



C. PETER MICHAEL MARINO 2014. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

KASDANDRA WINCAID

CADNICE CREATIVE

# Fringe for All!

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND GET IN ON ONE OF ORLANDO'S MOST COLORFUL ANNUAL EVENTS.

BY SANDRA CARR

**Comedy? Check. Dance? Definitely. Visual art? A wide variety. Kids' activities? Of course!** From May 14 to 27, the 23rd Annual Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival will have everyone covered with special events and an array of performances that include family-friendly productions, raunchy, laugh-out-loud shows and everything in between. "Our tag line this year is 'Over 100 shows rated G to OMG' because our shows are so diverse," explains Festival Producer Michael Marinaccio. "You can see all types of performing-arts productions for any age group, so there's something for everyone at the Fringe."

A member of both the United States Association of Fringe Festivals (USAFF) and the Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF), the Orlando Fringe is the

oldest of its kind in the U.S. Attracting a motley crew of talented actors, comedians, dancers, puppeteers, artists, filmmakers and others, the festival has a cult-like fol-

lowing from fans in-the-know, who gather in Loch Haven Park and surrounding venues during two weeks packed with shows, spontaneous performances, original artwork, food trucks and beer tents and plenty of other activities.

But newcomers are always welcomed—and encouraged—to come out and experience the festival. "Everyone should have the Fringe on their bucket list," says General Manager George Wallace. "Don't be afraid of the Fringe or to ask questions. We're here for 14 days, so give us a try."

## Show Time

There were 125 applications for this year's event, and more than 90 productions—including 13 international acts from Australia, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom—were selected to perform in 10 color-coded venues throughout Loch Haven Park, including the Orlando Shakespeare Theater (OST) and Orlando Repertory Theatre, and at The Venue in nearby Ivanhoe Village. Fifty percent of the performers are from Central Florida, 25 percent are national acts and the rest are international participants. Remaining true to the original concept of Fringe festivals, the Orlando event offers completely uncensored and unjuried shows, and the talent receives 100 percent of their ticket sales.

Orlando Fringe officially kicks off with an opening-night ceremony on Wednesday, May 14, at 5:30 p.m. on the Green Lawn in Loch Haven Park, which serves as a main hub for happenings throughout the festival. The event will include a ribbon cutting, two-minute teasers from visiting acts during the National and International Artists Preview Show, and a sneak peek at 10 to 12 shows.

There's no shortage of local talent at this year's festival, which includes performers of all ages. The Downtowners, a senior-citizen choral ensemble from Orlando Lutheran Towers, returns with *The Real 50 Shades of Gray (hair)*, not to be confused with *Fifty Shades of Gay: The*

*Musical*, presented by another hometown group, Homicidal Orphan Productions. Dance is also part of the mix, with performances by Yow Dance and Sanford's Flamenco del Sol, which won the Critics' Choice for Best Dance Production at last year's festival.

Other beloved Orlando Fringe veterans will be on hand, including Michael Wanzie and Todd Kimbro. Patrons can meet the person of their dreams during Rob Ward and Pepe Productions' *Truth or Dare with Pepe*, a dating game that gives singles an opportunity to win an all-expense paid date with an eligible bachelor.

If that doesn't pan out, then try *Deranged Dating* by Kirchmann Productions. The South African group is just one example of the great international talent in this year's lineup. Fringe's 2013 Patrons' Pick winner, Canadian comedian Mike Delamont, presents *God Is a Scottish Drag Queen II: An All New Testament*, a sequel to last year's hit. Another Canadian—and a returning festival favorite—TJ Dawe will be debuting his new monologue, *Marathon*, at Orlando Fringe.

Pop culture fans might want to check out the real-life "Breaking Bad" story, *Fire in the Meth Lab*, presented by 2hoots Productions from Melbourne, Australia. The U.K.'s Haste Theater will perform *Oyster Boy*, which is about a boy who is born with an oyster-shell-shaped head. Hailing from London, the Wish Experience takes audiences back in time with *A Brief History of Beer*, a "docudramedy" on one of the world's most popular beverages.

## Making Cents

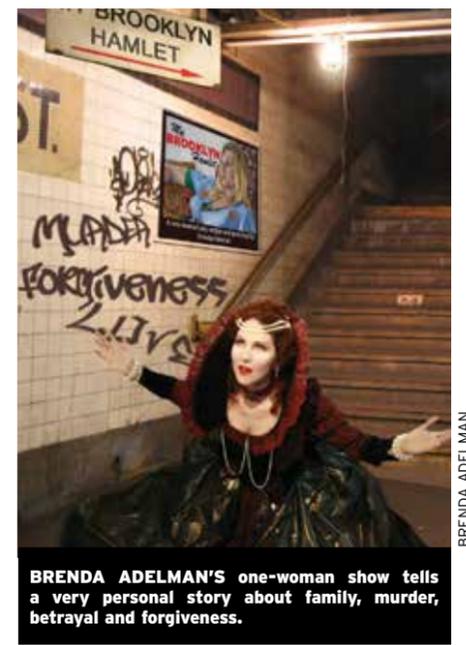
In addition to 14 days of shows, Fringe generates dollars for area bars, restaurants and other businesses, especially in Ivanhoe Village. The festival's office relocated to the area and teamed up with the Ivanhoe Village Main Street program to further develop their partnership last fall. In recognition of its commitment to and involvement in the district, the Fringe received the Orlando Main Street Business/Merchant of the Year 2013 award last October.

It's a win-win for the festival and the neighborhood. "We help the businesses and they help us," says Marinaccio. "The Americans for the Arts research estimates that we have about a \$1.8 million economic impact on the Ivanhoe Village district during our two-week festival."

As part of their partnership, the two groups will be hosting a pre-festival "Don't Know Ivanhoe Pub Crawl" on Tuesday, May 13, from 7 p.m. to midnight. Patrons can get acquainted with the area as they move from venue to venue, enjoying live Fringe performances and one free drink at each stop. The cost is \$15 per person, with proceeds benefitting Ivanhoe Village Main Street and the Orlando Fringe.



WITH FOOD AND BEVERAGE VENDORS, an outdoor stage featuring free entertainment and a box office, the Green Lawn is a hub of activity throughout the Orlando Fringe Festival.



BRENDA ADELMAN'S one-woman show tells a very personal story about family, murder, betrayal and forgiveness.

## Quick Tips



ORLANDO FRINGE

**ORLANDO'S OWN BLUE AND TODD KIMBRO** make an entertaining duo with cabaret-style performances.

### Ticket Talk

Patrons must obtain a \$9 Fringe button to attend any show. Buttons can be purchased at the box offices and proceeds benefit Orlando Fringe. Show prices are set by performers and range from free to \$11. Tickets can be purchased at the box offices located at OST, The REP, The Venue and the Green Lawn one hour before each show and online at [orlandofringe.org](http://orlandofringe.org).

### Parking Plan

Parking is available at Loch Haven Park, in nearby garages, and on the street in the Mills-50 and Ivanhoe Village districts. Florida Urology Associates and the Magruder Eye Institute are also providing off-site parking. Pedicabs will be offering rides to the venues.

### Sustenance

For eats and drinks, head to the Green Lawn. The ever-popular Beer Tent is back and this year's food purveyors have healthier selections and more seating. Santiago's Bodega, Hawkers Asian Street Fare and The Hammered Lamb will have small bites for \$2 to \$5. Shadrach's Fiery Furnace Traveling Pizza Company will also be offering waiter service for its customers.

### More Information

407.648.0077, [orlandofringe.org](http://orlandofringe.org)

Set in England in a brothel, *Black Stockings* by Dangerous Theatre from Denver, Co., is a morality play about sex and war. Family, love, betrayal and forgiveness are all addressed in Brenda Adelman's acclaimed one-woman show, *My Brooklyn Hamlet*, which tells the heart-wrenching story of how her mother was murdered by her father, who married her aunt after getting out of jail.

Other national acts include Seattle's Theater Simple, which salutes one of today's most popular bad guys as actor Ricky Coates stars in *The Death of Brian: A Zombie Odyssey*. Using puppetry, soundscapes, and simple set and lighting transitions, Coates creates multiple characters and settings to give fans of the undead a taste of everything from violence, sex and humor to flesh-eating, death and occasional sci-fi references.

If you're looking for more family-friendly puppetry, gather the kids and get to *Flight: A Crane's Story*. Presented by Jim Henson's daughter and puppeteer Heather Henson and IBEX Puppetry, this production features enormous puppets and elaborate staging that will captivate audiences of all ages.

Other shows appropriate for kids include PB&J Theatre Factory's *Smooch* and Cadence Creative's *Professor Soap's Music Machine*, an interactive, multimedia production with short films and live music.

As the festival winds down, you can be sure to catch all of this year's Fringe

favorites on May 27 and 28, when the best-selling shows from each venue—dubbed Patrons' Picks—will have special encore performances.

### Affordable Acts

In addition to affordable shows—which range from free to \$11—the festival offers budget-minded attendees plenty of free activities. Sit back and watch local bands and karaoke, comedic and open-mic performances on the Outdoor Stage on the Green Lawn, or jump in and participate in the Fringe Poetry Smackdown, a poetry slam with local celebrity judges, a la "American Idol."

There's no admission fee to Visual Fringe, an exhibition located in the Patron's Room of OST that features more than 100 works by local artists, including paintings, photography, metal, mixed-media and sculpture. (If you don't get your fill there, the Art Bazaar features vendors selling artwork on weekends from 4 to 8 p.m. in the rotunda of the Orlando Museum of Art.) There is also a Kids Visual Fringe in the Orlando Repertory Theatre, and just like the performing-arts events, the art shows are unjuried and the artists receive all the monies from any sales.

Youngsters won't want to miss out on Kids Fringe, which will be held during the weekends from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Mennello Museum of American Art. The free program is for pre-K students to fifth graders and includes shows, arts and

crafts, face painting, a bounce house and character meet-and-greets.

New to Fringe this year are panel discussions, which will be held in the Orange Venue at OST. The Edinburgh Fringe Road Show will be presented by CAFF on Tuesday, May 20, and USAFF will hold the North American Artist Panel on Wednesday, May 21. The events are free and open to the public.

Whether you're a Fringe Festival alum or a first-timer, this year's event offers not-to-be missed entertainment for patrons of all ages. "Fringe brings the most eclectic, innovative, passionate performing arts and an explosion of creativity during a two-week party," says Marinaccio. "It's a celebration of art, people and different cultures and the best two weeks of the year in Orlando." **oam**

*Sandra Carr is a regular contributor to Orlando Arts Magazine and freelances for the Orlando Sentinel and Us Weekly.*



IBEX PUPPETRY



ORLANDO FRINGE

**FROM G-RATED SHOWS** to Kids Fringe to Kids Visual Fringe, there are plenty of family-friendly offerings at this year's festival, with activities designed especially with little ones in mind.



ORLANDO FRINGE

**TOP: ARTIST AND PUPPETEER HEATHER HENSON** brings her elaborate production *Flight* to this year's festival. **BOTTOM:** You never know what you'll encounter at Orlando Fringe, so don't be surprised to find yourself mingling with cardboard robots and fluffy four-legged friends.