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## The unpredictable, eclectic Infringement Fest returns

By Colin Dabkowski

Jul 21, 2015



The band Amrev2 performed as part of Infringement Festival in 2014.

By BN

By Colin Dabkowski

**L**et the weirdness begin.

Thursday marks the opening of the 11th annual Infringement Festival, Buffalo's grandest, most eclectic and certainly most bizarre cultural achievement. This year's festival, far from its humble beginnings as a theater-centric event in 2005, will feature more than 400 artists of all imaginable varieties performing in 94 venues throughout the city as well as on its streets, sidewalks, out-of-the-way pocket parks and forgotten promenades.

In past years, organizers have pegged the number of performances at more than 800. This year, they gave up trying to quantify the festival's exact reach but have noted that it will feature more than 90 music and arts showcases, each with dozens of participants and performances.

A small taste of the festival's depth was on display earlier this month in the annual festival preview in Asbury Hall, which featured bite sized-performances from puppeteers, playwrights, poets, improvisational dancers and various permutations of the above.

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At that event, emcee and longtime Infringement participant Ron Ehmke summed up the unpredictable and eclectic vibe of the festival, which approves every project proposed and matches artists with venues free of charge.

“I defy you to name another festival, not just in Buffalo, not just in this country, but in the entire world, where you will find puppetry, electronic synth, strip-teasers, burlesque dancers, amplified paintings and people performing a tribute to the American farmer in an anarchist bookstore in the same festival,” Ehmke said. “We are a blessed city.”

Of those 400 artists and dozens of group shows, some potential highlights of the festival’s first few days include:

- The Infringement Fest opening ceremonies at 9 p.m. Thursday in Nietzsche’s (248 Allen St.), featuring musical performances from festival veterans such as David Adamczyk and Erica Wolfing.
- A Subversive Theatre production of Eugene Ionesco’s little-produced play “Rhinoceros,” opening at 8 p.m. Thursday in the Manny Fried Playhouse (255 Great Arrow Ave.) and running through Aug. 1.
- A party on the roof of the Broadway Market (999 Broadway) from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday featuring 14 acts.
- A mini busker festival from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday outside of Caffe Aroma (957 Elmwood Ave.).
- Art installations and exhibitions at galleries and shops including Artspace Buffalo, Cafe Taza, Glow Gallery, Mohawk Place, Perk’s Cafe and Market, Starlight Studios and under a random pine tree at 156 Park St.
- Film screenings at Hostel Buffalo Niagara (667 Main St.) from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Monday.
- Popular infringement performer and puppeteer Michele Costa’s new piece “Muse,” playing various dates throughout the festival from Friday through Aug. 2.

The full list of events, which the festival’s tireless troupe of volunteer organizers does its best to keep updated, is online at **[infringebuffalo.org](http://infringebuffalo.org)**.

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