

A Few Minutes with Chuck

Intrepid Jenny Revue scribe, Kevin Campbell, did a Q & A with the Winnipeg Fringe Festival Executive Producer, Chuck McEwen. You can hear the entire interview verbatim on our website at jennyrevue.ca.

The following version is slightly edited for easier reading. Kevin refers to himself as JR, meaning Jenny Revue, not the head of the Ewing clan.

JR: Why has the Winnipeg Festival been so successful through the years?

CM: It's a couple of things, but the big thing is the community. From very first year, Winnipeggers flocked to the Winnipeg Fringe. They've really bought into the whole Fringe ideal of an un-juried theatre festival where artists can do whatever they want artistically on stage, and audiences get to decide what's a hit. It's been phenomenal growth over the years with people really buying into supporting independent theatre artists.

JR: What makes the Winnipeg Fringe Festival volunteer corps so faithful and dedicated to this festival?

CM: It's amazing. We have so many people come out and donate their time to our organization. I think they believe in our ideals of supporting the artists.

You know all of our efforts are going towards making sure that theatre artists' artistic dreams can be realized on stage, and their [the volunteers] support—selling tickets, ushering, all those kinds of things—help them achieve their goals, because all the artist has to do is focus on the art. And that really is the key.

JR: After 25 years, how can you outdo this phenomenal year? What about next year?

CM: It's going to be tough, because—for the anniversary year—the extra adrenalin and the enthusiasm has really made Fringers get out there and see more shows and there's the excitement of seeing so many of their Fringe favourites from the past years.

It's going to be really hard to out-strip this year's festival, but we're always trying our best to make sure that we provide services that everyone will enjoy. I think we'll do our best to keep it going. It's going to be hard, this has been a great year.

[ED NOTE: The two reminisce about how in the old days there were closing night parties held by

Fringe staff, and by the technicians, in addition to the Jenny Awards. Chuck points out that those parties are gone now, and things have become more sedate and Kevin suggests the reason is exhaustion!]

CM: Well, that's just it. By the end of Sunday night we're actually striking two venues, getting ready for Monday

I know the Jenny Revue is real successful now, they have their party at the King's Head Pub, I believe, and Fringe staff go there as well to party all night long, *[ED note: Well, until 2:00 AM, anyway]* to celebrate the wacky awards they hand out.

JR: One last question, Chuck, have you had a chance to see any shows?

CM: You know, it's bit of an embarrassment. I usually get to a couple of shows a year And I'll get to two this year for sure, if not three or four; but for me, I really want to be experiencing the festival outside. I want to make sure that everything is running well, smoothly.

And I go to a Fringe after the Winnipeg Fringe, so I went to Vancouver last year, and Edmonton the year before. So I go and relax and become a Fringe-goer.

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 Revue on over 20 Years
 of Reporting on the
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