

Glendon Fridge Festival marks 20 years of provocative student theatre

From Tuesday April 4 through Saturday April 8, Theatre Glendon will present its annual bilingual showcase of student work – the Fridge Festival. Of the fifteen shows, all are student-acted, directed and produced and all, but three are written by York students. This year's annual Fridge marks twenty years of provocative student theatre that began as an open mic evening of improv, skits and song in the early 1980s – long before Glendon College's thriving Drama Studies program even existed. This format built on a tradition that featured Glendon students in York's earliest years staging a satirical revue called "Croak" in the Dining Hall, an irreverent "vaudeville" that poked fun at college faculty and traditions.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, under the Technical Direction of Annabelle Tully-Barr, "the Fridge" was solidified as an evening (or two) of student-generated work under its current title. After 1986, when Drama Studies became a major within the Multidisciplinary Studies program at Glendon and students were participating in theatrical activities at the College the Fridge featured more diverse and provocative content including plays by published playwrights, new work and original solos. Then by the mid-1990s the Fridge was well established as the most successful event in Theatre Glendon's season and was soon expanded to three nights to accommodate the rise in student interest.

Drama Studies became its own degree-granting program in 1996 and has since experienced phenomenal growth, with over 50 students now pursuing a major or honours in the field. As the program grew in size, it attracted more serious students for whom the Fridge provided an important opportunity to independently develop and produce their own work. Since 1999, students were offered the opportunity of curating the event themselves, and, with each successive year, they have introduced innovations to the structure and significance of the festival that continues to evolve today.

The Fridge remains satirical, irreverent and provocative: and it still excites enthusiasm, controversy and a heady rush of creativity. In effect, it has become an important showcase of student work that highlights the creative energy of Glendon students, whether they work within Drama Studies or not. According to Professor Robert Wallace, coordinator of the Drama Studies program today's Fridge "presents much more challenging, if not polished work. It maintains the goals of the original events in as much as it gives students free reign to develop their own ideas and put to use the skills and information they are learning in their courses. Ultimately, it demonstrates the viability and vitality of student-generated and produced theatre. It's a wonderful tribute to the cultural prosperity of the College."

For a complete performance schedule, visit:

<http://glendon.yorku.ca/QuickPlace/theatre/>