

**FULLY ENGAGED: A SENIOR PERFORMER  
ON THE FRINGE THEATRE CIRCUIT**

by

William A. Galloway

A.B., Princeton University, 1960  
LLB., University of California, 1964

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

in the Faculty of Arts, Graduate Liberal Studies Program

© William A. Galloway, 2004

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

April, 2004

All rights reserved. This work may not be  
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy  
or other means, without permission of the author.

# Approval

Name: William Galloway  
Degree: Master of Arts in Liberal Studies  
Title of Project: Fully Engaged: A Senior Performer on the Fringe  
Theatre Circuit

Examining Committee:

CHAIR: June Sturrock, Professor  
Department of English and Program in Liberal  
Studies  
Simon Fraser University

---

Peter Dickinson, Senior Supervisor  
Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Simon Fraser University

---

DD Kugler, Supervisor  
Associate Professor, School for the Contemporary  
Arts  
Simon Fraser University

---

Ron Fedoruk, External Examiner  
Associate Professor, Department of Theatre, Film, and  
Creative Writing  
University of British Columbia

Date Approved: April 1, 2004

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY



## Partial Copyright Licence

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

Bennett Library  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, BC, Canada

# Abstract

This project studies the Canadian Fringe theatre circuit through an analysis of my wife, Susan Freedman's, experience of writing, producing, and performing her first show, "Fifty Seven and Still Lying about My Weight." In so doing, the project aims both to offer a descriptive and analytical account of the basic structural requirements involved in mounting and touring a successful Fringe show, and to assess what role, if any, age plays in such a process. In the first chapter, I examine in detail Susan's creative construction of her successful 1999 Vancouver Fringe Festival show, which was autobiographical and clearly broadcast her senior viewpoint in its title. The second chapter outlines the adjustments – both performative and personal – that Susan and I, as stage manager, had to make in taking the show on the road to five different festivals across Canada and the United States in 2000. Finally, the third chapter asks if Susan's life experience, and that of other senior participants, was important in creating their Fringe shows and affiliations. I interviewed fifteen seniors to obtain their Fringe stories. The results of these interviews, when analyzed alongside Susan's experiences on the Fringe circuit, elicit important age-related information. For example, the number of seniors attending the festivals as volunteers and audience members is growing. Older audiences are attracted to, and support, senior performers. Also, Susan and other senior performers feel greatly empowered by the freedom and success of their performances.

Importantly, the Fringe welcomes older performers at a time when established theatres no longer employ them because of their age. Their Fringe shows are motivated more by pure enjoyment and less by career ambition than those of younger artists. Older actors incorporate the benefits of their life experiences into their performances, which in turn often helps facilitate mentoring of younger colleagues. In short, just as seniors' good health can benefit from participation in the Fringe phenomenon, so is that participation integral to the continued good health of the Fringe itself.

# Dedication

I dedicate this project to The Senior Performer. It is small thanks for the excitement and pleasure that she provided us both by undertaking to create a Fringe show. We have lived happily together for nearly 30 years. I assumed that I knew her well. How wrong I was! I was continually surprised by her creativity, skill, and talent, that I discovered or rediscovered during my project research. I was, and continue to be, in awe of her. Bravo!

# Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and thank my supervisors, Professor Peter Dickinson, and Professor DD Kugler, for the personal care and attention that they willingly gave, to help me see this project to its end. As senior supervisor, Peter particularly donated his time and effort to examine every aspect of this volume.

For me, such help was necessary. It also speaks volumes about Simon Fraser University and the type of care it lavishes on its students. As a result, this project provided both a wonderful ending to my years as a student in the Department of Liberal Studies, and the most enjoyable part of that program for me

# Table of Contents

<b>Approval</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction: Curtain Up</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Edinburgh Festival Fringe .....	2
Canadian Fringe Theatre Festivals .....	3
Goals .....	7
Questions .....	7
Research Methodology .....	8
Notes .....	12
<b>Chapter 1: “Bit By Bit, Putting It Together”</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Script .....	15
Production Company .....	21
Publicity Photos .....	26
Director .....	26
Slides .....	29
Music .....	32
Lighting .....	34
Other Rehearsal Considerations .....	35
Memorization of Lines .....	35
Props .....	36
Blocking .....	37
Dance .....	37
Singing .....	38
Costume .....	39
Promotion .....	39
Print Material and Publicity .....	42
Posters and Handbills .....	43
Programs .....	44
Final Preparations .....	45
Informational Flyers .....	45
Other Considerations .....	47
Technical Rehearsal .....	49
1999 Vancouver Fringe Festival .....	55
Audience Attendance Patterns .....	56



Fringe Hangovers.....	59
Media Reviews .....	61
Notes .....	65
<b>Chapter 2: On the Road.....</b>	<b>67</b>
Initial Preparations: Stage Management Changes .....	69
Seattle Fringe Festival: Spring Training.....	73
Winnipeg Fund Raiser: May 15th, 2000.....	79
Summer Fringe Festival Season: Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton.....	82
Toronto Fringe: July 6-16, 2000 .....	85
Winnipeg Fringe: July 20-30, 2000.....	88
Edmonton Fringe: August 17-27, 2000.....	91
Comparative Reflections .....	93
Notes .....	99
<b>Chapter 3: Talkback.....</b>	<b>100</b>
People Interviewed.....	100
Questions Asked .....	101
Individual Fearlessness .....	103
Individual Motivation .....	106
Senior Audiences .....	107
Why Perform at the Fringe? .....	108
Performance Opportunities.....	110
How is the Fringe Different for a Senior Performer?.....	112
Ending Remarks.....	114
Notes .....	115
<b>Conclusion: The Green Room .....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Appendix A: Research Ethics Approval Form.....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Appendix B: List of Sample Questions.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Appendix C: Promotional Photo - 57 .....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Appendix D: Promotional Photo - Scale .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Appendix E: List of Music.....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Appendix F: Press Release.....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Appendix G: Poster.....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Appendix H: Program .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Appendix I: Ticket Sales and Revenue.....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Appendix J: Schedule of Expenses .....</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Appendix K: Vancouver Province Review.....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Appendix L: Vancouver Sun Review .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Appendix M: Prompt Book Pages.....</b>	<b>137</b>

<b>Appendix N: T.O.A.D. (Tickets Only at the Door)</b> .....	<b>139</b>
<b>Appendix O: Performance Photos</b> .....	<b>140</b>
<b>Appendix P: Persons Interviewed</b> .....	<b>141</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>143</b>
Books.....	143
Articles and Periodicals.....	143
Reports.....	146
Files .....	146
Thesis .....	147
Lectures .....	147
Interviews.....	147
Other Materials.....	148

## Introduction: Curtain Up

Our country's population is ageing fast. We all know it. The actuarial calculations are in place. The federal government awaits a tidal wave of applications for Canada Pension and Old Age Pension benefits. That is the picture on a macro scale.

I want to show you another picture about ageing, on a micro scale. I want to follow my wife, Susan Freedman, through a particularly demanding experience that started as she reached the ripe old age of 57. She decided to become an artist and perform in public. The Fringe theatre festival was her performance site. Today, she is four years older, many years wiser, and still performing. So am I, because I was involved, in varying degrees, throughout her entire journey. Our trip is not over.

This project will be largely biographical. In it, I will document Susan's odyssey. I was there every step of the way. Although I had no input into her creation of the script, my participation increased as she progressed towards performance, and after. I was there as a second opinion, to help decide, to perform errands, to assist in rehearsals, to show slides during performance, and throughout to offer support and companionship. And I was always an observer, even when not a participant.

The first two chapters of this project start with her idea for a Fringe performance, and finish as we returned from festivals across Canada – our

“Millennium Project” – at the end of August 2000. In fact, the story continued as she wrote a subsequent Fringe show that she performed in 2002 and 2003, which is alluded to in Chapter Three. Again, we returned in August 2003, after performing at Fringe festivals across Canada. Some other project will likely emerge from her artistic core before too long, and we will be off again.

The Canadian Fringe theatre festival dominates the contents of this project. Everything I touch or describe is within the festival’s compass. As a result, the project will illuminate many of the Fringe’s facets to aid the reader to compile an accurate understanding of its cultural impact.

Susan started performing at age 57. One of the issues this project seeks to investigate is whether her age had any importance as she worked within the Fringe theatre system. Age, as a consideration, became magnified and a central consideration of this project, as I talked to other seniors that Susan and I met while performing at the Fringe. As such, another aim of this project is to assess Susan’s experience, comparatively, with that of other senior Fringe participants. The assessments will be found in Chapter Three.

## **Edinburgh Festival Fringe**

But first, we may need a primer on the Fringe theatre festival itself. The initial Fringe event occurred in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1947. In that year, the city held its first annual International Festival. At the same time, six Scottish and two English theatre groups turned up unannounced to participate in the program.

The interlopers were denied entry. Undeterred, they set up venues in empty buildings in which to perform during the Festival period. They secured their own venues, technical capabilities, and whatever other production assistance they needed. There was no support structure to help them. During the next year, theatre groups returned at the same time. A local journalist described their activity as being “[r]ound the fringe of the official Festival drama.” His description named the event: The Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Fringe performances have grown into the largest arts event in the world, at which more than a million tickets were sold in 2003.<sup>1</sup> There is now a Fringe administrative organisation, but each performer is still responsible for satisfying his/her own production requirements.

## **Canadian Fringe Theatre Festivals**

Brian Paisley graduated from the University of British Columbia’s drama department in 1968. For the next seven years, he worked in theatre in England and Ireland before returning to Canada. So he was familiar with the Edinburgh Fringe festival. In 1982, he was Artistic Director of Chinook Theatre, and well-known in Edmonton’s theatre community. In that year, he secured a \$50,000 grant to hold a public theatre event that became, in retrospect, the first Edmonton Fringe Theatre Festival. Paisley made some structural changes to the Edinburgh template that bode well for the long-term success of Canadian

festivals. In return for an applicant paying a specific fee to the Edmonton festival organisation, he/she received the following benefits:

a) An assigned venue in which to hold an allowed number of performances - usually between five and eight. Paisley had rented a number of vacant building spaces in Strathcona, a site near the University of Alberta. He converted them into theatrical performance venues for different-sized audiences.

b) Sufficient theatrical lighting and sound facilities with technicians to operate them, along with festival volunteers to administer the front-of-house activities.

c) A page in the festival's program, describing the particular production, its venue location, and the times of its performances. In the beginning, all tickets were sold before each show at the venue. Now the festival organisation may also sell a percentage of tickets in advance.

d) The Fringe organisation advertised the festival event.

e) All applications were accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

As the Fringe festival became more popular and the number of applicants exceeded venue capabilities, its organisation introduced a lottery format to select performers. Other festivals have created performer categories - local, national, and international.

f) All Fringe productions were non-juried. There was no critical evaluation of their artistic merits or otherwise, as part of the admission process.

This lack of aesthetic control has contributed importantly to the artistic freedom that is a hallmark of all Canadian Fringe festivals. It was revolutionary and contrary to the procedures of theatrical funding agencies and mainstream theatres.

g) Of greatest importance, the performer received all ticket sales revenue. That has changed slightly. At the present time, festivals now pocket the one or two dollar premium that is added to the cost of an advance ticket.

In short, Paisley created a production model, unlike Edinburgh's festival. He also structured an event in which the artist and the audience were thrown together without any administrative mediation. This situation led to many elements that we take for granted today: performers plastering the festival site with posters, and distributing handbills to potential audience members; street performances; a general festive atmosphere that engulfs participants, volunteers, and the attending public. The Fringe continues to this day as a festival for, and by, the performers. The festive element is one of the Fringe aspects that Susan and I love the most.

Paisley's initial festival started "with 47 companies, 5 venues, 200 volunteers, 7500 audience members, and an average ticket price of \$3.00."<sup>2</sup> Its success led to an annual festival that has increased in size in every way, and continues to this day. Others recognised its merit; festivals sprang up in Vancouver (1984), Victoria (1987), and Winnipeg (1988). Many more are found

now across the country in large and small communities. None has folded, with the possible exception of Calgary, which never really got off the ground.

Susan and I lived in Edmonton for seven years. We arrived shortly before the 1984 Fringe festival. We attended many productions, that year and each subsequent year until our departure from the city. We were caught up in the festival's creative, joyous, chaotic energy. We loved these events. Susan was particularly attracted because of her background as a performer and actor. Through her work at CBC Radio, of which she was Director, she reinforced her commitment to these areas by directing the station's services to support the Fringe and other community artistic events.

We next met the Fringe festival in Vancouver. Susan became Marketing Director of the festival in 1995. From that point, it was a straight line to her becoming a performing artist in the festival. During this period, I was both a festival volunteer and a board member of First Vancouver Theatre Space Society, the organisation that oversees the festival. We were part of the Fringe festival community. In 1999, Susan wrote and performed her Vancouver Fringe show. Its genesis, development, and successful production is the subject of the first chapter of this project. In the following year, we toured with it across Canada: our trip is the subject of Chapter Two.



## Goals

I have set certain goals to meet in writing this project. Hopefully, subsequent chapters will develop them in sufficient measure. They are:

- 1) To create a cross-sectional view of the Fringe theatre experience by close examination of one person's festival participation as a creator of and performer in a single production.
- 2) To examine the exigencies that we faced in the touring of Susan's show on the Fringe theatre circuit.
- 3) To explore, comparatively, the importance of senior Fringe participants' age and experience, both to the process that created Susan's show, and to other participants' Fringe festival affiliations.

## Questions

It is critical to this project's success that I succinctly enunciate the specific questions that I wish to answer. The questions will serve both as guides to the direction of my discussion, and as measures of the project's success. My questions are:

- 1) What structural ingredients are necessary to assemble a viable Fringe theatre production?
- 2) How does Susan's experience illustrate the difference between performing in a single festival and taking that show on the Fringe festival circuit?

- 3) Are the life experiences of senior Fringe participants important to their creative processes if they are performers, and to the affiliations they may form as part of their festival events?

I have formally recited three questions. However, I intend to refer to any and all of them throughout the project. Aspects of each question are relevant to all of the chapters.

## **Research Methodology**

My project is substantially biographical in form. Most of my attention is focused upon the experience of my wife throughout the entirety of her project. But I also inquire into the experience of other senior participants in these festivals. The information gathered from these interview subjects is thus largely biographical as well.

As a result, my research information was obtained as follows:

- a) My observation of Susan's experience throughout this project was crucial. I was with her for the entire time of her productions. My recollections drive the overall direction of this project.

I also have access to all of Susan's files that she created as her journey progressed. There is a separate file for each festival; she has additional generic files covering various production components like posters, printing, photos, etc. Finally, there are ancillary documents such as appointment calendars and income tax returns. All of this information

contributed to an accurate reconstruction of events. Some examples have been included here in various appendices.

- b) I have conducted interviews specifically for this project.<sup>3</sup> These included people involved in or affected by the process of creating Susan's initial production, such as family members and Susan's director.

As well, interviews in person or by e-mail and telephone were also conducted with the directors of the Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver festivals.

Finally, I conducted in person interviews with various senior Fringe artists during June and July, 2003, to gain understanding of their professional backgrounds, their Fringe experience, why Fringe festivals were important to each of them, why their experience might differ from younger performers, etc. Later, I interviewed by telephone or e-mail an additional group of the same type of Fringe participants in which every person answered a pre-set list of questions. I had drafted the questions prior to the interviews, which occurred in November 2003. They addressed each individual's professional background, how the Fringe is different from other theatrical venues, how each interviewee's Fringe experience would be different than a younger performer's, and one's opinion about the contribution of senior participants to the Fringe festival. Sample questions are included in Appendix B. These interviews will be

important both in assessing Susan's experience, as well as the basis for a discussion about seniors' performances in these festivals.

- c) Various journal and newspaper articles that focus primarily upon the merits of specific Fringe festivals were also consulted.

I have set out the goals, questions, and research methodology of this project in a formal manner. Susan's personal story is structured as a linear progression of events. Nevertheless, her tale may be moved around to facilitate the discussion.

I have divided this project into three chapters and a conclusion:

*Chapter One* will examine the process that Susan followed to create her first Fringe performance vehicle. Her travails will vividly describe much about the structure of the Fringe theatre festival. Its greatest institutional strength was not to impose any requirements on Susan except certain time deadlines. I will rely upon my recollections as a continuing observer, both caught up in the process, and as someone evaluating the experience academically. I will also rely upon relevant file documents and some opinions of selected people that I interviewed. The chapter will end by discussing the conclusion of her performances as a "hangover" of the 1999 Vancouver Fringe Theatre Festival.

In 2000, our Fringe focus substantially shifted as we embarked upon our equivalent of the "Grand Tour." *Chapter Two* will cover our time as itinerant performers on the road to Seattle, Winnipeg, Toronto, Winnipeg again, and finally, Edmonton. The trip started slowly in March and ended in a rush in late

August. My role continued as Boswell, the observer; but I also became much more responsible for the productions as stage manager calling the shows. What part of the festivals becomes important when one is on the road? What is different for a performer between participating in local and out-of-town festivals? Are any aspects attributable to our roles as senior participants? I will try to deal with these issues, drawing both from our experience and from the opinions of older performers.

I think that older participants have a Fringe experience different in part from younger festival performers. In *Chapter Three*, I will look at this issue. I will draw upon my own recollections, as well as those of other seniors, all of whom have had a Fringe connection. Are there any specific benefits that accrue to older performers? Is there a demographic connection to other people at the festival?

Finally in my *Conclusion*, I will evaluate my findings in light of my goals and questions. I will also briefly discuss future directions for research.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The sources of information describing the Edinburgh Festival Fringe are: Annual Report 2002 of the Festival Fringe Society, 8; Press Release of Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 29 August 2003.

<sup>2</sup> I have relied on the extensive discussion of Brian Paisley's early efforts to establish the Edmonton Fringe Theatre Festival contained in Erika Paterson's Ordering Chaos: The Canadian Fringe Theatre Phenomenon (Ph.D. Thesis; University of Victoria, 1997), 44-53.

<sup>3</sup> I obtained ethical approval for my interviews from Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Review Committee; see Appendix A.

## Chapter 1: "Bit By Bit, Putting It Together"

On January 1, 1999, Susan Freedman started to write a one-person show. She intended to perform it at the 1999 Fringe Theatre Festival in Vancouver during September 9-19th. She had never written any type of show before. But her decision represented a natural progression of skill and experience. Her life to that point led her to this particular undertaking.

Until her first marriage in 1961, Susan was active in Winnipeg as a young actor and public performer. Thereafter, she joined the Bay for seven years in Calgary where she mastered the arts of copy writing and the editing of newspaper advertisements. Subsequently, Susan joined CBC Radio. During the next sixteen years, she wrote radio copy, performed on air, and ultimately, became a radio manager. During her busy work life, she continued an active interest in live theatre, but reduced her level of participation as an actor.

We arrived in Edmonton in 1984 to enable Susan to assume the job of Director of CBC Radio. Her position allowed her administratively to manifest her interest in the arts. She committed her station to public participation and support of the city's arts events. Because of her predisposition to theatre, she was particularly interested in Edmonton's burgeoning Fringe theatre festival. She directed the station to participate fully in the festival's activities. Both of us also became strong individual supporters.

In 1995, Susan became Marketing Director of the Vancouver Fringe Theatre Festival. For four years, she immersed herself in the organisation of each year's festival. By the end of the 1998 festival, she had decided to make a change. As she submitted her resignation, she announced that she would return next year in her own Fringe show.

Since our arrival in Vancouver in 1994, we had assiduously attended each Fringe festival. I even became a board member of the First Vancouver Theatre Space Society, the festival organiser, for two years to help set policy concerning the festival. Throughout this period, Susan was increasingly critical of many of the productions that we saw. "The Naked Mind of Joe Boxer," a 90-minute production, confirmed her decision. A July 1998 issue of the Winnipeg Free Press, described the show, "... which clocks in at 90 minutes long, [and] stretches some of its material as thin as a cobweb." The male lead was "[n]aked except for thong underpants and a prosthetic device attached to his groin area."<sup>1</sup> In addition, Susan felt the Fringe generally was filled with stories of the angst of 20-30 year-olds. She had had enough of it. It was time to hear from people who had lived longer lives through a greater variety of experiences. Susan felt that she could do better.

On October 9th, 1998, Susan handed to the festival organisers her completed application form and cheque for \$588.50 to cover the admission fees. This initial step started her career as a serious performing artist, which continues to this day, and secured her a position at the 1999 festival. As they say, "The fat



was in the fire." She could have withdrawn. She never gave any sign of changing her mind.

By letter, dated November 21, 1998, the festival organisers informed Susan of her successful acceptance into the festival and receipted her payment. The letter informed her that March 30, 1999 was the last day to withdraw from the festival "...without forfeiting [her] entire application fee."<sup>2</sup> However, if the withdrawal occurred after the appointed date, the artist forfeited the return of his or her fee. It is a tough system for people who have little money. But the organisers are similarly strapped.

## **Script**

What would be the dramatic material of the show? On January 1, 1999, Susan sat down at the computer and started to write. Her writing of a performance piece was a new experience for her family and friends. We knew her as a writer of management reports and correspondence, of introductions and ending comments in radio scripts, and of the usual writings of daily life. Five months later, Susan's Fringe script was essentially complete.

Susan was 57 in 1999. Was she too old for this undertaking? She was in good health and the experience and skills that she had accumulated during her life prepared her specifically for this type of project. I was 61 that year. Was I too old to be involved? We never gave a moment's thought to our ages as she got underway. But looking back at the entire experience, I think that age played an

important part throughout. It was never an issue in itself. But we were aided greatly by our general experience.

Why did Susan wait until she was 57 to commit herself to the creation and performance of a Fringe play? The answer is that she finally had the desire and time to undertake the project. At an earlier point in her life, she was raising a family, getting divorced, or committed to a career. Her advanced age allowed her the latitude needed to undertake the journey. I was also retired from my profession and had sufficient time to support her efforts.

Out of a list of 58 potential titles for her show ("Venus Facing Menopause," "Fries with Everything," "Wig On, Teeth In"), she selected "Fifty Seven and Still Lying About My Weight." Susan said, "The men that I asked about the title didn't like it at all; the women thought it was perfect."<sup>3</sup> The text accompanying the title, which was used to market her show, described it as follows:

Susan tells it all in a one-woman show that travels from the backseat of a '59 Chevy to the front of the checkout of Costco. Petting above the waist and beehive hair-dos join wicked stepmothers and eating five veggies a day in a juicy mix of comedy and nostalgia. A lifetime of growing up squeezed into 45 minutes of laughs.

Warning: Not for sissies.<sup>4</sup>

The text was comprised of 66 paragraphs. They contained vignettes of her life, which were presented chronologically:

- 1-15 Childhood - walking to school in the Winnipeg winter, Jewish students sing Christmas carols but don't say "Jesus", faking illness to stay home from school.
- 16-26 Social pressures of school dating, dances, talking on the phone to friends.
- 27-30 Marriage at 20 and the marriage of her older brother to her best friend, leaving university, attempts at employment.
- 31-38 She and her husband move to Calgary and work, copy writing at the Bay, her three husbands, babies.
- 39-47 Work at CBC, pot and fun in radio, ascending the corporate ladder to Director of Radio in Edmonton, budget cuts wipe out career.
- 48-52 Marriage assumptions end at wedding, first two marriages and divorces.
- 53-54 Weight problems and diets.
- 55 Step-parenting and "blended families."
- 56 Third marriage, five years to answer marriage proposal.
- 57 A jogger for twenty-two years.
- 58-61 Rectify heart defect, hepatitis C, cancer, Parkinson's disease.
- 62 Dyeing hair and going grey.
- 63 Menopause and hot flashes.
- 64-65 Vitamins, healthy diet, newspapers' health scares.

66 Mother's longevity and good health, lucky genes, philosophy for the future.

Her script is structured largely as a series of stories and anecdotes. I think that this exposition vehicle is a reflection of Susan's Jewish character. Her father was a renowned raconteur. In addition, Leo Rosten, another more celebrated, Jewish humorist, comments:

I consider the story, the anecdote, the joke, a teaching instrument of unique efficacy. A good story is exceedingly hard for anyone to forget. It is therefore an excellent pedagogic peg on which to hang a point.<sup>5</sup>

Susan's self-deprecating humour was the script's overriding quality. She laughed at herself and invited the audience to join her. Besides, as she said, "If I wanted to be assured of the lead, I'd have to write it myself." Rosten speaks of humour as a vehicle that enabled the Jews to overcome millennia of oppression and deprivation:

I once defined humor as "the affectionate communication of insight." Humor also serves the afflicted as compensation for suffering, a token victory of brain over fear. A Jewish aphorism goes: "when you're hungry, sing; when you hurt, laugh." The barbed joke about the strong, the rich, the heartless powers-that-be is the final citadel in which human pride can live.<sup>6</sup>

Susan's entire script was firmly anchored in the human scale. It described events from her life - its highs and lows. For her, it was the only thing she had to write about. Her instincts were sound. As Judy Carter, a professional comedian, states, "...the more candid the material, the better it is. People love to laugh at another person's heartache ... Maybe because they are so happy that it is not happening to them."<sup>7</sup> Susan tried to recall the pivotal moments of her life as she grew up. She remembered them as being funny. Indeed, she would only write humorously about them. Carter feels "the challenge is to find humour in your most ordinary experiences."<sup>8</sup>

The script was all about "age" - the passage of one's life. Susan wrote about her own life as a template for others to reflect upon their own stories. "I had great material - three marriages." The hardest task was to present this "ordinary" information in an "non-ordinary" way. She needed to be creative. Susan's objective was to have it remembered *not* as her particular history; rather she aimed to "incorporate it into each listener's own experience."<sup>9</sup> Although she grew up largely within the Jewish community, she strongly believed that her problems were those faced by Canadian women generally throughout those years. Judy Carter says, "the new school of comedy is personal comedy. Your act is about you: your gut issues, your body, your marriage, your divorce, your drug habit."<sup>10</sup>

Susan thought about the techniques of stand-up comedy. The classic formula for stand-up humour is to have several sentences of "set-up," followed

by a demolishing “punch line.” Her material was not so formulaic. Several items or stories might elaborate one area of discussion and contain several punch lines. Others had no such line, but added aspects to suggest the situation’s humour. She thought of her writing as comedy.

At this early stage in the creation of her new show, Susan exhibited the benefits of her age and experience. First, the script’s material and structure followed her life story. And she selected humour as the manner in which to present it to the audience. Second, she planned her performance to last only 45 minutes. After watching Fringe shows since 1984, Susan concluded it to be “the perfect length” of time to entertain someone. In her opinion, a common fault of Fringe artists was to perform too long. Her decision about program length was excellent discipline for her writing: her prior experience in copy writing and radio aided her in writing precisely to that time-length. Advertising copy focuses on the exact, short, succinct words needed to sell a product. Radio relies on the spoken word, with no chance of revision after speaking. Thus, her experience in these types of specialised prose helped her greatly. Both media also placed a premium upon clarity of communication. “No one laughs when confused.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, she decided that this project would include only herself as performer. Standing on a public stage for 45 minutes, I assume is a terrifying prospect. Few people would select that form of performance without a sound

understanding of their capabilities. Susan's decision incorporated both courage and confidence.

Susan completed her first draft in May 1999. She distributed copies of the script for comments to Alan, our son, Jennifer, our daughter, and me. My conclusions were largely structural; some items seemed out of order, and the clarity of some sentences needed fixing, etc. I did not react to the material discussed even though it included descriptions of my foibles and my life with Susan. The process of her describing them on paper to be used in a work of performance art seemed to remove that information from my emotions. Alan, who is a professional scriptwriter and director, also, focused only on the writing's structure. Stories that included him comprised part of the script. On the other hand, Jennifer, an actress, was upset because her mother "was telling things about my life that I had not told my friends. For \$8, my friends found out things about my life that I didn't particularly want them to know." Later, as the festival approached, Jennifer said: "Mum asked me to tell my friends to come to her show. I never did."<sup>12</sup> She also never told her mother of her upset. Both were artists. Susan was free to create and perform her material.

## **Production Company**

It is a characteristic of Fringe festivals that many participants adopt bizarre trade names for their production companies. Susan chose GoodSide Productions to represent her show. The name's genesis arose because "I was

thinking of the good side of my face for photography purposes." Also, the name might suggest metaphorically the positive aspects of her Fringe show. GoodSide would join a colourful bunch of production companies – Procrastination Productions, Tocsin Players, shameless hussy productions, The Weird Sisters, etc., – at the festival. To facilitate GoodSide's business activities, we dedicated our home office telephone and fax connection to its needs. Their numbers became part of the firm's public identity.

Although Susan only formally started to create her show on January 1, 1999, she was already caught up in the festival's inexorable countdown to the event's commencement. In early spring, she received a Travel Plans Form, a Program Guide Form, and a "Technical Information Form" ("Tech" Form), from the Fringe office. They had to be completed and returned by May 28, 1999.

The office's inquiry into Susan's travel plans was not relevant to her situation because she was a local performer. However, it was very important for performers arriving from another community shortly prior to our local event. The Vancouver Fringe office scheduled the performer's technical rehearsal very close to the festival's opening. Plus the actor's performances might be scheduled towards the end of the Vancouver festival, if he could only arrive after our local event had started. The Program Guide Form was critically important to every performer. It requested the information that would describe Susan's show in the festival's program. It had to be correct. Participants who had not started to write



their shows by May 28<sup>th</sup> had to make up a title and description for the program that might not coincide with the actual production at festival time.

The Tech Form was addressed to the Fringe's Technical Director, who scheduled every technical requirement of every production at every venue. That task was only part of his responsibility, but it was huge. Susan submitted the form before she finished her script or obtained a director.

Susan completed the Tech Form in the name of GoodSide Productions, and gave her name as the person to contact. She told them that there would be one performer and a stage manager. The festival's first major inquiry was the show's "Official Running Time." It was 45 minutes. This was key information. It could not be changed without the organiser's permission, prior to its final scheduling of every show in the venues. The 45-minute running time, together with every show's allowed "turn-around-time" of another 45 minutes, totalled one hour and a half. That was an easy time block to plan around. If a show ran an hour or 90 minutes, it became much more difficult to schedule.

We stated on the Tech Form that we had props, and would require storage space. We assured them that our lighting needs would be "simple." Actually, we knew nothing of our lighting needs. We told them that we would have taped sound, and indicated our need for a sound system. The slide projection and screen qualified as "special effects" that were non-hazardous and allowed. Susan estimated her minimum performance space to be eight feet wide and six feet deep. The space had to be high enough to include a screen on which to

project slides. Lastly, Susan signed a "Waiver," in which she indemnified the Fringe festival and its organisers from any claims arising out of her participation in the event.

The festival organisers promised in the Tech Form to forward by the end of June a floor plan of her venue, the technical rehearsal's time, and her schedule of festival performances. A month later, GoodSide Productions received the Fringe's letter of June 25th. It spoke of "Fifty Something and Still Lying About Weight." Alarm bells rang at our end. Although we had given the show's correct name on the Program Guide Form, it was returned to us incorrectly described in two places: "something" substituted for "seven" and there was a missing "my" before "weight." The errors were critical because they would be incorporated into the festival's program if not corrected. Susan quickly corrected the errors by calling the Performer Liaison person at the Fringe office.

The June 25th letter contained much important information. It confirmed Susan's performance venue to be Havana Theatre behind the restaurant of the same name on Commercial Drive. She was assigned five performance times, like most other performers. We would learn later that the average number of performances at most other festivals is six. An additional performance is key to earning added ticket income. The quantity of performance times to be assigned is governed largely by the number of performance times from all of the venues, divided by the number of performers. Other considerations factored into the calculations include the performance length inclusive of turnaround time, and

the seating size of the venues. Again, the wisdom of Susan's age and experience played a part. She wanted a smaller, more intimate venue because this would be her first festival, because she was a single performer, and because of the personal nature of her material. She knew about Havana Theatre; she requested and received it. It had 68 seats.

With the June 25th letter, Susan also received a booklet setting out "Performer's Advertising Rates" for advertisements to be included in the festival program. She bought an "eighth of a page" ad. Sixty thousand copies of the program were to be distributed by Starbucks. Only sixteen other productions also advertised, out of a group of 94. Fringe performers either do not seem to believe that they need formal advertisements to attract the public's attention, or they can't afford it.

While Susan commenced the formal creation of her show's material, she also started to plan for the additional elements of its production. From the viewpoint of an audience member, her performance would probably represent the entire show. As its creator, however, Susan knew that there were many different ingredients to co-ordinate in order to realise the production's full potential. I will now look at the items that were assembled during the period leading up to September 9, 1999.

## Publicity Photos

Publicity photographs were very important in Susan's promotional plans. She would need them in any press kit, and as part of her posters and handout flyers. Dina Goldstein, a friend of our daughter, was a professional photographer who worked in the media. Susan discussed her needs with her. Susan decided on certain props in the photos: a piece of cake, a food scale, and birthday candles in the shapes of the numbers five and seven. On July 11, Susan arrived at Dina's studio in a black turtleneck shirt and black trousers with makeup and the props. Two black and white pictures were selected. In each case, everything was blacked out except her head and her hands in close-up. Her face reflected a quizzical, amused expression. In one, her hands held the lighted candles five and seven; in the other, she held the food scale upon which sat a tall piece of iced cake (see Appendices C and D). "It was a piece of mocha cake that I bought at True Confections. After the shoot, Dina and I sat down and ate all three pieces."<sup>13</sup>

## Director

As she planned the show, Susan knew that she would require a director. This decision was a further indication of her experience. Alex Dallas, a veteran Fringe performer that I interviewed, said "...I have a director[,] which I notice the younger ones often don't. Usually due to costs[,] but also I hear them say they don't need one[,] which is usually fatal."<sup>14</sup> In this case, the director would

be a key player in many different ways: accepting the contents of Susan's script; creating an overall vision of the show; fitting details and changes into its structure; and working to enhance Susan's performance of it. The director would play a pivotal role fraught with possibilities of crises.

Susan approached a young woman whose work she admired, to have her direct the show. After a month, the woman returned the script to Susan because she and Colin Thomas agreed that the story lacked a "central conflict."<sup>15</sup> Susan then called one of her drama teachers, who did not return the call. It was approaching the end of May. Time was passing. It was a little more than three months to the festival. Susan discussed her situation with Lalo Espejo, who suggested Jan Kudelka. Evidently, Jan had not directed a great deal, but she had written and performed two successful one-woman shows: "Circus Gothic," which dealt with life in the circus; and "Janus Janis," about the tragic rock star, Janis Joplin.

Jan believes that it "can be an invitation to hell"<sup>16</sup> to agree to direct someone's project. She had suffered unpleasant experiences in earlier productions as director. Susan and she met for the first time on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Jan said, "I walked over to this woman who had a stunningly beautiful presence. It was Susan." Susan gave Jan a copy of her script. For Jan, her feeling that they would work well together was the most important result of the meeting. "We communicated well, and I did not pick up any uncooperative vibe."

They worked hard on the script. Jan's primary interest was to reorder the script. "I believe in juxtaposition." She physically cut the script into pieces and moved the paragraphs around. She always looked for "the shortest distance between two thoughts." Jan did not feel that she inspired much rewriting, although every passive verb became active. Susan started to look at the script with the same eye. In the end, she rewrote the script about six times.

Jan felt that the script's content was completely Susan's own. It was "really real, really true." She realised that the material did not come to any conclusion. "Like a Reggae song, it didn't end, it just stopped." Perhaps it was this quality that led a number of audience members in different cities to tell us of their enjoyment because it was like "having a conversation with Susan."

As director, Jan had several objectives:

- 1) To give Susan permission to do her show. "So much with Susan was to make sure that she was safe, so she would hit the stage with confidence. I lent her my arrogance. It increased her stage authority." Jan dropped ideas that Susan could not or would not perform. "She trusted me; I was not going to sabotage her."

- 2) To treat the project "organically." "I hadn't directed that much." Jan knew that if she stayed relaxed, the show would be "revealed." She felt that Susan had a very strong work ethic. She only had to follow Susan's lead.

3) To package the show. She wanted to create a “spare environment” to make it a “low maintenance” show. Jan evaluated every component to enable the show to unfold seamlessly.

Between June 9th and August 8th, when Susan delivered her final script, Jan and Susan had 10 meetings that totalled at least 20 hours. After August 8th, they took a break for two weeks. From then to the festival’s opening on September 9th, preparation became intense and frequent. On August 17th and 19th, production meetings of at least 3½ hours planned the show and examined each of its components. The first rehearsal on August 26th ran for 4 hours. The next ten consecutive days, except for August 30th, were of the same length. By September 6th, we had rehearsed 44 hours.

That summer, Jan rented a house in east Vancouver close to the festival site. We rehearsed in her living room. Before each rehearsal, we would pull the furniture out of the way, only to return it at the session’s end. Susan would enter from upper stage right, an open door off of a backyard deck. It was all very domestic.

## **Slides**

During the writing of her script, Susan decided that she wished to incorporate family pictures, and perhaps other images, into her show. We decided that the pictures should be transferred onto 35mm slides to be projected upon a screen on stage. She gutted family photo albums to select the desired

photos. Each slide would illustrate or confirm a particular discussion or poke ironic fun at it.

As an ingredient of the show, the slides played a big role. Initially they contained images from Susan's personal history - the effect was to take the audience back to the particular incident that she discussed. In the first twelve stories of her childhood, we showed four slides that followed her physical development from pre-school up to young teenager. The slides reinforced the show's introduction of Susan's life to the audience, as she started to age.

Sometimes the pictures were for information only. One example was her standing with her first husband, holding their first child shortly after he was born. At other times, the slide was to be a sight gag. For example, in describing the Calgary Jewish community, she says: "it is really small compared to Winnipeg's and it seems to me that everyone is related to everyone else. I comment at a party that the community '...seems pretty incestuous.' It didn't go over well."<sup>17</sup> The audience always laughed. But we would wait a moment and then put up a slide showing Susan with an expression of shocked incredulity. It confirmed and increased the audience's laughter. When discussing her second wedding, she showed a slide of her wedding day. Her husband was dressed in a very exaggerated version of 1970s styles. The audience laughed loudly. Thus, the slides both reinforced the topic being discussed and generated their own humour.



When Jan became director, she adopted the idea of using slides and distributed the images throughout the script. But she augmented them by adding ten slides containing words that would be treated as ironic humour. She also washed the slides in bright colours – yellow, hot pink, blue. These additional ingredients enhanced the slides' production value. For example, when Susan joined the CBC, Jan's slide read "corp" in printed form, which is its popular nickname. Later, as Susan's job disappeared in budget cuts, the slide "corp" appeared again in printed form, with "se" added in a bloody red scrawl. The audience's laughter took the sting out of the situation's sadness. Elsewhere in the show, when Susan started to describe the attributes of her three husbands, the slide read "I DO I DO I DO." Lastly, Susan describes a party when she was 13, at which her date placed his hand on her left breast. She does not remove it fast enough because "it does feel good." The next day, the story is all over the school. The slide read "Branded," to accompany Susan's line, "I'm branded, petting above the waist." At that moment she has changed from an adult recalling the story, to the upset, mortified 13 year old. However, the slide and accompanying music satirised the incident and the audience laughed.

My first formal participation in the production occurred when Susan and I agreed that I would be the slide projectionist. It was not a difficult role, but it was very important to the smooth-running of the show. We used a friend's old Kodak projector and I became familiar with its idiosyncrasies. I bought a cassette to hold the slides, and loaded them into it in proper order and direction. In early

rehearsals, the slides came up reversed or upside down a number of times; it was a learning process. I annotated a copy of the script with the entrance and exit of each slide to dictate their exact use. Jan often had the slide come up at a specific word in mid-sentence, and it came down in the same way. Therefore, it was mandatory that I be completely alert throughout Susan's entire show and follow her precisely through the script. In a dark theatre, or during a warm August rehearsal, I would sometimes doze off. The lapses were never received with good cheer.

## **Music**

For Susan, music played an equally important role in the show. She thought in terms of familiar songs that would speak to her audience. She has an excellent memory for Broadway show tunes and popular music from the mid-1950s to the 1970s. As she wrote the script, certain songs suggested themselves. For example, as she talked about the mistake of her second marriage, she thought of "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover" by Paul Simon. During the story of her humiliating petting episode, "Town Without Pity," sung by Gene Pitney, played softly in the background and hit its crescendo at the dramatic highpoint of her story. The audience recognised the story's humour partly because of the mock seriousness of the accompanying song.

Fortunately, most of the music to which Susan listened was readily available on CDs. Jan's particular interest was its use to create the show's

atmosphere. Each piece was evaluated in terms of its place in the script. When and where did each song start and stop? For how long did it run? Jan felt “most people use music too little.” One of her greatest pleasures in creating the show was to be “an editor with music.”

There were 11 musical selections of varying length and importance (see Appendix E). Initially, three songs with a total length of 8:03 ran consecutively for the fifteen-minute period after the theatre doors opened to allow the audience members to gain their seats. After Fringe festival announcements, the theatre doors closed and Jim Croce’s “I’ve Got a Name” came on. The show had started. At a particular musical point in the song, the lights darkened, the audience quieted and the music held everyone’s attention. At its end, a spotlight cut the darkness to Susan on stage as she started to speak. This song, with the changing light levels, acted as the audience’s portal into the life of the show. Next, we had excerpts of six songs distributed strategically throughout to augment Susan’s script. The final cut of music was really four entire songs that were played as the audience left the theatre. After Susan selected the particular songs, she asked Don Pennington, a music producer and old friend at CBC Radio, to burn a CD for her to contain them all. He did so. Was there a copyright requirement that we secure permission to play the music in the show? To this day, we still do not know. However, at the time, it was not an issue that we even considered.

The new CD allowed us to incorporate the musical selections into the show. I became responsible for its playing at rehearsals. Now my script was

annotated also with music cues to indicate each piece's entrance and exit, along with its "sound level" – which sometimes varied during its playing. When the slide and music cues coincided, I needed to be in top form to complete them successfully. In rehearsals, we played the music selections on our domestic "boom box."

## **Lighting**

The last formal ingredient added to complete the production was stage lighting. This item was the sequence of illumination that allowed Susan to see her chosen way around the stage, and for the audience to follow her. The festival assigned Susan a theatre venue that contained lighting fixtures suspended above the stage. A technician controlled them by operating various switches. Neither Susan nor I knew anything about performance lighting. We assumed that she would receive sufficient light to allow her to perform her show. But what part we would play in planning the lights' performance, we had no idea, and it did not seem to bother us as we approached the festival.

As rehearsals progressed through August, Jan retained Aiyana Maracle to create a written lighting plan to illuminate Susan's performance. Aiyana watched several rehearsals to become familiar with the show.

## Other Rehearsal Considerations

### Memorization of Lines

How does an actor learn her lines? The writing of them did not equate to Susan's ability to recite them. Although I was present at earlier times when she had acted in a play, I had no recollection of her routine for learning lines. Now here is another clear example of her experience and confidence. For years we have run for approximately an hour every other day. During this rehearsal period, she told me that she rehearsed her lines while she ran. I don't know how she concentrated on the words without stepping into a hole, but she did. She continues to do so to the present day. It is a particularly important device for maintaining her recollection of the lines during periods when she is between festivals.

As a result, she knew her lines during rehearsals. That does not mean word perfect. She might drop a line or two, or say the scripted line in a different way. Since I was following each word of the script, another task of mine was to evaluate her recitation each time. I would interject only if she forgot an entire topic. Other times, I would discuss missed lines at the end of her rehearsal presentation. She would speak the lines after being reminded, but might skip over other ones. As we approached the end of the rehearsal period, however, her accuracy increased and remained high during the festival. I was worried about her "drawing a blank" on stage and forgetting her lines completely. We

discussed the possibility. I was to prompt her with a line, but *only* if she called for it. She never did.

### Props

To construct a “low maintenance,” non-complicated show, Jan and Susan decided to have very few props or stage furnishings. Stages are described from the actor’s viewpoint, looking out to the audience. So stage left is on the audience’s right. The main prop was a medium-sized, upright, black leather armchair that we brought from home. The chair was placed slightly left of middle stage centre. All of Susan’s actions were tied ultimately to the chair.

Against the right arm of the chair, we lodged a rectangular wooden table of similar height. A Hilroy scribbler, or *cahier*, occupied its lower shelf. A string tied a sharp pencil to the *cahier*. Susan drew in it during one of her childhood stories. Wedding pictures of Susan and each of her three husbands were attached by paperclips to the scribbler’s back cover. As she held each picture up to introduce the particular spouse, the picture’s slide was projected onto the screen at upstage left.

We brought a glass from home that sat on the table, full of water for her to drink. A rotary hand phone, purchased at a used furniture store, sat on the stage behind the chair. Susan brought it to her lap when she called a high school friend during a story. The final prop was our vivid, hot pink mohair throw. As the initial light on Susan opened the show, she stood, wrapped in the blanket. It was visually dazzling. And it kept her warm as she lamented frigid winter walks to

her Winnipeg elementary school. The blanket served later as Susan's bed cover when ill or hiding in humiliation.

### Blocking

It is difficult for an audience to think about the movements of actors during a performance. They seem just to flow from the script. In fact, every step is planned. As director, Jan blocked Susan's movements: "I was a traffic cop." When Susan was not sitting in, or standing next to her chair, she was moving about the stage. She even ran in a circle on the stage to illustrate her "flying" as a little girl. When she accepted the loss of her employment at the CBC, she walked with a deliberate, funereal gait from mid-stage centre to downstage centre, and onto downstage left, during the 19-second cut of "Tybalt's Death." The movement was very expressive.

### Dance

Dance is a related ingredient. Jan felt that dance was part of Susan's vocabulary. "I just used it. I don't remember if it was her or my idea." There were two instances. First, Susan tells a story of being selected by American Airlines for stewardess school in Dallas, Texas. It comes after several university years of lacklustre academic performance. The overriding story elements are life-changing opportunity and excitement. At the end of the story when her emotions are highest, Frank Sinatra's singing of "Fly Me to the Moon" bursts loudly upon the audience. Susan immediately proceeds in a jive dance-gait from downstage centre to downstage right, up to centre-stage right, and then

diagonally across to the front of the slide screen, on which is projected a slide of her original stewardess contract. Bathed in red light, she dances in front of the slide, first with her back to the audience, and then facing it. As the 48-second cut ends, she completes her dance to downstage left. The music, dance and light enhance Susan's excitement at the opportunity. The audiences loved it. In the other example, she similarly moves from downstage left to downstage right and returns, accompanied at full volume by "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover." This 32-second cut caps her humorous account of how Husband #2 had no affection for her. The humour of the song's words and her story, along with her happy, high-energy dance step, defused the actual sadness of the failure of her marriage.

### Singing

Recorded music played a major role in the show. But there were also two instances in which Susan sang several lines from particular songs *a capella*. In each case, her singing was for humorous effect. For example, when telling about Jewish children singing Christmas carols in elementary school, she sang three lines from "Away in a Manger." She showed, however, that none of the children would say Jesus' name. They just left it out and sang the following words. Later, when justifying why she made such bad choices of husbands, she said that she had believed every word of every popular song. She then sang from "When I Fall In Love":



*When I fall in love, it will be forever,  
or I'll never fall in love  
And the moment I can feel that you feel that way too,  
is when I'll fall in love with you.*

But then she added immediately at the end of her singing, "I rest my case."

Everyone laughed. In these two instances, her singing was an effective means to show complex cultural issues surrounding her upbringing in Winnipeg.

### Costume

Finally, attention was given to Susan's costume. She was 57 and of slender build. She has a head of bright silver hair. Jan and Susan selected a costume that was simple with freedom of movement. Below her waist, she wore only black. Above, she selected a hot pink silk shirt. It is a colour that she wears frequently. It is an attractive, invigorating hue that was readily visible to the audience in a dark theatre. In addition, it was the same colour as her mohair blanket that stayed on her chair throughout the shows.

### **Promotion**

Susan knew that she had professional experience that would greatly help her to promote her show. From 1995-1998, she was highly involved in Fringe festival promotion. In addition, her years with CBC had taught her how to present stories to journalists for radio, television and newspaper publication. Her copy writing experience would also help. Now she would need material to create a public presence and stimulate discussion.

During Susan's career as Director of Marketing for the Vancouver Fringe, she had befriended Lalo Espejo, a public relations professional and actor in the local arts community. Susan had discussed the idea of doing her own Fringe show on many occasions with him. On January 5, 1999, they met for the first time to develop concrete plans about the ingredients necessary to produce the show. He was the first person she enlisted to help her. They spoke the same professional language in terms of creating a public awareness of her effort.

Lalo Espejo agreed to write a one-page press release for Susan to distribute to various media outlets (see Appendix F). He told her what to put in a press kit: both publicity pictures, the press release, a resume, a poster and a handout flyer, and favourable reviews from her earlier Fringe shows. As this was Susan's first Fringe show, she had no reviews. Lalo also told Susan the stations and publications that had to receive her press kits and, most importantly, to whose attention they should be addressed. Sometimes she already knew the people from her Fringe marketing days. All of the preparation occurred during July and August. As the event approached, the Fringe festival also gave the performers a list of media outlets for delivery of their promotional material. But Susan had a jump on her fellow actors. She was media-savvy. "I was not afraid of them. I knew exactly what they wanted. I know what a story is and I left enough time for [the information] to stand out."<sup>18</sup> She hoped that her material would be read first and remembered ahead of her competitors'.

The press kits were reserved for the media that one most wished to influence. In Susan's case, she earmarked the kits for the Georgia Straight, CBC-TV (English language), CBC AM Radio, Vancouver Sun, Westender, and West End Times. She also sent one to the entertainment editor of the Vancouver Province, because he was a friend. There was one other newspaper choice that she made: the Jewish Western Bulletin. Susan's show involved Jewish aspects of her life that she felt would be of special interest to the paper's readers. We delivered the kits to the various recipients between two weeks and ten days before the festival started. Each press kit was directed to the entertainment editor or chief critic. In addition, Susan faxed press releases to the producers of the three daily shows at CBC AM Radio.

Why make the effort? First, she hoped it would result in inclusion of a photo or a discussion of her show in any preliminary article or comment about the Fringe *before it opened*. In fact, the picture of Susan holding a piece of cake on a food scale appeared on the Vancouver Sun's restaurant review page. That was a bit wide of the mark. However, readers attracted to the photo might recognise it in a subsequent Fringe discussion. She also hoped that the kit would stimulate media discussion of her show *during* the Festival. In fact, on Monday, September 13th, Susan appeared on the CBC AM Radio's local morning show to discuss performers who were doing one-woman shows at the Fringe. And on the following day Lalo arranged for John Piper to interview Susan during his 1040 AM Radio morning program. Mr. Piper had seen her show and spoke highly of

it. We hoped that such exposure would cause more ticket sales. Lastly, she hoped her promotional material would attract an entertainment editor or critic's attention sufficiently to have him attend and review her show.

Print advertising is an aspect of promotion. There are many opportunities to buy advertisements. One pauses, however, before doing so. From our viewpoint as neophytes such advertising was expensive. But the really important question was: will an advertisement attract a larger audience? That is the only reason to use it. We did not know. Nor did anyone else really know. And since people participating as Fringe performers are generally without means, they are loath to invest.

Susan finally purchased two print advertisements. In the West End Times, a weekly community newspaper, she bought a 2 x 3¼ inch horizontal rectangular space, to appear in the August 27th issue, and to continue in the two following issues. The space contained a vertical picture of Susan holding the numbers 5 and 7 lit candles in the right-hand one-third of the advertisement. The remaining two-thirds contained most of the same information as the poster or handbill. She also placed it in the festival's program.

## **Print Material and Publicity**

Susan's greatest use of publicity photographs was to advertise her show's venue and performance. As the festival dates approached, she sought out a printer that could produce this type of promotional material. Lalo suggested

Bond Repro in downtown Vancouver. Joyce Hodges, its proprietor, was excited by Susan's project and rendered excellent assistance.

Susan's judgement in marketing and publicity again asserted itself. Every item was printed on 60 pound paper, "electric red" in colour, to catch the public's attention. The pictures were attractive and amusing. The text was written in "comic sans" font that has an informal air and is very simple to read. For us, it was important that people easily understood our performance information. Her printed material created a public identity for her.

### Posters and Handbills

Susan created the poster's format on her computer. The poster was printed on an 8½" x 11" sheet (see Appendix G). It had to answer the key questions of what?, where?, when?, why?, and how? Susan also created the poster's sibling - the handbill or flyer. It was identical to the poster except half its size. It was printed as a "two-up" - printed two to an 8½" x 11" page, and then divided. We constantly handed handbills to those who walked by, or as they stood in line to attend another performer's show.

The poster was both included in press kits and other promotional material, and placed in prominent locations for the public to read. We put it up in communal poster areas at the festival, and various venues, but particularly at Susan's theatre. The Fringe term for it is "postering." We knew nothing about the practice which, we would come to realise, is an art. The first actor to poster basically gets the best locations and as many as he or she wants. The unwritten

rule, not always observed, is that you cannot put your poster on top of someone else's. Before, and during the festival, one travels always with posters, scotch tape, push-pins, and a stapler. You must be constantly on guard for a "postering opportunity."

We were not aware of a timetable for starting to poster. Nevertheless, several days prior to the Vancouver festival's opening, we travelled up and down Commercial Drive within three or four blocks north and south of Grandview Park, the festival's centre. We walked into every store that we could to ask if we might put a poster discreetly in its front window. Many allowed us. First, most wanted to view the poster's artistic merits. The closer to the Park, the more difficult it became, because other artists had already put up their posters in the front windows.

### Programs

Another printed product was the show's program. Susan, again, designed it on her computer. It was an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of electric red paper, turned horizontally and folded in half. That created four 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" "pages" (see Appendix H). We calculated that we would use a maximum of 70 programs for each of Susan's five performances; as it turned out, we were correct. And after each show, we would rush through the theatre and pick up any program that was not creased and soiled, for reuse at a later time. We were less accurate in estimating our poster and handbill needs. We used much less of both of them.

As a result, the unused ones were cut up, and ended their days as message paper.

## **Final Preparations**

### Informational Flyers

The Fringe sent Susan, in early August, a handful of information flyers.

“Fringe Publicity” set the tone for performers’ attempts to attract an audience:

When creating publicity for your play, shoot for the moon. Aim to get your picture on the front page of every major newspaper; appear on TV; design stunning promotional material, and remember: publicity is hype, GO BIG!<sup>19</sup>

The flyer advised that “Word of mouth is the best way to sell tickets ....” It urged performers who wished to be reviewed by a specific publication to invite it to send a reviewer. One way to attract such attention was to “explain how you’re [sic] show will appeal to their reading audience.” This advice confirmed Susan’s interest in attracting the attention of the Jewish Western Bulletin. The publicity flyer also emphasised the importance of posters, handouts and sandwich boards.

“Fringe Fun Facts” included a line of description on every performer in the festival. The information was collected from the Program Guide Information sheet, completed earlier by everyone. The organisers also provided a Glossary of Theatre Terms, and a public transit map of Vancouver. Performers were told of

discounts available to them from specific local merchants. Another handout explained about the "People's Choice Awards," in which audience members cast ballots during the festival to select the best actor, actress, director, production and new play. The winning performers received free entry into the 2000 Vancouver Fringe Festival. We also were notified about a "Performer Service Centre," to provide assistance to the performers or a place to congregate.

Finally, another flyer explained about the festival's box office, guest "comp" tickets and ticket sales. Susan charged \$8.00 for a ticket sold at the venue prior to the performance. The same ticket sold in advance from August 23rd to September 18th cost \$10.00. The festival kept the two-dollar premium. Each performer was allowed, also, to give away up to three percent of her tickets to each performance. For Susan, this amounted to two "comp" tickets each time. She set them aside for various family members and friends. Of greatest interest to each performer, the flyer discussed how the performers could receive their earnings. A cheque containing the proceeds from door ticket sales was available after 4 pm the next day. One cheque containing advance ticket sales monies could be picked up on a specific date after the festival concluded. Most of Susan's income arose from advance ticket sales. Along with money, Fringe performers love the social life. The organisers invited each performer to opening and closing night celebrations, a two-night event entitled "Drag Bingo," and disclosed the presence and location of the Fringe Club. This facility was a pub



and social centre, maintained by the Fringe organisers for the performers and members of the public attending the festival.

### Other Considerations

August was the last month of preparations. The organisers moved into high gear to prepare for the festival events. They had few overt dealings with Susan, although she had met them at their reception on May 6<sup>th</sup>. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the technical staff suggested that we use a back-projected slide screen. Unfortunately, its screen and image were too small. We retained our original plan of projecting the slides from the audience on to a screen up stage left.

During the last ten days of August we were deeply involved in show rehearsals. But it was also a time of errands: “to order, reorder, and pick up” became our mantra. I did most of it. For example, the projector ran fine during rehearsals. I still wanted it completely checked over and I needed a new bulb for the show’s opening. Leo’s Camera on Granville sold me a bulb and showed me how to change bulbs. Kerrisdale Camera sold me a used carousel slide tray. I was intending to use a small maglite flashlight to illuminate my script in the darkened theatre. I discovered 3 Vets on West 7th Avenue had a cloth strap with velcro closing to hold the light around my head. I wore it around my neck.

We retained Dina Goldstein to create our slides from Susan’s photos. However, some of the photos were too small or damaged to be made into slides. We went to Abbott & Tincombe on West 4th Avenue to make some new pictures and create duplicates. We needed the firm to make seven 5” x 7” enlargements.

We returned to Kerrisdale Camera to isolate and enlarge a portion of a coloured photo. Dina ultimately made 66 slides. We asked The Lab on West 1st to make new slides from portions of photos that previously had been slides. It also made blank and dark slides for us. We were running in and out of the Lab right up to curtain time.

Bond Repro did its printing of posters, flyers and programs during this period. Susan's costume also had to be dry-cleaned.

As we crossed the frontier into September, a season changed: the event was in sight and we were fast approaching. Everyone seemed calm and unflustered. The performer, herself, set the tone: she never exhibited a case of "nerves." She was completely professional and never once disclosed to me the unsettled state of her stomach, if, indeed, that was the case.

An unplanned event even appealed to Susan's sense of humour. One of the stories that comprised her material told of her being diagnosed hepatitis C positive late in the 1990's after receiving a blood transfusion in 1985. Only our immediate family knew of her condition. She was never certain why she included the story in her show except that it reflected a major issue in our national life of that period. She realised that her mother, who was coming from Winnipeg to see the show, did not know of her condition. Susan did not want to shock her 90 year-old parent with the public disclosure. She telephoned her mother, who took the news well. But she then suggested that Susan tell her family members and close friends who were intending to see the show. So, one

day Susan sat down and telephoned a list of fourteen people to relay the news. She had the pleasure of talking to her close friends and family, but never realised that the show might trigger this kind of disclosure.

During the first week of September, the Fringe held several events comprised of excerpts from various performers' productions. There was no admission charge, because its purpose was to whip up public excitement about the soon-to-open festival. On Saturday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, Susan performed a short snippet of her material without special lighting, music or slides. People laughed. It was a modest victory.

### Technical Rehearsal

The first serious test for us occurred on Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, when we had our three-hour Technical Rehearsal ("tech"). It was not defined in our Glossary of Theatre Terms, although we were notified of the time in the festival's June 25th letter.

The tech is held at the performer's venue. Inside the venue, we met the resident technician. Previously we had received a plan with the venue's dimensions, and the location of the lighting grid. Havana's interior space was 40'2" long and 24'6" wide, and the stage area was 11' deep and 24'6" wide. A three-foot cross-over space was behind the stage. Four feet separated down stage from the audience. The stage was not raised. The house area was raked with the rows of the audience's seats higher in the back than in the front. The

technician's "booth" was behind the audience, in the right corner, facing the stage.

Susan and I arrived at the venue shortly before 9:30 am. We were joined by Jan, the director, and Aiyyana Maracle. The performer carried her costume. I had the slide projector, the slides housed in a carousel and a kit bag with everything else: such as flashlight, batteries, projector bulb, stopwatch, etc. Most importantly, I had a loose-leaf binder that contained my copy of the script, annotated with slide cues. We also brought all of our props and duplicate CDs.

After we met Patrick, our technician, Susan left to change into her costume. Jan and I "spiked" the floor props. I knew nothing about this. Patrick gave Jan a role of brightly coloured vinyl tape. We positioned the chair, table, and slide screen that the organisers had provided. By spiking, we affixed pieces of tape to the floor on the outside surfaces of, perhaps, three of the table and chair legs. We also spiked three of the screen's feet. We took these steps to be able quickly to place the props in their exact locations during set up before a show. Every show used a different coloured tape. Havana's stage was a patchwork quilt of small pieces of bright colours by the end of the tech rehearsals.

Concerning the slides, our first task was to decide my location from which to project the slides. The projector's fan was too noisy for me to sit in the middle of the audience. I next tried to set up facing down stage left in the front row of the audience. In other venues at later productions, we used this location by

choice. At Havana, it did not work. The slide screen was 6'x6'. The short distance from the projector's lens to the screen made the slide images too small.

I moved to the back left corner of the theatre facing the stage, immediately behind the last row of seats. The audience entered the venue at that location and had to walk past me. I would apologise in advance for any fan sound that might disturb the audience members in front of me. None ever complained. But the projector had to sit on a surface high above the ground. I stood at ground level. But the last rows of seats were elevated perhaps 18" above the floor. The slide projector's lens had to clear the heads of those sitting in the last row. Patrick produced a tall *jardinière* that had sufficient table surface to set the projector upon. In fact, we had to increase the height of the projector; we stacked three rows of wooden blocks on to the table surface, and placed the projector upon them. It was now shoulder-height on me. The technician of every venue always has a ready supply of black extension cords. I plugged the projector into one to obtain power and then attached the extension cord to the floor with duct tape, to prevent anyone from tripping on it.

Our director had advised Susan to hire Aiyana Maracle to "stage manage" the show. In our case, the stage manager notifies the technician in advance of an upcoming light cue or music cue. In response, the technician starts or stops the music, or turns certain lights on or off to facilitate the passage of the show.

We arrived at the tech rehearsal with our music cues already determined. Aiyyana, gave Patrick our CD containing each cut of our selected music. The technician merely had to insert it into his player, “cue up” the cut in advance, and hit the play button exactly when Aiyyana told him to “go.” The music would start immediately. Each instruction, or cue, was allocated a number. They then discussed sound levels, which were largely the same for each cut. They would try it out in the venue to determine a satisfactory level. Often, the levels would be adjusted in later shows because the presence of an audience reduced the volume of sound. If the sound level was to increase or decrease while playing, Aiyyana would identify another cue by number that contained the instruction to change the level. Everything was agreed upon in advance. Each music cue was keyed to a particular point in Aiyyana’s script. She had to read ahead to anticipate when to give the cue to the technician. We had 16 music cues; five dealt with changing levels.

To facilitate the lighting plan in advance, the festival sent to Susan a map of Havana’s stage area and its “lighting grid” – the electrically-alive bars suspended above the stage. Normally, the technician and lighting consultant would agree to the “lighting hang,” which are the specific places where lights are attached to the grid for the duration of the play. During the Fringe, the technician places the “generals” on the grid in such a way that they can be used, with a minimum adjustment, by all of the companies performing at Havana during any festival day. The generals are a type of “flood” or broad illumination

bulb. In addition, there would be one or two “specials” - spotlights that cast a narrower beam of light. They would be adjusted before each performance to shine wherever the performer wished. In our case, they focused on Susan’s chair. They would be used alone, or with adjoining general lights.

After I spiked the position of Susan’s props, and the technician recorded the music cues, we proceeded with the lighting cues. In our experience, lighting cues take most of our tech rehearsal time. The object is to record in some way the lighting arrangements at every point in Susan’s show, including blackouts and house lights. What takes the time is how the lighting information is expressed to the technician, and what he does with it. It is the hardest technical part of the show, and most fraught with error. One must think of a theatre as a totally dark box. During the shows, only enough light is added or taken away to facilitate the actor’s performance. Susan moves about the stage as her performance unfolds. The light comes on in anticipation of her move, and goes off in the space that she has left. If she is moving over a large area, Patrick might turn on several lights at once. If she is not moving or moving a short distance, he might turn on only one or two lights. We had 40 lighting cues, including turning house lights off and on.

The fastest way to deal with this problem is for the lighting consultant – Aiyana in our case – to hand Patrick a written list of lighting cues. Each cue would describe the lights that illuminate the stage at a particular point in the performance. Patrick would then incorporate the information into his control console, if it contained a computer chip. This type of procedure is called “cue-to-

cue.” We expected Aiyana to present a lighting cue list. Instead, she took the long way, asking Susan to move slowly through her performance. Whenever she moved, Aiyana and Patrick would stop her and decide how to illuminate her – what spots, generals, gels, etc. It took a long time to complete all of the cues. Towards the end of the three hour tech, we were rushing to complete the process in time. Patrick had a “slide board,” which means he had switches that slide up and down to control lamp selection and intensity. He did not have a computer board; so, he wrote down the lighting components of each cue, which he would have to re-construct before each cue arrived.

In the time allowed us, we covered the important aspects of our show, each of them necessary to its success. First, we became familiar with the overall venue. Next we placed our props where we wanted. Susan tried out her costume. I selected my position for projecting the slides, and completed a successful run through. Patrick accepted the music cues. He and Aiyana agreed on the composition of the lighting cues. Lastly, we stored all of our props and equipment at the venue for use at our performances. The tech is always hard work. This one, our first, was particularly trying. But we did it. We felt ready to perform in the festival.

The next day, Wednesday, September 8th, we had a three-hour rehearsal, followed by a final, two-hour workout on Friday. In between, we staged an in-house performance on Wednesday night for an invited audience of approximately twelve people. It was Jan’s idea. It was a very important event -



the first public performance of Susan's show. We invited mostly family members, including Alan, our son. Jan selected several professional theatre people and some of her friends. Susan performed in our rehearsal venue with the room's lights turned on. We moved all the furniture. Susan entered from the exit to the backyard balcony. I ran the slides and music cues. We were excited. Susan performed well. She learned "...that I could make people laugh," and that truth was her most important lesson of the evening. One could just about hear her sigh of relief.

### **1999 Vancouver Fringe Festival**

Susan had very high attendance at her five performances during this festival. At her opening show on Saturday, September 11th at 7:45 pm, we had one empty seat. On the following Wednesday (9:30 pm) and Friday (11:00 pm), the house was full. At her last performance on Saturday (2:00 pm), her attendance was 64. Fifty people attended Monday, September 13th at 4:45 pm, the lowest turnout. Overall, Susan sold 76 tickets at the door and 235 in advance. Twenty-nine attended on complimentary tickets or as volunteers. She earned \$2,368.00; it was not enough to bring her financial condition into the black, but it was a respectable distance along the way (see Appendices I and J).

Thrilled might be the best word to describe how we felt by the public's attendance at Susan's performances. For nine months, we had worked in isolation trying to assemble a viable show. Would anyone be interested in what

an older performer had to say? The crowds filled the theatre. And they seemed to enjoy the performances enough to laugh. Once again, Susan's judgement was vindicated.

### Audience Attendance Patterns

Audience attendance patterns are "entail" material for the performer. One examines them carefully for "truths." After close empirical observation and much speculation, we concluded that the show spoke predominantly to women who had experienced similar life changes. They were very appreciative of Susan's observations. Many were Jewish. Most of our tickets were sold in advance. We assumed that the older audience members were uncomfortable with the hurly-burly of the Fringe and bought their tickets by phone, rather than at the door. Also, we thought that her performance times would affect audience turnout. For example, a Friday night performance would conflict with the Jewish Sabbath dinner. In this case, her performance was at 11:00 pm, which should have been too late for her audience. But she sold out that performance. The thirty tickets sold at the door were the highest number for any of her five shows; the thirty-three tickets sold in advance were the lowest. That night the crowd was younger, more raucous and fun.

We always examine assigned performance times to see if any occur outside of our preconceived time parameters. For example, we assumed that a weekday performance before 5:30pm would draw a smaller audience than a later performance. And Susan's show on Monday, September 13th at 4:45pm did

have her lowest attendance by fourteen people. On the other hand, her Wednesday performance at 9:30pm filled Havana with 54 presales. We assumed that a lower number would come at 10:00 pm or later. Above all, we were surprised that so many attended during the work-week. We have since found that these assumptions are affected if the community has a developed night culture, or the festival is held during vacation periods. Despite the questionable accuracy of our forecasts, we still examine the entrails.

Audience turnout testified to the success of Susan's show. We wondered why they came. Susan's contemporaries, women and men, identified with her stories as they recalled their own experiences. Younger audience members told us that they attended to better understand their parents' and grandparents' lives. For Alan, his mother's story was that of "an outsider who screws up."<sup>20</sup> As a free spirit, she violated the rules of the time and paid for it. But she was strong and overcame the adversity. Her story was optimistic and, for Jan Kudelka, "life affirming." As a dramatic presentation, Alan felt that one of its greatest strengths was that it is written absolutely "in the vernacular" - in his mother's voice.

For Susan, the success of her performances had many happy ramifications. Before the festival, she did not know if her stories "would hit people in the right place, whether they would raise universal responses across the footlights." "They loved it! Yah!" Susan knew that her friends were initially "stunned and surprised" that she intended to write and perform the show.

Everyone was very supportive of her efforts. But Susan was delighted that they really enjoyed the show after they saw it. As Lalo blurted out during the festival: "It's not just that you are doing it, but the show is good!"<sup>21</sup> A number of family members and old friends attended from other jurisdictions to see the show. If the show had bombed, she would have suffered a public humiliation. Instead she enjoyed a public triumph.

It never occurred to Susan that she "was too old." As she said, "I was doing me!"<sup>22</sup> The story was about her life up to that time. She felt that she improved her performance of the show each time.

From a technical viewpoint, there were mistakes every performance: lighting cues left her in the dark; the wrong lighting cue; occasionally the wrong music cue; etc. Also, in projecting slides from the back of the theatre, I was not quite high enough to clear audience heads. As a result, my images often contained a *leitmotif* of silhouetted heads along the bottom. No one ever complained about the technical gaffes. The audience only focused on the pleasure of Susan's performance. Sometimes the show was noticeably slowed because everyone was laughing so hard and often. Susan loved that atmosphere. The next night, the audience would barely express any emotion; its members would sit quietly until the end when they would applaud vigorously and often get on their feet. The audiences' various reactions continue to be a "puzzlement."

It is a common practice at Fringe festivals to invite three or four of the most popular productions to perform several times at a Fringe venue after the festival ends. It provides the performers and the festival an opportunity to earn additional income in the warm afterglow of the recent festival. In fact people do attend but not in festival numbers. In North Vancouver, Presentation House Arts Centre presented "Fringe Picks" during the two weekends subsequent to the festival. Susan was not invited.

### Fringe Hangovers

The Fringe Festival, however, organised a "Hangovers" event for the period between Friday, October 22nd and Saturday, October 30th. Susan was invited to participate. She arranged for a single three-hour rehearsal with Jan to refresh her memory. We had time only for four performances. All of the performers from Vancouver attended an organisational meeting on October 6th. "Hangovers" was held in the Cavern, a venue that epitomised the Fringe festival spirit. The theatre was a converted underground garage beneath the building in which the festival had its offices. One approached the venue down a long ramp/driveway. The stage was a bare floor covered with a black material. Several rows of raked benches were located on three sides of the stage. A small lighting grid topped the stage area. The tech booth was elevated in the rear of the theatre, facing down stage right. Aiyana acted as stage manager for three of the four performances. I sat in the front row facing down stage left to project our

slides on to the screen upstage left. Our technical rehearsal was for three hours during the afternoon prior to Susan's first performance at 8:00 pm.

The Cavern's audience capacity was 49. Susan performed on Friday, Saturday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights at various times ranging from 8:00 to 9:45 pm. On Wednesday night at 8:00 pm, she sold out; on Thursday at 9:45 pm, only sixteen people attended. These performances book-ended the other two. Her total 1999 income from ticket sales rose to \$3,104.08 (see Appendices I and J). She was advancing towards the black.

Although the "Fringe Hangovers" was a small event, it precipitated a change of long-term importance. John Murphy, a young performer in the event, operated as the technician at our show for the night that Aiyana was absent. He had seen the show and told Susan that he would also do the music and light cues. The performance proceeded without any technical mistakes. We were thrilled. He suggested to us that I should become Susan's stage manager. He volunteered the services of Caitlin Pencarroch, his girlfriend, who was in her final year in the UBC Theatre Program in stage management. She would annotate our script with music and lighting cues and prepare several other documents, including a list of lighting cues. Of greatest importance, she would instruct me in the mysteries of stage management to enable me to call Susan's shows. We were delighted.

## Media Reviews

For a Fringe performer, public comments and reviews are another source of “entrails.” Although some performers deny any interest, I think that most, including Susan, rush to read them. Probably the most substantive value of a reviewer’s comments is to acknowledge, affirm, and validate the importance of a show. Susan has occasionally received the caustically negative review. It hurts. But it has never undermined her confidence in her ability to perform. The performer’s second consideration about any review is the question: will it attract any audience to the show? As part of that consideration, a review is read, word by word, to find anything for the performer to incorporate into her promotional literature. Often the quoted “cutline” was typed on to a label that was added to displayed posters and flyers.

The Vancouver Sun, the Province and the Georgia Straight reviewed Susan’s show during the Fringe festival. The Province on September 17th provided the cutline “it manages to evoke both uninterrupted laughter and inner reflection” (see Appendix K). The Straight, in its publication of September 16th, was less enthusiastic. It still elicited the serious cutline “a representative tale of changing times.” Both of these quotes were incorporated into her press release to notify the media of her part in the Fringe “Hangovers.” At the end of these performances, Susan wrote to the Western Jewish Bulletin to thank it for its support of her efforts. It had not reviewed her shows, but in advance of both sets

of performances the Bulletin ran articles with her picture notifying its readers of their occurrence.

Paula Brook, a columnist with the Vancouver Sun, attended one of Susan's "Hangover" performances. After the run was completed, she wrote a column on November 3rd, 1999, entitled "Take This Life and Celebrate It." The subtitle read: "Susan Freedman has survived marriage breakdown, job loss and tainted blood. It has all been so liberating" (see Appendix L). The article discussed Susan's show and how she laughed at adversity and kept going. It was republished several days later in the National Post. People read it all over the country. Later, a number of people attending her show in other cities mentioned their reading of the column.

On October 28, 1999, Susan's last Fringe performance ended. She had started to write her script on January 1st. We became caught up in a ten-month odyssey. Our prize was the process itself as we travelled forward through that time period. Susan's commitment to create the production led to many steps along the way. Neither of us had experience in creating a show, and in seeing it through to performance. Script, director, props, rehearsal, promotion, etc., had to be assembled carefully to build towards the climax of performance. We felt our way.

Within the Fringe context, success for a performer can be measured by the size of the audiences' ticket purchases. By that standard, Susan's show was a success. She was someone without prior experience, who wrote and performed a



show that largely filled her venue and was invited to perform after the festival. I regarded the earned ticket revenue as her personal badge of accomplishment, not as an optimistic business indicator. Fortunately, we did not have to live off the avails.

The title of Susan's project indicates the presence of "age" from the very beginning. To present an alternative to the worldview of the "20 - 30somethings," she broadcast her advanced years right away. It was a consistent element in the promotion of her show. By implication, she announced: "Want a different view of life? Want to hear the stories of someone who has suffered the crises that have wracked your life? Then come to my show." She viewed her age as a hook to attract an audience. It worked. I think that most of her audience identified with her place in life's journey.

From another viewpoint, "age" was a continuing strength to Susan as she assembled her show. Although never identified specifically, its presence constantly asserted itself. She exercised excellent judgement throughout this journey because of her lifetime of relevant experience: the composition of her script; the appropriate reliance upon outside advice in promoting her show; her trust and acceptance of her director; the addition of slides and music; the creation of one consistent, attracting image in all of her publicity material; her intentional selection of the Havana Theatre; and, finally, her happy, disciplined work ethic. This legacy transformed her show into a success in the Vancouver festival that

year, and led to her decision to travel with the show to other festivals across Canada.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Clipping of article contained in showfile of Susan Freedman.
- <sup>2</sup> Letters and informational brochures from the Vancouver 1999 Fringe Theatre Festival organization, and miscellaneous items, are all contained in various showfiles of Susan Freedman.
- <sup>3</sup> Susan Freedman, personal interview, 9 February 2003.
- <sup>4</sup> Susan Freedman, Fifty-Seven and Still Lying About My Weight, written script title page.
- <sup>5</sup> Leo Rosten, The Joys of Yiddish (New York: Pocket Books, 1968), xxii-xxiii.
- <sup>6</sup> Rosten, xxiii-xxiv.
- <sup>7</sup> Judy Carter, Standup Comedy (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), 4.
- <sup>8</sup> Carter, xxvii.
- <sup>9</sup> Susan Freedman, personal interview, 23 January 2003.
- <sup>10</sup> Carter, 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Carter, 7.
- <sup>12</sup> Jennifer Silverman, personal interview, 3 February, 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> Freedman, personal interview, 9 February 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> Alex Dallas, interview by email, 8 November 2003.
- <sup>15</sup> Handwritten note addressed to Susan Freedman and signed by the writer, 18 May 1999. It resides in a showfile of Susan Freedman.
- <sup>16</sup> Jan Kudelka, personal interview, 11 February 2003. All quotations in the text attributable to Ms. Kudelka are from this interview.
- <sup>17</sup> Freedman, script, paragraph 30.
- <sup>18</sup> Freedman, 9 February 2003.
- <sup>19</sup> 1999 Vancouver Fringe Festival flyer located in a showfile of Susan Freedman.
- <sup>20</sup> Alan Silverman, personal interview, 5 February 2003. All quotations in the text attributable to Mr. Silverman are from this interview.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Freedman, personal interview, 26 March 2003. She recounted the statement of Mr. Espejo made to her.

<sup>22</sup> Freedman, 26 March 2003.

## Chapter 2: On the Road

Shortly after the “Hangovers” ended, I told Susan that “we should take Fifty Seven on the road.” We had not discussed the idea previously. We both knew that other Fringe productions often travelled to several festivals. Indeed, the country’s festivals are held on consecutive summer dates, starting in the east and ending the season in Vancouver. This structure invites performers to perform at some or many festivals in a summer season. We had not previously thought about touring with the show; our goal was only to complete successfully our Vancouver Fringe production. My suggestion to go on the road reflected my satisfaction at the success of our Vancouver run.

In a macro sense, we had no idea what would be involved in such an undertaking. But on a personal level, we now knew enough to produce a successful show. My thoughts were mixed with my pleasure in Susan’s Fringe accomplishments and her professional growth. Besides, I felt it would be a wonderful adventure. It would require both of our efforts. Susan felt that she could do it.

Perhaps it is time to consider the nature of the event that we were intending to visit. I once described the Fringe festival phenomenon as follows:

This festive creature is totally decentralized. Each festival is locally produced, chaotic and anarchic. The festival organizations are designed only as administrative frameworks that incorporate

certain minimum commitments to national Fringe standards. The performances, theatre personnel and attendant celebrations comprise the substance of the festivals. At the end of each festival, everything dissolves into the night. Very few permanent records, except administrative statistics, remain.<sup>1</sup>

Don Perkins expounded another description of the Fringe phenomenon:

Among other things that I have learned over those nine days is that the Fringe is not *an* event, but is a coming together of a wide variety of theatrical styles, techniques, and agendas, mixed with non-theatrical happenings, all attempting to entertain, some to politicize. Even the word "Theatre" is a bit misleading, unless your definition includes a bit of lawn, or a stretch of curb, or a rope or chalk circle on the pavement, where the street performers hold court.<sup>2</sup>

And finally, David Cheoros, Edmonton's festival director, made this wry admission about the Fringe festival's nature:

Is the Fringe a theatre festival or is it an outdoor carnival with a bunch of plays thrown in? It is a constant struggle. We are constantly being advised we've gone too far in one direction or the other.<sup>3</sup>

Susan responded enthusiastically as we discussed the 2000 Fringe season.

Where should we go and to how many festivals? We decided to apply to the

Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton festivals. They are three of the biggest Fringe events in the country, and we wanted to spend time in those communities.

Furthermore, we wanted to have fun on the tour. We knew of the spirit of the Edmonton festival, and had heard similar stories about Winnipeg's event. We had time to apply for admission to them.

### **Initial Preparations: Stage Management Changes**

In preparation for the 2000 road trip, we made a major structural change. I was converted into the show's stage manager. I waved good-bye to slide projection. Hopefully my new-found professional knowledge would bring sunlight to the sombre mysteries of the "booth." I brought no prior experience to the task.

During late February 2000, Caitlin Pencarrock instructed me in the finer points of stage management. She was about to graduate from the UBC Theatre Program in stage management. At John Murphy's request, she agreed to consult with us about our stage management needs. When she warned me that, as stage manager, I could stop the show or order the audience to leave the theatre, I knew that I was on to something that I would like. This description of power and responsibility appealed to my controlling nature. Of course, I had to tell Susan of my new situation, implying her position was really only artistic fluff, while I had to guide the sacred ark. She was not impressed.

Caitlin introduced me to many things. First, she annotated Susan's script with light, music and slide cues. This stage management script, combined in a thin loose-leaf binder, presented me with two pages each time: a left page of text and a right page of cues. I colour-coded each cue as to its nature: red for lights, green for music and black for slides. Each cue was joined to a particular word or space in the text by a line or arrow. A mark to indicate a cue's termination was as important as its commencement (see Appendix M). The script's cues might change during the road trip to reflect inevitable modifications. However, our 2000-show script basically remained the same throughout.

Each cue had an entrance and exit that needed to be implemented, or "called." Our slide projectionist was responsible for performing each slide cue. I directed the technician when to implement the entrance and exit of each light cue. Most often, I would control the sound system. If so, I would perform the sound cue at its proper sound level. Other times, I would direct the technician to do so if he or she controlled the sound system.

Caitlin next prepared two documents relating to show lighting. The first was a rough sketch diagram of the placement of generic lighting equipment for any particular Fringe venue. Second, for Susan's 2000 road shows, she compiled a synopsis of 39 lighting ("LXQ") cues. The list contained for each cue: a consecutive number; a time duration for a particular cue to be completed; the areas to be illuminated and to what degree, and whether in conjunction with a wash. A wash might be "warm fronts and backs at 10%." In addition, each



lighting cue was keyed to a particular script page, with space for notes that I might wish to write during a show. For example, LXQ5 on script page 2 should take 3 seconds to illuminate downstage right, centre stage right, downstage centre, and centre stage to 60% percent of the light's power, together with a wash. The lighting cue describes illumination for a specific movement by Susan found on page 2 of the script.

Our consultant next provided us with a synopsis of sound ("SQ") cues. It was substantially shorter than the lighting cue synopsis. It described 12 cues. Each cue had a consecutive number, the equipment that contained the specific "cut" of music (in our case a CD), and the CD track number of the music to be played; we had a list of each musical piece by track number. The synopsis described the cue, either the piece's name, or step to be taken. Last, the piece's length might be described and whether it came on immediately ("snap") or during a "count" measured in seconds. I later added the corresponding script page. For example, SQ 3.5 referred to track 8 and described a change in the presentation of the music introduced in SQ3 as follows: increase sound level by 5 units for a period of a two-count, and then reduce the sound level by 5 units during a one-count. Subsequently, SQ 3.7 increased the sound level by 5 units over a period of a two-count.

Caitlin next provided me with an extensive Pre-Show Checklist. It was more detailed than our show required, but it told me that I had a lot of work to do prior to opening the house to the audience. The process started at the end of

the prior show. Were all of the items that I needed to call the show in my briefcase or shoulder bag? Did I have my equipment, such as flashlight, stopwatch, vividly coloured ballpoints, etc.? I was responsible for the props that we took home after each show. Was the projector operating properly? Did I have an extra 300-watt bulb for it? Were the slides in satisfactory condition? For example, the projector's heat dulled the slides that Jan had coloured.

Periodically, I would refurbish them with brightly coloured felt-tip pens. Was everything I should be taking to the next show in position and accounted for? I could not scramble for a replacement as we walked to the venue.

Once there, I placed the props on the stage, as indicated by the spiking tape, in readiness for the show. I helped the slide projectionist to get ready by erecting the screen at its proper stage place. I required the projectionist to run the entire slide carousel to ascertain that each slide would move smoothly in and out of the projector. Was the projectionist ready?

I would then turn to the technician. Would he run his lighting cues to confirm that they all worked? The technicians are all professionals and take pride in their work. Sometimes, however, one would assure me that it was not necessary. But since I was twenty to forty years older, I would gain their compliance by an invitation "to humour an old man." I would run the sound cues, if I was responsible for them during the show. Otherwise, I asked the technician to do so.

Lastly, Caitlin provided me with show reports, four to a page, for us to compile rudimentary post-performance information. The reports contained the date, house open time, show start times, show finish time, name of venue, house size with potential and actual attendance, and weather. The reports provided a thumbnail sketch of each performance. Most important, I would make notes here during Susan's performance of items to discuss with her after the show.

My introduction to stage management opened up an entirely different aspect of Susan's show from our previous view. We could now relate her performance to the technical support that is so necessary to a satisfactory performance. It also removed the mystery surrounding the performance of the music and lights. It was not a hit-and-miss affair as we had previously experienced it. Instead, I was part of a tightly co-ordinated performance by the technician, stage manager, and projectionist, guided entirely by a script, minutely annotated with detailed symbols governing specific steps to be taken during Susan's performances. I quickly learned that the better the technical performance, the greater the opportunity for Susan to perform at her best, free of worry about the actions of those assisting her.

### **Seattle Fringe Festival: Spring Training**

Before we departed for the summer festivals, we felt that we should have a dry run at another event. We needed to go on the road to learn the realities of festival travel. We had no prior experience. Fortunately, Seattle would hold its

tenth annual Fringe festival March 9-19, 2000. Those dates fit perfectly into our long-term plans. Susan quickly completed her application and mailed it to Seattle on November 4, 1999, six days after her last Vancouver performance. The adventure continued with hardly a pause.

As we prepared for Seattle, we entered an entirely new situation. We had to develop plans to help us prepare the show for tour. Fortunately, we were to perform again a show that we already knew and had last played the prior October. All of the show's components were in place from the Vancouver production. No substantive changes needed to be made except for my role as stage manager.

It was hugely significant for us to be able to rely on the Vancouver production elements for our Seattle show, although we did not think about it at the time. Our familiarity with them made us more efficient in our preparations. Substantial savings of energy, time and money were made. Second, our decision to rely completely on the prior show, confirmed Susan's initial artistic and creative judgement in its creation. All of her production components remained. Thus, her Vancouver achievement had a far greater dimension than just how many tickets were sold. Instead, her success extended to the production's furthest perimeter. Nothing substantive had to be changed in our preparation for the 2000 season. Of course, we would continue to tinker with isolated parts of the script if we did not receive the audience response that we wanted. But we

essentially accepted all of the parts of our Vancouver production for our Seattle performance.

In advance of travelling to Seattle, Susan rehearsed five times, answered Fringe correspondence, sent out media packages to selected TV stations and newspapers, oversaw the printing of posters, performance handouts and programs, and bought advertising in the Jewish Transcript, a community newspaper in Seattle. I dealt with tangible aspects of the performance: gathered props and the show's CD, checked and replaced slides, had the slide projector overhauled and purchased a new bulb, had our car examined for roadworthiness, and created a fully annotated script for calling the show. In hopes of attracting beneficial attention to her show in a community unknown to us, I arranged for her publicity to be placed on the Princeton University Alumni website in Seattle.

After our application was accepted, the festival organisers called for copies of our passports, which we provided. They informed us that the US government required us to obtain visas in order to perform in that country, as GoodSide Productions could potentially take employment opportunities away from American residents. That logic seemed inappropriate for a festival in which anyone could perform upon application and fee payment. Nevertheless, to qualify for the issuance of a visa, we had to fit within a defined classification: in this case, cultural exchange. Also a Canadian public official had to vouch for our identities. Fortunately, Susan's sister-in-law, Roxy Freedman, was Deputy

Minister of Heritage in the Manitoba Government. I drafted a letter for her to sign in which she recited her personal history with us, and her official opinion of the positive cultural value of Susan's show for American audiences. She sent the letter off on her government's stationery and the visa was quickly issued.

Perhaps it is not surprising that there were only three Canadian companies (two from Ontario and us) that performed at the Seattle festival out of a total of seventy-nine.

GoodSide was assigned the Chamber Theater, Venue 5, located on the fourth floor of Oddfellows Hall. It contained 49 seats in straight, raked benches. There was no raised stage and Susan faced the audience. We were fortunate in our support personnel. John Evans was also the Head Technician for the festival. Johnny Otto, a middle-aged woman taking a break from being a tech, answered Susan's notice at the Fringe office to be our slide projectionist.

For me, Evans was ideal because he was steady and confident. I told him that this show was my first as stage manager. I learned from him that I would "call" the show; that is, he would wait for me to direct him to implement a light cue. I would precede the order with a verbal notice to standby for the cue. I learned the necessary rhythm of interchange between the stage manager and the technician. To call the show properly, I had to remain alert. There was no room for a doze during a performance. In Seattle, I was particularly vigilant because calling the show was a completely new experience.

The Vancouver tech rehearsal set out a procedure for determining lighting cues that has been followed at every other venue in which Susan has performed. We arrived at the Seattle rehearsal with a written, "cue-to-cue," synopsis of the contents of each lighting cue fully described. We submitted Caitlin's list of 39 cues to Evans. We had only to allocate each cue to a particular place in the script. We ended up with 20 lighting cues, derived by having Susan do her show in small segments. At each one, Evans recommended the lighting combination; we could call for a tighter or looser focus and a coloured gel. We used either a light pink or amber gel on Susan. Also, the arrangement of lighting in LX 3 would be adopted for LX 7 and LX 11, if her actions were similar in each case. This method of determining lighting cues is always the biggest part of any technical rehearsal. However, if you don't determine your cues efficiently, you end the three-hour period rushing to get all of the lighting cues ascertained before the rehearsal ends. It can be stressful.

Cold, dark, sopping wet seemed to sum up Seattle in March 2000. Much like Vancouver, but darker. The weather mitigated against any street festival or outside celebrations. It was a festival in which we really knew no one - a big difference from our Vancouver experience. An audience is not composed only of one's friends, but friends pass the word to others who also attend. I had a close former university roommate living in Seattle with his wife, last seen forty years before, who was very supportive. Two relatives in the Seattle area arrived in good cheer. Several family members came from Vancouver, along with good

friends from Calgary. Susan and I got along fine. It could have been in question because of the unfamiliar stress of Fringe travel. We found that we liked the sense of freedom that anonymity in a new community provides.

Susan performed beautifully, as we expected. The seven performances were technically sound. But attendance was dismal. Our first show at 11:10 pm on the festival's opening night had four who bought tickets and eight that were given complimentary tickets by the festival. Our two best attended shows were the first Saturday at 3:10 pm (34) and the last Saturday at noon (38). We sold 160 tickets in total for USD \$800. Our 2000 odyssey started in red ink (see Appendices I and J).

We think that the Seattle festival is structurally similar to Vancouver's larger event; it is attended by a small segment of the community that comprises "hard-core fringers." We saw no indication of wide community support, attendance by members of the Seattle Jewish Community, or Princeton University alumni. Instead, those who attended our show came because they wanted to see it. Seattle stood in stark contrast to our fond memories of Edmonton's festival.

Seattle was a mixed experience. But our stay was highly positive. We enjoyed performing; we enjoyed the people and the community. We would not return to Seattle to perform again because we do not need to do so. We have garnered enough experience from other festivals. But Seattle's event was



valuable: it allowed us to prepare the production for travel, gave me “booth” experience, and taught us about being on the road.

### **Winnipeg Fund Raiser: May 15th, 2000**

In early 2000, Susan received a phone call from a good friend in Winnipeg, who had heard of the success of her show. Would Susan perform her show in Winnipeg for one night as part of a charitable fundraiser for the Women’s Endowment Fund of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba? Her friend knew that “Fifty Seven” dealt in part with Susan’s growing up in Winnipeg’s Jewish community and thought that it would have broad appeal. The fundraising event would be held on May 15th. Susan expressed interest.

The Endowment Fund representative contacted Susan and after discussion, she was hired. Susan’s fee was \$1,000 plus travel and incidental expenses. The expense money covered us, and our son, who was to be projectionist for the show. We all stayed with Susan’s mother. Our expenses were an additional \$840.82.

Our venue was Prairie Theatre Exchange, a completely modern, mainstream theatre, in the round. Susan now also held seven rehearsals to prepare for Winnipeg. She had never performed at a theatre in the round. Jan Kudelka had to change her blocking to include audience members behind the action.

Susan's preparation was further complicated because she contracted laryngitis. Her voice reduced to a squeak. She had never had it before. Various "cures" were solicited or contributed. None worked. We arrived in Winnipeg with a substantially disabled performer. Only Jennifer, our professional actor daughter, confidently assured us that the laryngitis would disappear before curtain time. None of the rest of us knew what would happen. Susan said nothing and continued her preparation. At the technical rehearsal on Sunday, the day prior to the performance, she had no voice. Her voice returned fully within an hour of her performance.

The venue had a slide screen that covered one wall of the theatre. In preparation for the performance, our son entered a catwalk above the stage from which he would project his slides. Unfortunately our projector was too small for the caged platform in which it would sit. Alan and the technician sprang into action to call Winnipeg firms to rent a larger projector. It was about an hour to curtain. The first several places called were closed. Finally someone answered. Fifteen minutes before the show started, as the theatre filled, the replacement projector slid into place. The theatre was filled with a good-natured hubbub. No one saw the drama being enacted above their heads. On the other hand, we were riveted. As the projector came on, and projected a brief image on the screen to focus, we started to breathe again. We told Susan about the problem after the show.

The venue held 435 people for the performance. Extra seating was added. The show was sold out. Everyone knew Susan's family. Her 90-year old mother sat in the first row, dead centre in front of her daughter. Members of her family fanned out around the Matriarch. Susan's friends, acquaintances, old schoolmates, and other members of Winnipeg's Jewish community filled the theatre. It was packed. Excitement charged the air.

It is a truism in the theatre: an actor plays off her audience. If the audience is responsive to the actor, it enriches and embellishes her performance. We learned its truth during the Vancouver festival. A fun, responsive crowd would lengthen Susan's performance by more than three minutes. The actor adds more flourishes and greater emphasis. Comedic timing pervades the performance. Audience sentiment was singularly absent in Seattle. In Winnipeg, the audience was with the performer. From the moment the show started, the audience laughed, applauded and cheered. The show was excellent. Susan had returned to her hometown in triumph.

This one Winnipeg show was important in our professional development. First, it tested Susan's mettle. She was to perform in her hometown, in front of her family and many friends in the community. She had no voice. And she had to perform on a stage completely surrounded by audience – a completely new experience. She passed all tests. She never faltered in her preparation. I certainly was impressed by her courage. Second, my stage management skills held up satisfactorily. My responsibilities were the same, whether in a typical Fringe

facility, or in the finest mainstream venue. That was an important lesson. Last, the audience's obvious enjoyment was in stark contrast to Seattle's more sombre reception. It reconfirmed the humorous quality of our show. We were reminded of the fun of performing a Fringe show. Our excitement at the prospect of our summer Fringe tour was rekindled.

### **Summer Fringe Festival Season: Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton**

Susan was admitted to the Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton festivals. Each festival's dates dovetailed to enable us to complete the prior festival before starting at the subsequent event. Susan's admission followed a different route at each festival. Toronto had reserved a certain number of places for out-of-province, national performers; Susan applied and was admitted in this category. Winnipeg's admission process was a lottery because there were too many applicants for the spaces available; her name was drawn. Edmonton's festival was also a lottery; Susan's name was 19th on a 20-production list waiting to get into the festival, but early in June the festival contacted her to say that she was admitted. We never knew what befell the nineteen productions ahead of her.

Following the Seattle festival and throughout the spring, we prepared for our summer trip. We relished the opportunity to travel across Canada to perform "Fifty Seven" in different parts of the country. We learned that when one planned to perform at three festivals, there was a lot of advance work to do. For Toronto, we did not want a car, but we needed one in Winnipeg. Our

residential distances from Susan's venues dictated those decisions. In Edmonton, we would have our own vehicle. For Toronto, we wanted a furnished apartment near our venue; Susan found one on the internet. It was reasonably priced for two weeks and exactly what we wanted. In Winnipeg, we stayed with her mother again. In Edmonton, old friends kindly invited us to stay.

Our travel and accommodation were driven by the needs of age. We wanted comfort and convenience at a reasonable price. We may have been in the minority of Fringe performers:

Putting a play on the road is an expensive proposition.... Ensemble players made the trip to Edmonton by crowding into their 10-year old van ("It's held together by duct tape," Mr. Joyce jokes) and then cut costs by accepting billets in the community.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of preparing for the performance itself, we packed only those items necessary to stage the show. They were the same equipment and props that we had needed for Vancouver and Seattle.

As with Seattle, we needed to hire someone to perform as slide projectionist in each festival. Susan's procedure was to ask the local festival personnel for their recommendation. If nothing was forthcoming, she requested that her notice be posted within the festival office. In Winnipeg, we arranged for the daughter of a family friend to perform the task. In Toronto, an actor friend of our son and daughter performed the task well. In Edmonton, a new arrival answered our advertisement.

The biggest area of increased work was in printing and promotion. We printed everything in Vancouver before we left. Because we were not admitted into the Edmonton festival until early June, printing for it was done later than the other two festivals.

The greatest part of the increase related to dealing with the media. It was the same procedures as in Vancouver times three. Because we did not know the media establishment in each community, as in Seattle, Susan worked off the media lists that the organisations provided. She created new press kits that included photos, press release, poster and flyer, etc., relevant to each festival. All of this work required many phone calls and a close scrutiny of detail.

The same procedure and time sequence governed each press release. The media recipients need to receive their information about two weeks prior to the festival. We mailed the press kits and faxed the press releases to the Toronto media organisations within the appropriate times. For Winnipeg, we did the transmission so that everything would arrive just before we left for Toronto. Upon our return to Vancouver on July 31st, we immediately faxed press releases to Edmonton. From Winnipeg, Susan had requested our daughter in Vancouver to mail the Edmonton press kits on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Susan did a huge amount of work in order to complete this entire task properly and in time.

We travelled very lightly to Toronto and Winnipeg because it was summer and Fringe festivals are informal. We carried on the planes a shoulder bag full of small props, scripts, the slide carousel, stage management equipment,

etc. I also carried the projector in its cardboard box. Susan took posters, flyers and handouts, and programs sufficient for the first two festivals. We worked hard to fit everything in tightly. We were modern itinerant entertainers.

### **Toronto Fringe: July 6-16, 2000**

On July 2, 2000, we departed Vancouver and flew to Toronto to start our summer tour. We travelled the entire summer compliments of Air Canada on Aeroplan points. In Toronto, Susan's venue was the Helen Gardiner Phelan Theatre on St. George Street. It was fully equipped, and part of the Drama department at the University of Toronto. Its capacity was 115 seats. Physically, it would be one of our best appointed Fringe venues.

By now, we had a routine that both settled us into the festival and set up our production of Susan's show. We arrived several days before the event commenced. After a quick reconnaissance of our furnished apartment, we located our venue about eight blocks away. We always tried to see inside of it right away. Our viewing settled any lingering curiosity or anxious questions that we might have. It had a performance area, a booth, and seats for an audience. That is all we needed to know.

We would drop into the Fringe office to confirm our arrival and to solicit any necessary information. The staff was always welcoming and harried. Thereafter, we never felt any need to stay in touch with the office except to pick up ticket money. In Toronto, the office was located at Brunswick and Bloor, just

west of Spadina. Next to it was a small venue and the Fringe Club/beer garden. All of the other venues were quite dispersed in distance from it. Our venue was a ten-minute walk. We postered heavily around the office and at our venue. We also put posters at other venues. There really was no central hub in the middle of the festival that provided excellent poster opportunities.

To ready our projectionist for the tech rehearsal and shows, we followed a procedure that worked for us in Seattle. In each festival, our projectionist was completely unfamiliar with the slides. Susan always mailed a script to the person several weeks before our arrival. Twice before the tech rehearsal, we would set up the slide projector at our residence, and walk the projectionist through the show. Once our living space was so small that we had to drape a white sheet over the garden fence and sit outside to rehearse this part of the program.

By the time of the tech rehearsal, we were ready for it. Our venue had two technicians that spelled each other off. The Toronto tech rehearsal followed a familiar format. After pleasantries and introductions, we would spike the props, settle the projectionist and his equipment, agree on music cues, and walk through the show to set lighting cues. The rehearsal time was over.

Our two largest show props were an armchair and adjoining table. For Seattle, we took them both in the trunk of our car. In Toronto, good friends took us on our first day to Goodwill to secure inexpensive replacements. We followed this practice in Winnipeg and Edmonton. We always donated the



furniture back after the show. In Toronto, the venue had a slide screen. At the latter two festivals, we had to rent them. These matters fell into the “housekeeping” department. They had to be dealt with at each festival before our show opened.

Perhaps it was our age, but we had a secondary agenda that paralleled our travel plans. We wanted to visit our friends in each fringe community. In Toronto, our friendships also aided Susan’s efforts to set up and to publicise our Fringe show to the local audience. Our friends embraced our cause. A CBC friend arranged for Susan to be interviewed about her show and life on “This Morning,” the three-hour daily national CBC-AM radio-program. Another friend did a radio commentary about Susan’s show on a private FM station, that was repeated during the day for an extended period. She was also interviewed on CUIT.FM, a university radio station. We hired someone to poster at inside locations in the Annex south to Queen Street West. Susan placed an advertisement in the Eye Weekly. Two Jewish publications wrote a short description of her show with accompanying photographs. In addition, Susan received favourable reviews of her show in Eye Weekly and the Toronto Star. We felt that these activities were important in attracting a Toronto audience to our show.

However, we could not fill the place. The Toronto festival, like Seattle, was different than we expected. It was geographically spread out. We were more familiar with a highly centralised festival location in which people and

activities were close. The people who did come enjoyed the show and seven performances occurred without incident. We were happy with the productions. But there was no discernible “buzz” enveloping the festival. In addition, the major demographic group attending the festival was younger than our audience. We also were in a large metropolitan area in which the Fringe competed for audience with many other community activities at the same time. We had a wonderful personal time in Toronto, but our Fringe experience was muted and lower energy than we had expected.

### **Winnipeg Fringe: July 20-30, 2000**

We flew into Winnipeg on Monday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, a day after Toronto’s festival ended. When one is on the Fringe circuit, one must quickly switch gears as one moves on to the next festival. On Tuesday, we rented a slide screen, obtained the necessary furniture from Goodwill, and Susan did a short excerpt from her show for CBC-TV to promote the Festival. We also had a rehearsal with our slide projectionist. On Wednesday, Xain, our projectionist, and I visited the Fringe’s central area in the “Exchange District.” We put up Susan’s show posters wherever we found space. The tech rehearsal in the evening was fine, with media representatives attending at the end to interview Susan and take pictures. These were busy days.

Our venue was at Son of Warehouse, a 100-seat studio theatre, upstairs above Manitoba Theatre Centre’s large Warehouse Theatre. It was primitive in

its furnishings, air conditioned, and lovely. Everyone just packed in. The front row was 3-5 feet away from Susan as she moved through her performance.

Every performance was a sell-out. For the performer, this is the best way to get the Fringe spirit. People loved the show. Some, who had seen it on May 15th, came again. But for most of the crowd, it was their first time. Many approached Susan on the Fringe grounds to say that they had heard her on CBC radio from Toronto, or how much they identified with the show, and would tell her about their first husband, step-child, etc.

Susan was thrilled by the public's reception. She received four-star reviews in the Winnipeg Sun and Free Press. Her performance lengthened to 44 and 45 minutes as she slowed down to play off the audience's responses. The overt, comedic aspects were accentuated to the people's delight. These were grand circumstances under which to perform.

Winnipeg was our first Prairie Fringe festival. It was fundamentally different from Toronto's Fringe. Winnipeg is a city of summer festivals, but they occur sequentially. While the Fringe was on, there was virtually no other competing public entertainment. Winnipeg attracted a roughly equal division of people aged 20-35, 35-50, and 50 and older.<sup>5</sup>

The festival's demographics were particularly important to us because we estimated our Winnipeg audience to be largely over 40 years old. Doug Arell spoke somewhat sadly of this demographic situation in a 1995 article on the festival that year:

I sense a definite demographic shift in the audiences. The young, radical, trendsetting audience has largely forsaken the festival; most festival attenders seem distinctly middle-aged and/or uncool, clutching their carefully-marked programs and determined to see only four-star attractions, as certified by the Winnipeg Free Press.<sup>6</sup>

In Toronto, the biggest group to attend the festival may indeed have been the young, radical “trendsetters” eulogised by Arell. In Winnipeg, all ages attended. And in my opinion, this only added to the experience. Enthusiasm dominated Winnipeg’s festival: newspapers, radio and TV had large coverage of the shows every day during the ten-day period. The festival activities were largely together in one area. All ages talked to each other about what they had seen. Word-of-mouth played an important role. People took their vacations to coincide with the Fringe. In Toronto, the venues were geographically decentralised, and the critical mass of public enthusiasm was absent.

This thirteenth Winnipeg Fringe was a great success as a festival. There were 114 companies, up from 101 in 1999. One hundred twenty-two thousand people attended, an increase of 19,000; 53,000 tickets were sold, an increase over the 44,000 sold the prior year. Susan’s individual success was mirrored at the festival level.

## **Edmonton Fringe: August 17-27, 2000**

We flew to Vancouver on July 31st, the day after the Winnipeg festival ended. There was much to do to prepare for the Edmonton festival. All equipment was checked and the printing of posters, handouts and programs was completed. We factored in three days of seaside relaxation before we drove our car to our next Fringe festival.

We arrived in Edmonton by automobile from Vancouver, on Monday, August 14th. We stayed with old friends at their home for the duration. Generously, they threw a party for us to introduce everyone to our show. But there was a condition: all who attended had to buy a ticket to Susan's show. It was a good-natured crowd of old friends and we saw them all later at the venue. Our part was to give an insider's view of performing on the Fringe circuit. The party was a joyous kick-off for us to the Edmonton festival.

The morning after our arrival, we switched into our pre-performance mode. It is a high-adrenalin time. We rented a slide screen, snuck into our venue to secure an early glimpse of the performance space, and surveyed the grounds for postering opportunities. We were so glad to be back at the Edmonton festival.

We have learned the hard way about when to start to hang posters. There is a delicate time balance to be performed: one waits as long as one can before putting up posters. You don't want to be so early as to be seen to be ahead of the festival. But if you wait a moment too long, others start to poster about the same

time, and leave you without satisfactory spaces. Thus, you must rely upon your intuition as to the best moment to start.

Susan was assigned Acacia Masonic Hall, or “Hothouse Stage,” which featured a lack of air conditioning. Venue 2’s capacity was 83 seats. It was a small, intimate performance space. Only Edmonton provided two technicians per show, rather than one. I only called the show, while they executed all of the lighting and sound cues. In Toronto and Winnipeg, I ran the sound cues and called the lighting changes. Edmonton’s arrangement seemed luxurious.

As in Winnipeg, all seven of Susan’s performances in Edmonton sold out. Susan was the first festival performer to sell all of her advance sale tickets (see Appendix N). The remaining tickets had to be purchased at the venue just prior to each performance. Like Winnipeg, this situation was a great emotional high for the performer, especially after the low turnouts in Seattle and Toronto. Her newspaper reviews were approving. CBC Radio interviewed her for the afternoon show and recorded her performance for rebroadcast; CBC Radio also recorded her entire show for future broadcast on the national program, “Out of the Blue.” Canada Learning Television, part of ACCESS, interviewed her and filmed part of the show; CHED Radio interviewed her by phone; and ITV, the CTV affiliate, showed clips of her show and interviewed Susan in studio, live to air.

All of this public acceptance and acknowledgement was a perfect finish to our summer odyssey on the Fringe circuit. We were very happy with the

festival. And as a final treat, the Edmonton Fringe organisation invited Susan, along with two other shows, to hold over for an additional week at a larger venue on the Fringe site. She accepted the additional four performances.

The hold-over performances were a bittersweet affair. We did not sell-out, although we had reasonable crowds. The weather changed abruptly to cold and rainy; the festival crowds and enthusiasm were gone. People attended her shows as they might attend any theatrical production. When the rain poured down, I thought that I might be back in Seattle. The excitement factor fell to zero; it was a more sombre week.

After three weeks, we left Edmonton. "Cirque du Fringe," its nineteenth annual festival, was an enormous success: over 450,000 people attended the grounds and more than 80,000 tickets were sold. It is still the granddaddy of Fringe festivals in North America. As always, we loved its festival and felt privileged to be a part of it.

Leaving Edmonton, we thought that this was the end of Susan's show. In fact, Susan briefly resurrected it for three more performances at the "Chutzpah" Festival at the Jewish Community Centre in Vancouver in February 2001. After 44 performances, the show was finally retired.

## **Comparative Reflections**

By September 2000, we had performed in five different communities (see Appendix O). As Fringe experiences, Winnipeg and Edmonton's festivals were

our favourites, and not just because Susan sold out at both festivals. However, the fact that she did so was an indicator of each festival's success from our viewpoint. Others have made similar comments:

Winnipeg and Edmonton ... run the most successful festivals in North America. Walls and Schneider [two former directors of the Winnipeg festival] suspect that it has to do with geography; these are isolated, lonely Prairie cities, each with an immigrant base that loves art and culture. Both cities possess an area of old buildings, refurbished in close quarters, that can accommodate a lot of plays where it is easy and pleasant for people to walk from one to another.... In large cities like Toronto and Montreal, festival plays are scattered hither and yon; a Fringe festival is far less significant.<sup>7</sup>

In thinking about our experience as older participants on the Fringe circuit, it is necessary to preface any consideration with this caveat: we remained in good health during the entire period. Both of us were needed for this project. I am quite certain that Susan could have not done the tour alone. I think that this vulnerability was a direct result of our age. However, others may not agree. In 2003, Catherine Ueguello, at the age of 55, performed at the Montreal and Toronto festivals, and then departed for a three-week run in Edinburgh. She was travelling alone. In my opinion, her performance agenda was nearly an impossible feat for a single person because of the physical and emotional



demands of such travel. She would have to be physically strong and completely satisfied with her own company.

In Vancouver, our energies were focussed in the creative process of physically defining the show. Susan had never performed it at a festival. Our situation was fluid. How would it be received? The audience seemed to like it. Did they respond more favourably if Susan did one thing rather than another? We were all feeling our way, waiting for the deluge. By the end of Susan's five performances, we felt that she had a success on her hands. The correctness of Susan and Jan's production decisions was reaffirmed at the "Hangovers."

By contrast, on the circuit we were largely in a production mode. Susan's creativity was intensely focused on the rendering of her art. She constantly endeavoured to improve her performance. As to the actual process of performance, there was no difference from Vancouver, except for me personally, as my duties were more important to the production. The configuration of the venues varied, but all were sufficient for performance. All of the technicians were competent and helpful. In our procedure to produce each performance, we did it in the same way as any other performer within the confines of our specific show. Nothing in our age or experience played a material role.

However, age did play a role in our decisions as to travel and accommodation. It also governed our involvement in the Fringe participants' social life. The festivals offer beer tents to theatre personnel and audience members for their enjoyment. Susan does not drink alcoholic beverages. Neither

of us lasted very long in the smoke, noise, and often heavy metal musical accompaniment. Rather, we organised our own social agenda in each festival city, with the possible exception of Seattle.

Nevertheless, we felt ourselves to be a part of a distinctive Fringe community. There was a degree of fellowship amongst the itinerant performers. We would recognise many of the same artists as we travelled from one festival to the next. We developed a continuing conversation with them as we travelled. “[A] circuit of such festivals across Canada and around the world ... creates a seasonal subculture of touring actors, dancers and directors that spring up in one city only to reappear a week or two later in another one down the road.”<sup>8</sup> Fringe festivals are completely democratic. Everyone is treated equally. Therefore, we felt no distinction made by festival participants based upon our age. To our knowledge, no one ever alluded to our age in any type of consideration.

There was one major distinction in the tenor of our daily life between performing in Vancouver and on the road. In Vancouver, we were constructing a show and performing it at the festival. Nevertheless, we were still embroiled in the trappings of an active domestic life. On the road, you are isolated from such entanglements. We were with a totally different group of people who were working hard for the same reason as we were. This peculiar environment makes the organisation of one’s daily life both easier and cheaper than within one’s usual domestic circumstances. You spend less money, or spend money on a lesser number of things. The isolation is magnified because the festivals are

metaphorically, high-energy fields. One is keyed to a higher energy level throughout the period of one's travels. "It's very exciting, it is highly emotional, it's very intense," says [Shannan] Calcutt, whose summer plans included eight fringes from Ottawa to Victoria. "Then you are gone. You are off to another place."<sup>9</sup>

In summary, there were, I believe, four benefits accruing to us as older performers during the summer:

- 1) Susan's experience facilitated her dealing with the huge amount of work arising out of three promotional campaigns that all had to be dealt with, essentially at the same time.
- 2) We may have been better organised for our extended trip than a younger performer. We probably had a better idea of our travel needs and were more able to afford them.
- 3) Susan's show seemed to speak to a distinctive audience of older people, largely women, who responded enthusiastically to her message.
- 4) As an outgrowth of her promotional efforts, she was rewarded with a number of radio and TV interviews that were helpful in attracting an audience to her shows. The media acknowledged and celebrated her as an older performer.

The summer of 2000 came to an end. For almost two years, we had focussed on some aspect of "Fifty Seven." For nine months, Susan had created

the show. During the remainder of the period, we were caught up in its production. Within this project, we had learned a lifetime of new things and accrued untold experiences that, in themselves, would have made the entire effort worthwhile. But it was so much richer that it is hard still to assimilate it all. The best part for me was to witness Susan's unique creativity as it blossomed in an entirely new way. Although the production had elements of drama, nothing exceeded the dramatic acts of courage that circumstances required. Susan exhibited so many of them but proceeding to performance while suffering a lack of voice perhaps illustrated her character most clearly. And the best of all: it was so much fun.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The author, email to Professor June Sturrock, Department of English, Simon Fraser University, 18 December 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Don Perkins, "The Edmonton Fringe Theatre Event: August 13-21, 1998," NeWest Review vol. 14, no. 1, October/November, 1988, 47; italics in original.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Bob Weber, "The Edmonton Fringe: Carnival or Theatre Festival?" Canadian Press Newswire, 14 August 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Jerry Johnson, "Shock Is Not Enough," Alberta Report, vol. 21, no. 37, 29 August 1994, 40.

<sup>5</sup> 2002 Winnipeg Fringe Festival Survey Results, sample size = 234; theoretical error rate = +/- 6.5%, 19 times out of 20. Type of respondent: Regular attendee (78%), Performer (7%), Volunteer (15%). Age of respondents: 24 or younger (19%), 25 to 34 (14%), 35 to 54 (38%), 55 or older (23%), no response (6%). Average age: 42 years old.

<sup>6</sup> Doug Arell, "The 1995 Winnipeg Fringe Festival," NeWest Review, vol. 21, no. 2, December 1995/January 1996, 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> Judy Watiuk, "On the Fringe in Winnipeg - Winnipeg Fringe Festival," Performing Arts & Entertainment in Canada, vol. 29, no. 4, 1995, 34-35.

<sup>8</sup> Growth of Fringe Theatre Festivals Creates Touring Community of Actors," Canadian Press Newswire, August 2000.

<sup>9</sup> "Touring Community of Actors."

## Chapter 3: Talkback

In my opinion, Susan's age and life experiences are the most defining qualities of her Fringe production. They governed the direction, quality and outcomes of the various elements of her show. I think that she would have been unable to write and perform such a show if undertaken at an earlier age.

### People Interviewed

In order to determine if Susan's experiences on the Fringe circuit were comparable with those of others, I interviewed a number of people about their Fringe affiliations. Twelve of the interviewees were Fringe performers, four of whom, like Susan, fell into the category of solo women performers during their Fringe careers:

- 1) Mary Fulham, 50, had performed previously as a stand-up comic; in 2003, as a writer, director, and performer, she brought her play to Montreal and acted in it with other cast members.
- 2) Christine Ueguello, 55, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Fringe festival, was performing her first solo show in 2003, touring in Canada and Scotland.
- 3) Jan Streader, 63, of Edmonton also performed one-woman shows on the Fringe festival circuit. Neither she nor Christine performed her own material.

- 4) Alex Dallas, 45, was the only artist to write, perform her own material, and tour with her show to various festivals.

I interviewed eight other performers: Allan Perry, 50+, Ray Cloutier, 54, and Marian Martin, 69 were all from Winnipeg; Peggy Barker, 58 Len Crowther, 72, Mary Glenfield, 80+, John Rivet, 81, and Dale Wilkie, 65 were all from Edmonton.

I conducted two other interviews in 2003 with seniors whose affiliations with the Fringe were non-performative: Andrea Fieldman, 70, was a Montreal audience member; and John Madill, 64, is head of the Theatre Production Program at Grant McEwan College in Edmonton. In addition, I interviewed David Barnet, a professor of Theatre at the University of Alberta. Finally, additional interviews were conducted with the Executive directors of the Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver Fringe Festivals (see Appendix P).

## **Questions Asked**

My interviews with the twelve senior Fringe performers initially took place as informal conversations during the course of various local festivals during the summer of 2003. I spoke to five performers and one audience member in this manner. However, I asked all of them essentially the same questions and took detailed notes on their replies. During mostly the fall of 2003, I conducted eight additional interviews by telephone or email, in which I asked each interviewee a pre-set list of questions, recording their answers in my

handwritten notes. The people I spoke to were: Peggy Barker (Edmonton - 9 November 2003), Len Crowther (Edmonton - 8 November 2003), Mary Glenfield (Edmonton - 10 November 2003), John Rivet (Edmonton - 9 November 2003), Jan Streader (Edmonton - 10 November 2003), and Dale Wilkie (Edmonton - 17 November 2003). Alex Dallas (Toronto - 18 November 2003) and Susan Freedman (Vancouver - 20 January 2003) responded by email.

The questions that I asked this latter group were:

- 1) What Fringes have you performed in?
- 2) Why do you perform at the Fringe?
- 3) How is performing in the Fringe different from performing elsewhere?
- 4) How do you think the Fringe experience is different for you than for a 30-year old?
- 5) What do you think older participants contribute to the Fringe festival?
- 6) What theatre do you perform in other than the Fringe?
- 7) Tell me a few highlights of your theatrical career.

This chapter's focus is upon the "life experience" of older Fringe participants. "Life experience" is admittedly a slippery concept. What does it mean? For my purposes, it describes the intimate connection between a person's chronological age and what she has learned from the events of her life. I assume that an older person will have accumulated more experience. That is not always



the case. Arguably, a performer could accrue sufficient “life experience” by having spent a large amount of time in demanding circumstances. In my opinion, Alex Dallas at 45 qualifies because she has performed in the Fringe festivals for many years. Conversely, someone of a “senior” age may not have much “life experience.” I believe that all twelve of the senior Fringe participants that I interviewed possessed age-related life experience as I am defining it, and were experienced in theatre and in the Fringe festival.

In the following sections, then, I analyse how this life experience translates into the experience of performance itself for senior Fringers. Where appropriate, I also bring in discussion about how this experience is received and viewed by audience members, academics, and Fringe administrations.

## **Individual Fearlessness**

As we have seen, the material for Susan’s show was largely autobiographical, with a final portion commenting upon current issues affecting her life. Professor Errol Durbach, speaking on “Jewish Humour,” characterised it as “the point of view of an outsider.”<sup>1</sup> The European Jews developed such humour from their community position outside of the European historical mainstream. Alan, our son, described his mother’s show as that of an “underdog, [an] outsider.” As a victim of her time, she is “upbeat, [and] inspiring for people.” In the telling of her life she is “strong [and] overcomes.”<sup>2</sup>

Susan wrote her show as a one-person performance. In my opinion, this is its second most distinctive element. There are many people, mostly young ones, who aspire to the life of a stand-up comic. Susan was attracted to this method, however, only as a means of presenting her show. She wrote humorous material because she only remembered the highlights of her life “as funny” in retrospect.<sup>3</sup> She decided that she would only write about them as objects of humour. Judy Carter comments: “The real work of stand-up is digging deep into themselves and discovering their unique way of looking at the world.”<sup>4</sup> For Carter, “the perfect act is funny to the audience and serious to [the performer].”<sup>5</sup> These statements describe clearly Susan’s mode of performance.

She was 57. This was to be her first written show. She would perform it for the first time at the Fringe. It would be her first Fringe performance. A lot of “first time” events were to be combined in this project. And, finally, for the first time she would perform the show alone. Judy Carter comments:

The number-one obstacle to doing comedy is FEAR. Let’s face it, if standing alone on a stage, in front of strangers, doesn’t frighten you, then something may be very wrong.<sup>6</sup>

Carter continues, with the following bit of advice,

The trick to dealing with fear is to go on in spite of feeling afraid.  
Stand-up takes courage.<sup>7</sup>

Susan may have felt fear. She never mentioned it or indicated it in her behaviour. She just went out and happily performed. Even when struck down

with laryngitis, her pace never faltered. She admitted that she “had a lot invested in [her] personal shows ... I kept saying to myself: ‘it’s only a show, they don’t shoot you, you don’t die from it, you’ll still be alive at the end.’”<sup>8</sup>

Brian Paisley was quoted as saying: “You have got to have a place where you can fail ... I tell the artist ‘don’t do something safe.’ It is hard to get artists to be daring, especially in Canada.”<sup>9</sup> It is pretty clear that Susan was dealing with elements of high risk. It was never discussed. I certainly did not raise the issue. This was her project and her show. She never exhibited any signs of doubt, anxiety or loss of confidence. Her demeanour was exactly the opposite. As a result, we all assumed that everything would be successful. Only someone with an excellent sense of self-confidence based realistically upon her life experience could have acted as she did. I just followed along doggedly without question or doubt.

I interviewed other performers that had opinions on this topic. Christine Ueguello, of San Francisco, found acting in her first one-woman show to be “daunting [and] terrifying.” She felt that she had a “love-hate relationship” with acting. It was “a drug when the audience was with you.” Alex Dallas, who is a veteran performer of her own solo Fringe shows, made this comment about the difference between herself and a younger artist: “I have a thicker skin and more self-confidence.” Finally, also speaking about the same difference, Dale Wilkie, at 65, believed that she felt “less intimidation” while acting, than would a younger Fringe performer. It is clear that fear and anxiety must be a constant

companion of Fringe performers. Age and experience provide a means of controlling these potentially negative impulses.

## **Individual Motivation**

Following on, initially, from our analysis of Susan's show and her willingness to take risks, I believe that she was a performer at ease with herself, and confident of being able to surmount crises that might arise from her production. Indeed, she was exhilarated by the entire process. Her explanation reflects this confidence:

The Fringe is perfect for me. I can write the show I want to do, play the lead (my motive for doing one-woman shows to begin with) ... I love the Fringe. It is democracy in theatre. ... The performer (company) has total artistic freedom ... [T]here really is the opportunity to create a small gem for the price of festival entry ... and an enormous amount of work.

Christine Ueguello provided a more subjective take on the Fringe experience. At 55, she was performing her first solo production. She felt "empowered" by her self-production. She feels "more accomplished" at her age and "less intimidated." One does something "because you want it." And finally, at her age, she feels "not as vulnerable to another person's opinion."

Christine also felt that "acting is the only thing worth doing." Her comments that it can be "a drug when the audience is with you" reminds me of

Susan's heightened sense of happiness in Winnipeg and Edmonton when she sold out both houses for every performance. For a Fringe performer, it can be a happy experience, because the line between performer and audience is less strictly drawn, than in established theatres. The Fringe audience and actor may continue their "conversation" after the performance, on the festival grounds.

Christine made one other relevant comment: "We are much younger than our antecedents at this age." I think that government statistics would confirm our general level of better health and the longer duration of our lives, compared to our parents. As a result, we might speculate that today's senior participants bring more energy to the festivals than their parents would have done, if the Fringe existed comparably in their times. For all older people, one's health is a continuing consideration. I have previously referred to its importance in assessing the success of our road trip.

## **Senior Audiences**

Since we have already mentioned it, perhaps we should consider the Fringe audience from a "senior" perspective. Bertram Schneider, speaking as Director of the Winnipeg Festival, exclaimed that seniors "love" the Fringe. Interestingly, Andrea Fieldman, who attends the Montreal Fringe festival, stated that she was "more attracted to an event that has an older performer." Susan felt that her work spoke "most directly to people over 45. There is a large and growing audience in this age range at the Fringe festivals and having this

definable target is helpful when there is a choice of 100 different productions.”

Professor Barnet spoke of an Edmonton Fringe production of “Boiler Room Suite, ” acted by performers all over 70. He was very interested in the audience. It was comprised of people “in their 50s and 60s. They loved it.”

Actors want to perform in front of full houses. The structure of Fringe festivals embodies special aspects concerning audiences. For Alex Dallas, “[t]he festival environment provides an automatic audience.” Susan comments, “[w]hen you are part of a festival the audience is coming out to see perhaps two, or three, or even four shows on a day and the trick is to encourage them to include yours.” So the factor of “senior” age plays a role in the Fringe. Susan and other performers attracted an audience of older people, either because of a conscious intention to do so, or because the subject matter was of special interest to the senior demographic.

### **Why Perform at the Fringe?**

Professor Barnet says that the Fringe’s “post-modern structure” allows senior performers easy access into its activities. We have seen by earlier descriptions that the festival is totally decentralised and without any significant obstacles or rules. Anyone is invited to participate in it. Seniors have as much ability to perform or attend as any other age group.

Presumably because of this open access, reasons for participating vary with each person. The opportunity to showcase new material was mentioned by

several people interviewed. Although lamenting the economics of mounting a new show with three cast members, Mary Fulham still thought the Fringe provided a “great way to get new work out to a new audience.” Both Susan and Alex Dallas agreed. These three artists, of those interviewed, were performing their own new work.

Both senior audience members and performers that I interviewed raised another issue that may be important to those attending the Fringe, namely affordability. For Andrea Fieldman, it was “a huge factor [that] I could afford it.” She bought a ten-performance pass to reduce ticket costs. Allen Perry acts at the Winnipeg Fringe each year because he feels that he reaches an audience that would not or could not afford to go to an established theatre. Instead, the Fringe audiences are “younger, broader, and have less wealth”. These people “feel comfortable” to attend. They are “the greatest audience; they are prepared to enjoy themselves.” Incidentally, Allen, who acts older roles, corroborates Andrea’s earlier statement: “older roles at the Fringe ... bring [in a] different audience, but also bring young people.” The difference presumably is the audience members’ older age.

John Madill echoes Allen’s comments about attracting an audience that would not attend an established theatre. For him, however, the biggest reason is the intimacy engendered by a Fringe performance. It is not present at mainstream theatres. People attend a festival performance because of the experience; it is the subjective element in the performance. I would agree. I

think that it is, again, because the line between the actor and the audience is not sharply drawn. We saw it many times in Susan's show; people described her performances as being like having "a conversation" with her.

Marion Martin, age 69, has performed in six Fringe shows, the last four in a row. It was "thrilling." Her last performance was two years ago. She fears there are no more roles for her due to her age. She admired Susan for making her own role. She found the Fringe audiences to be very good, but more sympathetic in community theatres. For her, the Fringe was very important because one would see things not seen elsewhere. The productions' short duration did not reduce their integrity and honesty.

## **Performance Opportunities**

As we have seen, Susan felt that the Fringe presented an opportunity to develop "a gem" for the cost of admission and a lot of hard work. On the other side, she would have had to spend much more money to create a public presence for her show if no Fringe festival existed. The festival represented a relatively easy opportunity to perform her original work in front of a large number of people.

For Len Crowther, at 72, the Fringe is the "major venue now for me." He has always acted along with a "day job," or full-time after his retirement. He now acts with old friends. Last summer, they performed "Boiler Room Suite" at a BYOV (Bring Your Own Venue) at the Edmonton festival. He feels that Fringe



productions are a lot less professional, except in the quality of the actors' performances. They are the same as at an established theatre. As another actor in "Boiler Room Suite," John Rivet, 81, is the retired head of the Edmonton Catholic School Board's theatre program. He also believes that a Fringe show's emphasis is on the play and the actors. Because of the small venues, there is a more intimate feeling with the audience. He corroborates John Madill's earlier comments.

Rivet revealed another problem faced by the senior participant: mainstream theatres do not generally produce shows that include roles for older actors. Most theatres now produce plays for younger performers. Even the Walterdale Theatre, Edmonton's most successful amateur theatre, limits its selected roles to characters no older than 60.

It is clear that the Fringe festival plays an important role for Rivet and other actors in his situation. He, Crowther, and Mary Glenfield produced "Boiler Room Suite" to provide themselves roles. It was an opportunity "to do a short show and make some money." Evidently, there are plays that call for actors their age. The Fringe allows them to perform any play they choose. Thus, at a time when professional acting roles are diminishing in regular theatres, the Fringe provides the opportunity to continue to act. If this trend continues as Canada's growing performance community ages, the Fringe conceivably will have a growing number of older actors, for older audiences.

For Jan Streader, at 63, the Fringe provides a chance to perform work that one has “a passion” about. But she is dependent totally on her own efforts to work up to the performance, and subsequent travel on the circuit. She stressed the need for good health and physical strength. Because the performer has to do everything required to successfully produce a show, the Fringe is an excellent environment in which to learn. She particularly emphasised entrepreneurial skills. Susan’s experience is an excellent example of such effort.

### **How is the Fringe Different for a Senior Performer?**

All of the senior participants felt that the older actor brought more life experience to the task than did a younger performer. The former could “call on memories and [the] wisdom of our years.” These intangible qualities are incorporated into “their interpretation of the characters.” The older actors “bring more to the role.”

Many spoke of the older actor’s mentoring function towards his or her younger colleague. Their performances helped “young actors to see what is a good job.” In Rivet’s opinion, this dynamic was particularly true at the Fringe where the older actor had more opportunities to perform.

Alex Dallas feels that her skills are improving as she ages. She has always tried to learn from older actors. In her opinion, an actor is at her peak at 60 years of age. It seems ironic that established theatres draw a line at roles of that age.

Mary Fulham sees younger actors working with an “intense burning energy to make their mark.” For this older actor, that energy is put into developing technique. Crowther agrees. Professor Barnet also agrees that senior actors operate with an aesthetic different than the younger performer. The older person strives for authenticity and a non-commercial ethic. Fulham sees differences in the areas covered by younger and older performers. Younger ones, particularly in comedy, deal primarily in matters of sex and parody. But as performers age and start to experience death, their interest moves to sex and death. Also, they develop a responsibility to comment on the current day. For Fulham, one’s world of ideas continues to grow with age. And finally, these intangible changes may lead the ageing actor into areas of character acting that call for subtle, discreet skills.

Ray Cloutier, 54, described the situation from a different viewpoint. He is a high school drama teacher. Each year the Fringe provides him with an opportunity to act. For him, it is a good place for “pros and semi-pros” to mix together. He uses this situation to solicit advice from the professional performers on acting skills. He finds, unfortunately, that some pros “won’t talk to you.” They are largely the younger ones.

Finally, Peggy Barker, 58, thinks that a senior performer is more willing to be experimental and take risks. She is not hindered by a concern that she might make a fool of herself. Perhaps this would explain Susan’s propensity for taking risks.

## Ending Remarks

This chapter discusses material that is difficult to deal with in depth. Nevertheless, I think that it is clear that seniors have an identifiable presence at the Fringe festival. The older audience is recognized. Susan created her production on the basis of attracting such an audience.

For the older performer, the Fringe presents special opportunities to continue to work at a time when established theatres are restricting careers. These older participants also believe that they contribute performances enhanced by their greater life experience. They see differences between themselves and younger performers both in their professional values and the direction of their creative energies. The younger actor's ambition is often invested in the advancement of their careers. That is no surprise. But the older person sees a future at the Fringe and seems to attract an audience with similar life experiences and expectations.

This tandem arrangement will take on increased recognition and importance in the Fringe community. It is happening now. Susan's experience is an illustrative example of a much larger change that I have described in this chapter. It is possible that the senior contingent at the Fringe will become its largest and most visible segment in the next decade and beyond.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Errol Durbach, "Jewish Humor," Lecture given at the Jewish Community Centre in Vancouver, 24 February 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Silverman, interview.

<sup>3</sup> Freedman, interview, 23 January 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Judy Carter, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Carter, 7.

<sup>6</sup> Carter, xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Carter, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Freedman, interview, 26 November 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Kevin Prokosh, "Lunatic Fringe: Theatre Festival Presents Range of Unpredictable Fare," Winnipeg Free Press, 16 July 1988.

## Conclusion: The Green Room

This project tells a biographical story, simple in its outline, but very complicated in its telling. In 1998, Susan Freedman decided to write a show for the local Fringe festival. I began by documenting the steps that went into the creation and production of Susan's one-woman show, "Fifty Seven and Still Lying About My Weight," and how that show was received during its initial run at the 1999 Vancouver Fringe Festival. Next, I analyzed how Susan and I, as stage manager, adapted that show into a touring production that visited four different Fringe festivals in the summer of 2000. Finally, I compared Susan's experiences as a senior performer on the Fringe circuit with those of other senior Fringe participants. In this conclusion, I briefly wish to review some of the larger implications my focus on age might have for a re-analysis of the Fringe theatre phenomenon (and vice versa). I will also suggest directions for future research.

The detailed analysis of Susan's and my, to a lesser degree, exploits on the Fringe circuit led me to the most significant aspect of her experience: she is part of a growing segment of senior participants at the Fringe festival. Susan's story, together with my interviews of fourteen other participants, disclosed a vibrant, growing community within the general Fringe population.

Who is a senior participant? Chronological age is a general criterion. The age of 50 is probably a valid arbitrary starting point. However, Alex Dallas at 45 is arguably the most worthy senior performer because she has toured her own

work, largely, for 20 years on various Fringe circuits in Canada and abroad.

Therefore, substantial life experience would be the more valid criterion. Susan is a first-time performer but her life experience and age contributed to a successful production from the start.

The specifics of this community are varied. The 13 performers of our group sometimes operated differently from each other: Susan and two others performed their own new work. Two others toured using other writers' scripts. The five often performed one-person shows. The remaining eight performers acted only at their own communities' festivals, in ensembles, using published scripts. These senior participants arrived at the Fringe from different directions.

The Fringe provides some senior performers an opportunity to act, at a time when established theatres are restricting their roles. This opportunity is the foundation of those senior artists' affiliation with the Fringe. Professor Barnet spoke of the Fringe's "post-modern" structure that allows applicants unfettered access to participate in the festivals. One tends to think of it as providing a starting point for young theatre aspirants. But it also works equally well for performers nearing the end of their acting careers. This aspect is particularly valuable to senior performers.

Senior artists seem to benefit in many ways from the Fringe. They can work. They can showcase their own new work. They are surrounded by an abundant audience that only needs to be attracted inside their venue. They are able to mentor younger actors by performing more frequently at the Fringe. And

they carefully maintain their usual high standards of performance in spite of the informal, primitive theatre conditions of the Fringe venue. However, they may be forced to learn new ways to be successful. Jan Streader spoke of the need for entrepreneurial skills to promote one's show and attract an audience. Susan's story exemplified that situation.

Finally, we must examine the impact of senior performers on the Fringe audience. First, Andrea Fieldman raised the issue of the affordability of Fringe productions. Allan Perry echoed this sentiment. For him, the low admission cost of Fringe shows allowed people who would not or could not afford to attend established theatres, to support festival performances. He found, in addition, that an older role will bring out older audience members. Andrea also confirmed that she was attracted to older performers. Professor Barnet spoke of an audience for "Boiler Room Suite" being in their 50s and 60s. The three actors were 72, 80+, and 81.

The quality of the Fringe experience for the audience has special significance in the case of senior performers. Several mentioned the sense of intimacy between performer and audience because the line between them is not so strictly drawn. Our experience confirmed this quality on many occasions. Older audiences form a large part of those who attend, certainly at the Prairie festivals. They will grow as our population continues to age.

Professor Barnet raised an ancillary issue when he described the positive therapeutic qualities for senior citizens becoming involved in theatre activities



for the first time. I think that it is arguable that the opportunity to perform at the Fringe has a similar health benefit for the senior performer. He must have a sense of a professional future as a Fringe actor with the opportunity to return annually. Performing at the Fringe is an enormously exhilarating experience. One's energy level rises and one's senses are sharpened. It cannot help but enhance a performer's health and sense of well-being.

This project leads to at least two areas of future research. First, the number of senior Fringe participants will continue to increase. Canada's performance community is growing and ageing at the same time. The senior audience is also increasing. It is possible that before long, seniors in their many capacities, including volunteers, audience members, and performers, may constitute the largest identifiable segment of the Fringe community. The changing dimensions of the seniors' contributions to the Fringe during the next decade, would provide a worthwhile research project.

Second, it would seem important to pursue Dr. Barnett's inquiry into the benefits of theatre participation upon the health of seniors. The Fringe example may be particularly helpful in this regard.

Certainly Susan's experience would seem to lend credence to this theory. Her performance at various Fringe festivals may represent a more focused example of Professor Barnett's observation. For five years, she immersed herself in the creation and performance of two Fringe shows. The entire experience provided us with positive health benefits that continue to this day. Her

successful Fringe history may confirm both Professor Barnett's observations about seniors' health, and the expectation of future growth of their presence in the Fringe festival community. Susan's experience exemplifies developments that bode well for the continued health of our senior citizens and the continued vitality of Canada's Fringe festivals.

# Appendix A: Research Ethics Approval Form

## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS



BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CANADA V5A 1S6  
Telephone: 604-291-3447  
FAX: 604-268-6785

January 21, 2004

Mr. Bill Galloway  
Graduate Student  
Liberal Studies  
Simon Fraser University

Dear Mr. Galloway:

**Re: Fully engaged: an older performer's odyssey in Fringe Theatre festivals**

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has been approved on behalf of the Research Ethics Board. This approval is in effect until the end date of January 21, 2007. Any changes in the procedures affecting interaction with human subjects should be reported to the Research Ethics Board. Significant changes will require the submission of a revised Request for Ethical Approval of Research. This approval is in effect only while you are a registered SFU student.

Your application has been categorized as 'minimal risk' and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with University policy R20.0, <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm>.

"Minimal risk" occurs when potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms incurred by participating in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research.

.../2

Page 2

Please note that it is the responsibility of the researcher, or the responsibility of the Student Supervisor if the researcher is a graduate student or undergraduate student, to maintain written or other forms of documented consent for a period of 1 year after the research has been completed.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director  
Office of Research Ethics

c: Dr. Peter Dickinson, Supervisor

/jmy

## Appendix B: List of Sample Questions

### SFU Project Questions to Third Parties

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Community:**

- 1) **What Fringes have you performed in?**
- 2) **Why do you perform at the Fringe?**
- 3) **How is performing in the Fringe different from performing elsewhere?**
- 4) **How do you think the Fringe experience is different for you than for a 30-year old?**
- 5) **What do you think older participants contribute to the Fringe festival?**
- 6) **What theatre do you perform in other than the Fringe?**
- 7) **Tell me a few highlights of your theatrical career**

## Appendix C: Promotional Photo - 57

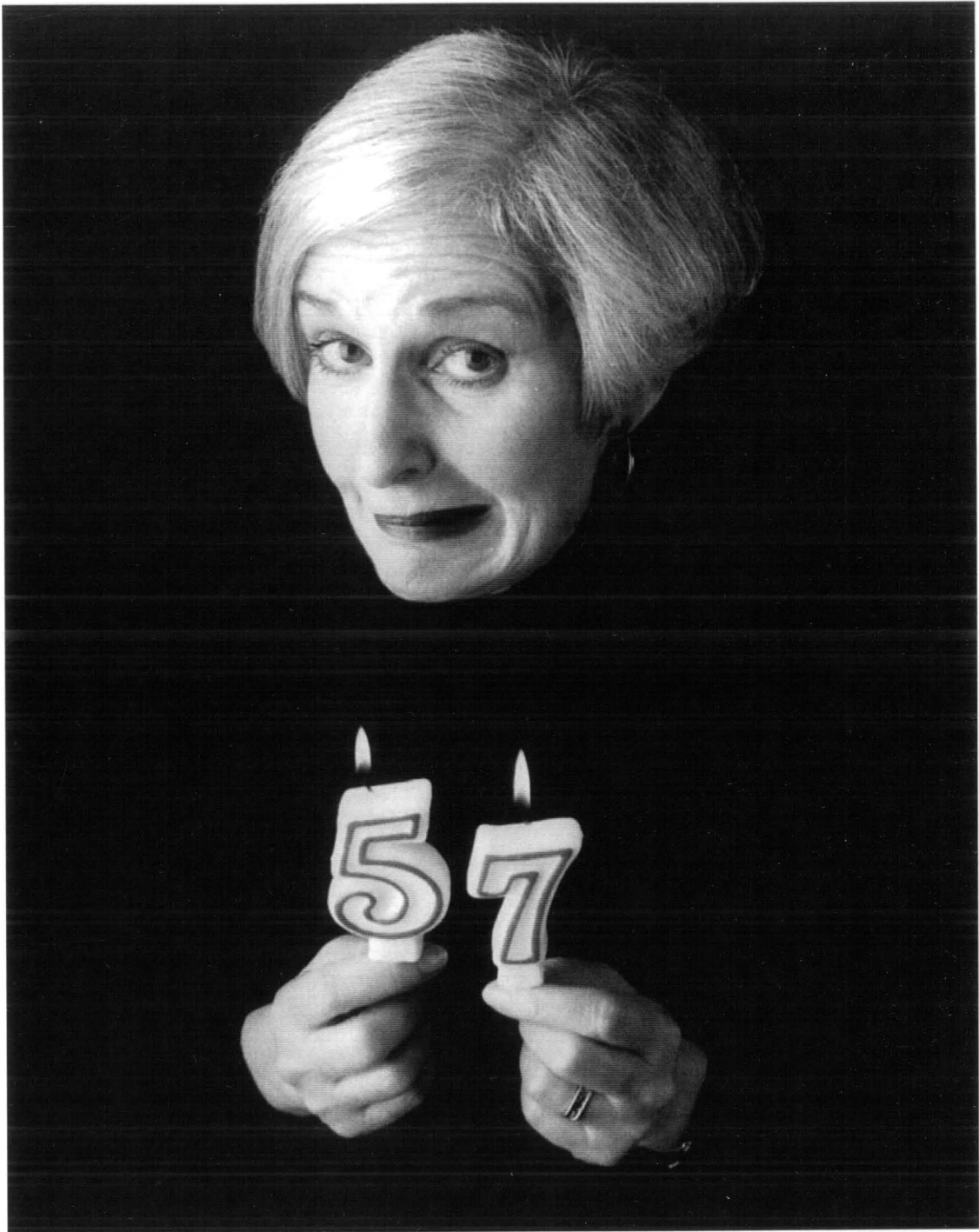


Photo / Dina Goldstein

Photo used with the permission of Dina Goldstein.

## Appendix D: Promotional Photo - Scale

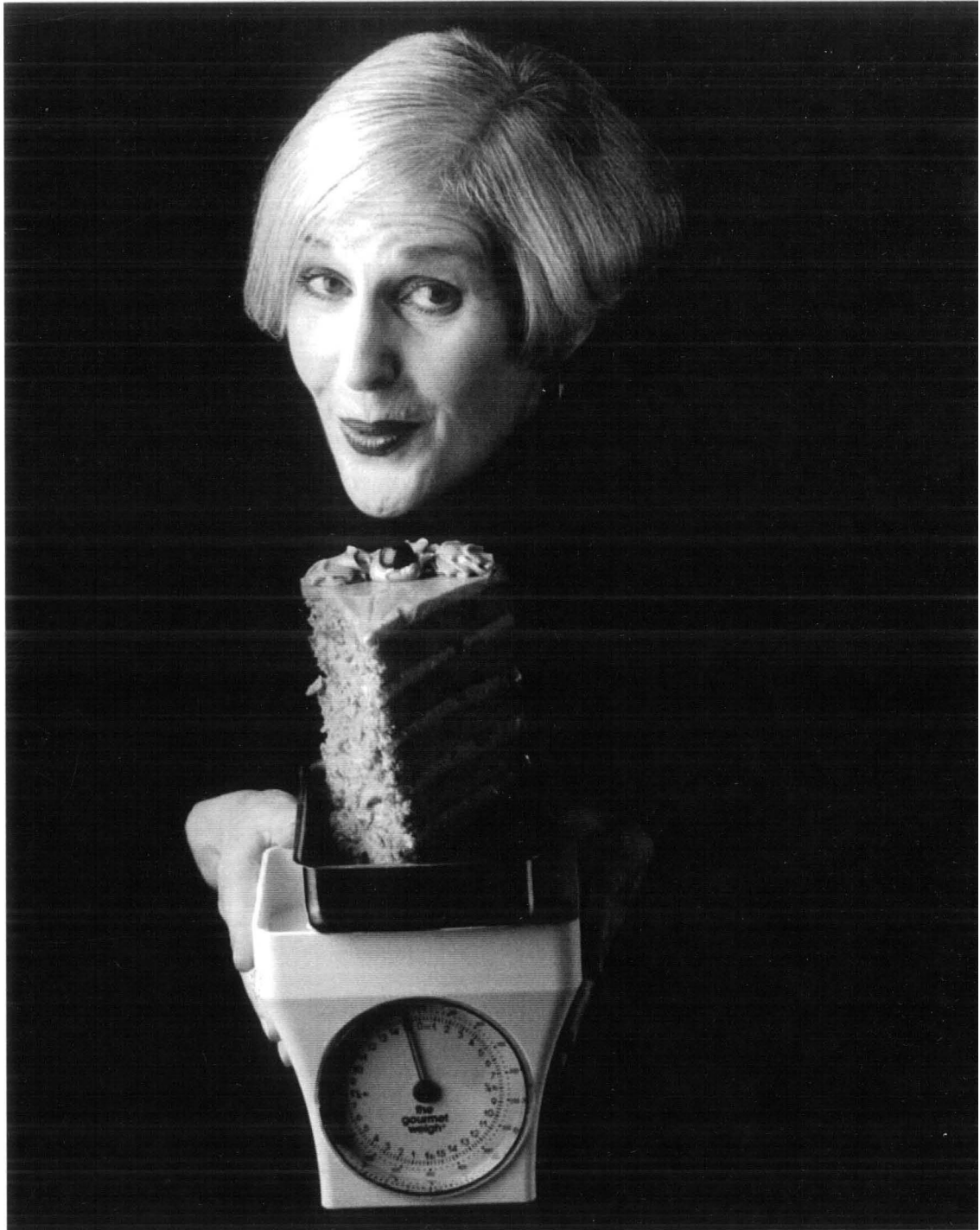


Photo / Dina Goldstein

Photo used with the permission of Dina Goldstein.

## Appendix E: List of Music

Cut Number	Title	Duration
<b>a) Pre-show</b>		
1	Wedding Bell Blues	2:45
2	Why Do Fools Fall in Love?	2:22
3	Can't Hurry Love	2:56
<b>b) Show</b>		
4	I've Got a Name	3:10
5	Town Without Pity	:60
6	See You in September	:54
7	Fly Me to the Moon	:48
8	Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover	:32
9	Tybalt's Death	:19
10	I Can See Clearly Now	1:55
<b>c) Post-show</b>		
11	Cathy's Clown	2:27
	Baby Love	3:35
	Wouldn't It Be Nice	2:22
	Monday, Monday	3:16



## Appendix F: Press Release



# Fifty Seven And Still Lying About My Weight!

Written and Performed by *Susan Freedman*  
Directed by *Jan Kudelka*

### For Immediate Release

Susan Freedman announced today that she weighs 110 pounds, and for the most part she was able to keep a straight face while saying it. Her new one-woman show *Fifty-seven And Still Lying About My Weight* is Susan's funny and moving object lesson in being a survivor—whether it's a Winnipeg winter, the 1991 CBC blood-bath, or marriages on the rocks, this indestructible woman has survived it all. She performs at the **Havana, 1212 Commercial Drive**, as part of this year's **Vancouver Fringe Festival**, September 9 - 19, 1999.

For all its fun, and there's plenty of it, the 45-minute monologue is an appeal to let our good judgment show us that life, after all, 'ain't so bad.' Susan chronicles the ups and downs of the Fifty Something generation. As we follow her through her various tribulations (from the trivial to the treacherous) we catch on quickly that she's bragging, not omplaining...and laughing most of the way.

Susan makes the move from Marketing Director of the Fringe (1995-98), to writer/ performer in it. Though she has done various acting stints through the years, this is her first run at writing. "Maybe I've been hanging around the Fringe too long," she says. "I've seen a lot of great shows...but I think it's seeing the *bad* ones that made me think 'y'know, I can do this."

As to the questions *why a monologue?* and *why now?* she says she would see young performers doing shows that were funny, ironic, and about their own generation. "I hope my story speaks about my generation. We've got a lot to say. We've lived through more and seen more of life's shadings by our fifties."

At Havana, 1212 Commercial Drive

Saturday, Sept. 11	7:45 p.m.
Monday, Sept. 13	4:45 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 15	9:30 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 17	11:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 18	2:00 p.m.

**For tickets call 257-0366**

-30-

For more information contact: Lalo Espejo, 730-1648

Press release used with the permission of Lalo Esejo; Vancouver Fringe Festival logo used with the permission of First Vancouver TheatreSpace Society.


## Appendix G: Poster

**Fifty Seven and Still Lying  
About My Weight!**


*Written and Performed by:*  
**Susan Freedman**

*Directed by:* Jan Kudelka

at HAVANA

<b>Sat.,</b>	<b>Sept. 11</b>	<b>7:45pm</b>	
<b>Mon.,</b>	<b>Sept. 13</b>	<b>4:45pm</b>	
<b>Wed.,</b>	<b>Sept. 15</b>	<b>9:30pm</b>	
<b>Fri.,</b>	<b>Sept. 17</b>	<b>11:00pm</b>	
<b>Sat.,</b>	<b>Sept. 18</b>	<b>2:00pm</b>	

*A lifetime of growing up squeezed  
into 45 minutes of laughs...*



Poster used with the permission of Susan Freedman; Vancouver Fringe Festival logo used with the permission of First Vancouver TheatreSpace Society.

## Appendix H: Program

Fifty Seven  
and Still Lying  
About My  
Weight



Program used with the permission of Susan Freedman; Vancouver Fringe Festival logo used with the permission of First Vancouver TheatreSpace Society.

## THE TEAM

Writer/Performer	Susan Freedman
Director/Dramaturgy	Jan Kudelka
Stage Manager	Bill Galloway
Lighting Design	Aiyana Maracle
Slides & Photography	Dina Goldstein/The Lab
Publicity	Lalo Espejo
Music Production	Don Pennington
Technician	Patrick O'Doherty
Venue Captains	Michelle, Louise, Dean

Thank you's from Susan:

Jan for her enormous talent and making it all work; Sheila Mackenzie for the wonderful rehearsal space; Ray Hannah for fixing the phone; Joyce at Bond Repro; Leslie at Tech One for great haircuts; The Huberman's for the slide projector and all the answers as usual; Aaron for the other slide projector and still being family; my dear friends for cheering me on; all my children and grandchildren for the joy; Al and Jen for inspiration and staying close; Bill for proving third time lucky; Brownie for still being up for anything; The Fringe for making it possible.

**Dedicated to Sam: a wonderful storyteller**



Susan Freedman trained at the Banff School of Fine Arts, The Citadel Theatre School in Edmonton and The Central School of Speech and Drama in London. Most recent role: Mom in "Potted Mom" for Deep Cove Players. Other credits include: Sally Bowles in "Cabaret"; Bianca in "Kiss Me Kate", Mercy Lewis in "The Crucible", Pitti Sing in "The Mikado". She was indeed in the chorus of *Guys and Dolls* at Rainbow Stage and sang "I Caint Say No" at teen dances. After CBC, Susan studied and had fun in London for three glorious years, then moved to Vancouver. Her 30 years of work in Communications includes: CBC, The Bay and The Vancouver Fringe Festival, where she was Marketing Director from 1995 through 1998.

Jan Kudelka's 30 year theatre career includes: acting, writing, singing and directing. Her credits include: two seasons as a principal at Stratford; the original "Hair" at The Royal Alex in Toronto; ten years with Caravan Farm Theatre. Recent gigs: opening act for Jessie Award winning Devil's Box Cabaret; Tarot Reader at The WISE Club. Jan is author/performer of the Canadian classic "Circus Gothic", acclaimed this July in Langley. Her dynamic play on the music of Janis Joplin; "Janus Janis" will be seen Dec/Jan at the Langley Playhouse.

Aiyyana Maracle is an award-winning multi-disciplinary artist who works in theatre; also as a writer, curator and performance and visual artist. Her next gigs include a performance at the Vogue and a reading at the VAG as part of Live At The End Of The Century, and a performance mid-Oct. in Toronto during Count Past 2, a transgender arts event.

At Havana

1212 Commercial Drive

Saturday, September 11, 7:45 pm

Monday, September 13, 4:45 pm

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 9:30 pm

Friday, September 17, 11 pm

Saturday, September 18, 2:00 pm

Tickets \$8 at the door; \$10 in  
advance, call 257-0366

## Appendix I: Ticket Sales and Revenue

<b>Festival</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Ticket Cost</b>	<b>Number of Performances</b>	<b>Total Venue Capacity</b>	<b>Tickets Sold</b>	<b>Revenue</b>
Vancouver Fringe	Sept. 9-19, 1999	\$8-\$10	5	340 (5 x 68)	311	\$2,368.00
Vancouver Fringe Hangovers	Oct. 23-28, 1999	\$10	4	196 (4 x 49)		\$736.08
Seattle Fringe	March 9-19, 2000	\$5	7	343 (7 x 49)	160	\$1,173.60 (USD \$800)
Winnipeg Charity	May 15, 2000		1	435	435	\$1,000.00
Toronto	July 6-16, 2000	\$8	7	805 (7 x 115)	307	\$2,400.00
Winnipeg	July 20-30, 2000	\$5-\$8	7	700 (7 x 100)	699	\$4,244.00
Edmonton	Aug. 17-27, 2000	\$6-\$8	7	581 (83 x 7)		\$3,885.96
Edmonton Holdovers	Aug 30 - Sept. 2, 2000	70% of \$12-\$15	4		190	\$1,750.69
Chutzpah	February 18-24, 2001		3			\$1,500.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>						<b>\$19,058.33</b>

## Appendix J: Schedule of Expenses

Category	Vancouver	Seattle	Toronto	Winnipeg	Edmonton	Chutzpah	Totals
	(Sept. 9-19, 1999, Oct. 22-28, 1999)	(Mar. 9-19, 2000)	(July 6-16, 2000)	(July 20-30, 2000)	(Aug. 17-27, 2000)	(Feb. 17 - Mar. 4, 2001)	
Admission fee	\$ 588.50	\$ 567.50	\$ 598.50	\$ 428.00	\$ 535.00	\$ -	\$ 2,717.50
Director	1,200.00	200.00	100.00			225.00	\$ 1,725.00
Photos	370.73	114.00	91.20				\$ 575.93
Music	100.00	91.20					\$ 191.20
Slides	497.00	9.12					\$ 506.12
Printing	128.70	180.72	307.75	367.40	70.05	19.38	\$ 1,074.00
Promotion	441.33	132.90	227.91	157.70			\$ 959.84
Postage		79.56	92.86	101.66	40.19	11.17	\$ 325.44
Props	24.55		6.48		17.98		\$ 49.01
Screen rental				119.10	32.10		\$ 151.20
Stage mgmt	350.00						\$ 350.00
Slide projectionist		300.00	235.00	300.00	400.00		\$ 1,235.00
Drycleaning	45.84	7.86	8.05	16.54	51.52		\$ 129.81
Consultants	470.00						\$ 470.00
Performance		30.31	76.34	37.50	45.13		\$ 189.28
Accommodation		957.08	1,289.38	42.42	199.13		\$ 2,488.01
Car expenses			135.73	106.85	68.75		\$ 311.33
Travel expenses		199.19			561.52		\$ 760.71
Entertainment		665.96	859.87		624.83		\$ 2,150.66
Fringe tickets		58.50	143.00	166.00	405.70		\$ 773.20
Machine maint.	34.19	43.06	26.44				\$ 103.69
Telephone							\$ -
Video	139.10					100.00	\$ 239.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,389.94</b>	<b>\$ 3,636.96</b>	<b>\$ 4,198.51</b>	<b>\$ 1,843.17</b>	<b>\$ 3,051.90</b>	<b>\$ 355.55</b>	<b>\$ 17,476.03</b>



## Appendix K: Vancouver Province Review

### Fringe fest reviews

The Province • Take a break!

Friday, September 17, 1999

# Laughter and inner reflection

By Melissa Radler  
Staff Reporter

She is your mother/sister/daughter at her best, in matching magenta dress shirt-lipstick-shawl ensemble and perfectly coiffed hair.

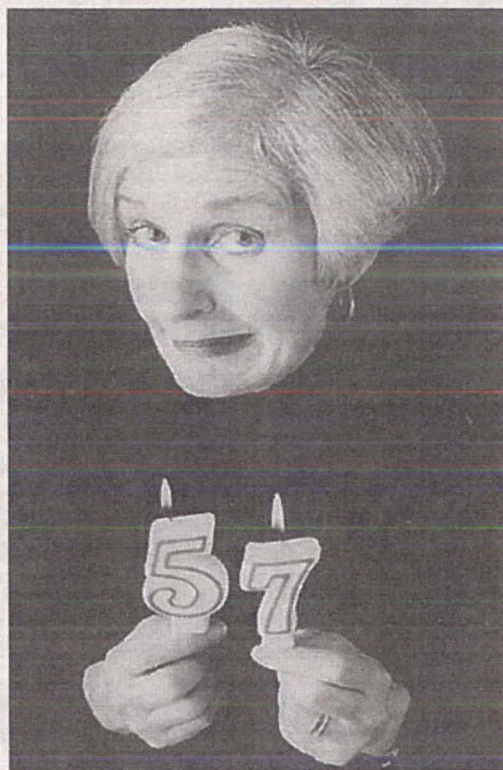
Fifty-Seven and Still Lying About My Weight is a fiftysomething monologue written and performed by Susan Freedman, marketing director of the Fringe from '95 to '98.

She talks about overlapping marriages, ex step-families and tainted blood and shares slides of the fashion victim-style hairdos and outfits that mark her life from the '50s to the present.

Mood music accompanies Freedman's personal travails, which are presented in flashback format beginning with a Winnipeg Jewish community reminiscent of Seinfeld.

Multiple divorce, menopause, hepatitis, Costco — such catchwords are thrown around casually and with great effect, creating a one-woman self-help group setting that manages to evoke both uninterrupted laughter and inner reflection.

Playing at Havana (1212 Commercial Dr.). Remaining shows: Today at 11



Susan Freedman stars in *Fifty-Seven and Still Lying About My Weight*.

p.m., tomorrow at 2 p.m.  
Ticket information 257-0366



## Appendix L: Vancouver Sun Review

THE VANCOUVER SUN, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1999

### TAKE THIS LIFE AND CELEBRATE IT

**I**t's funny how the definition of success has changed in a generation or two. For my parents, it was something one pursued down a straight and narrow road of hard work, sacrifice and hope.

For my adolescent children, witnesses to the overnight making and breaking of fortunes in a speculation-fuelled, tech-crazed, downsized and contracted-out world, success doesn't appear to be something earned so much as randomly bestowed. It is hard for them to plan, and will be harder still to buckle down and commit to career choices.

For the generation in between (mine) the magic pill is a 2,500-year-old formula devised by Heraclitus: Nothing is permanent, except change. This has been a bitter pill for of us those bent on pursuing our parents' dreams, or for those who simply don't like change much — or who don't care for risks.

You know when you gaze at newsstands and book shelves stacked with titles screaming *Yes You Can!* that you're looking at a distorted reflection of a generation quietly choking on that magic pill. Maybe not a whole generation, but an awful lot of little engines that couldn't — that wish like hell they could. Little engines stuck on go-nowhere career tracks, loaded down by too high taxes, too little time, and the creeping fear that any small derailment could mean a final plunge straight down the deepening income gap.

Well this is getting awfully bleak, isn't it? And here I was gearing up to review a piece of comic theatre called *Fifty Seven and Still Lying About My Weight!* It's a one-woman, one-act show written and performed by that charming 57-year-old liar, Susan Freedman, who has staked her current fortunes on the idea that it truly is funny how our definition of success has changed in the last 30-odd years. If a sold-out run at the Vancouver Fringe Festival (and repeat performances as part of last week's Fringe Hangover) are any indication, Freedman is one tough little engine that could.

Paula Brook



Susan Freedman has survived marriage breakdown, job loss and tainted blood. It's has all been so liberating.

with CBC Radio in Edmonton — which was totally devastating, and ultimately liberating.

She tried to look at her layoff the way the way she looked at the rest of her life — not so much unravelling as unfolding: the failed marriages, the hard-to-blend families, the heart surgery and Hep C-tainted transfusion, the whole shie-mazel.

"I like the way the Chinese look at disaster," she told me. "In the written language, a single character means both disaster and opportunity."

It wasn't, in other words, your standard rebound. With her children by then away at college, she and third husband Bill Galloway held a giant garage sale, packed a couple of big suitcases and moved to London for one year that turned into three.

They lived in a tiny fifth-floor walk-up apartment, went to plays and museums and took lots of classes. Freedman studied drama and voice, and boned up on the advertising/marketing skills she'd first developed when she was a single mom in the '70s in Calgary, working as the editor of *The Beaver Byline* at The Bay and taking classes in Creative Living For Divorcees, which was where she met Bill. Freedman has always been a sucker for continuing ed. She has never had a problem seeking help or advice.

The play is her story, which starts in Winnipeg where the ornery middle child of a middle-class family grows up with one ambition only: to become an American Airlines steward. This is about to happen — the job beckons in Dallas — when someone asks her to marry him and she says yes.

She would say yes twice again before she would finally understand that marriage (and husbands) are not, as advertised in the early '60s, "a way to give my life some sense of direction." That would be entirely up to her. Ditto, employment.

"The place you work is not your mother. Keep a bag packed," she says at the end of the play, which rings a bell for me. Freedman had told me the same thing four years earlier when I'd interviewed her for a book I was writing on women and work.

At that time she was marketing director for the Fringe Festival, on the rebound after having lost her executive-director job

So maybe that's the ticket. Seeking help. On their return to Canada they settled in Vancouver and Freedman belatedly put herself through extensive outplacement counselling offered as part of the CBC lay-off. It had been 20 years since she'd applied for a job. She would need help — not only to sell herself, but to figure out what to sell.

She had a series of theatrical "head shots" taken, filed them for the next disaster/opportunity, and turned her mind to marketing. Finding the name of the Fringe's producer on a program, she picked up the phone and made her pitch. "I told her I didn't think they were getting nearly the support from the community and the media they deserved, and I said I could help make that happen."

She did, and seven years later she made her debut in a show that won't win a Pulitzer — but that's not how Susan Freedman spells success. And anyway, they don't award Pulitzers for life.

[pbrook@pappress.southam.ca](mailto:pbrook@pappress.southam.ca)

Paula Brook's column appears Wednesdays.

# Appendix M: Prompt Book Pages

3

19. (on the phone) "So are we going to the Y on Saturday? What do you mean you can't go? We planned it weeks ago! You've got a date! With who? Arthur! Oh my God! No.No. I mean, No,...he's really neat. Of course you have to go with him. That's great. I'll find someone else to go with" |

20. (to the audience) (slide: prom picture) In the 50's we don't go out in groups much. We do go places with our girlfriends but going out with the girls is not important...compared to a DATE with ANYONE. If you have a plan with a girlfriend and a guy asks you out ...the girlfriend gets dropped. She understands completely because she'll do the same thing to you in a New York minute.

LITE

21. My parents get so sick of never having their phone free that on my 16th birthday I get my own phone! But it can't be in my bedroom? Maybe they figure they'll never see me again. So the phone is in the hall outside my room. Fortunately, this puts me in close proximity to the extension phone in my parent's bedroom and I talk on both phones at once. One day I get caught...not for the first time. My very gentle father rips my precious phone out of the wall!

LO-10, up  
see You in Sept  
LO-54 sees  
LOUD -10  
how @ replace  
-35

22. (back in my bedroom listening to the radio, under the duvet). I stop listening to CBC and start listening to CKY and CJOB. I have to in case somebody sends me a request. And finally it happens. I'm at Clear Lake. It's about midnight and I'm listening to the radio in bed. The Request Line guy says... That was "See You In September" by The Happenings, for Susan, at Clear Lake from David!" I'd asked him to do it...but still...

LOUD -10

23. (photo: Roxy and Martin grad picture) I'm 18. My best friend Roxy is visiting me...at least I think it's me. You have to know my brother Martin is 5 years older and barely acknowledges I'm alive. And of course he ignores my friends too. Is this fair!? What are we? Chopped liver? So why does he start talking to Roxy...or is it the other way around? ... They get into one of those flirty little "arguments" about music? A movie? Who knows? In a heartbeat I know. My brother Martin and my new sister in law Roxy both get the gold medal when they graduate from University of Manitoba in Law and Education. They are the golden couple!

to be a doctor  
close to a doctor

university  
to class

24. (Slide: Phyllis) Who here is a middle child? I'm a middle child. My younger sister, Phyllis, is an early Baby Boomer. When she rebels she runs away from home. Haight Ashbury! Yorkville! Stunning Stuff. When I rebel, I just stand in the front hall and yell. I want to be free of parental shackles too but I don't have her guts. In the first place I never go downtown at night alone. But, at 19, I give up my diet of A and W Teenburgers, chocolate shakes and fries and drop 40 pounds. I get a job as a stewardess with American Airlines. Impressive. And frankly unheard of for a Jewish girl in Winnipeg in 1962. I'm heading off to Love Field in Dallas Texas (photo of stewardess application from A. Airlines) (Music: Fly Me To The Moon)

Fly Me to the Moon  
LO-7:48 -10  
LOUD

SR - upSR  
DSL - DSL



SB SLIDE 5

|| SLIDE 5  
~~4.2~~

SB LX 8 thru 11  
SQ 3 thru 4.5  
SLIDE 6

LQ 8

SQ 5  
LX 9  
SQ 3.5

SEE YOU IN SEPT  
MQ 6 :54

SQ 5.7

Tues 11/7 -  
must NOT UP  
@ David

LX 10

|| LX 10

SQ 4  
SLIDE 6  
~~SQ 7.2~~  
LX 12

FLY ME TO  
THE MOON  
MQ 7 :48

NB LQ 13  
nt overpage

## Appendix N: T.O.A.D. (Tickets Only at the Door)

T.O.A.D.		ATTENTION! WE CANNOT SELL TICKETS FOR TODAY'S SHOWS. You Must Go TO THE VENUES!	
*ALL	SHOWS *	57	AND STILL LYING ABOUT MY WEIGHT.
Thu Aug 24	8:00		SKIATS ON FIRE
Thu Aug 24	4:00		BOUNCERS
WED Aug 23			ALL EXPENSES PAID
FRI Aug 25	6:00		ALL EXPENSES PAID
WED Aug 23	8:00		I WAS A HORSE PHELPS STING MACHINE
SAT Aug 26	9:45		BLACK RIDER
SAT Aug 26	9:45		BOUNCERS
Fri Aug 25	6:00		AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS



## Appendix O: Performance Photos



Photos used with the permission of Mufty Mathewson.

## Appendix P: Persons Interviewed

During 2002-2004, I interviewed the following people about their affiliations with the Fringe theatre festival.

### a) Fringe Festival Directors

Name	Position	Method of Interview	Date
Bertram Schneider	Winnipeg Festival Director	personal	October 10, 2002
Joanna Maratta	Vancouver Festival Director	telephone	October 28, 2002
Chuck Ewans	Toronto Festival Director	telephone	November 19, 2002
Michael McLoughlin	Vancouver Festival Director	personal	December 16, 2002
Karen Planden	Vancouver Festival Director	telephone	February 14, 2003

### b) Fringe Participants

Name	Age	Position	Method of Interview	Date
Christian Ueguello	55	actor	personal	June 17, 2003
Andrea Fieldman	70+	audience	personal	June 20, 2003
Mary Fulham	50	writer, director, actor	personal	June 21, 2003
Alan Perry	50+	actor	personal	July 24, 2003
Marian Martin	69	actor	phone	July 27, 2003
Ray Cloutier	54	actor	phone	Late July 2003
John Madill	64	stage designer	personal	August 20, 2003
Alex Dallas	45	writer/performer	email questionnaire	November 8, 2003
Len Crowther	72	actor	phone questionnaire	November 8, 2003
Peggy Barker	58	actor/volunteer	phone questionnaire	November 9, 2003

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Method of Interview</b>	<b>Date</b>
John Rivet	81	actor	phone questionnaire	November 9, 2003
Jan Streader	63	performer	phone questionnaire	November 10, 2003
Mary Glenfield	80+	actor	phone questionnaire	November 10, 2003
Dale Wilkie	65	actor	phone questionnaire	November 17, 2003
Susan Freedman	61	writer/performer	email questionnaire	January 20, 2004

## c) Other

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Method of Interview</b>	<b>Date</b>
David Barnet	n/a	theatre professor	telephone	August 28, 2003



## Bibliography

### Books

- Bain, Alice. The Fringe: 50 Years of the Greatest Show on Earth. Edinburgh: The Scotsman Publications, 1996.
- Bessai, Diane. Playwrights of Collective Creation, vol. 2 of The Canadian Dramatist Series. Toronto: Simon & Pierre Publishing, 1992.
- Carter, Judy. Standup Comedy. New York: Dell Publishing, 1989.
- Cresswell, John W. Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1998.
- Kershaw, Baz. The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993.
- Perret, Gene. Comedy Writing Step By Step. Hollywood: Samuel French, 1982.
- Rees, Roland. Fringe First: Pioneers of Fringe Theatre on Record. London: Oberon Books Ltd., 1992.
- Rosten, Leo. The Joys of Yiddish. New York: Pocket Books, 1968.

### Articles and Periodicals

- "Alberta Government Nixes Extra Funds for Fringe: Theatre Festival Must Tighten Its Belt." Montreal Gazette (2 September 1989): D10.
- Arrell, Doug. "The 1995 Winnipeg Fringe Festival." NeWest Review 21.2 (December 1995/January 1996): 30.
- Arrell, Doug. "The Fringe Binge-Winnipeg." NeWest Review 22.2 (December 1996/January 1997): 26-27.
- Arrell, Doug. "The Winnipeg Fringe: The Most Successful Yet." NeWest Review 23.2 (December 1997/January 1998): 34-35.
- Ash, Shannon E. "Playing on the Fringes: Women at the Vancouver Fringe Festival." Kinesis (September 1996): 19.

- Barnard, Elissa. "Real Life on the Fringe: Playwrights Turn Personal Experience Into Art." Halifax Chronicle Herald (31 August 1995): D1, D5.
- Barton, Bruce. "Redefining Community: The Elusive Legacy of the Dramatists' Co-op of Nova Scotia." Theatre Research in Canada 21.2 (Fall 2000): 99.
- Bell, Nancy & Bessai, Diane, eds. Review of Five From the Fringe: A Selection of Five Plays First Performed at the Fringe Theatre Event. Canadian Materials 15.1 (January 1987): 40.
- Bell, Nancy. "Gone With the Fringe: Being There: A Flying Look at the 1987 Edmonton Fringe Theatre Festival." NeWest Review 13.2 (October 1987): 9-11.
- Bergen, Glenn. "Adam and Eve Appear at the Fringe Festival." Canadian Mennonite 4.17 (4 September 2000): 9.
- "Canada's Oldest Fringe Theatre Festival Opens after Near-Death Experience." Canada Press Newswire (16 August 1996).
- Dambrowsky, Gwen. "Edmonton Festival Offers Theatre for the Masses." Montreal Gazette (18 August 1990): H12.
- Donnelly, Pat. "Thanks to ex-McGill Students, Montreal Now Has Its Own Fringe Theatre Festival." Montreal Gazette (15 November 1990): C2.
- Donnelly, Pat. "Fringe Theatre the Clear Winner at Drama Fest." Montreal Gazette (2 May 1988): B16.
- "The Fabsolutely Abulous Fringe." Editorial. Edmonton Journal (24 August 2003).
- Filewod, Alan. "Erasing Historical Difference: The Alternative Orthodoxy in Canadian Theatre." Theatre Journal 41 (May 1989): 201-210.
- "Fringe Theatre Fest's Safe-Sex Skit Draws Parental Protest." Montreal Gazette (20 August 1991): C6.
- "Fringe Theatre is Front and Centre as Edmonton Parties." Calgary Herald (26 August 1984): E1.
- Gilbert, Reid. "Vancouver and Victoria: On the Fringes of the West Coast." Canadian Theatre Review 85 (Winter 1995): 69-70.
- "Growth of Fringe Theatre Festivals Creates Touring Community of Actors." Canadian Press Newswire (17 August 2000).

- Johnson, Terry. "Shock is not Enough." Alberta Report 21.37 (29 August 1994): 38.
- Kaplen, Jon. "Viewpoint." Performing Arts & Entertainment in Canada 26.3 (Spring 1991): 46.
- Lusty, Terry. "Native Youth Act at Theatre Festival." Windspeaker 4.25 (29 August 1986): 14.
- Matwychuk, Paul. "The Future of the Fringe." Vue Weekly (14-20 August 2003): 12, 14.
- Melnicer, Sharon. "On the Fringe: Jewish Performers, Themes Well-Represented." The Jewish Post & News (25 June 2003): 13-14.
- Mietldewicz, Henry. "Toronto Warms to Fringe Theatre." Toronto Star (19 February 1984): H1, H9.
- Morrow, Martin. "Calgary's First Fringe Festival Cancelled over Funding." Calgary Herald (4 August 1999): C8.
- Nichols, Liz. "Theatrical Beast Leaves the Stage." Edmonton Journal (24 August 2003): B1.
- Pepper, Kaija. "Fringe Theatre Festival, Vancouver." Dance International (Fall 1995): 36-37.
- Perkins, Don. "The Edmonton Fringe Theatre Event: August 13-21, 1988." NeWest Review 14.1 (1988): 47-50.
- "Retired Reborn." Maclean's (3 March 2003): 34-38.
- Sacuta, Norm. "Edmonton Fringe Festival." NeWest Review 24.2 (December 1998/January 1999): 24-25.
- "Theatre Minnow Leaps in with the Big Fish." Canadian Press Newswire (7 August 1997).
- "Title of Winnipeg Fringe Theatre Play Offensive to Some (The Fuck Machine)." Montreal Gazette (17 July 1993): D2.
- Waytiuk, Judy. "On the Fringe in Winnipeg – Winnipeg Fringe Festival." Performing Arts & Entertainment in Canada 29.4 (1995): 34-35.
- Weber, Bob. "The Edmonton Fringe: Carnival or Theatre Festival?" Canadian Press Newswire (14 August 1997).

Woodward, Joe. "No Salvation at the Fringe." Alberta Report 24.39 (8 September 1997).

## Reports

The Festival Fringe Society. Annual Report for the Year Ending November 30, 2002. Edinburgh, 2003.

Manitoba Theatre Centre. "2002 Fringe Festival Survey Results."

Meyers, Deborah. "Client Project History - BC Fringe Festivals." Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, February 17, 2003.

## Files

- 1) Susan Freedman
  - a) Vancouver Fringe and Vancouver "Hangover," September 9-19, 1999; October 22-28, 1999
  - b) Publicity and Reviews - Vancouver
  - c) 57 - Early Drafts, Music and Slides
  - d) Reviews
  - e) Seattle - March 9-19, 2000
  - f) Winnipeg - May 15, 2000
  - g) Toronto - July 6-16, 2000
  - h) Winnipeg - July 20-30, 2000
  - i) Edmonton - August 17-27, 2000
  - j) Chutzpah Festival - February 17 - March 4, 2001
- 2) William Galloway
  - a) File of forms, notes, and records from our 2000 festival tour
  - b) Stage Manager prompt book containing annotated scripts, records and notes, necessary to call performance.

## Thesis

Paterson, Erika. Ordering Chaos: The Canadian Fringe Theatre Phenomenon.  
Ph.D. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1997.

## Lectures

Durbach, Errol. "Jewish Humor," at the Jewish Community Centre of  
Vancouver, February 17 & 24, 2003.

Durbach, Errol. "The Theatre Experience," at the Vancouver Institute, University  
of British Columbia, October 4, 2003.

## Interviews

### a) Festival Directors

Winnipeg Festival. Personal interview with Bertram Schneider, October  
10, 2002.

Toronto Festival. Telephone interview with Chuck Ewans, November 19,  
2002.

Vancouver Festival. Telephone interview with Joanna Morata, October 28,  
2002.

Vancouver Festival. Personal interview with Michael McLaughlin,  
December 12, 2002.

Vancouver Festival. Telephone interview with Karen Planden, February  
14, 2003.

Edmonton Festival. Telephone interview with Brian Paisley, February 12,  
2004.

### b) Fringe Participants

Ueguello, Christine, 55, performer, personal interview, June 16, 2003.

Fieldman, Andrea, 70+, audience member, personal interview, June 20,  
2003.

Fulham, Mary, 50, writer/director/performer, personal interview, June  
21, 2003.

Perry, Allen, 50+, performer, personal interview, July 24, 2003.

Cloutier, Ray, 54, performer, telephone interview, late July, 2003.

Martin, Marian, 69, performer, telephone interview, July 27, 2003.

Madill, John, 64, set designer, personal interview, August 20, 2003.

Crowther, Len, 72, performer, telephone-questionnaire, November 8, 2003.

Dallas, Alex, 45, writer/performer, email-questionnaire, November 8, 2003.

Barker, Peggy, 58, performer/volunteer, telephone-questionnaire, November 9, 2003.

Rivet, John, 81, performer, telephone-questionnaire, November 9, 2003.

Glenfield, Mary, 80+, performer, telephone-questionnaire, November 10, 2003.

Streader, Jan, 63, performer, telephone-questionnaire, November 10, 2003.

Wilkie, Dale, 65, performer, telephone-questionnaire, November 17, 2003.

Freedman, Susan, 61, writer/performer, email-questionnaire, January 20, 2004.

c) Other

Barnet, David, professor, telephone interview, August 28, 2003.

## **Other Materials**

The Polestar Family Calendar, 1999.

The Polestar Family Calendar, 2000.

Freedman, Susan R. T1 General Income Tax and Benefit Return, 1999 with attendant expense and income records.

Freedman, Susan R. T1 General Income Tax and Benefit Return 2000 with attendant expense and income records.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Press Releases dated January 17 and August 29, 2003.