

# BorderLight

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE  
+ FRINGE FESTIVAL  
CLEVELAND

## 2021 BORDERLIGHT FRINGE | APPLICATION GUIDELINES





## **CALL FOR ARTISTS | 2021 BORDERLIGHT FRINGE APPLICATION GUIDELINES** **DEADLINE TO APPLY: MARCH 5, 2021.**

Greetings, artist! The biennial **BorderLight International Theatre + Fringe Festival** returns to downtown Cleveland July 22-24, 2021. Thank you for your interest in submitting your work.

In the year since our inaugural event, the global performing arts community has been rocked by unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the reopening of indoor theatre venues remains uncertain, we've reimagined the 2021 BorderLight Festival as a primarily outdoor event - **July 22-24** - with safety protocols overseen by public health advisors and in compliance with regional event reopening guidelines. Like with everything this year, we recognize that circumstances may change and have adapted our plan so that we may move forward, conservatively, in a way that embraces the current limitations on public gatherings of artists and audiences.

BorderLight will remain anchored in downtown Cleveland, making the festival accessible to visitors from across the city and beyond. Performances will take place across **outdoor stages, tents, green spaces** and other **open-air locations** to allow for social distancing, as well as **interactive remote and streaming options** to enjoy from home or live, whether as viewers or in interactive ways. We're also seeking **site-specific proposals** to take place in locations within our downtown footprint. Have an idea? [We'd love to hear from you.](#)

The **BorderLight Fringe** is the open call submission part of the Festival—**application is free, there is no risk to submit.** The Festival welcomes work from both established and emerging companies—we look forward to hearing from you!

The BorderLight Festival team

Dale Heinen, Jeffrey Pence + Cathleen O'Malley

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. From left to right: Dale Heinen, Jeffrey Pence, and Cathleen O'Malley.

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL:

Visit [www.borderlightcle.org/fringe-apply-2021](http://www.borderlightcle.org/fringe-apply-2021) to access all the application documents and links.

- 1) **READ ME FIRST:** “2021 BorderLight Fringe Application Guidelines”—You’ve got this! Keep reading. 😊
- 2) Download the **SAMPLE Application:** Please note, *your actual application will be submitted through an ONLINE FORM (step #3) and there is no saving mid-process.* Use this sample to prep and save your answers as a separate doc before copying them over.
- 3) Submit the **ONLINE APPLICATION. Deadline is MARCH 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.** Important note: the online form must be completed in one session (no saving mid-process)—see step #2.

## WHAT IS THE BORDERLIGHT FESTIVAL?

Founded in 2015 by Dale Heinen and Jeffrey Pence, BorderLight’s mission is to present visionary international theatre and build cross-cultural understanding.

The **BorderLight International Theatre + Fringe Festival** is a hybrid festival model, featuring a) a curated selection of *international touring productions*, b) commissioned *collaborations between Cleveland professional theatres and international artists*, and c) a *fringe festival* programmed through an open call for submissions, featuring all genres of theatrical performance self-produced by local and national artists.

The BorderLight Festival debuted in 2019 as a biennial summer event. In our inaugural year, BorderLight hosted 40 unique productions and special events from artists from 8 countries + across the US, selling over 4.5K tickets and attracting a total of 10K visitors to downtown Cleveland for free public performances and other special events.

## BORDERLIGHT 2021: “A THEATRE FESTIVAL FOR A CHANGED WORLD.”

The **2021 festival will mark our second biennial festival.** Needless to say, the last year has dealt our performing arts and events industry untold challenges—and uncertainty remains. As of the launch of this application, most indoor event venues remain closed. For this reason, under the guidance of top public health and event safety advisors, our 2021 festival has been redesigned as an outdoor, open air event—prioritizing safety, distance, and accessibility alongside artistic excellence and community impact.

## WHAT IS A “FRINGE” FESTIVAL?

The “fringe” concept first developed in 1948 in Edinburgh, Scotland, when groups of local actors, performers, and musicians—in reaction to the more conventional lineup of the Edinburgh Theatre Festival—launched an alternative program to run concurrent to the main event. Now almost 73 years later, the term ‘fringe’ widely refers to work that resides on the edges of the mainstream—and fringe festivals have served as a critical launch pad for independent artists to self-produce, showcase original work, engage new audiences, and network with fellow indie artists and producers inside of a vibrant festival environment.

There are now 100s of fringe festivals in North America and across the world... and each has its own structure and personality. The BorderLight Festival is a proud member of the **United States Association of Fringe Festivals (USAFF)** and **World Fringe Network (WFN)**.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

The **BorderLight Festival Fringe** is an open call submission process—**application is free, there is no risk to submit**. The Fringe welcomes work from both established and emerging artists.

BorderLights seeks to offer a culturally, racially, and geographically diverse program representing a variety of theatrical approaches, styles, topics, and genres including (but not limited to):

- Theatre
- Physical / Movement / Dance Theatre
- Circus
- Street Theatre
- Burlesque
- Children’s Theatre
- Solo Performance
- Performance Art
- Puppetry
- Immersive / Interactive Experiences
- Music / Cabaret
- Multimedia
- Spoken Word
- Roaming Performance
- Stand Up Comedy

- Digital (**NEW in 2021**)
  - Interactive remote experiences (Telephone, ZOOM, etc.)
  - Audio Plays
  - Streamed or live-streamed productions
- Site-Specific work / “Bring Your Own Venue” (**NEW in 2021**)
  - Performance installations
  - Walking tours
  - Storefront performances (artist behind glass)
  - Drive in/Drive Up performances (audience in cars)
  - Other ideas?—We welcome your proposal!

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

Due to the limited number of venues and schedule slots, the BorderLight Fringe program is determined through a selection process. **Application does not guarantee acceptance.** All proposals are reviewed and adjudicated by a diverse panel of industry professionals and theatre practitioners, in collaboration with BorderLight Festival staff.

Productions that are not chosen during the initial selection may be placed on a waitlist in the event of a cancellation.

## PRACTICAL INFO FOR APPLICANTS

### ARTIST RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **We are not producing your show, we are merely presenting it.** You or your producing organization must hire your **own cast, crew, stage manager**, etc. as well as **run the light or sound board** if needed during performances.
- For scripted work, we require that artists provide evidence that they have obtained rights. This documentation will be required at the time of contracting.
- Accepted applicants with a designated venue will pay a modest **Production Fee** (details below) to offset venue, marketing, staff, and technical support provided by the Festival.
- Each production receives a **70/30 box office split**, with 70% of ticket revenue (minus credit card and processing fees) paid out to the artist.

- For **un-ticketed/free shows, street theatre, short form “pop-up” performances,** and other **shows without a designated venue,** pass-the-hat or other special fee arrangements may apply. Outline your proposal and we’ll have a conversation!

### **RUN TIME:**

- Standard length of a Fringe show is **45-60 minutes** long. Limited slots are available for shows 60-80 minutes. Please specify show length in application.
- **Non-standard shows**—street theatre, durational work, and shorter “pop up” presentations—are also welcome! Please provide details in your application.

### **TECH + VENUES:**

- In response to public safety and event reopening guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic, **all 2021 venues are currently outdoors or online.** These will include (but are not limited to) open air stages, open-sided tents, green space, patios, virtual platforms, and site-specific performance locations.
- **No elaborate tech/sets.** Most venues will have a very simple tech set up (lights/sound).
- Productions with lighting/sound are required to provide their own board operator.
- Productions are permitted to bring in additional tech, but all equipment must be discussed and approved by the Festival in advance.
- Most venues will be shared by several productions. When you are striking your show, another show will be setting up.
- **Load in/load out per production is typically 15-30 minutes,** sometimes less for shows with minimal or no tech. Please note any special load in/load out needs in your application.
- There may be minimal or no storage facilities at our outdoor venues. Please indicate any storage requests in your application.
- With few exceptions, productions will be scheduled into a single venue for the duration of the Festival. Curtain times vary from day to day to ensure all shows receive a variety of start times.
- Productions are provided **(1) technical rehearsal** (typically 2 hours) in their venue prior to the first performance.
- Venue allocation is at the discretion of the Fringe, based on availability and information provided in the application.

- Proposals for **site-specific performances are welcome**—we look forward to a conversation with you. Permitting downtown requires advanced planning, so provide as much detail as possible in your application.

## **COMMUNICATIONS + MARKETING:**

- Artists are welcome to apply with more than one show, but a separate proposal must be completed for each show. Note that only one in-person show per Company/Lead Artist will be accepted into the Festival.
- Request for marketing materials will follow upon acceptance into the Festival. Productions will be asked to submit photos and other promo material for use in Festival marketing.
- Artists are responsible for publicizing their own show. Examples include: press releases, outreach, mailers, social media posting, busking and/or flyering.
- BorderLight will supply required logo files, best practice tips, regional press contacts, and will conduct a marketing workshop leading up to the 2021 festival. At least 1 delegate from each production must attend one of the virtual sessions.
- **Promote! Promote! Promote!** Establish a plan for marketing your show—the more tickets sold for your show, the more revenue comes back to you.

## **HOUSING + TRAVEL:**

- At this time—due to restrictions related to COVID-19—we cannot guarantee free housing for out-of-area fringe artists, but limited travel subsidies may be available. If your company requires housing, please indicate your needs in the application.
- Artists are responsible for arranging all necessary visas and work permits—BorderLight is not able to support visas for international fringe artists at this time. No visas are required for international streaming work.
- Consider applying for support and/or travel grants from funding agencies. Even if your participation is not confirmed, we can issue letters of intent if needed for application purposes.

## **COVID SAFETY**

- As the festival approaches, BorderLight will provide all registered artists with current **COVID safety plan** and **event participation agreements** developed under the supervision of public health advisors.

- In the application, you will also be asked to detail what you/your company will do to stay safe prior to and during your engagement at the Festival.

## PRODUCTION FEE + BOX OFFICE

BorderLight Fringe functions as the presenter for independent artist-producers.

Accepted applicants will pay a standard **production fee (see below for details)** in exchange for the following venue, marketing, and technical support provided by the Festival:

- Venue Rental
- Venue Manager
- Limited technical support (basic lights, sound, power)
- Front of House Management
- Box Office + Ticketing Management (web and in-person)
- Guaranteed (1) tech rehearsal (2 hours) in your venue prior to the first performance
- Dedicated show page on the BorderLight Festival website
- Show listing in the BorderLight Festival Guide (10K+ copies distributed locally and via digital download)
- Other Festival marketing and publicity (PR, media release event, etc.)
- Free access to marketing workshop and references to community resources, etc.
- Artist pass access and special discounts to other BorderLight Festival shows

BorderLight offers a **70/30 box office split** with 70% of ticket revenue (minus credit card and processing fees) paid out to the artist. Checks will be mailed to the lead artist by Sept. 10, 2021.

Accepted shows will be notified by April 5, 2021. Reply by the requested contract deadline (TBD) to avoid the risk of your slot being offered to another applicant.

## PRODUCTION FEES

If selected, ticketed fringe shows will be asked to pay a standard production fee. Production fees (if applicable) vary depending on type of show, number of shows, and size of venue (starting at \$75 and up to \$200 for shows in the largest venues). These fees directly fund the festival venue costs, tech & box office support, and help make the festival sustainable. We will try our best to accommodate your venue choices as space/schedule allows and specifics will be noted in your contract.



Special support or fee waivers may be available for **free/un-ticketed performances, site-specific work, buskers, and street performance**, to be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Tell us about your work and we'll have a conversation.

*Production fee waivers may be available for artists with demonstrated financial need. Contact [fringe@borderlightcle.org](mailto:fringe@borderlightcle.org) for details or indicate a request for a fee waiver in the "Notes" section of the application.*

## **BOX OFFICE AND TICKETING**

BorderLight will handle all aspects of ticketing and box office via our AudienceView ticketing platform. In 2019, Fringe tickets were priced at **\$12 (plus convenience charges)**, with some special discounts for **4 and 8-pack bundles** and **passholders**.

## **IMPORTANT 2021 DATES / DEADLINES**

- January 22: BorderLight Fringe Applications Open
- March 5: BorderLight Fringe Applications Close
- April 5: Festival acceptance / waitlist / decline notices sent by this date
- July 20-21: Technical rehearsals (all Fringe); international previews
- July 22 - 24, 2021: **2021 BorderLight International Theatre + Fringe**

## **READY TO APPLY? HERE ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS.**

Go to [www.borderlightcle.org/fringe-apply-2021](http://www.borderlightcle.org/fringe-apply-2021) to download the application documents.

1. Read first: **2021 BorderLight Fringe Application Guidelines**. If you've made it to the end of this page—well done, you've completed the first step! 😊
2. Download the **SAMPLE Application Form**. Use this form to draft your answers and gather your support materials.
3. Fill in the **[ONLINE Application Form](#)**. **Deadline is MARCH 5<sup>st</sup>, 2021**. Remember, the online form must be completed in one session (no saving mid-process) so we recommend you prep your answers in a separate doc before copying over (see STEP 2).

If you still have questions, email Cathleen at [fringe@borderlightcle.org](mailto:fringe@borderlightcle.org) in advance of the deadline. We look forward to receiving your submission!