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Buffalo to celebrate 'art under the radar'

By **CANDACE LUKASIK**

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The Buffalo Infringement Festival is dedicated to anti-commercial artwork, whether it be in theater, music or other art forms.

Across the country in cities such as New York City and Philadelphia, this revolution of art for the sake of art is occurring. The festival originated in Montreal when artists from the Optative Theatrical Laboratory were taken out of the Montreal Fringe Festival for insulting the corporate sponsor for the event, Starbucks. In 2004, the "infringement" festival sprang up across Canada. Kurt Schneiderman, director of the Buffalo-based Subversive Theatre Collective, observed the Toronto festival and thought Buffalo needed it. At Buffalo's first festival last year, 144 performers took part.

Matt Lachiusa, a writer/actor in Buffalo and a member of the volunteer ad hoc committee for the festival, said, "We are infringing upon nothing in the theater community; actors need to do work that challenges them."

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The Buffalo Infringement Festival has begun to nurture a younger generation to come to theater.

"There is no cooperation or collaboration in the acting community," said Lachiusa. "We are challenging and opening creative horizons for producers, actors and directors."

In uniting these independent artists, this year's festival displays more than 250 acts, including musical ones, this year. The festival is expanding and is bringing creativity in many different forms to Buffalo.

This year the festival will be held from Thursday to Aug. 6 at various venues, ranging from Albright-Knox Art Gallery to Rust Belt Books at 202 Allen St., to Soundlab at 110 Pearl St.

"Akhmatova," by Romulus Linney, displays the life and tribulations of the work of poet Anna Akhmatova in post-Stalin Russia. It is being performed at Squeaky Wheel at 712 Main St.

Gusto at the Gallery showcases multiple art forms at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 4 at the Albright Knox.

For hip hop-lovers, the Hip Hop Showcase displays new and upcoming artists such as Milkfat and Pseudo-Slang. This Saturday from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Soundlab, Hip Hop reigns.

"Red Clay" by Matt Lachiusa and "Sincerity Forever" directed by Kurt Schneiderman (both at the New Phoenix Theatre) are choice pieces to see.

An interesting event comes at Shakespeare in the Parking Lot (10 to 11 p.m., Aug. 5) on the sidewalk in front of the Allen Street Hardware Cafe at 245 Allen St. This interactive street theatre brings you in and gets you involved in the festival. For exact times, dates and changes, go to **infringebuffalo.org** for more information.

Organizers say the Buffalo Infringement Festival is meant for the creative development of Buffalo Theatre District, but is not meant for all viewers. Audiences must choose what they see at their own risk.

As far as age-appropriate material for audiences, Lachiusa says: "It's a judgment call for folks. Some adults would find some productions appropriate for young minds, while others would find them inappropriate. The organizers don't place these types of taste restrictions upon acts submitted. That's what makes this festival so unique and so diverse."

Candace Lukasik will be a senior at West Seneca East.