

the Jenny Revue

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Termination Point

We're approaching the event horizon. Soon we will all be sucked into the black hole of Not Fringe. And a great sleeping, er, weeping will fill the land.

(For my part, I plan to make it to Star Base Coma about five minutes after I finish writing this).

I know it's only Friday (hopefully). You have a whole weekend of Fringeing before you. You've read and heard so many Fringe reviews and blurbs that you no longer remember if you've seen the shows or just have their descriptions embedded in your brain.

We're part of that brain clog, of course. As of this writing, somewhere around noon on the final Friday of the 2010 Jenny Revue, you've talked about 94 shows (and one busker). It's not all 153, but it ain't hay either.

So let me say "Congratulations!", to all of you unpaid, theatre-loving chroniclers of the Fringe. And thank you for your generosity in giving us—and the performers and your fellow audience members—your time and your words.

Media Fringey—Got an Email in response to yesterday's column (see page 6) about the star rating system from Joff Schmidt, associate producer of CBC Radio's *Definitely Not the Opera*, theatre reviewer, and the man responsible for wrangling all the CBC Fringe coverage.

He directed me to his blog on the subject of star ratings, where he made some very cogent points about the how and why of the rating system.

He also took some umbrage—and rightly so—at my contention that most of the reviewers in the established media had "...no more (and sometimes considerably less) knowledge about live theatre than the Fringe-going public..."

Now that was born out of my own ignorance, I'm afraid. A cursory look at the roster of CBC reviewers (each with a mini bio), amply supports that the folks reviewing for the Mother Corp have more than a nodding acquaintance with both sides of the stage and the entertainment biz. So, I am sorry about that.

Part of it is that I'm living in the past (it's so much cheaper there). In the years after the media turned its full attention Fringeward, there was a habit—of



The Winnipeg Free Press in particular—to gather writers from the paper's other sections and throw them through the Fringe Festival's venue doors, even though they had never attended live theatre before, much less Fringe theatre.

Obviously, as founder and editor of a paper that consists of 100% voluntary contributions by anyone who will sign his/her name, I have no argument with that. It was that having done so—and I'm guessing this had more to do with editorial choices than any intention on the reviewers' parts—the paper gave every impression that the writers were expert reviewers of live theatre.

In years past, I also had more than one disgruntled Free Press reviewer inform me that the ratings they gave to a show wound up lowered or raised (but mostly lowered) before their reviews hit print.

There have been changes there too, and while I don't recognize a lot of the reviewer names, I do know some who have been covering the entertainment beat since Adam was a pup (an evolutionary discussion for another day, a different paper).

Anyway, most complaints come from local companies who've been rankled by either of Messrs.

Walker or Prokosh, who certainly have spent vast expanses of time in darkened theatres.

Gratitude—So many to thank, so little time. First let me send kudos to the Winnipeg Fringe Festival for their on-line program. Being able to jump in and out to collect venue and company names and check spellings was invaluable; and without it I would probably have gone blind ('cause the paper version is for younger eyes than mine.)

To Jem and all the performers at the *Midnight Cabaret* a very big thank you, for once again spreading the joy to us, both money and entertainment wise.

To the folks at UPS's Portage and Lipton location, thanks for your patience and professionalism. For once the snafu wasn't either of our faults. We both get to blame Xerox (They have big shoulders, they can handle it).

To all our faithful advertisers, our undying gratitude, because without you there is no us.

Hugs and kisses to Jay, May, and the King's Head staff for putting up with us again and for hosting the Jenny Awards one more time. (Sunday night 10:15. Be there—or tell us that you won't be)

And I would be nowhere without the Jenny Staff (see back page masthead) whom I would call tireless, but who are, in fact, freaking exhausted, and who still have to spend tomorrow night on the King's Head patio writing an Awards Show. Feel free to come by and kibbitz. You did it again, gang. Thank you.

(A last note to anyone who needs to get in touch with me, post Fringe: leave a message on our Facebook page where some other Jenny head can pass it on. Terrifying creatures from the planet FinancialRuin are off the port bow, and all things Internet and TV must cease if I want food, heat, and water—and I do).

Now I must climb into my deep space, suspended animation chamber emerging only long enough to be possibly impregnated by alien embryos at the Jenny Awards. So see you there (but don't get too close).

Coral McKendrick

The Jenny Revue is a proudly independent publication NOT affiliated with the Winnipeg Fringe Festival

