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Full slate; Infringement Festival showcases a wealth of theater

By Colin Dabkowski

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From a musical about the joys of cannabis to a production about the French Revolution that will roam the streets of Allentown, the Buffalo Infringement Festival contains some of the year's oddest and most innovative pieces of theater.

The festival, which kicked off Thursday with an opening party in Nietzsche's, will host several dozen theatrical or quasi-theatrical presentations, all of which are listed on the festival's website, www.infringebuffalo.org. Here are a few highlights of the festival's many theater presentations.

*Steve Roylance, writer of Road Less Traveled Blacklight's "Dependent, Undisciplined and Sleeping Late," will present his "City Sketches," a "slightly vulgar" collection of shorts drawn from life in the Queen City. The show is at 3:30 p.m. today in Westside Stories (205 Grant St.), 4:30 p.m. Saturday in El Museo (91 Allen St.), 3 p.m. next Friday in Main Street Studios (515 Main St.) and 3:30 p.m. Aug. 4 in Rust Belt Books (202 Allen St.).

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*Torn Space Theatre presents Leonid Andreyev's play "He Who Gets Slapped," which, according to a release, "tells the story of a famous writer who takes a job as a circus clown in order to escape his past." The show kicks off at 8 tonight in the Foundry (298 Northampton St.) and runs through Aug. 5.

*"Activist Theatre," presented by the West Side community advocacy group PUSH Buffalo, will feature 30-minute skits about issues their organization faces. The performances take place in Burning Books (420 Connecticut St.) at 5 p.m. Saturday, 4 p.m. Wednesday, 6 p.m. Thursday, and 5 and 8:30 p.m. Aug. 4.

*"Symphony," a new piece by puppet artist and Infringement regular Michele Costa about a forgotten man and his dog, plays at 5 p.m. Saturday and Thursday in Rust Belt Books (202 Allen St.), 7 p.m. Monday and 4 p.m. Aug. 4 in the Crane Library (633 Elmwood Ave.) and 7 p.m. Wednesday in Allen Street Hardware (245 Allen St.).

*Optative Theatrical Laboratories, the Montreal-based troupe that launched the first Infringement Festival, will present three projects at this year's festival. The troupe's acclaimed original interactive theater program "Car Stories" will run from Thursday to Aug. 4 at various starting times in the parking lot next to Nietzsche's (248 Allen St.). At 8 p.m. Wednesday in Nietzsche's, the troupe hosts the interactive piece "Occupy Theatre." And its project, "Infringement Therapy," runs from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in the parking lot next to Nietzsche's.

*Franklin LaVoie performs his engaging one-man Mark Twain piece "Incident at Deer Lick" at 4 p.m. Monday in the Crane Library (633 Elmwood Ave.) and at 1 p.m. Sunday, 5 p.m. Thursday and 5 p.m. Aug. 4 in Westside Stories (205 Grant St.).

*"Airport Musical," an Infringement staple about "the drama of an overnight layover" by Kilissa Cissoko, will have its fourth annual workshop performance at 6 p.m. Thursday in El Museo (91 Allen St.). This time around, the \$10 workshop features live music.

*"420 The Musical," which had its first outing earlier this year, is a project in development by a local troupe known as the Francis Bacon Experiment. The show, described as "a lighthearted adult comedy that travels through the mind of a young man confused about his place in the world and where his life is headed," is on stage at 7 p.m. next Friday and Aug. 4 in Wasteland Studios (700 Main St.). Says FBE's Nick Russo: "It's fun, it's silly, and it's best if you pre-game it."

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