

## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 1

**Virginia Proud:** Australian, lives in Budapest and is the Artistic Director/Producer of Budapest Secret Theatre (Virginia is the one in the photo below waving her hand in the air excitedly!)



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Diverse, collaborative, fun.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

Prague is a very special city, and the intimacy of the Festival is a delight. The quality of most shows I thought extremely high, but what I also loved was the friendly, supportive relationship between all the participants. There was openness between performers and audience, and a sense of community amongst the artists; a real interest and engagement in each other's work.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

I can't remember exactly, the internet somehow! I was investigating English language performance and events in the region, seeking creative inspiration and opportunities for exchange with Budapest (performance/education/collaborations).

**How many years have you attended?**

My first year, but it won't be my last and I will be encouraging my colleagues from Budapest to come with me!

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from this years' fringe?**

Every moment of Sharmeena Nougur's performance (*Ace of Space*) was hilarious, especially when long barbeque tongs started appearing from inside her dress. Also, not exactly a funny moment, but at *The Sparrow and the Mouse* show, Melanie Gall (in character) announced that she was extremely good at acrobatics and then attempted a cartwheel across the tiny stage at Museum of Alchemists, crashed into the table and sprawled on the floor. For a moment we weren't sure whether it was an accident or not (given the irony of the comment) but quickly saw the pain she was in. But she smiled through it and launched into a Piaf number, never missing a beat.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

I saw 21 shows, and still wish I'd seen a few more. It was a great experience, especially being able to chat with everyone at Beseda afterwards and compare notes. I came not knowing anyone, but it was no problem at all to mix and meet people. It's wonderful to be able to talk with the performers about their work, especially when you've really enjoyed it, not just slink off into the night as you often do after a typical night of theatre.

One highlight was chatting with J.B. Alexander (*Metamorphosis*) after his show, finding he was coming to Budapest after the Fringe, and although we only had a few days to get it together, I was able to produce a show for him at a great venue here in Budapest! And I've made good connections with a number of artists who are interested in working together so it was a very productive visit!

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

There were so many things I wanted to do, art galleries I'd planned to see, but what I really did was spend most days writing – I was so inspired by the shows and the conversations. But I've visited Prague before and will again, so there is always another time.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

First relax. Don't worry about trying to plan or book too many shows ahead of time. Attend the Fringe Sunday event and let yourself be inspired by what you see. Second, be friendly. Go to Beseda (The Fringe Club) in the evenings and talk to people, get recommendations and in the morning make a plan for the day. Third, indulge. Tickets are so well priced, if it sounds interesting, just go. If you're coming from out of town, stay for as long as you can and really get into the Fringe experience.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

The Fringe after parties were wonderful and a great way to build the Fringe spirit and keep it going through the Festival. I only wish I'd had more stamina.

## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 2-3

**Annie and Chris Moir: English and Scottish respectively, live in Newcastle, retired primary school teacher (Annie) and 'lord of all he surveys' (Chris). In the photo, Annie is third from the right in the front row (having just finished doing her show) and Chris is doing his tech thing at the back!**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Annie: Dynamic, theatrical, friendly.

Chris: Fun without end.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

Annie: Due to its compact nature, the festival feels like a 'village' - bumping into people - both artists, volunteers, and audience members on street corners and in the park as well as in venues. I get a sense of belonging at festival time - of being a part of something vibrant and exciting.

**How did you first come across the PFF and how many years have you attended?**

Annie: I first came to the festival in 2004 to perform with a group called the *Poetry Vandals* but heard about it from Carole Wears, the artistic director of the festival and also a fellow Geordie (a person from Newcastle), a few years before that. This was our 11th festival. I come back every year because theatre is my passion and the theatre on offer at PFF is always so good. It's something different. Plus now we've made several friends we like to spend time with during the festival.

Chris: My wife (Annie) first performed here 2004 and after discovering the festival we have come back as both performers and audience members for the last 11 years. We keep returning to see shows that have increased in quality year after year.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

Annie: The British embassy party is always a special event in any PFF calendar and this year was pretty outrageous with the girl from *Ace of Space* doing her act!! And I remember an earlier year parading behind the Grampian Police Pipe Band from the castle down through the streets. We were handing fliers out to the local people lining the streets gawping at us all, and they were handing them back to other artistes following behind us. We all ended up with each other's fliers but it was such fun.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

Annie: This year was different because we missed the last 3 days so we didn't see a few of the shows we've since heard people rave about! But I still managed to pack 15 shows into 5 days.

Chris: This year during the 6 days we were there, there seemed to be less dramatic and more 'fringe' pieces. Shame we had to leave before the last weekend! But during my time there I managed to see 15 shows.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

Annie: I like to shop in Prague and find a new place to eat every year. Or see an exhibition in town. And hang out with friends.

Chris: What else did I do? I went to see a Tim Burton exhibition at the Stone Bell gallery, bumped into many lamp posts while staring at the countless fabulous buildings, went out for meals, visited friends who live in Prague (whom we have met through the festival), and drunk several pints of great lager.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

Annie: Go see as much as you can. Talk to everyone you see waiting outside a show or at Beseda (The Fringe Club). Throw yourself in to the experience and enjoy.

Chris: If you want to immerse yourself in the festival aim to see at least 3 shows a day. Go to see performances you wouldn't go to see at home, it costs so little and is so worth it.

## **Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 4**

**Michael Calcott: Canadian, lives in Ottawa, retired (former Canadian Ambassador to the Czech Republic, now Fringe Ambassador – see his blog <http://praguefringe.tumblr.com/#>) (pictured below (on the right) with PFF Director Steve Gove)**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Eclectic, energetic, friendly.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

The location in Malá Strana is unique and contributes significantly to the atmosphere. The size is ideal allowing for quick moves to different venues with plenty of pubs along the way!

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

I was introduced to the Fringe in 2007 by colleagues at the Canadian embassy who thought I would like it and who wanted to support the Canadians appearing that year.

**How many years have you attended?**

I have attended in 2007, 2008 and 2009 and then returned for 2013 and this year.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

I remember Fringe lunches at the Canadian residence (which we put on to support the Canadian companies), which were always chaotic and delightful, but one springs to mind

when Topping and Butch (one of the acts that year) tried to incorporate the waiters into their foolishness. It was hilarious.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

I saw 25 or 26 shows this year and I had a ball. There were a few terrible shows and they are often the most discussed. However, the number of powerful, innovative shows this year was quite amazing. I witnessed a level of professionalism and sophistication that really astounded me.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

I am lucky enough to have a number of friends in the city who are keen to see me watered and fed regularly. I always leave with a swollen liver, a bloated stomach and a fried brain.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

See as much as you can because you may be the one who starts the 'word of mouth' about a great show that is so important in fringe. Take it all in, but pace yourself. My limit is 3 shows a day - any more than this and I get confused and irritable! And talk about what you see. People want to know your opinion and they will respect it.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

PFF is a family affair. The nucleus of Steve, Carole and Giles has drawn in a second tier of workers and volunteers who are also fiercely proud of the Fringe and wonderfully supportive to the actors and directors. It is amazing that it works at all but it does, year, after exhausting year. It is a wonder.

## **Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 5**

**Cathy Meils, American, lives in Prague and Wisconsin, Editor/Journalist**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Diverse, fresh, easy-going.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

It's a very friendly festival.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

After attending the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, I decided to check out the Prague Fringe.

**How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

This is my second year. I was eager to attend again because I found so many interesting and unusual performances at the festival last year.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

I was watching a performer doing a very strange solo comedy show and realized he was the real life equivalent of a character I had written into a novel – a fake Italian Andy Kaufmannesque comic! It was a very surreal and amusing realization.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

Mostly excellent, although it can be a bit awkward being part of a very small audience seeing a show that's not terribly good! I saw about 20 shows.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

I work, go out to eat, go to the opera and theatre and art exhibits, walk, and shop!

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

See the shows at Beseda, look for the shows that have awards from other festivals, and come with an open mind. Don't miss the Sunday Fringe sampler. And buy the 5 for the price of 4 pass! It makes it easier to say yes to seeing a show, and if you don't like it – well, consider it your freebee!

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

I thought 2014 was a very good year – although I can compare it only to 2013. The festival has a good energy and fun spirit. I love the opportunities to mingle with other Fringers – people are generally very open to chat and share tips on shows. It's something I now look forward to doing in future years.



## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 6-7

**Simon O'Neill and Mark Shiels: both British, live mainly in London, but partly in Prague. Simon is a Psychotherapist and Mark is a Medical Charity Director.**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Passion, creativity, community (and Simon would add Fun!)

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

A welcoming community, where the artists, volunteers, directors and Fringe attendees enjoy each other's company and creativity and have many opportunities to socialise together (and Simon would add 'laugh your socks off!'). And it's also held within sight of the most spectacular view in the world, Prague Castle, which we never tire of.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

Mark first saw a sign displayed in the street outside Studio Rubín in 2004 - and the poster made him aware there was a Fringe in Prague and made him want to try out a few shows. He then dragged Simon along the next year to the Fringe Finale on a Saturday night - the only night we were in Prague during the Fringe Festival - and Simon said, we have to come earlier next year!!

**How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

Mark has attended for 10 years and Simon for 9. Initially we dipped our toes into the Fringe, seeing more shows each year - but we didn't get too involved in the whole Fringe scene. However, since we dared go to an after show evening (the Fringe Club) when that moved to Malastranska Beseda, we've felt ourselves to be part of the community. We now make sure we always take the week of Fringe off work so that we can be here for the first show right up to the last party! What brings us back is - always in the first instance, the varied and fantastic shows that make up the Fringe - but latterly, the feeling of community and the enjoyment of making and meeting friends (both old and new).

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

This year we were sitting in a cafe on Ujezd having lunch when one of the volunteers we had met the night before walked past with a young man carrying a wig on a stand. No-one made any comment - just said hello- and afterwards we both said - well, that's Fringe for you.

A few years ago we went to see a show in Studio Rubin. Towards the end of the show Mark started to feel unwell, but didn't want to walk across the fully used stage to leave - but as soon as the lights went up, he ran from the theatre to the loo. Two nights later, Simon was waiting to go in to see a different show, in a different venue, when one of the actors from that earlier experience came up to ask him whether they had offended Mark. 'We were really worried, he left so quickly we thought we must have done something to really offend him!' Simon was able to reassure them that we had both really enjoyed the performance - but we both thought it showed a real spirit of the Fringe.

We also enjoyed walking over the Charles Bridge as dawn was breaking this year after the final night party. It's good to be up till dawn when you're in your 50s every now and again!

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

Between us we saw 29 shows - and we thought the quality of the shows in the Fringe this year was better than ever. We also found the sense of community to be as strong as ever and it was great to catch up with old friends and get to meet new ones.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

Mark works, Simon tries not to (but the evil email is always there!), we meet friends, occasionally do something cultural (like the Tim Burton exhibition this year) and introduce new people to Prague and the Fringe where possible - so far we've got the Fringe one volunteer (with a few more keen for next year) and about 14 Prague based friends to sample the delights of Fringe).

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

Get a programme as soon as it comes out and go to the Fringe Sunday to get a feel for what you might want to see. Talk to people - the actors are normally really pleased to hear if you liked their show - and are usually very friendly and don't bite - and talk to people going to the shows - you might make some new friends and you'll certainly feel part of something special.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

We'd love to get hold of the programme earlier so we can promote the amazing Fringe more widely before it starts, not just in Prague but elsewhere. Otherwise Fringe is a highlight of our year - and we're really pleased you always try and co-ordinate it with Mark's birthday!!

## **Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 8**

**Petr Dlouhý, Czech, 18 years old, lives in Prague and is a theatre student**



**\_What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Genius, loci, works.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

The presence of the city itself. The atmospheric Lesser Town (Mala Strana) with its narrow streets, parks and historical memory helps to build up the friendly content of PFF. It also makes every walk in between the various theatre spaces an experience on its own.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

Via [protisedi.cz](http://protisedi.cz) – medial partner of PFF.

**How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

I've been attending for three years in a row. Two years as reviewer and this year as performer. I am interested in the model of Fringe as it's very unusual for Czech culture.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

The funniest moments are always within specific performances. But the most heart-warming stories are connected to how easily one gets into 'Prague Fringe Family'. It's so quick and lasts through years.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

For me this year was artistically weaker when compared to others. On the other hand, this year I was fully immersed into Fringe as I had my own show included in festival. Each year I'm seeing around 15-20 shows.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

Everything I do as when I'm 'fringing' – preparing theatre, performing, learning, meeting new people, walking through the city – except the fact that in fringe time everything is concentrated within PFF.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

To fully flow into the spirit of the festival, because for me that's the main attribute of the festival.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

I think one has to accept the unwritten rules of the festival, being open minded, nice to each other, supporting other performers, being less sceptical and more enthusiastic. And to understand and enjoy the festival, because it is built upon the foundations of community, which shares a common optimistic mood, passion for theatre, and art itself.

## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 9-10

**David and Gilly Waddy: Both British, live in Caterbury. David is an Editorial Consultant and Gilly is an EAL Co-ordinator/Theatre Studies Examiner**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

David: Compact, friendly, stimulating.

Gilly: Accessible/surprising/one big family—sorry, that's 5!

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

David: It's accessible. Its venues are in an interesting and compact locale, but its shows are diverse. The Festival seems to develop a support culture among the participants, and within 24 hours you seem to have made new friends among the audiences. Four shows a day are achievable (and often accessible – unless it is Swiss clowns or girls dancing with a laundry basket).

Gilly: The venues [and performances] are so varied-some really quirky-and within a small geographical area, which means that one is able to see five performances a day, due to the clever timetabling—and not get too wet if it is raining!. Within 24 hours, performers and audience seem to know each other, and 'first timers' comment that it is the friendliest fringe they have experienced. Because the brochure is so detailed and available well before Fringe week, one can plan an outline of shows to be seen, with a little judicious 'tweaking' where necessary as a result of Fringe Sunday! I like to research the websites of some performers before coming to the festival, if I have time. We usually base ourselves at one venue on each of the first two nights, in order to 'tune ourselves in' and see as many shows as we can in that time. I love the exchange of views that flies between performers and

audiences in the bars, and the gentle , constructive [requested] feedback that is offered, by audience members who care so much about the performers and want them to do their best. So many 'old friends' come from all over the world year after year, which makes it extra joyful.

Two very big bonuses for us—the voucher deals on tickets and the way in which queuing is cut down to a minimum—we often whizz in at the last minute, and do not have to worry about being 'in the queue', unlike some Fringes. Because it is easy to purchase tickets in advance and have a clear idea of exactly where and when one needs to be each afternoon /evening, one is able to enjoy so much more of what Prague has to offer, be it sightseeing, gallery visiting, shopping, socialising, eating/drinking, for much longer each day—which must, surely, help the economy?

### **How did you first come across the PFF?**

David: Word of mouth after wife 'stumbled across it' on a visit to Praha.

Gilly: I think that it was in the Easyjet brochure as I travelled over to Prague on my own for the first time since we had bought our Mala Strana apartment a few months previously. I remember landing, dumping my bag in the bedroom and rushing directly to Kampa! By midnight I had seen at least 5 shows and had the great fortune to find myself sitting next to Carole (festival artistic director) and Robert (festival researcher) at *Topping and Butch*—the rest is history!

### **How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

David: Approximately 9. It always manages to introduce new and surprising theatrical experiences. And every year the participants, organiser and supporters create a terrific 'family'. And it's a family where you like ALL your relatives!

Gilly: Was that really 9 years ago? I remember that there was a performer in a shopping trolley and that the Poetry Vandals were there, if you need to check! So much part of our lives now, with so many old and new friends.

### **Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

David: Trying to heat the tent venue with a pair of fan heaters from our apartment. And listening to my wife give appreciative notes to a group whose enthusiasm far outweighed their collective theatrical abilities. It was a rare occasion where the two of us were 'the audience'. I swear she said "Well done! Good is not the word..."

Gilly: Watching a performance by 'Smokin' Apples –I think that Molly, Hatty and Matt were using that name then—and chatting to them outside Rubin afterwards, with Matt looking at me very quizzically, before adding 'Gilly , do you recognise me? You were my A Level

examiner in Tenterden!’ They then invited me to go to see their end of course show at DAMU –and we have all been friends ever since. So good to see Matt and his plant this year, with Molly over for three days to support him. He is now on tour with it in the UK.

I’m sure that there must also be some mileage in our bringing over the life size cut out of the Queen for our Jubilee party, and not being charged extra for her by Easyjet, out of respect! Also the moment outside Beseda when Lindsey was filming with the cut out and Lucy Hopkins providing the monarch’s voice– and someone came by with a corgi, which they lent for the interview! We have never seen that breed of dog in Praha before or since!

### **How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

David: Another good year and generally the standard of shows improved, as they have done, year on year. The Festival assistants have become increasingly professional, too. The tech team were the best so far. And, yet again, we saw some shows and performances that stay with you for the year ahead. We saw over thirty.

Gilly: Really enjoyable—a wider range of venues and performance styles, only four shows that did not ‘grab me’[and they gave us all lots to talk about!], a delightful event at the Embassy, with an unforgettable ‘teaspoon moment’ (*Ace of Space* performance at the British Embassy) at which I caught sight of the waiter bringing in a tray of drinks and will never forget his expression! How he kept hold of that tray, I will never know! He immediately glanced at Jan Thompson (the British Ambassador to the Czech Republic), saw her laughing, and then allowed himself a BIG smile too! Having Jan so supportive and seeing her casually attending the performances in various venues with such enthusiasm has done so much for the morale and standing of PF, establishing it firmly as part of the city’s cultural heritage.

Full marks to the brilliant technical teams who, quite rightly, were acknowledged by many performers from the stage this year. The volunteers were ace, and we loved their speeches from the stage at the start of each show—but what is it with some audience members who STILL choose not to listen and insist on photographing and filming shows on their phones—especially at the Alchymist?

Personally, I loved the intimate first few days with fewer venues—which I know was not the organisers’ choice—where people all got friendly before PF spread out a bit.

Oh, about 30 shows, I think. My brochure is not to hand.

### **What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

David: Visit galleries, restaurants, old bookshops and managed a trip to the Estates theatre.

Gilly: Sleep, eat out or in, meet up with chums, visit lots of galleries, a bit of shopping [!]  
—which definitely includes visits to Julius Mien!! This year we also went to see the amazing



Robert Wilson performance at the Estates Theatre and transformed our smart outfits to PF outfits as we rushed from there to see another two performances. Oh, and we bought a wacky picture from the Dorotheum, which will always remind us of the PF 2014 week. Come and see it soon!

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

David: Book ahead for the next one!

Gilly: Actors—stay as near to the centre as you can afford. Ensure that you are there for Fringe Sunday and perform! Please bring something that is READY to show—we are very tolerant and encouraging audiences but do not appreciate lazy work—please remember that, on the whole, your audiences are adults. Follow Steve/Carole’s advice as to the ideal venue for your show—they know their stuff—Alchymist is not ideal for concerts as it gets SO hot and no, the door cannot be opened, as it is a residential area. Finally, talk to everyone, be friendly and supportive and go to see lots of other shows—we are all in this together!

Audience—same goes for accommodation near the centre. Familiarise yourself with the PF area early on. Talk and be friendly, we all love meeting new people. It doesn’t matter if you decide to come on your own, you will soon make friends to hang out with. Attend Fringe Sunday, which can be a revelation! Please do not ignore the requests about photos, filming, having your phone light on during shows. And please, please go and discover the stunning beauty that is Prague!

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

David: It would be good to encourage more local Czech groups to participate. Perhaps develop some associated activities such as literary sessions, art exhibitions, workshops. And develop a Fringe Supporters Organisation, to get the word out and to help raise sponsorship and funding.

Gilly: We have spoken with quite a few local restaurants and cafés who would be happy to offer discounts to Fringers—eg Meduzzy in Melnicka, Café Lounge in Plaska and Campanula behind the John Lennon Wall. Could one of your volunteers develop this for next year? Issuing a list of deals with our tickets and showing a valid ticket/ identification card when one visits the establishment during the week would be great for performers, audience and eateries alike.

We would also be interested in Fringe Extra, spin offs of some of the shows—talks, workshops, book readings and script try outs, meditation, juggling, magic etc in the afternoons—in one of the discounted eateries, in the park, one of the PF venues—anywhere cheap. These extras are very popular at other fringes, festivals etc, so maybe ask performers what else they could offer when they are registering? I have loved the unusual

performers again this year—such as Stuart Lightbody. More please! Put out the word as you travel around the Fringes that we enjoy the quirky, but fully rehearsed, please!

## **Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 11-12**



**Don and Susan Culvenor: Australian, live in Newstead in Victoria, and run their own business.**

**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Fun , entertaining, eye-opening.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

Wonderful small venues; great city; very friendly; approachable and engaging performers and volunteers.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

We found out about the PFF by accident. One of the performers was promoting their show on the Charles Bridge and we took a brochure.

**How many years have you attended?**

This was our first trip to Prague and our first PFF.

**Do you have a funny story from this year's fringe?**

One of the performances called *Men with Coconuts* did a wonderfully funny, and sometimes accurate, portrayal of the school-days beginning of our 45 year relationship. To be part of the audience participation was a highlight of a great show. A very memorable experience.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

Our PFF experience was the highlight of our 10 week European trip. After discovering that it was on, we attended nine shows over the last three days of our stay.

### **What do you do in Prague when you were not 'fringing'?**

When not attending shows in the PFF we attended 3 concerts in the Klementonium, shopped, ate and drank, had a boat trip, and visited the Palace, Cathedral and other tourist attractions. We also had a wonderful day trip to Dobruška (where photo above was taken) by train and enjoyed the Czech countryside.

### **What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

Our advice to others would be to jump in feet first and see as many shows as possible. Don't be afraid to attend something that at first thought may not appeal. We went to 9 shows - 5 were outstanding, very good and 1 'challenging'. A great strike rate! Stay at least a week.

Talk to performers after the shows, all seem genuinely keen to embrace their audience and the interaction adds greatly to the experience. Meet and mingle with fellow audience members and volunteers. PFF has a really good way of making a visitor feel welcome and engaged.

### **Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

In summary, the PFF is a fantastic value-add to any stay in Prague. All the cities we visited in Europe have palaces, cathedrals and old city centres full of shops. The benefit of the PFF is that it makes a stop in Prague so much more alive and contemporary, producing an experience like no other place we visited ( Paris, Madrid Barcelona, Seville, Munich, Berlin, Dresden, Venice, Milan).

The chance to walk home at midnight across Charles Bridge arm in arm after a wonderful night that included two great shows, a fantastic meal and some great local wine is something we will never forget. All for less than \$100 (Aus). WOW!! We will be back – with friends!

## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 13

**Polly Forbes: English, lives in London and is a teacher. Polly has been a festival assistant at the PFF for 6 years now and is pictured second from left below, with some other long-term festival assistants.**



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Friendly, fun and fantastic.

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

It's a festival where you have a real sense of community. Whether you are new to the festival or a part of it over many years you are drawn in to the community and become a part of the festival. I have volunteered as a festival assistant many times and sometimes I know people and sometimes not so many but each time I come home having met amazing people and forged new friendships.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

I used to work for Carole Wears (*PFF Co-director*) at Live Theatre who runs the festival with Steve. One day she asked me if I wanted to work at her festival and I said yes and since then I have been hooked.

**How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

I think 2014 was my 6th time at the festival. It's very hard not to go back each year as there is so much to enjoy whilst your there. It's fun working as you get to catch up with everyone or meet lots of new people and get to see many amazing shows. After work you can party at the fringe festivals till the birds sing. Prague is beautiful and there are so many things to see or places where you can sit and relax.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

There are so many but one of the funniest moments was Lucy Hopkins show The Artist, which was so funny my stomach hurt from laughing.

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

I really liked the amount of comedy there was this year, I spent many a show laughing my head off. I don't normally get to watch a lot of comedy so it was a great experience to watch such a variety of performances.

**What do you do in Prague when you are not 'fringing'?**

I love walking around Prague and exploring as it is a beautiful city. Each year there are still more sights to see and it can be a very relaxing city when the weather is nice and can sit in the park or go for a coffee.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

Enjoy every minute as there isn't a festival like it and relax and see shows with a smile and open mind so you can enjoy what they have to offer.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

One of the reasons it's spirit is so magical is because it's big enough to house so many good shows but small enough to visit all the venues and get to know all the people involved in it to make it the Fringe that it is.

## Prague Fringe Festival (PFF) Audience Profile No. 14

**Mary Bartlett:** Mary is from the USA and splits her time living between Portland, Oregon and Paris, France.



**What three words would you use to describe the Prague Fringe Festival (PFF)?**

Exhilarating, invigorating, provocative

**In your view, is there anything 'unique' about this festival? If so, what?**

I found the entire experience unique – however, I don't have a lot of experience with fringe festivals. This was a first.

**How did you first come across the PFF?**

Through meeting Steve Gove (*the festival director*) through our mutual friend, Jim Haynes.

**How many years have you attended, and what specifically keeps bringing you back to it?**

This is our first year and we definitely plan on returning.

**Do you have a funny story or remember a funny moment from either this year or a past fringe?**

I am stumped for a specific story but I haven't laughed so much in ages!

**How was your PFF 2014 experience and how many shows did you see this year?**

We saw about 25 shows.

**What do you do in Prague when not 'fringing'?**

We went to restaurants; some sightseeing; visited museums and an interesting toy store.

**What advice would you give to someone attending PFF for the first time?**

Read the programme carefully: some of the shows continue throughout the week, others for shorter periods. By figuring this out, you won't miss out on some good performances. Be sure to go to the opening 'preview' – you'll get a very good sense of what you will be seeing. Also, go to the after-party, at least once; it's really terrific to meet the actors and talk over the performances.

**Finally, is there anything you'd like to say about PFF that we haven't asked that you would like to talk about?**

As much fun as we had, the entire experience was more than that. I really was touched and moved by the extraordinary energy, hard work and originality of all the participants. It was one of the most positive experiences I've had in many years.