



NEWS RELEASE
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GET READY TO RUN AWAY WITH THE CIRCUS!



WINNIPEG, June 15, 2011 – At the official kick-off this morning, Ringmaster and Festival Producer Chuck McEwen brought the circus to town in preparation for the 24th annual Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, **BIG TOP FRINGE: THE GREATEST SHOWS ON EARTH**. Helping him to launch the Fringe extravaganza was Momentum Aerial & Acrobatic Troupe, master juggler Chris Without the Hat, and Ken Rudderham and Tim Cranwill, who will be clowning around on the Fringe's outdoor stage. Circus performers, volunteers and Fringe Festival carnies were also on hand to light the fuse on the festival and start it off with a bang.

BIG TOP FRINGE promises 12 days of theatre without a net, eye-popping outdoor attractions, and thrills for the whole family. 150 performing companies have travelled from far and wide to perform in the 25-venue three-ring circus. The Festival Fairground will again extend onto Albert and Arthur streets, where the crowds will be able to enjoy tasty treats, vendor stalls, busker circles and Kids Fringe.

New rules for Fringe passes allow for 50% of the pass to be redeemed at the Fringe box office prior to the opening of the festival. Fringe-goers who are on the ball can score daily specials of 2 for \$10 tickets. Details on tickets can be found on the Fringe website. Also new this year is the Big Top BIZ Noon-Hour Extravaganza, a merry-go-round of noon shows at the MTS Outdoor Stage, co-presented by the Exchange District BIZ.

"The Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival energizes downtown Winnipeg every July," McEwen says. "This year, we're giving festival-goers even more entertainment to juggle, while providing a place for artists and circus performers to grow into superstars. Re-discover the joy of the circus and be a kid again, only at Big Top Fringe!"

Tickets to step right up for BIG TOP FRINGE are available in advance or at the door. Advance tickets go on sale June 15 at www.winnipegfringe.com and the MTC Box Office (942-6537). Fringe programs are on sale at the MTC Box Office (174 Market Ave.) as of today, and at Liquor Marts, Safeway stores and McNally Robinson Booksellers on June 17.

For more information on the 2011 Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Festival, please call the Fringe info line at 9-4-FRINGE (943-7464) or visit us online at www.winnipegfringe.com.

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