of concern, however, is that the popular beer tents became one of the festival’s defining aspects; while they served as a congregation point, they also attracted patrons only interested in experiencing the festival’s atmosphere and alcoholic beverages. This effect could be due, to some extent, to the Fringe’s scheduled position towards the end of the summer, a characteristic pointed out by David Cheoros, Festival Producer from 1997 to 2001: “People are interested in one final blowout, whether it’s an artistic blowout or just a party.

That's a huge part of our success. They love when we happen" (qtd. in Ohler). In this manner, the Edmonton public has positioned the Fringe Festival as the culmination of the city's busy summer festival season.

Beer Tents as Sites of Social Intermingling and Corporate Colonization

Curiously, the Fringe's party culture and its family friendly environment do not conflict, in part because the Fringe draws both crowds at different times: families primarily visit during the day and throughout the week, while the drinking crowd appears at night and on the weekends. However, it is precisely the intermingling of people from diverse backgrounds that lends the Fringe a political and subversive potential. Willems-Braun observes that Fringe festivals operate as discursive social arenas that can (dis)articulate and (re)signify not only social identities/roles but also the "social and spatial organizations of a city" (76-77). Peter Dickinson notes that an audience's "shared aesthetic taste, geography, identitarian affiliation, or socio-economic status" often reaffirms the (inter- and intra-) social relations inherent in a performance event (24). The Fringe however allows no such possibility since "the structure of the event encourages confrontation with difference" (Willems-Braun 100). The beer tent here functions to temporarily level or flatten social hierarchies, (theatre) producer/consumer, divides, geographical separations (between local audiences and international performers), and differing interests. The beer tent is therefore a "space of connection and contestation" that allows those who inhabit it to confront "different sentimental attachments, stranger forms of intimacy, new narratives of embodiment and political participation" (Dickinson 23-24). The Edmonton Fringe's beer tents thusly operate as a tool to bring diverse groups of Edmontonians — not to mention transnational publics — together, even if some of those who have come to the Fringe are unaware that it is a theatre festival.

Nonetheless, as sites of consumption that attract a high concentration of people, the beer tents become a lightning rod for corporate sponsorship, leading to the further obfuscation of the theatre and performance communities that comprise the Fringe Festival. Corporate sponsor Big Rock Brewery (Calgary-based) has supported the Edmonton Fringe since 1994 and, as of 2011, had been the exclusive beer tent sponsor for at least ten years. In exchange for supplying the festival with beer at production cost, Big Rock gains access to an automatic clientele and their logo's presence at the two busiest locations on the Fringe grounds: the north and south beer tents.⁴ The monies earned from drink sales at these tents can account for between twenty and twenty-five percent of the Fringe's overall revenue stream, remembering that 100 percent of ticket revenues are returned to the artists (Paterson 130; Marck). The irony here is that over time the Fringe's own revenue stream has become reliant on those festivalgoers who are less interested in the theatre and more interested in spending time in the beer tent. By developing specific spaces for alcohol consumption and promoting them to a drinking public, the Edmonton Fringe developed a necessary additional funding channel. But this move nevertheless resulted in the Festival's de-emphasis of theatre. This process is perhaps best articulated by the fact that Fringe artists tape handbills and posters to the tops of the beer tent tables (while some have created advertisements in the form of coasters). However, while these publicity ventures

fade or rip or are ruined by nature, patrons, and spilled beer, Big Rock's banners, posters, flags, and umbrellas remain unscathed.

Corporate and Governmental Support for an Internationally-Minded Localized Brand

By creating a festival experience that was accessible to a wide Edmonton demographic, the Fringe also furthered its “festival” brand within an Edmonton community that already, as described, boasted numerous arts and heritage festivals throughout the summer months. Corporations and governments could support both the Fringe as a cultural event and the Fringe’s administration as the facilitators of this event without having to endorse the theatre being produced. Erika Paterson outlines that, “For the most part, the government agencies that fund the Fringe do so to fulfill objectives that have little to do with what the Fringe provides for artists, or for what those artists produce; they support the event, not necessarily the theatre” (10). Moreover, the Fringe, as a cultural event, could be folded into municipal discourses of neighbourhood revitalization and tourism (Willems-Braun 89). In 1994, the City of Edmonton reached a deal with Chinook Theatre to lease half of the city-owned Old Strathcona Bus Barns, a space that was largely unused outside of the Fringe Festival, for one dollar a year, with the idea that Chinook Theatre would turn it into a multipurpose venue and cultural centre (Kostash). Theatre scholar Michael McKinnie notes that, “theatres are an effective index of civic self-fashioning” (18). Importantly, however, this self-fashioning often operates as a means of also attracting private capital by shaping the city’s imaginary so that potential investors and residents view “the city, and [their] place within it, in a more comforting and pleasurable way once a certain level of economic security [and, I would add, neighbourhood prosperity] is reached” (11). Here, the Fringe Festival, as a theatre site but also as a location of cultural production, became a potential conduit to breathe new life into the local Old Strathcona area, then “littered with abandoned buildings and store fronts” (Simons). By being allocated a permanent cultural space, the Fringe demonstrated its increased brand in Edmonton—both in the sense of gaining possession of a demarcated space and in that its profile had grown within the auspices of the municipal government. This Fringe brand was further defined when, in 1995, Chinook Theatre renamed itself Fringe Theatre Adventures (FTA), tying it and the Bus Barns space to the festival event. FTA became responsible for the Fringe Festival, in addition to running seasons of children’s theatre and managing the Bus Barns venue as a rental space for other theatre companies throughout the rest of the year. The deal therefore shifted Fringe space from being a temporary pocket of festival spatiality overwriting the logics of urban design to a permanent space carved out of the city’s urban imaginary; it also marked a tangible space that could be supported by both governments and corporations.

The Fringe Festival’s new permanent home facilitated additional funding support from corporate and federal government sponsors, again tied to the Fringe’s “eventness” rather than to its facilitation of theatre creation and presentation. The festival’s funding was bolstered in 1998 when TransAlta, the Calgary-based international power and energy provider/wholesaler, injected three million dollars, over a total of four years, into a Bus Barns revitalization project (in addition to over two million dollars in provincial funds and two

million from federal sources) that created a state-of-the-art cultural centre and Fringe headquarters, known as the TransAlta Arts Barns (Nicholls, “Fringe”).⁵ The name of TransAlta’s associated fundraising campaign is “Where the world comes to play,” indicating the Fringe’s (and Edmonton’s) aspirations of world-class cultural status and the transnational range of artists attracted to the festival. Robert Westbury, Vice-President of Corporate Outreach for TransAlta, and the campaign manager (and the man for whom the largest theatre in the complex is named), lists the variety of festival-related components behind TransAlta’s corporate support for Fringe Theatre Adventures in a 1999 *Edmonton Journal* editorial: “TransAlta is committed to helping the Fringe invent a new future for itself, a future in which theatre buffs, music lovers, film aficionados, proud parents, budding actors, established celebrities, street performers and craft makers can come together.” He also references the Fringe’s global brand and compliments the festival’s ability to “constantly remake itself to remain at the forefront attracting groups and audiences from a world base.” Both the governments and the sponsoring corporations, then, give financial support to the Fringe based on its status as an *event*, not as a collection of artistic productions. How then, does this colonization of festival spaces by corporate and governmental brands impact the Fringe’s art ecology?⁶

The Fringe Ecology as a Free Market Economy

Into its fourth decade, the Fringe has become an important avenue through which the city of Edmonton self-fashions its urban imaginary; however, such self-fashioning happens through the channels and networks of global capitalism and markets. It is important to note here that the Fringe is indeed international in the sense that it attracts international artists: it reserves about twenty-five percent of its allocated indoor productions for international audiences, artists, and companies (fringetheatre.ca). However, unlike other international festivals in Canadian cities—Luminato in Toronto, Calgary’s High Performance Rodeo, Vancouver’s PuSH Festival, and Festival TransAmérique in Montreal, for instance—the Edmonton Fringe (and other similar Canadian Fringe festivals) does not curate and import specific international artists that operate as markers for a city’s cultural and social capital within a “global economic hierarchy” (Kwon 54). The Edmonton Fringe does not attract big-name celebrities per se but instead acts as a platform for, and caters to, lesser-known touring artists. Rather than use well-known, powerhouse world artists to establish a global urban brand, the Fringe does the opposite and bases its brand on the notion of a theatrical free market art economy, a notion that I will return to below, that *attracts* international attention. As such, all three levels of government, in addition to Canadian corporations (with global interests) such as TransAlta, can support the Fringe as an internationally minded cultural festival. Nevertheless, like these other international festivals, the Fringe operates as what Ric Knowles calls governmental and/or corporate “showplaces” that serve as an “international market for cultural and other ‘industries’” (181). Strathcona Business Association Executive Director Shirley Lowe highlights this connection between the Fringe Festival and other industries when she notes that the Fringe is “our strongest and most unique arts industry in this city [. . .]. It’s a continuing tourism product” (qtd. in Peters). Likewise, in a recent appeal for federal governmental support, (since retired) FTA Executive Director Julian Mayne stressed the economic importance of the Fringe, citing an independent study by a Toronto firm that concluded the Fringe had “contributed \$10 million to the Edmonton economy” in 2009 (Peters).

In order to be considered a valuable cultural enterprise nationally, the Edmonton Fringe needed to stress its economic and industrial benefits. These discourses demonstrate how the Fringe, as an international festival, nevertheless operates as “a theatrical version of late-capitalist globalization, postmodern marketplaces for the exchange, not so much of culture as of cultural *capital*” (Knowles 181). For Knowles, the theatre productions mounted within these globalized festival contexts “are significant primarily as products, and can only ‘mean’—or be culturally *productive* (rather than *reproductive*)—insofar as they are considered to be [. . .] about the promotional public construction of national cultures and identities” (188). That is, the products traded within these international festivals are manifestations of corporatized nationalisms. At the Edmonton Fringe, however, no such productions of national identity take place: there are no productions by the National Theatre, or even, more regionally, by the Citadel Theatre. Instead, the product/identity/structure sold and traded upon here is actually one specific to the Fringe: a Fringe aesthetic (which I will explore next) produced by a (globalized) free market theatre economy and the notions of privatization and corporatization of culture.

In other words, the Edmonton Fringe becomes a cultural space in which globalized capitalism repurposes theatrical enterprise according to specific market logics that favour profitability over innovation and creativity. Although the Fringe has gotten bigger and bigger, and so has its attendance, its audience is still stretched thin, meaning smaller audiences spread out over more shows. Therefore, producing companies must take certain economic realities into account. Journalist Mark Leiren-Young argues that even a sold-out run in a 200-seat theatre, with a ticket price of twelve dollars, would only bring in \$16,800, and that “With a cast of nine, \$17,000 doesn’t stretch far, especially once you factor in costs for rehearsals and development, or for taking the time to write a script.” The end result is that, in order to maximize profits, companies produce more plays with smaller casts and lower associated costs. Brown comments that, “Fringe productions are after all business ventures, and as in all business ventures, the desire to succeed financially may override other considerations” (110).

While Brown describes a Fringe aesthetic as one that relies on the innovative use of minimal resources, that same scarcity of resources inherent in Fringe production can be as much artistically limiting as it is creatively freeing. Playwright Brad Fraser, who launched his career at the Edmonton Fringe, states, “In terms of full-length plays rather than one-person shows, the Fringe can be limiting for writers and, in the worst scenarios, can actually ghettoize new work” (qtd. in Leiren-Young). Brown echoes these sentiments and admits that the logistical and economic factors placed on artists can restrict their choices: “The kind of material that is most suited to Fringe production is that which is strongly based on writing and performance, rather than technical values. Moreover, the technicalities of the festival dictate that large-cast plays pay their participants less than small-cast plays” (98). Furthermore, given the festival’s carnival atmosphere, it is much easier to pitch comedies to the crowds, particularly those in the beer tent, than to sell dramas, tragedies, or plays that deal with serious issues. In a 2008 *Edmonton Journal* article contemplating what comprises “Fringe theatre,” Bryan Birtles asks where the challenging and experimental theatre productions are: “The vast majority of plays listed in this year’s Fringe program are comedies, and of those many fall into what has become known as the “Fringe genre”—one- or two-person shows with little or no set, designed to maximize laughs and profits.” Calgarian playwright and past participant

Ken Cameron comments also that “the cruel economic facts of the situation force many performers to accept a simple mathematical formula: playwriting + comedy = money” (11). The fact is, within this specific Fringe ecology, plays are developed—written and/or chosen—specifically according to this logic, effectively reducing the innovative and alternative works the Fringe Festival was originally founded to foster.

The Fringe as an Art Economy that Produces Sameness

A further problem here is that this capitalistic logic not only impacts the shows themselves, but it also takes over the festival’s entire experiential brand so that the difference (in theatre and in spatiality) is reduced to a commodity that becomes increasingly similar and easily identifiable. This phenomenon is best demonstrated through the establishment of what Brown calls “Fringemachines”: artists whose identities and artistic products have become routinely associated with the Fringe itself, often due to their sheer, prolific output as (primarily) playwrights and producers (“Re: Fringemachines”). These artists are named and celebrated in the Edmonton media, which further affirms their brands in the festival’s theatre ecology: “The Fringe relied heavily on a roster of well known Edmonton ‘names.’ As one local newspaper put it, ‘Even a quick perusal of the festival guide underlines the crush of familiar names associated with productions—Trevor Schmidt, Darrin Hagen, Chris Craddock and Marty Chan—on top of a few creators who are almost synonymous with this event’” (Scott). David Belke, Stewart Lemoine, and Brown himself can be added to this list.⁷ Note, for instance, *Edmonton Journal* columnist Paula Simons’s reaction to the annual Festival Program Guide and list of people whose work she would like to see: “I still love the Fringe, still love poring over that fat glossy program. A new Stewart Lemoine? Check. A new David Belke? But of course. A new Ken Brown? All present and accounted for.” In the *Globe and Mail*, Dafoe names Belke and Hagen as Fringe must-sees and singles out Lemoine as inherently connected to the Fringe (“All the City’s a Stage”). While they receive less mention from Edmonton’s media, touring artists such as T.J. Dawe and Jayson McDonald (Canadian) as well as Jem Rolls (British) are also Fringemachines and often appear at Fringes across Canada (Brown, “Re: Fringemachines”).

While the media has established these artists as familiar brands that have, in a sense “already been declared ‘worth watching’” (Scott), these artists have also established themselves through their continued presence at the festival. In some cases, they have remounted past successes or staged sequels to previously well-received and economically successful work (often with a same or similar casts).⁸ Here theatrical practice has become economic practice: the Fringe becomes a marketplace that trades on difference (as a commodity and an experience). Within these theatrical transactions, it is “the production and consumption of ‘difference’ that marks these events” (Willems-Braun 78). However, difference is but a marker for cultural capital since the individual shows themselves are not inherently different from each other, and often, being remounts or sequels, these productions are not inherently different from year to year. Rather than sell a form of theatrical difference, the Fringe model sells theatrical sameness to its audiences. While the Fringe might reorder this space according to its own temporary festival logic, this logic is nevertheless already one of capitalist production and consumption. It follows that, instead of producing innovative and experimental

theatre, the Fringe becomes a spatialized capitalist free market that “tends to encourage certain choices, and that what might be touted as a celebration of the margins (it is called the Fringe, after all!) is driven by a desire for the familiar,” often at the expense of audience and media recognition of untested artists (Scott). Here the Fringe’s brand or notion of difference remains as something to be consumed and experienced, but what this difference amounts to is, in the end, much of a sameness.

A Neoliberal Fringe and the Fringe Artist as “Artrepreneur”

More problematically, the Fringe has become a space in which to affirm and even celebrate neoliberal ideologies and entrepreneurship. Another unintentional consequence of the Fringe’s unmitigated growth is the recent rise of BYOVs (Bring Your Own Venues) as part of the festival’s theatre offerings. BYOVs, first used by the Fringe in 1992, were intended as a means to include and welcome site-specific performances outside of the Fringe’s jurisdiction (fringetheatre.ca). Artists using this format could include their performances in the Fringe program but pay a smaller artist fee since they were not using the festival’s spaces or crews. In its last decade, the Fringe has seen a rapid growth and use of BYOVs that both celebrates its artist-first ethos but conflicts with its origins as a theatrical process with as little artistic intervention as possible. In 1992, there were three BYOVs (Levesque), and in 2003, there were nine (“Fabsolutely”). By 2011, the number of BYOVs had grown to thirty-two—up fourteen from two years prior (Nicholls, “Theatre Town”). While many of these venues were orchestrated by artists who wanted to explore a certain space, or wished to produce their work at the Fringe but had not won space in the lottery, others saw the venues’ potential for exhibiting a curated series. In 2008, the artistic operators of one of the Fringe’s official (and first) venues, the Varscona Theatre, located in the centre of the festival site, decided to turn it into a BYOV, allowing the four theatre companies who resided in the theatre to decide who had access to the space during the festival.

Some might see this trend as a push towards giving artists more control and agency over their respective performance spaces even though it also erases a qualitative difference between Edmonton’s Fringe and its Edinburgh counterpart. Although this observation might be true, this transition also enforces a form of theatrical favouritism. For instance, the Varscona consortium—Shadow Theatre, Teatro La Quindicina (Stewart Lemoine’s company), Rapid Fire Theatre, and Die-Nasty—ensured that (only) their own productions—or productions the companies curated, often from affiliates—be presented at the festival year-after-year, letting those companies bypass the lottery selection system (Nicholls, “Varscona Passes”). It is also possible to perceive the BYOV phenomenon as a form of quality control and artistic curation. Other venues have, since the Varscona’s withdrawal as one of the festival’s official venues, also started to curate mini-seasons within the Fringe: the Strathcona Public Library (on the Fringe grounds) and the Stanley E. Milner Public Library (located downtown) are both recently established BYOVs whose shows are chosen by MAA and PAA Theatre, a production company started by David Cheoros (“Strathcona Library BYOV”).

Again the growth of BYOV venues is not in itself problematic and indeed could open up additional spaces for innovative and creative theatre within the Fringe’s specific theatre ecology. However, the BYOV phenomenon is also troubling in a more insidious

manner: it promotes and normalizes in art and theatre practices the capitalistic and neoliberal ideologies involved in entrepreneurialism. In this case, BYOVs promote the idea of the artist as entrepreneur or what Jen Harvie, citing others such as Evelyne Brink, would call the *artrepreneur*. For Harvie, the artrepreneur is a form of art practice that celebrates individualism and self-interest while emphasizing “productivity over other potential values” (23). In this manner, the artrepreneur “models neoliberalism, the contemporary form of economic practice that privileges the ‘liberty’ of individuals to trade as they please and, in so doing, promotes private enterprise within apparently ‘free’ or ‘open’ markets” (63). Here the supposedly open theatre ecology of the Fringe instead becomes a space in which individual artists can carve out and stake claim to their own performance spaces—in this case, BYOVs. Rather than supporting the community space and atmosphere of the Fringe, these spaces spread attendees out further spatially (including across town and off the site proper) while increasing the sheer competition for potential audiences. Interestingly, Fringe Theatre Adventures has facilitated the growth of BYOVs in the name of festival growth and arts prosperity (Nicholls, “The Life”). The Fringe has all but exhausted the possible arts venues in the Old Strathcona area, so the only avenue for growth is effectively off site. Accordingly, the Fringe works this neoliberal ideology into its social and performance frameworks: it masquerades this individualistic and entrepreneurial mode of thinking as a byproduct of theatre and festival success. By encouraging artists to find additional BYOV venues in the name of festival expansion, the Fringe not only reconfigures its own theatrical ecology, but it also realigns the expectations and practices of its performance and theatre artists, producing or reaffirming artrepreneurialism as normalized theatrical practice.⁹

The Beer Festival’s *Theatre* Problem

I would like to return to the beer tent, which becomes an appropriate and productive lens through which to examine the Edmonton Fringe Festival in both its cultural problematics and its social efficacies. The beer tent here operates as a site of consumption that can stand in for the festivalgoer’s consumption of spatial and artistic/theatrical difference espoused through the Fringe theatre model. At the same time, as a point of exchange, the beer tent opens up discussions into the festival as a capitalist market. As outlined, as a sponsored location, it raises issues of corporate sponsorship and the privatization/corporatization of the Fringe’s performance ecology. It represents the ease with which audiences and performers (and their respective spaces) are caught up in and interpellated into globalized capitalist and neoliberal machinations. It also leads to further discussions of how Fringe attendees—both audiences and performers—might themselves be caught up in and produce these larger performance and economic networks as performing consumers (Wickstrom) and/or as prosumers (Harvie). That is, how might those attendees in the beer tent (and on the Fringe grounds) actualize and produce these sites as both differentiated and corporatized spaces that they then, in turn, consume?

Nonetheless, the tents remain spaces in which social groups of differing interests and backgrounds comingle, a condition that characterizes the political potential of Fringe festivals and performance/theatre in general. Michael McKinnie notes that the theatre,

despite being a space occupied by the (global) market, is still “valued as a way to create social bonds between people and their environment” (9). He states further that theatre that has become imbricated into this globalized market system, in cities, can nevertheless both affirm and subvert its market logics (11). It is still quite possible then for Fringe productions and for the festival itself to become forms of socially engaged performance. I want to focus on the social part here because the Fringe has always been, since its inception, about creating a space for dialogue and discussion between artists and their publics. Through the critical engagement of spectators, performers, and passersby, the Fringe becomes both an urban space and a festival space “transversed by multiplicity, resulting both in the dissemination of multiple discourses and the negotiation of subjectivity within and between them” (Willems-Braun 100-1). Theatre and performance, despite being increasingly marginalized and homogenized within the festival, but because they deal in differentiations, are nevertheless key to this process. Peter Dickinson, in his discussion on how local performances come to bear in more international contexts, notes that, “[t]he local spaces of performance, and the persons within whom it is embodied, constitute sites where broader political engagements and movements [. . .] might be initiated” (11). That is, as a space for conduction of multiple forms of what Harvie would call “aesthetically turned’ socially turned art” (20), the Fringe Festival ultimately has utopic and world-fashioning potential. This is in fact the “Beer Festival’s” theatre *problem* that I refer to in this article’s title: theatre and performance’s capacity to disrupt capitalist and neoliberal logics that lay claim over them.

I end with a call for more research into the Canadian Fringe Festival model. Both Shannon Jackson (2011) and Jen Harvie have taken up and examined the social and political systems and structures through which socially engaged art (in the United States and in England respectively) is made. Because the Canadian Fringe was founded as an alternative form of theatre production, and because it has seemingly been caught up in larger globalized flows of capital, it would be highly productive to bring their discussions of neoliberalism, spectatorships, and art practices to bear on the Canadian Fringe. Similarly, Ric Knowles has discussed in depth the free trade of national and corporate brands that occurs within large international festivals (including the Edinburgh Fringe) and how this has affected the production and reception of specific shows. However, the Canadian Fringe model does not operate in the same manner as these larger (most often curated) festivals; it has its own benefits, nuances, and drawbacks (some of which I have charted here). What happens when we think of the Fringe as an alternative to these larger festivals, which in Canada happen to be located in the major cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal? The sheer number of people involved in Fringe festivals—performers, staff, volunteers, spectators, and attendees—suggests that we should look further at the structures and processes that define these festivals as major municipal and theatre events. Knowles’s materialist semiotic approach to reading performance events would be fruitful to this endeavour; a question that Knowles might ask of the Fringe is whether alternatively produced theatre is really alternative? Lastly, because the Fringe model has largely taken hold outside of Canada’s largest municipal centres, “whose theatre community is too large and stable for a Fringe to exert a major influence” (Cameron 11), continued research into various Fringe Festivals would continue the provincialization of study into Canada’s alternative theatre.

The Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival was founded as an institutional critique of Edmonton's then tightly-controlled, top-down theatre creation and production model. Its foundational premise was that a non-adjudicated and first-come, first-served structure combined with bare minimum administrative and financial backing could offer artists and companies a degree of creative freedom not previously seen in Edmonton (or Canada). Thus the Fringe began as a theatrical brand based on differentiation both of space in Edmonton and of its theatrical product. In the process of making this event accessible to Edmontonians, the Fringe folded numerous non-theatrical spaces and outdoor performances into its brand: food and artisan vendors, a children's play area, the Whyte Avenue shopping district, amusement rides, and beer tents. These other facets have, in turn, redefined the Fringe as a community event, attracting governments and corporations to invest in the Fringe by claiming and demarcating space within the Fringe grounds and de-emphasizing the theatre part of the festival. This process has effectively reconjugated the Fringe space, overlaying it with a logic based on global capital and profitability. This, in turn, has impacted the forms of theatre the model encourages: companies have established their own brand aesthetic by producing sequels and remounts while others create more mainstream, often comedic fare that, while entertaining, is far from the subversive or challenging performances that the Fringe ethos originally fostered. Not only has this effectively erased the theatrical differentiation and innovative work that the Fringe was founded upon, but it has also recast Fringe-making as an entrepreneurial, individualistic endeavour rather than as an alternative, innovative, or interventionist practice.

Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this essay was presented as part of the Theatre and Brand Politics Seminar during the 2012 Canadian Association for Theatre Research conference. My thanks go to Marlis Schweitzer and Laura Levin, the seminar coordinators, and to the other participants for their helpful comments.
- 2 Outside Edmonton and within Canada, there are currently Fringe Festivals (based on the Edmonton model) in Victoria, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, St. John, Charlottetown, and Halifax. There are also Fringes in the United States and in Australia that use Edmonton's fringe model ("Member Festivals").
- 3 That said, during recent festivals it has not been uncommon to see productions with sponsors in the form of smaller, localized businesses. Furthermore, within the past couple of seasons, artists have also started to conduct personal fundraising campaigns for their productions using social media.
- 4 This section is based on my own observations while working for the Fringe over the course of five festivals, in addition to what information I could find on sponsorship agreements. Drink revenues increased in 2010 when the Fringe took on the sole responsibility of selling all beverages, including Coca-Cola products (another sponsor) on festival grounds. Previously, food vendors were allowed to sell non-alcoholic beverages.
- 5 This sponsorship deal expired in 2013. On 1 April 2013 FTA announced a new five-year partnership deal with ATB Financial as the primary sponsor of both the Arts Barns and the Fringe Festival (fringetheatre.ca).

- 6 See also Peter Dickinson's "PuShing Performance Brands in Vancouver," which explores the same questions but in regards to Vancouver's PuSh Festival; Dickinson's paper emerged from the same 2012 CATR seminar.
- 7 Without the space to discuss these artists further, I can characterize Belke and Lemoine by their comedies, while Brown produces a diversity of styles and genres, including comedies, one-man shows, and historical dramas. Brown also notes that the term "Fringemachine" further refers to these artists' ability to produce one or more shows every year (Re: Fringemachine).
- 8 See Scott for a breakdown of remounts and sequels that occurred during the Fringe's twentieth year in 2001.
- 9 Importantly, the Fringe has always encouraged a certain entrepreneurial, do-it-yourself artistic ethos, and these traits in and of themselves are not neoliberal. What I want to flag here is the folding of neoliberal ideas of growth and success into the Fringe's performance ecology as well as the atomization of Fringe communities by the increased use of BYOVs and curated venues. I am concerned here by how increased competition has started to shift the Fringe's theatre ecology towards a more explicitly consumerist model of production, and I wonder what effects this might have on future artists and audiences.

Works Cited

- Arrell, Douglas. "Paradigm Shifts at the Box Office." *Canadian Theatre Review* 66 (1991): 20-24. Print.
- Ashbee, Karen, Tammy Palmer, and Denise Wild. "Part 2 of our Ultimate Guide to Summer Fun in the Cities." *Flare* 28.2 (2002): 24. *ProQuest*. Web. 11 Feb. 2012.
- Babiak, Todd. "Fringeopolis, for Those in Search of an Authentic Civic Identity; Working from the Bottom Up, Edmonton has Made this Wildly Successful Phenomenon our Own." *Edmonton Journal* 10 Aug. 2011: A5. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 11 Jan. 2012.
- . "Scared of the Dark? That's no Excuse to Miss the Plays; Soul-Searching, Life-Changing Theatre to be found in the Venues between the Beer Tents and Bhoona." *Edmonton Journal* 14 Aug. 2008: D1. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 11 Jan. 2012.
- Birtles, Bryan. "How Fringe is Fringe? Shouldn't There be More to a Theatre Festival than One-Handers and Breezy Comedies?" *Vue Weekly* 13 Aug. 2008: 669. Web. 29 Apr. 2012.
- Brown, Kenneth. "A Fringe of What? The Three Streams of Canadian Theatre." MA Thesis. U of Alberta, 1989. Print.
- . "Re: Fringemachine." Message to Brian Batchelor. 23 Aug. 2012. Facebook. 23 Aug. 2012.
- Cameron, Ken. "Jesters, Rabbits and Mavericks." *Canadian Theatre Review* 136 (2008): 11-16. *ProQuest*. Web. 2 May 2014.
- Chalmers, Ron. "Klondike Theme Mined for all it's Worth since 1962." *Edmonton Journal* 3 Oct. 1993: C83. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 21 Aug. 2012.
- Dafoe, Christopher M. "All the City's a Stage when Fringe Hits Edmonton Annual Festival Showcases Myriad Forms of Theatre Art." *Globe and Mail* 18 Aug. 1998: C1. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.
- . "Is the Scene on the Street Pushing Plays to the Fringes? Not Everyone Flocked to the Edmonton Fringe Festivals Stages." *Globe and Mail* 26 Aug. 1991: C2. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.

- Dambrosky, Gwen. "Edmonton's Fringe Crowd Set for 10 Days of Lunacy." *The Gazette* 13 Aug. 1994: C2. *ProQuest*. Web. 1 May 2014.
- Dickinson, Peter. "PuShing Performance Brands in Vancouver." *Theatre Research in Canada* 35.2 (2014): 130-50. Print.
- . *World Stages, Local Audiences: Essays On Performance, Place, and Politics*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2010. Print.
- Edinsor, Tim and Mark Jayne. "Introduction: Urban Theory Beyond the West." *Urban Theory Beyond the West: A World of Cities*. Ed. Tim Edinsor and Mark Jayne. New York: Routledge, 2012. 1-28. Print.
- "Edmonton Festival City." *Edmonton Tourism*. n.d. Web. 12 Jan. 2012.
- "The Fabsolutely Abulous Fringe." *Edmonton Journal* 24 Aug. 2003. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 9 Sept. 2012.
- "Fringe Fest Hopes to Build on Record Year." *CBC News Edmonton* 22 Aug. 2011. Web. 12 Jan. 2012.
- Fringetheatre.ca. Fringe Theatre Adventures. n.d. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.
- Godfrey, Stephen. "Theatrical Shots in the Dark Pay Off at Fringe Festival." *Globe and Mail* 22 Aug. 1985: E1. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 10 Aug. 2012.
- Gold, Marta. "Fringe Breaks Attendance Records; Perfect Weather Helps Boost Crowds on First Two Days by 20% from 2010." *Edmonton Journal* 14 Aug 2011: A3. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 12 Feb. 2012.
- Harvie, Jen. *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.
- Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Kostash, Myrna. "Fringe No More: How a DIY Festival Grew into Edmonton's Biggest Draw." *Alberta Views Magazine* 1 Feb. 2012. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.
- Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT P, 2002. Print.
- Leiren-Young, Mark. "Beyond the Fringe: The Edmonton Festival has Launched a Thousand Careers – and has Arguably Corrupted a Generation of Performers." *The Walrus Magazine* (Jan./Feb. 2012). Web. 11 Apr. 2012.
- Levesque, Roger. "Curtain Set to Rise on 11th Fringe; More New Works in 1992 Edition." *Edmonton Journal* 29 July. 1992. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 2 Sept. 2012.
- MacDonald, Jack. "City Cuts Festivals Grants to Give K-Days More Cash." *Edmonton Journal* 20 July 1989: D3. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.
- Marck, Paul. "Suds Sales Hinge Fringe; Beer Tents as Good as Banks." *Edmonton Journal* 12 Aug. 1992: D13. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 20 Aug. 2012.
- McKinnie, Michael. *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007. Print.
- "Member Festivals." *CAFF: The Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals*. The Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals. n.d. Web. 1 June 2014.
- Nicholls, Liz. "Fringe Director Exits Company, Proud of Festival's Success." *Edmonton Journal* 26 Jan. 2012: D3. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 11 Feb. 2012.
- . "Fringe Needs Major Change Or Else." *Edmonton Journal* 29 Aug. 1989: E7. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 30 Apr. 2012.
- . "Fringe Theatre Joins City's Big League: Designation Greatly Boosts Provincial Funding." *Edmonton Journal* 5 Oct. 2005: C3. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 30 Apr. 2012.

- . "The Life of the Party Comes to the Fringe." *Edmonton Journal* 3 Jan. 2007: D1. *ProQuest*. Web. 2 June 2014.
- . "Theatre Town Morphs into Fringeopolis!; our Annual Stage Binge Officially a City for its 30th Anniversary Run." *Edmonton Journal* 10 May 2011. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 9 Sept. 2012.
- . "Varscona Passes on Lottery, Plans Fringe within the Fringe Jackpot." *Edmonton Journal* 11 June 2008. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 9 Sept. 2012.
- Ohler, Shawn. "Others Love to Copy Edmonton's Fringe: Success in a Prairie Oasis." *National Post* 16 Aug. 1999: A9. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.
- Paterson, Erika. "Ordering Chaos: The Canadian Fringe Theatre Phenomenon." Diss. University of Victoria, 1997. Print.
- Peters, Allison. "Marquee Funding Misses Mark, Critics Say." *Edmonton Journal* 11 May 2010: B3. Web. *Factiva*. 25 April. 2014.
- Scott, Shelley. "A Fringe Odyssey: 20th Annual Edmonton Fringe Theater Festival, August 16-26, 2001." *Theatre Research in Canada* 22.2 (2001): n.pag. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.
- Simons, Paula. "Beloved Fringe Festival Part of Old Strathcona Transformation: Whyte Avenue was in State of Decay when Brash Theatre Festival was Born." *Edmonton Journal* 15 Aug. 2002: B1. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 11 Apr. 2012.
- "Strathcona Library BYOV." *MAA and PAA Theatre*. 2012. Web. 9 Sept. 2012.
- Westbury, Robert. "Fringe, TransAlta make a Lovely Couple." *Edmonton Journal* 19 Aug. 1999: A13. *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies*. Web. 12 Apr. 2012.
- Wickstrom, Maurya. *Performing Consumers: Global Capital and Its Theatrical Seductions*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Willems-Braun, Bruce. "Situating Cultural Politics: Fringe Festivals and the Production of Spaces of Intersubjectivity." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 12 (1994): 75-104. Web. 11 Apr. 2012.
- Ziegler, Rod. "Edmonton Risks Losing its Claim as Gateway to the North." *Edmonton Journal* 25 June 1991: D3. *ProQuest*. Web. 1 May 2014.