

## When Worlds Collide...

Welcome back Fringe Festival! It's me, Shawn! And they're letting me write again! What the hell kind of world is this?!

I see you've made a few changes since our last date. Had some work done, huh? Nothing to be ashamed of. I love how you closed a couple of streets down to make room for more booths and buskers. Well played, Fringe. Well played, indeed.

And my beer tent. My beautiful canvas wonderland! It's (gasp!) bigger! With more tables! You DID get my Christmas list!! Still no ferris wheel though, huh? Oh well, always next year.

I'm not thrilled with the construction in the lot where all our booths usually go, though. I'd hoped you'd have the place cleaned up when you knew company was coming. And then gating off the whole area in the middle of the night? That's just inconsiderate.

Coming back from *Die Roten Punkte* last night (and by the way: welcome back, Otto and Astrid! Awesome opening, and what a great start to my weekend!), I couldn't cut through that lot, or down the stairs behind the School of Contemporary Dancers because that was gated off, too! I had to walk all the way around the block to get to the Kings Head.

Don't get me wrong, I'm thrilled that Red River College bought that building, and that our city is putting some much needed cash into revitalizing our downtown area, but not if it means slightly inconveniencing me! I can't believe you didn't consider that!

And, well...I really didn't want to say anything, but everyone's talking about it...why did you let The Borg park their ship in the middle of Old Market Square?



I know that in a general sense Winnipeggers just don't like change but let me misquote Dan Aykroyd for a sec, and tell you that the architect was either a certified genius or a pathetic whacko. I mean you took a regular stage and put a chainmail shirt on it? I'm just as concerned about impending orc invasions as the next guy, but my home security doesn't come at the expense of my comfort.

I seem to be in the minority, but esthetically I actually like it. It's bold. It stands out. It's a focus for debate.

Functionally however, it just doesn't work. You'd need to knot it up in the front like a T-shirt bikini, to make a stage area which is still smaller than the old stage and has no ability to host anything that requires any height overhead, anything hanging, or certainly anything flying. I'm told that a couple of jugglers and acrobats showed up,

took one look at the stage, then shook their comically oversized heads and went home.

And this design is apparently the one that The Powers That Be didn't think was a huge disaster and tear down before anyone used it.

**The Old Ultra violence**—Coral just handed me what she claims is a "Jenny exclusive," though I know better than to believe anything she says.

Resonator Theatrical tells us they were contacted by a Fringe rep who told them that a "graphic violence" warning was being added for their show *Taming of the Shrew* after a number of concerns were raised about the extreme nature of the violence portrayed in the show.

Director Rob Brown says he fielded a number of similar calls and emails, and there were even a few walkouts. That gives this show the elite distinction of apparently being the only one at the Fringe this year with a "Graphic Violence" rating.

It makes me wonder if this adaptation of the Shakespearean comedy is actually more gruesome than shows like *Grimmer Than Grimmer Than Grimm*, or *Grand-Guignol On The Prairie*, or *Macabre Tales Of Horror And Macabreness*; or if people just weren't prepared to be shocked out of their little world of afternoon sitcoms. Brown says he welcomes the new warning as accurate, but notes the show's description in the Fringe guide already states it's "dark", "violent", and contains "horror"; so people really shouldn't have been surprised.

Shawn Kowalke

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