

College Application Essay Example 500 Words

Over 3,000 shows every year across 300 venues. Thousands of performers drawn from 47 countries around the globe. The largest international arts festival in the world. There is no place I am more content than at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe every summer.

It seems an odd juxtaposition at first; Edinburgh is an old, medieval city. History oozes out of every vein, from the cobbled streets to the magnificent stone castle that so dominates the skyline. Yet, for three weeks every August it is engulfed by an electrifying torrent of cutting-edge, experimental music, theatre, dance and comedy. I have seen shows performed entirely in darkness, entirely in silence, and even one where nothing happened at all! It is a heady mix of the beautiful and the daring, and I leave Edinburgh each year with radically altered perceptions of art, of culture, and indeed of life in general.

There's a great deal of nostalgia tying me to the festival. I have visited every year for as long as I can remember. The gradual transition from having to wait in a coffee shop with my mother while my father and brother watch a risqué comedian I was too young to see, to actually witnessing the powerful and taboo-breaking performances that populate the Fringe seems to me inextricable from the process of growing up itself. This bohemian, spirited atmosphere has helped define me, both as an aspiring playwright and as aspiring academic. There is a beauty in encountering new ideas, new perspectives, and new analytical frameworks for looking at the world. Fundamentally, a healthy mind is one that actively confronts itself with the unfamiliar.

It was only three years ago that I began performing at the Fringe Festival as well as attending. Being part of a community of twenty actors just as invested in creativity and beauty as you are is an incredible experience. Many have become some of my dearest friends and, this coming summer, five of us intend to go a step further and write, organize and put on our own show from scratch entirely independently. Here is a chance to not just absorb the eclectic discourse of the Fringe, but to actively contribute our own creative voice to it. Economists frequently talk of a 'marketplace of ideas', as if inspiration were a discrete product that can be traded and bartered between socio-economic actors. There is no marketplace of ideas. It is a festival, a celebration of innovation to which all can lend the weight of their own experience, and from which all can learn equally.

Too often we associate contentment with tranquility. We think of the New England log cabin, surrounded for miles and miles by sublime wildernesses. We think of isolation, of peace, as if we alone are enough to make ourselves happy. Perhaps some people can do that, but I cannot. I need bustle. I need energy. I need to be assaulted, barraged by a stream of exotic ideas that are not my own. It is not peace, but a kind of intellectual chaos; daring; beauty. Then and only then am I content.