

FROM: Mr. Honeyman  
TO: SOUTH STAGE students, parents, teachers  
RE: EDINBURGH FESTIVAL 2011

Dear South Stage Friends,

**South Stage has been nominated to apply to perform in the 2011 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Members of the class of 2011 are eligible, even though the festival is in August. The application is due February 5th.**

South Stage was invited to participate in the 2004 Edinburgh Fringe Festival as one of the top high school theatre programs in the United States. We wrote our own show, a political satire called *FREE, ADULT, UNCENSORED*, based on performances of the Federal Theatre Project(1935-1939) - the only moment in U.S. history when a National Theatre has been funded: in the words of Roosevelt's deputy, Harry Hopkins, "free, adult, uncensored" theatre. *FREE, ADULT, UNCENSORED* was a hit at Edinburgh '04, invited onto a radio talk show about political satire at the Fringe, and it impressed the AHSTF staff and all audiences who saw it. We held our heads very high.

Participating in the Edinburgh Festival was one of most powerful professional experiences of my life, as a teacher and as a director, and I want to invite South Stage students and parents to consider it seriously for 2011. The students who travelled to Edinburgh in '04 learned more about theatre and international perspectives in ten days than most people learn in a lifetime. It was a stunning experience.

Fringe 2009 sold 1,859,235 tickets for 34,265 performances of 2,098 shows in 265 venues, over 25 days, for an average of over 74,000 admissions and 1,300 performances per day. There were an estimated 18,901 performers from 60 countries. Edinburgh's paper estimated it would take 2 1/2 years without sleep to see every show. In '04 we saw as much theatre as two weeks would allow. This is the largest arts festival in the world.

South Stage performed four times in Newton, four times in Edinburgh. We have been invited back every year. We have not gone, because we have not yet solved this question:

***How do we hold auditions which are open to all South students, regardless of need, and how do we guarantee up front that we'll be able to pay for every student's trip, regardless of their financial circumstances?***

*FREE, ADULT, UNCENSORED* raised over \$20,000 - more than any student group in the history of South, as far as I'm aware. Impressive as that is, it shaved just \$500 off each fare. During auditions there were people who said, "I'd love to try out, but my parents can't afford it."

2004 expenses for airfare, busses, trains, lodging, food, theatre rentals, dorm security, access to local medical care, London theatre tix, etc. came to \$3984 per person. Today's cost is \$5900. Every person on the project needs to pay that bill OR we need to fundraise it as a community.

Personally, I think this is a theatrical, international, and social experience worth even the new price twice over. I'm one person, and this project "takes a village." Can we fundraise enough to guarantee students who audition in good faith that they don't need to have the "ability to pay" affect who gets cast? How many students need to participate to make it worth the commitment of the South Stage community as a whole?

The show we bring can be anything that showcases South Stage well. It cannot run more than 90 minutes - 60 is better, since we get two hours to set up, seat an audience, perform and strike. Another group takes over the space within seconds. I stand ready to lead this charge, but not without the whole-hearted emotional and financial support of South Stage. Mr. Knoedler and I agree it's worth launching this dialogue. I invite people to check out the websites below, to speak with us in person, to email ([james\\_honeyman@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:james_honeyman@newton.k12.ma.us) or [jeff\\_knoedler@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:jeff_knoedler@newton.k12.ma.us)).

More info:

<http://www.ahstf.org/AHSTF/pages/video.asp>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh\\_Fringe\\_Festival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh_Fringe_Festival)

<http://www.eif.co.uk/visiting-edinburgh/about-edinburgh/about-edinburgh>

Sincerely,

Jim Honeyman  
Director of Theatre, 1979-2005  
Program Director, Scotland 2004  
Acting teacher, Speech Coach, English teacher, web manager,  
director, 2005-present