

FRINGE FANTASY



The 22nd Annual Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival is pushing the boundaries this year—geographically and beyond.

By Denise Bates Enos

YANOMI, WHO HAILS FROM JAPAN, has become a Fringe favorite. You can catch her act as Miss Hiccup at this year's festival.

RICHARD HANNA

New venues, new acts and new diversions promise to make 2013 Fringe bigger, bolder and better than ever. Loch Haven Park will still be the heart of the festival, but this year, Fringe is expanding with two new venues, Theatre Downtown and The Venue. "Both of the venues are in Ivanhoe Village and just a short walking distance to Loch Haven Park," says George Wallace, general manager for the Fringe.

But that's not all, he adds: "I'm looking at the biggest and best Fringe ever; there are so many new and exciting things at Fringe this year. Our festival producer, Mike Marinaccio, was able to schedule 100 ticketed shows, more than ever before. We are expanding Visual Fringe this year and we have exciting things in store for Kids Fringe."

Visual Fringe's expansion includes dedicated space on Alden Road. "We're moving Visual Fringe to its own gallery with a warehouse atmosphere within Ivanhoe Village. It's a perfect spot," says Wallace. Another new element of Visual Fringe is Art Bazaar, which will include food trucks, music and art for sale, and will be held from noon to 8 p.m. on weekends.

So, What Else Is New?

The expansion doesn't stop there: this year, Fringe is doubling up on the beer tents. "We are transforming the Darden Courtyard at the Orlando Shakespeare Center into another beer garden area," says Wallace. And even though Loch Haven Park and Ivanhoe Village are within walking distance for those who don't mind hoofing it a mile or so, another new fea-

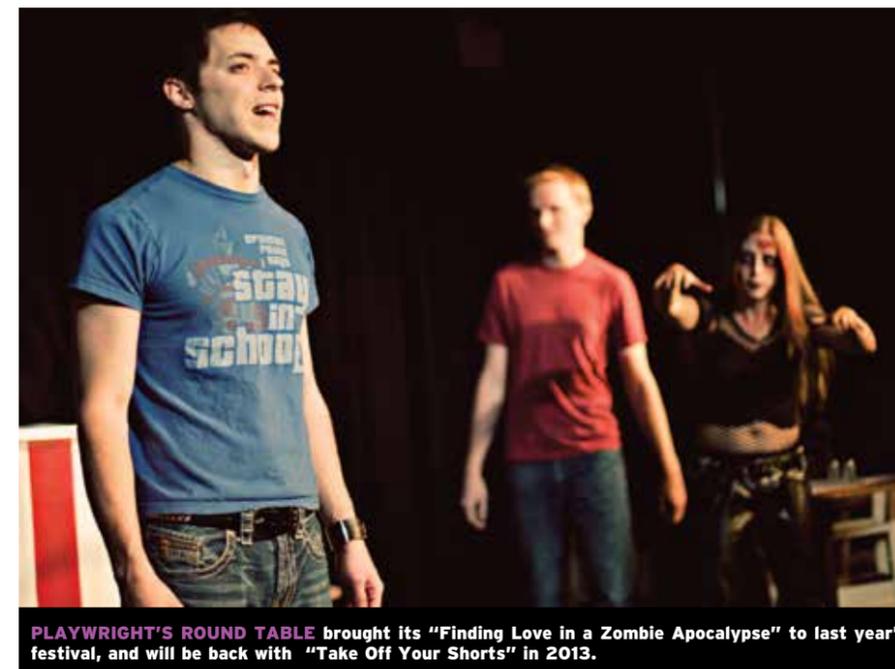
ture for 2013 is transportation; for the first time, Fringe-goers will be able to hop on a pedicab between venues. The rides will be free, although tips will be welcome.

Another fresh addition to Fringe is the introduction of aerial artists. "We've never had that before, so I am excited to see them perform," says Wallace. He's also enthusiastic about a new project of Marinaccio's: mini-golf. The indoor course will be located in the Visual Fringe venue and will feature six holes designed by local artists. It will be donation-only and all proceeds will be divided between the artists and Orlando Fringe.

The Great Outdoors

The Outdoor Stage on the Green Lawn will be the site of many free performances and events. The lineup, produced by Jessica Pawli, will feature popular local musical artists, Fringe performers and open mic nights. Local celebrity judges will be on hand both Saturday evenings to render their verdicts in the popular Fringe Poetry Smackdown.

This is also where you'll find food and craft vendors and the famous beer (and wine) tent. "We are excited to have a wide



PLAYWRIGHT'S ROUND TABLE brought its "Finding Love in a Zombie Apocalypse" to last year's festival, and will be back with "Take Off Your Shorts" in 2013.

ORLANDO FRINGE



Charting Your Course

The festival covers a lot of ground. Luckily, Fringe makes it easy to find your way around; here's a rundown:

- The Pink, Brown, Red, Yellow, Orange and Blue venues are in the Lowndes Shakespeare Center, 812 East Rollins St.
- The Silver and Green venues are at the Orlando Repertory Theatre, 1001 E. Princeton St.
- New venues for this year are Theatre Downtown, 2113 N. Orange Ave., and The Venue, 511 Virginia Dr.
- Kids Fringes shows and activities will be held on the grounds of The Mennello Museum of American Art, 900 E. Princeton St.
- Some shows are listed as BYOV (Bring Your Own Venue), and they can take place just about anywhere, from a bathroom in a theater lobby to a parking lot. Check each show's description to find out where it'll be held.
- In addition to the new warehouse gallery on Alden Road, Visual Fringe will be on display throughout the festival, with many of the works available for purchase. Look for art throughout the grounds, as well as inside the lobby of the Lowndes Shakespeare Center and the Orlando Repertory Theatre.
- All shows are handicap accessible; check in with the venue captain for help with early seating.



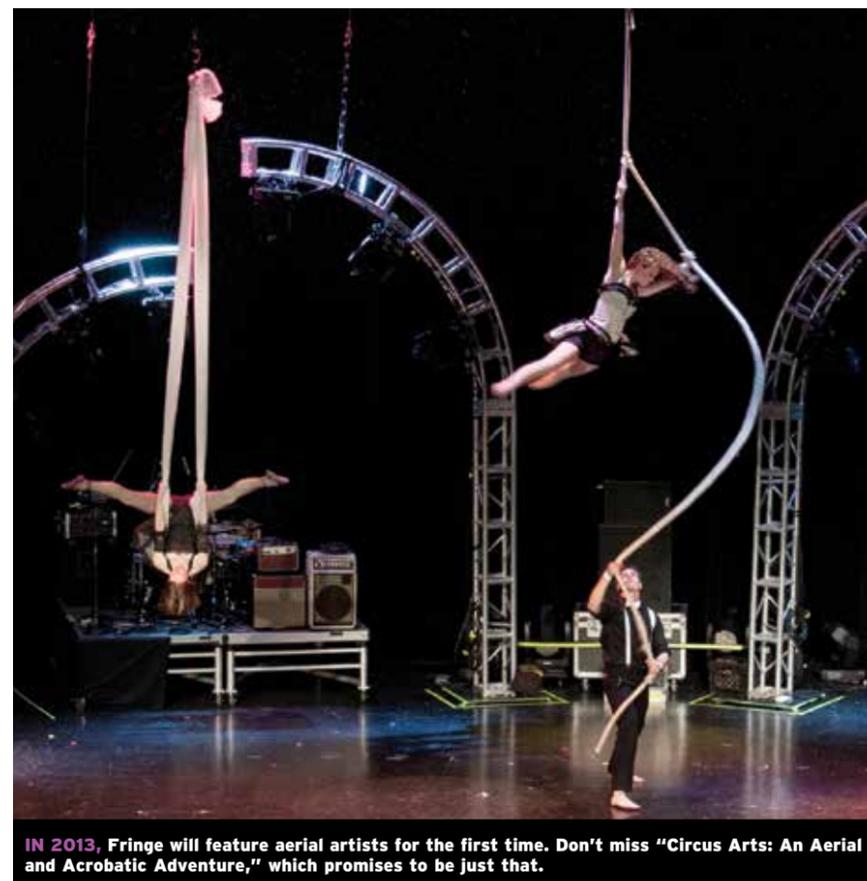
ORLANDO FRINGE

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT THEATER: the Fringe Festival features a wide variety of performances, including plenty of dance. Last year's lineup included the talented students at Orlando School of Cultural Dance. Opposite page: Michael Winslow of *Police Academy* fame brings his one-man show to Fringe 2013.



MICHAEL CAIRNS

LOCAL PERFORMER Chase Padgett will perform his "Six Guitar" act at this year's festival.



GIORGIO IURCOTTA

IN 2013, Fringe will feature aerial artists for the first time. Don't miss "Circus Arts: An Aerial and Acrobatic Adventure," which promises to be just that.

variety of food, from stone-fired pizza, gourmet burgers and vegetarian fare and some basic carnival-style foods like the famed fried peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches and funnel cakes, to hot dogs and everything in between," says Wallace.

Getting Their Acts Together

More beer, mini-golf, free transportation and new venues—exciting stuff, but Fringe is really all about the performances. And there's a lot in store for 2013. "There is so much local talent," says Wallace. "The Orlando Fringe allows artistic freedom and a place for local performers to test new works. Always a big hit is Jeff Jones, who is staging a 'Toddlers and Tiaras' parody, complete with drag queen contestants playing seven-year-olds."

Other acts include Michael Winslow—who gained fame with his amazing repertoire of voices and sound effects in the *Police Academy* movies—and his one-man show, and Michael Wanzie, who will be bringing his "Celebrity Match Game" to the stage. Wallace says he always enjoys Yow Dance's performances, and he has a soft spot for the troupe from Orlando Lutheran Towers, which is returning with a new performance. "The Downtowners"

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range in age from 75 to 96, and even Wallace teared up last year when they sang "Forever Young."

Local favorites Blue, billed as "the inimitable star of all media," and composer, singer and pianist Tod Kimbro will stage a campy, music-filled performance, and another Orlando performer, Chase Padgett, is also returning. The comic actor and musician is famed for his "Six Guitars" act, in which he takes on the persona of six different guitar players.

Worldly Flavor

But it's not all local talent. Fringe is an international festival, and it attracts performers from all over the United States

and around the world, including Australia, Asia and the United Kingdom. The festival reserves half of the available performance slots for local performers, 25 percent for performers from outside of Central Florida and 25 percent of the slots for international artists. Among the international artists coming to 2013 Fringe is Japanese clown artist Yanomi, who is bringing back a Fringe favorite, her "Miss Hiccup" show.



A Fortnight of Fringy Fun

The festival officially kicks off at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, with the National and International Preview Show. On Thursday, May 16, at 5 p.m., the ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on the Green Lawn at Loch Haven Park, followed by a VIP gala. It's an auspicious beginning for one of Orlando's most unique cultural events—and a magnet for talent from around the world. No doubt about it: this two-week event will be a Fringe frenzy of fun, fantasy and the fantastic.

For Marinaccio, who's performed at Fringe in the past, the festival is more than a couple of weeks of fun: Fringe also supports artists and the creative spirit. "For

two weeks, we help artists make a living," he says. "I always like to remind people that we are a not-for-profit organization that facilitates connecting artists to the community. One hundred percent of ticket sales go back to the artists; last year, we took in just over \$60,000 and gave back more than a quarter-million dollars to the artists. That's the number that means the most to me as a former Fringe artist."

Adds Wallace, "I tell people to come to Fringe to experience something they've never experienced before. This is one of the few places you can go see a Broadway-quality show and then go hang out with the artists at the beer tent. You can't get that experience anywhere else." **oam**

Just the Facts

Planning a trip to the Fringe? Here's what you need to know:

- Fringe takes place from May 15 through May 28, from 5 p.m. to midnight on weekdays and 10 a.m. to midnight on weekends. Kids Fringe will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both weekends of the festival.
- Venues are located just north of downtown in Orlando's Loch Haven Park and Ivanhoe Village.
- Tickets are available online at orlandofringe.org or during the festival at the Lowndes Shakespeare Center, Orlando Repertory Theatre, Theatre Downtown and The Venue. Performance costs range from free to \$11 per show.
- In addition to tickets, a Fringe button is required for admission to all shows. Buttons cost \$9 and can be purchased at the information desk and at locations throughout the festival grounds.
- Give yourself plenty of time to park; there are approximately 500 free parking spaces in the Loch Haven Park area, and there's additional paid parking at local garages. Limited street parking can be found around Loch Haven Park, Ivanhoe Village and the Mills-50 area.
- On May 28 and 29, Patron's Pick features an encore performance of each of the venue's best-selling shows.
- Plan ahead, pick a schedule and be prompt: there is no late admission for shows (and no refunds). Shows run from ten to 90 minutes in length, and most are 60 minutes long. Check out the show descriptions and times online in advance so you'll know where and when you'll want to go.
- Call 407.648.0077 or log onto orlandofringe.org for more information.