



Naming Committee

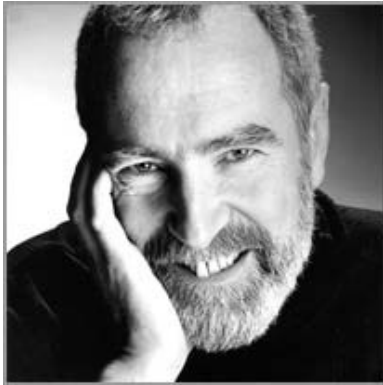
Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

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Brian Paisley

(1946-)



Brian Paisley is a writer and producer of theatre, television and film who is best known as the founder of the Edmonton Fringe Festival.

He was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1946, but grew up in Vancouver. He graduated from the University of British Columbia and then ventured to Great Britain to teach Theatre and English. After three years of teaching, Brian decided to travel throughout Europe and Africa.

Upon returning from his travels, Brian worked in Vancouver, but he moved to Fort St. John in 1977 to establish a theatre program at Northern Lights College. The demand for theatre was so great that Brian and his partner, Ti Hallas, formed the travelling theatre company known as Chinook Theatre. The success of the company prompted them to move to Edmonton, where they would have more access to a thriving professional theatre scene.

In 1982, funding was cut for Northern Lights Theatre's "Summer Shakespeare Program". Brian Paisley was asked to use the designated \$50,000 on a theatrical project. That grant enabled Brian to create the first Edmonton Fringe Festival. Five theatre venues and 45 productions attracted an unexpected audience of 7,500 people in the very first year.

During his nine years as the Edmonton Fringe Festival producer, he went on to help establish Fringe Festivals in almost every major Canadian City, including Victoria, Vancouver, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal. Brian parted with his prospering project to pursue writing for film and television.

Since 1982, the Edmonton Fringe Festival has continued to expand, attracting about a half million people to the Old Strathcona area each August. The Edmonton Fringe Festival is now recognized as the largest alternative theatre festival in the world outside of the original Fringe in Edinburgh.

Brian Paisley has received much praise and recognition for his contribution to Canadian theatre. His various awards include receiving the Confederation of Canada medal in 1993, the Sterling Award in 2001, Edmonton's City Excellence Award in 2001, the Order of Canada in



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2010, an honorary PhD from Athabasca University, and the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Brian currently resides in Victoria where he is a screenwriting instructor at the University of Victoria. He is currently writing and hosting *APOCALYPSE...WHEN?*, a five part television series for Asterisk Productions and the Vision TV Network, based on the end of the world.

*Written and edited by: Danielle Ferchoff
July 2012*

CITATION ON FILE

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Brian Paisley, telephone conversation with Danielle Ferchoff, 24 July 2012.

