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Press Release

“Actors Theatre of Windsor (ATW) Joins the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals North American Tour and announces the first Windsor International Fringe Festival (The Windsor Fringe) will take place from Friday, July 18 to Sunday July 27, 2008, in Downtown Windsor, Ontario, Canada.”

A New Theatre & Performing Arts Festival is Born

Chalk & Chocolate Festival, The Windsor International Buskers Festival & Artcite Inc’s Visual Fringe will be produced along side **The Windsor Fringe** under the auspices of ATW’s Actors Umbrella.

Windsor, ON, December 18, 2007: Actors Theatre of Windsor (ATW) announces its membership in the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals and confirmation it will produce **The Windsor Fringe** from July 18 to July 27, 2008 in downtown Windsor, Ontario.

Performing Artist and KidsFringe Applications will be available for download online at www.actors theatreofwindsor.com on Monday, January 7, 2008

This new event, **The Windsor Fringe**, will allow 35 to 40 theatre and performing arts companies the opportunity to co-produce in 10-day performing arts festival. The intention is to create a critical mass of festival activity in Windsor’s downtown core, by bringing together and operating **Chalk and Chocolate Festival, Buskers Festival** and **Artcite Inc’s Visual Fringe** as independent events produced along side **The Windsor Fringe**,

The Windsor Fringe is an example of arts groups, community not-for-profit organizations, local businesses and government working together to produce an event which aims to be an ‘arts incubator’ for artists, allowing more performing artists to contribute to the growth of cultural tourism in Southwestern Ontario and Southeastern Michigan regions.

For Release 9 a.m. EDT, December 20, 2007

“**The Windsor Fringe** as we have conceived it,” according to ATW Artistic Director **Mona el Baroudi**, *Producer* of **The Windsor International Fringe Festival** is to take the ‘footprint’ of three existing entertainment and artistic festivals, bring with them the majority of their existing staff, and operate them simultaneously, under the artist-driven **Actors Umbrella**, along side **The Windsor Fringe** performing and theatre arts festival, offering them a home to flourish and grow on the artistic side, while taking advantage of economies of scale and better access to grants and community fundraising on the business side, forming one new cultural mosaic.”

“We are very pleased to be working with a community consortium to provide new cultural opportunities in our parks,’ said **Jan Wilson**, Executive **Director of Recreation**. “Actors Theatre of Windsor is really committed to co-producing Buskers with Parks and Recreation and they will be offering our first International Fringe Theatre Festival. Both events will enliven our community and expand our tourism potential.”

"Our agency is excited to be a part of this new community event," said **Wendy Leigh**, **Executive director, Big Brothers Big Sisters Windsor Essex**. "Buskers Festival was missed this year, so we are pleased that Windsor-Essex County residents can again look forward to this unique event."

“The DWBIA is consistently looking for ways to effectively and innovatively promote Downtown Windsor, and felt that Fringe would be a good fit for both downtown and the Chalk and Chocolate Festival.” Said **Barbara Pierce Marshall**, Communications and Marketing Manager for the Downtown Business Association.

“**Artcite Inc.**, Windsor's only non-profit, Artist-run Centre for the Contemporary Arts is proud to be spearheading the "Visual Fringe" component of the Windsor International Fringe Festival.” Said **Administrative Coordinator for Artcite Inc., Christine Burchnell**. The "Visual Fringe" project will feature a multi-artist, multi-media, multi-venue, cross-border series of public art displays mounted in downtown Windsor storefronts and other public spaces by talented emerging and established Windsor and Detroit area visual artists."

“The members of the organizing group are talented, committed, and diverse in their backgrounds, bringing strengths in a number of areas including arts administration, artistic vision, technical knowledge and skills, community development, and fundraising said, **Dr. Jane Brindley, Ontario Arts Council Representative for Windsor.** They have developed a clear set of goals for **The Windsor Fringe** and have set out effective strategies to meet these. They have taken care to do extensive community consultation, building a strong foundation from which to launch the festival. Links have been developed with key individuals and groups across the business, artistic, professional, and academic communities. As well, strong support has been built at the municipal government level.

BACKGROUNDER: PRODUCTION TEAM FOR THE WINDSOR FRINGE:

Mona el Baroudi, a member of Equity & ACTRA with over 30 years experience in theatre, who also has had a success in her managing larger business teams and promotional events in the private sector, will lead the team of theatre and performing arts festival managing the Fringe as festival **Producer**.

Ray Salverda, currently the **Manager of the Technical Theatre** program at St. Clair College, and widely considered one of the top theatre Technical Theatre Production Managers working in Canada today, is **Production Manager** for The **Windsor Fringe**. Ray will have three **Technical Directors** reporting to him, among them, **Sergio Forest**, currently Theatre Consultant and Technical Advisor to Mackenzie Hall. The students from **St. Clair College's Technical Theatre Production Program** will be hired as the technical staff for Fringe venues and events.

Shannon Thomas Kennedy, currently the Technical Director at The Cranbrook Kingswood Schools and Production Manager for Water Works Theatre Company, in Michigan takes on the role of **Associate Producer** of the fringe responsible for **Buskers Festival**. Her extensive design work in the Metro Washington DC area included The Kennedy Center, Folger Shakespeare Theatre, and Signature Theater. Shannon is spearheading the effort to develop a sister fringe event in Michigan.

Mike Taylor, Special Events Coordinator for the City of Windsor's Parks and Recreation Department and a veteran member of the Edmonton Fringe Festival production team, will be the **Associate Co-producer** for **Busker Festival** representing the **City of Windsor**, backed by **Walter Metulynsky** and **Jan Wilson**. This co-production budget also allows for an additional experienced on-site coordinator with Busker Festival experience, who will be contracted to the city to assist in the transition of Busker Festival to **The Windsor Fringe**.

Barbara Pierce Marshall, Marketing Manager for the Downtown DWBIA, will take on the role of **Associate Producer** responsible for **Chalk and Chocolate Festival**, to manage

the festival for the third year in a row. Joining Barbara is **Festival Coordinator Jessica Hardy**, who will return for her second year as Coordinator for **Chalk and Chocolate**.

Christine Burchnell, Administrative Coordinator of **Artcite Inc**, Windsor's only non-profit, Artist-run Centre for the Contemporary Arts will to be supporting their work to spearhead the "Visual Fringe" component of the Windsor International Fringe Festival.

Fringe Fund Raiser Team for 12 Angry Men, Feb 15, 2008, 8pm Chrysler Theatre

Lydia Fiorini, Executive Director of the **Sexual Assault Crisis Centre (SACC)**, along with **Mona el Baroudi**, is co-producer of the Fringe Fund Raiser '**12 Angry Men**', which will also raise funds for the SACC. Lydia is an experienced Theatrical Benefit producer with a 5-year successful run of 'The Vagina Monologues' at the Capitol Theatre to her credit.

The team of volunteer lawyers who will appear in the show include guest star **Geoffrey Fieger** who will appear alongside the rest of an all-star cast from the Windsor – Detroit legal Community: **Jay Armeland, Robert N. Brown, Kenneth W. Golish, Frank Montello, Howard Pawley, Peter Hrastovec, Ken Marley, David McNevin Karen Momotiuk, and Larry Wilson**.

Mark R. Schilling will be joining the Fringe Fund Raiser production team as Coordinator for Communications and Sales support. Mark has extensive not-for-profit project event coordination experience with The Windsor Jaycees Santa Claus Parade (1999 &2000), Bright Nights/Ice Sculpture Festival, New Years Eve Family Celebration and Big Brothers/Big Sisters Bowl for Kid's Sake.

KEY ADVISORS SUPPORTING THE WINDSOR FRINGE:

Jane Brindley, Ontario Arts Council representative for Windsor, is the **Official Advisor** to **The Windsor Fringe**. This will be the third time in her career that Jane has lent her considerable energies and experience to the founding team for a Fringe: she and her husband Ross Paul were among the founders of the Canada's Largest Fringe Festival, the Edmonton Fringe and Jane was also a founder of the Sudbury Fringe Festival, Fringe Nord.

Kathy Navackas, Manager of the London Fringe Festival, has been assigned by the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals to be the mentor for the Windsor International Fringe Festival. Kathy has been advisor to **The Windsor Fringe** since 2006 and has been an invaluable resource to the project and the Fringe producer.

KEY VOLUNTEER TEAMS SUPPORTING THE WINDSOR FRINGE:

Festival Founding Project Partners to the Windsor Fringe, St. Clair College Centre for the Arts, and the University of Windsor, students from a number of programs were participants in the development of the Windsor Fringe and it is anticipated that students from a variety of departments from Business to Graphic Arts, as well as a number of student organizations, will continue to make a significant contribution to the development of both the artistic and business aspects of the project.

Centre for Business Advancement and Research (CBAR) at the University of Windsor, represented by **Kevin Wisdom, Adam Folliott, and Manish Trehan**, under the direction of **Dr. Francine Schlosser**, have been responsible for contributing to business research, and will be working on the marketing plan for **The Windsor Fringe**.

The **Pro Bono Students Association of Canada (PBSA)** at the University of Windsor, represented by **Andrew Eckart, Laura Levine, Carina Lentsch, and John Parducel** are conducting research into liability issues and local by-laws which affect **The Windsor Fringe**.

Leadership Windsor-Essex (LWE) is providing a **Community Action Project Team** from their current participants to assist in the management, and design of the Official Guide for **The Windsor Fringe**. The LWE team working on the fringe is **Bjoern Kingsley, Mike Hawkins; Steven Moro; Andrew Sasso, and Jennifer Walker**, under the guidance of LWE Executive Director **Lisa Kolody**.

The **Big Brothers, Big Sisters**, Windsor Local Chapter, rounds out the list of key volunteer teams working on the Fringe. Big Brothers and Big Sisters will continue in their role as the on-site volunteer corps to the International Buskers Festival at its new home at Charles Clark Square and in downtown Windsor. Further Media inquiries regarding Big Brothers and Big Sisters participation in **The Windsor Fringe** can be addressed to **Wendy Leigh, Executive Director**, Big Brothers Big Sisters Windsor Essex 519-945-6232 ext.11.

About Actors Theatre of Windsor ATW.

ATW Main Stage is the professional theatre company which produces our season of shows. All throughout 2006 and 2007 ATW has been at work developing the organizational and financial foundation for our first ATW Main Stage season. ATW is currently at work finalizing our first Main Stage Season in 2008/2009.

Actors Umbrella the community outreach arm of ATW. Actors Umbrella is committed to access to information and resources in order to sustain the growth of the theatre community at large. Actors Umbrella initiatives involve ATW taking a leadership, support or behind the scenes role on a number of strategic outreach projects. Established in January 2006, ATW was founded in January 2006, to produce quality professional theatre, with the intention to be a cornerstone of the development of a viable entertainment industry in Southwester Ontario and South Eastern Michigan.

BACKGROUND ON CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRINGE FESTIVALS

WHAT IS A FRINGE THEATRE FESTIVAL? It is a 7 to 10 day performing arts event, where live theatre and other performing arts are presented in informal, accessible and low cost environment. Audiences are invited to experience the work of seasoned veterans alongside that of emerging artists. Local, national and international performing companies benefit from working and learning together in order to stimulate artistic innovation. Applications for participation in Fringe Festivals are accepted on a either first come basis or non-juried lottery.

Fringe Theatre was first staged over 50 years ago by theatre groups who were not allowed to participate in Scotland's prestigious Edinburgh Theatre Festival. These groups performed on the 'fringe' or the outskirts of the city of Edinburgh and 'Fringe Theatre' was born. This type of festival has become so popular that there is now a '*Fringe of the Fringe*' in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Fringe's overwhelming success has resulted in a network of Fringe Theatre Festivals are members of the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF). The tour operates in both sequentially and in tandem from June to September each year. Many Fringe Theatre performers take their groups on this circuit, which **as of November 12, 2007 officially includes Actors Theatre of Windsor (ATW) in Windsor, Ontario, producer of the Windsor International Fringe Festival.**

The Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF) PHILOSOPHY: Shows are 100% UNCENSORED, 100% UNJURIED, 100% ACCESSIBLE, and 100% OF TICKET SALES GO TO THE ARTISTS INVOLVED!

HOW DOES A FRINGE FESTIVAL WORK?

Well, basically it works like a co-op, minimizing costs and risks to all participants while maximizing returns to artists. Artists pay about five to six hundred dollars for a fully equipped venue, professional technician, box office staff, insurance on their show and publicity for the festival as a whole - cooperation draws a greater audience, (but each participating theatre company has gotta work to get'em to see their show !) For much less than it would cost to do it from scratch, 40 companies share 5 or 6 venues, each getting six performances and each keeping 100% of their set ticket price.

Actors Theatre of Windsor Board of Directors

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FESTIVAL FOUNDING PARTNERS



FESTIVAL PARTNERS



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FESTIVAL APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY:

