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Theatre by the Sea's CATS Invites You to the Jellicle Ball



CATS is playing at Theatre by the Sea. If your first reaction to this was "Ouuuhh," go get your tickets now. If your reaction was more along the lines of, "Oh," keep reading.

I'm familiar with *CATS*. I was in kindergarten in 1998 when the movie version of the play had just gone straight to VHS; it was a hot commodity. We 5-year-olds were all pretty terrified of the actors and clearly had no idea what we were watching. A few years later it made its way to PPAC and you can bet I

was there, terrified, with my eyes shut the whole time. The things you learn as a young child stick with you - hey, it's science - things like addition and English and Andrew Lloyd Webber soundtracks. *CATS* has stuck with me for the majority of my life. And I hate it. I hate their spandex and that old hag Grizabella, all that hissing and the absence of a plot line.

But I heard Theatre by the Sea was pretty nice, so I dragged along my mother and off we went. As I sat in my seat waiting for the lights to dim I thought to myself, "If these cats crawl down the aisle and get up in my face I'm going to lose it." Two hours and four cats up in my face later, all I can really say is this is a summer stock production you should probably see.

CATS, based on the TS Eliot poem, "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," is pretty much about a bunch of cats that hang out in an alley at the "Jellicle Ball" for one night a year where they proceed to gloat about themselves, hate on the elderly cat and then change their minds and befriend her (or feel bad for her) before sending her up to heaven or the moon or something on a spaceship thing. So there's essentially no plot at all.

But there's a reason it's the longest running play in Broadway history - it's incredibly entertaining. There is no spoken dialogue in the whole performance. *CATS* is dance theater. The choreography is such that after watching for a half hour you forget that you're watching human beings and not cats. At one point, a character came crawling down the aisle sniffing around my chair and I almost pet her head. All of the acting is within the choreography; yes, there are words in the songs and yes, the performers must portray emotion the same way that any actor must, but everything that leads to the illusion that these dancers are actually cats, what makes the play such a hit, comes from the choreography.

Like any dance style and number, each dancer has his or her own talents and signature moves that get the crowd "Ooh"ing. There will always be the principal dancer who can silence a room with his straight-leg fouettes (always a big finish in *Magical Mister Mistoffelees*). But it's the group numbers, meticulously choreographed to the point where 17 dancers don't even take breaths on the wrong counts that are particularly impressive. There wasn't a single point in the performance when a cat wasn't pulling off some impressive dance move and in turn, distracting from the ridiculous non-plot. With Richard Stafford on board as choreographer and director after serving as dance supervisor over Broadway's production of *CATS*, you can expect the same level of quality at Theatre by the Sea.

Simply being at Theatre by the Sea is an event within itself. The theater exits let out to what could easily be mistaken for The Secret Garden. As the focal point of a grassy courtyard, a gazebo served as a makeshift bar. When the show ended, the sun had set completely and lampposts and string lights dimly, but pleasantly, lit the area. At the far end, a pathway surrounded by greenery and flowered vines on three sides summons visitors' curiosity. Walking through, couples sat on benches while showtunes quietly played out of the overhead speakers. At the end of the tunnel is the entrance to the Bistro by the Sea.

Whether you're new to the show, have happy memories of seeing it in the past, or cling to horrible childhood nightmares it created, *CATS* is worth another viewing. Just don't pet the actors.

CATS is playing at Theatre by the Sea on 364 Cards Pond Road, Matnuck, RI, through July 13. For ticket information, call 401-782-8587 or visit TheatreByTheSea.biz.

The Exonerated Leaves a Lasting Impact



Summer often ends up being the time when frivolous theater rears its ugly head. Not to sound snobbish, but lately, it seems like finding anything meatier than *No, No Nanette* would be a challenge. That's why it's so refreshing to have 2nd Story Theatre presenting a gripping piece of theater that's sure to leave an impact that'll last through the fall.

The Exonerated, by Erik Jensen and Jessica Blank, is a docudrama about people who were put on death row for crimes they didn't commit. The fact that the stories you hear throughout the course of the evening are all true is what gives the play its emotional punch. 2nd Story Theatre paired with Mixed Magic Theatre in Pawtucket to bring this powerful play to life. Add to that the location - Bristol's Historic Courthouse - and what you have is a real theatrical event. The setting gives the play the feeling of a town hall. All the characters are in street clothes, and they speak directly to the audience and to each other.

It's safe to say this show offers the best acting you'll see on a local stage right now. The cast is led by Mixed Magic's Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, who commands the stage as one of play's more philosophical characters. The existential insights he offers, combined with Pitts-Wiley's formidable presence, create a sort of ringmaster for the evening, or perhaps "father figure" is the more appropriate term, even though the stories these people have to tell evoke the image of numerous three-ring circuses.

Tom Chace's humble portrait of a man who is wrongly accused of murdering his parents is the first tale we hear about in depth. Chace does a fantastic job of portraying a man who keeps most of his thoughts and emotions to himself. The relaxed nature of his performance makes you examine him even after you know he's innocent, turning the audience into the types of people who continued to harass his character even after he was vindicated. Joe Henderson's performance is so visceral, it's hard to imagine how he's able to perform it multiple times a week. The same could be said for Amos Hamrick and Edward V. Crews, who conversely offer justifiable anger and solemnity with skill and dignity.

The most harrowing piece of this six-part puzzle is given to us by Joanne Fayan, the sole female death row inmate featured in the play. Her story begins with a double homicide and ends with her reflecting on the nature of forgiveness. Fayan is incredible in this role. She and the other actors have to be

applauded for keeping the material grounded in reality. Director Ed Shea has taken a real risk by keeping the show aesthetically and tonally simple, but the risk pays off as you find yourself wondering how six people talking to you for an hour and a half could leave you feeling so shaken up.

Preparing for a Visit from BOB



Of all of the technology spawned by and for the theater, from computer-driven lighting instruments and sound cue software to glow tape and thundersheets, none has proved as useful and ubiquitous as the coat rack. For the solo performer, in particular, the coat rack serves as wardrobe department, scenery and home base. A trip to the coat rack lets us know that something is about to change, a new beat is coming and we're cued to focus in on a new character or place in time. With the addition of a new hat or the leaving of a scarf, we're allowing the conceit that a single actor is now someone else.

This timeless and simple element of stagecraft is one of the core strengths employed by Anne Pasquale in her one-woman show, *BOB: Blessed Be the Dysfunction that Binds*. The unwieldy title betrays a production that, while straightforward in scope, sometimes gets bogged down in overcomplicated production elements that unnecessarily distract from a performance that is best when kept simple. The show, written and performed by Pasquale, is a first-person narrative of her experiences growing up north of Providence and dealing with a family life riddled with mental illness, disability and the unfortunate general communication issues we're all too familiar with. It's a gripping tale and one that we're sure Pasquale must have been urged to bring to life many times. As a screenplay, the plot would read like an after-school special: lower middle class, Italian suburban family makes their way through the 1960s and '70s with a potentially violent special needs son, a daughter with clinical depression, distant, yet quirky, parents with one foot in the Old Country, a youngest child getting tossed about in the melee and the one almost sane daughter who tries to hold it all together. However, since this is a true story, it seems harsh to consider the plot hackneyed or overly familiar. As a one-woman, live theatrical piece, however, Pasquale gives us not only her wonderfully filtered view of her unique history, but her emotional interpretation of the events that she was forced to deal with.

Pasquale involves the audience directly, if not always effectively, and we're slowly drawn into the story of she and her siblings, particularly the ever-challenging title character, who is expected to visit any minute. As she cleans up and prepares the space for a visit from Bob, she inhabits each of the family members and peripheral characters central to the often heart-wrenching storyline. Her portrayals of Bob himself are sensibly kept to a minimum of very effective and specific traits (a lunging forward while

biting one hand is the signature move), but some of the more disturbing moments in her history are relegated to shadowplay behind a translucent screen with added sound effects that, while appropriately emotional, tend to come across as gimmicky or an attempt by director Mary Ann Hay to artificially inflate the dramatic effect of moments that could stand alone more effectively if Pasquale simply told the story.

It's understandable that there would be a temptation to add production elements to this performance. Besides the aforementioned screen and copious sound effects, there are projections and several costume pieces all meant to help Pasquale relate this tortured, but ultimately triumphant life history. However, the moments that work best are when she roots herself and simply talks to us. She readily becomes all of the people she tells us about (her strongest recollections of character are her own parents, in characterizations that are a joy to witness) and the story drives itself very well without the added distractions of technical elements that are interesting ideas, but sometimes fall flat or seem forced. Director Hay would have best served Pasquale by giving her a blank space, one coat rack and our imaginations.

BOB... is a compelling piece and deserves an audience. One hopes that as this show moves on to different audiences and spaces, Pasquale and Hay will trust themselves and their talents to strip away the unnecessary distractions and trust us to follow along.

BOB: Blessed Be the Dysfunction That Binds, plays through June 30, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7 pm and Sundays at 2 pm at the Artists' Exchange, 50 Rolfe Square, Cranston, RI 02910.

Pilgrim - Doom-metal, Heavy Drinking, and No Apologies

 Doom. If you're a nerd like me, the word conjures images of violent PC games and masked Marvel villains with PhDs in Evil Science. If you are a nerd of a higher pedigree, you might think doom-metal. It's a sound that harkens back to Black Sabbath, emphasizing clean vocals and de-tuned guitars rather than screaming and breakdowns. As clean vocals return to preference in heavy music (thanks to bands like Baroness and The Sword), the heir apparent to the doom legacy may be Rhode Island-bred.

Pilgrim is a Rhode Island doom-metal act gaining acclaim in the realm of heavy music. The three-piece outfit was recently signed to Metal Blade Records (Unearth, Job for a Cowboy, Cannibal Corpse) and are creating the follow-up to their 2012 debut, *Misery Wizard*. There are only three guys in Pilgrim; Krolg the Slayer of Man (drums), Count Elric the Soothsayer (bass), and The Wizard (vocals/guitar), but they produce engrossing, dark down-tempo atmospherics as well as soaring vocals, powerful rhythm and groovy riffs as if they were a band twice the size. As far as heavy music goes, there are few RI acts as accessible or entertaining as Pilgrim. I talked with frontman, The Wizard, for more.

James Lucey: First off, congrats on your recent deal with Metal Blade! What have you guys been up to since you cut this new record deal?

The Wizard: We've been taking a little break and focusing on our lives outside the band. We just finished writing our next record (*Void Worship*). We dumped a LOT of time and energy into manifesting it completely. Now that the stress of writing it has subsided and we've got some time to kill before we actually record it, we're just taking it easy. And drinking heavily.

JL: In an interview, Pilgrim once said Providence should be nuked. I don't disagree. Sometimes Providence seems like a dystopia of hookah bars and Natty-Ice bros. What was so frustrating about playing shows and participating in the Providence scene?

TW: I'm glad you asked this. The whole thing has sort of blown out of proportion. When we first started as a band, we tried feverishly to play out in Providence, but every show we got was an opening spot on a dumb-ass post-hardcore show. Time and time again. It was infuriating. After a while, we built up a really horrible image of Providence, that it was this terrible nightmare of a city, living in the memory of its former glory as a big joke. But since we've been out to more doom shows, met more people there and gotten chances to play with great bands who we actually like, we've been overwhelmingly surprised by how nice it can be. Yeah, the people suck, but they suck everywhere, I guess. Do I regret what we said? No, not really. It was what we saw from our perspective as a young band. I just hope that people take the whole story into consideration before they absolutely hate us for it. Plus, it was really funny - totally worth it.

JL: Are there any redeeming qualities of Providence?

TW: Krolg and I were at a Windhand show last night at AS220 in Providence and I looked around and thought, "Fuck, I wish this was our first impression of the city." I think that the doom is spreading and everything is getting a little bit cooler. You can thank Armageddon Records for that.

JL: Someone in the band (I think Krolg) said fantasy lyrics helps the band to deal with being such miserable human beings. Is it easier to conceptualize a song based on sword and sorcery than complaining about a shitty relationship? How does storytelling feed into the music aesthetic of the band?

TW: Yeah, it is easier. It's sort of a no brainer. After 100-plus years of love songs, the same old lyrics get stale after a while. It's all about prose. It's all just another way to express the same feelings. That's how I write anyway. Storytelling appeals to me personally because I love the idea of an epic journey or a quest. I get it from all the gnarly video games I played growing up. It will always be a part of the band and our style.

JL: What kind of musical background does the band come from? Did you always play together, and if so, was it always doom?

TW: We first started playing together when we were like 16 or so, and back then, like most kids, we worshiped our idols. We basically just wanted to be Nirvana. And then we just wanted to be The Melvins. After some time and after we discovered heavy, slow, stoner and doom music, we found that we really connected with it and that's what we started playing. We always wanted our band to be a mix of doom metal and epic fantasy, almost like if Manilla Road was way slower and heavier, like Acid King or something! Imagine Acid King covering "Necropolis" (laughs).

JL: As metalcore fades into obscurity, do you think there's a place for down-tempo doom as the new "heavy"? Would you even want Pilgrim to be considered "heavy" or "tough" music? That stigma seems to come with the metal territory.

TW: The new heavy? Yeah, for sure. The new tough? I don't think so. To analyze it in a bit of a spiritual way, I feel like most heavy bands that are truly unique and amazing worship the feminine energy, if that makes sense. Bands that are overly masculine are often fucking horrible. I feel that even a burly fucking band like Gates of Slumber has more of a feminine energy about their music. Maybe I'm just fucking insane.

Another thing to keep in mind is that most of the doom bands now (especially the younger guys like us) are WAY more influenced by hard rock than metal, per se. I was just discussing this with Garrett Morris from Windhand last night that neither of us really listens to too much metal or hardcore and we don't really take influence from them. I think it's because the masculinity is lost on us. We're just a bunch of little girls. We're inspired by bands that fucking ROCK, everything from Sonic Youth to Electric Wizard to Grand Funk Railroad; it's more about the passion that makes a band good.

But at the same time, we still listen to metal, so don't get your ideas crossed or whatever. Fuck it.

JL: What can fans expect from your upcoming release on Metal Blade?

TW: I personally believe that the material on our next record will blow *Misery Wizard* out of the water. I just hope we don't fuck up recording it.

Check out Pilgrim online at metalblade.com/pilgrim for dates, info, and merch.

Epic's Fire Island Presents Theatergoers with an Unusual Experience



Fire Island, by Charles Mee, is the current offering at Epic Theatre Company. Directed by Kate Lester, this Rhode Island premiere explores the ups and downs of various couples as they spend a weekend on Fire Island.

The *Fire Island* script is cinematic and poetic. Mee, a current playwriting professor at Columbia University, has an experimental style. On his website, *the (re)making project*, Mee states, "There is no

such thing as an original play." To create art, Mee reconstructs and takes inspiration from found texts. This process gives his writings a collage-like feel.

In 1996, Mee launched *the (re)making project*, which contained full scripts of his body of work. He believes his plays should be accessible to everyone, especially young playwrights. Mee invites aspiring writers to splice and create original work influenced by his own. He also encourages playwrights to use text from the Greeks, Shakespeare and Brecht as well as *Soap Opera Digest* and the evening news.

Mee's laissez-faire attitude on text lends itself to his views on how and where his plays are performed. He does not want his plays to be constricted to the stage, but also to be performed for the film and internet.

Epic Theatre Company's production of *Fire Island* is interactive. Lester attempts to transform the Hope Artiste Village into an island resort. The actors enter from the audience and also blend in as bystanders. The actors lead the audience through the performance space, and this choice has its disadvantages. First, the staging lacked a clear direction and seemed unfocused at times. The audience follows the actors up the hallway and once the entrance is reached, the route is retraced back to the other side of the building. Each nook and cranny of the Hope Artiste Village did not offer anything new to the play. Except for a few café tables or tropical shirts, I forgot I was supposed to be on an island.

The staging was also distracting. People who were not involved in the play or part of the audience walked through the middle of important scenes. For example, in one scene, a character tells the story of murdering her family. Unfortunately, this dramatic scene took place next to the restrooms. The custodian was cleaning the bathrooms during the character's monologue, and as a result, the monologue was punctuated by the occasional toilet flush. Although Mee's work encourages experimentation, the attempt to have interactive staging, although admirable to try something new, just doesn't work.

After the show, I learned that the production was originally going to be performed outside, but was changed due to weather concerns. I think an outdoor environment would have suited the play better.

I did enjoy producer Kevin Broccoli's utilization of music during the play. He trailed the edge of the audience with an iPod blaring pop music during the scene changes.

The actors were inexperienced. The men of the cast especially delivered many of their lines in one level. Luckily, the actors might have the opportunity to gain experience in future shows for Epic.

Mee said, "I like plays that are not too neat, too finished, too presentable. My plays are broken, jagged, filled with sharp edges, filled with things that take sudden turns, careen into each other, smash up, veer off in sickening turns. That feels good to me. It feels like my life. It feels like the world." Life is not perfect and neither is this play. It's messy and its cracks are showing.

Recently, Epic Theatre Company joined Mixed Magic Theatre and The Contemporary Theatre Company to form The Rhode Island Theatre Alliance (RITA). The dialogue show, *This Might Be It*, written and directed by Broccoli, is premiering in early July.

Fire Island plays through June 22 at the Hope Artiste Village.

Building Bridges, Severing Ties



Delays in the construction of the Barrington Bridge were the most public display of bad blood between the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the contractor for the project, Shire Corporation of Cranston.

But that was only the tip of the iceberg, according to a lawsuit Shire filed against the state in 2009. The suit claimed the DOT had an ongoing vendetta against Shire and made a concerted effort to freeze the company out of future state projects, including a bid to replace the Union Avenue Bridge back in 2005.

The lawsuit, in its fourth year, already cost taxpayers at least \$1.5 million in legal fees. So late last year, the state quietly settled, shelling out another \$2 million in taxpayers' dollars to make it all go away. When *The Hummel Report* inquired about it more than a year ago, the DOT's Michael Lewis declined to talk about the suit, the roots of which began long before he became director.

He recently answered our questions, including: why the settlement?

"In any kind of litigation there's risk," Lewis told us. "We think the risk was low, but the Department of Administration and the Department of Transportation legal offices determined that it was in the state's best interests to settle that out for the value that it was, and put that chapter behind the state."

For the better part of a decade, Shire Corporation was the public punching bag for problems on the Barrington Bridge project, as higher-ups in the DOT blamed the contractor for delays and cost overruns.

But we learned last year that a Department of Administration official, called in to referee, put the blame for delays squarely in the DOT's lap and ordered it to pay Shire \$5.3 million in taxpayer money. The DOT did not admit liability, and Shire's president, Tom Gammino, in an interview last year with *The Hummel Report*, said the order angered some of the higher-ups in the DOT, prompting them to go on the warpath against Shire, which regularly bid on large state construction projects.

The heart of the 2009 lawsuit filed against the DOT and eight people in their state positions says the state delayed awarding the Union Avenue project to Shire because of the ongoing dispute between the DOT and the company, even though Shire was the low bidder.

Hummel: It's taxpayer money and when you're crying poverty, then to have to pay a \$2 million judgment, what do you say to the taxpayer about that?

Lewis: It was a settlement position that was in the best economic interests of the state. To stop paying legal fees, to remove any risk of any settlement adverse to the state. A decision was made; there were a lot of people involved.

Hummel: No admission of responsibility in the suit, though?

Lewis: No, no.

Hummel: So it's \$2 million to make this go away?

Lewis: Again, there is risk in any lawsuit and that was a judgment that was made by a number of people involved in the state to make that determination that it was the right thing to do.

Hummel: When somebody files a suit, if it's absolutely a frivolous suit with no merit at all, your lawyers are going to go in there and a judge...you're going to make a motion to have it dismissed based on a false set of facts or it's not holding up. So to me, the fact that it moves forward, a judge says it moves forward and you ultimately decide to settle shows, whether you want to admit it or not, some type of liability or admission by the state. You know what? Maybe we did do it wrong. Do you not agree with that assessment?

Lewis: There were a lot of parties involved. We did go for summary judgment on the case and the judge ruled in our favor in eight out of the 10 counts on summary judgment. There was an appeal to that. We are going to continue to pay legal fees and these can become very high.

What Lewis didn't say is that the remaining two counts were the heart of the case involving the Union Avenue Bridge, and an allegation the state and the Federal Highway Administration worked together to keep Shire from getting what eventually turned out to be an \$8 million job, which was awarded to Aetna Bridge of Pawtucket.

When you add up the Barrington Bridge project and the costs associated with the lawsuit and settlement, taxpayers have ponied up nearly \$10 million for the state's disputes with Shire.

But no admission by the state in the Shire suit of liability.

Hummel: Any discipline, any change of position, anybody lose their job, anybody lose a paycheck?'

Lewis: Jim, this is not what this interview was about. I go back and look at that at those issues. A lot of people who were involved in the work, including the Barrington Bridge, that led up to this lawsuit are no longer employed in the Department of Transportation.

But Lewis would not elaborate and insiders, both at the DOT and within the construction industry, tell *The Hummel Report* that many key people who had their fingerprints on the Shire debacle remain.

The Hummel Report is a 501 3C non-profit organization. If you have a story idea or want make a donation to the Hummel Report, go to www.hummelreport.com. Or mail Jim directly at jim@hummelreport.com.

RI Pride Celebrates 37th Anniversary



On Saturday, June 15, Rhode Island's LGBT community held their 37th annual Pride celebration in Providence. The day featured sunny skies, lots of heat and passionate performances from several local entertainers.

This year's theme, "Love Forward," signifies the freedom for people to love whom they want. The recent passage of marriage equality legislation in the Ocean State, as well as in Delaware and Minnesota, are proof of a society moving forward and becoming inclusive of same-sex couples.

Thousands of people flooded the streets of Providence to cheer on the marchers and floats featured in the Nighttime Illuminated Parade (see video).

Parade Grand Marshals were State Rep. Frank Ferri (D-Warwick) and his husband Tony Caparco, who have been together for over 31 years and have been married for the last seven. Ferri has been a leader in the fight for marriage equality and was a former co-chair of Marriage Equality Rhode Island (MERI). The other Grand Marshal was attorney Mary Bonauto of Boston-based Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). Bonauto represented same-sex couples in Massachusetts, which paved the way for gay marriage to become legal in that state.

Many of the floats at this year's parade featured wedding themes. Popular drag queen Sabrina Blaze wore a wedding cake hat topped with two grooms, which delighted the onlookers.

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), the Providence Gay Men's Chorus, and Youth Pride, Inc. (YPI) were among the organizations participating in the parade.

This year's festival was held for the third year in a row on South Water Street, alongside the Providence River. In past years the event was held at Station Park, across from the State House.

Belle Pellegrino, a veteran of the first RI Pride celebration in 1976, reflected on how Pride has changed

through the years.

“I think I can safely speak for the ‘76’ers’ when I say we are so awed to see the growth in what we began and are humbled to have been a part of this all,” Pellegrino said. “Knowing we were able to help start RI off on this journey to equality is a memory we will carry with us always.”

This year’s headliner was Thea Austin, lead singer of the pop group Snap.

Pride also featured special performances by Alexis Mateo from RuPaul’s Drag Race, Jackie Collins, Nova Starr, Ursula and the Glitterati, the Imperial Court of RI, and the Becky Chase Band. Emcees included Miss Kitty Litter, Jacqueline DiMera, Vi’Let, Ellen Moschetto, Haley Star, and Genesis.

Vendors manned booths all along South Water Street selling Pride merchandise, including clothing, jewelry and other trinkets.

AIDS Care Ocean State, AIDS Project Rhode Island, and Human Rights Campaign all were on hand to gather support for their services.

The festivities continued well into the night, with block parties and special events being held all over the city.

See video

Rail Jam Thursdays at The Avenue Sandwich

By Ali Walsh

Urban culture was in full swing at *The Avenue Concept’s* latest rail jam on Thursday, June 6. Over 100 graffiti artists, skateboarders, B-boys and DJ’s transformed the skating center at Kennedy Plaza, all at no cost to those who arrived.

People as young as 11 years old grabbed their boards to meet and learn from fellow skaters, without any worry of breaking Providence laws. There is no skate park in the city, which leaves these skateboarders no place to legally do what they love.

Eddie, a Cranston native and local skateboarder, believes events like this are positive for the city. “Having a skate park in Providence would keep kids off the street and out of trouble.”

Above the sounds of wheels grazing a rail or hitting the pavement after landing from a ramp, live music filled the air. DJ’s Jackson and Micah, Kansas natives, grew up together and moved east to pursue a DJ

career. Now they teach workshops within the Avenue Project to mentor and help other DJ's grow.



Next to the DJ booth lay a wooden floor where B-Boys took turns battling: competing, but also encouraging each other.

Across the way, the Avenue Concept contributed free materials for all to use to create a graffiti masterpiece. Both professional street artists and those who wanted to try it for the first time came together to create collaborative art.

Yarrow Thorne, founder of the Avenue Sandwich, created this event so that the youth of Providence had a place to express their "urban culture." Skateboarding or creating graffiti on buildings are illegal in Providence and most major cities. Thorne explains that instead of shutting down these talents, we should embrace them in a more controlled environment.

"We recognize the problem. Instead of ignoring it, we should come together and turn it into a positive," Thorne said.

The event was a great success, despite little advertising - primarily word of mouth. Skate parks are so few and far-between in the state that once one skater catches wind of a rail jam, everybody knows (thank you, social media).

The Avenue Sandwich event occurs every other Thursday in Kennedy Plaza, occurring next on Thursday, June 20. Thorne encourages anyone interested in skateboarding, graffiti, breakdancing or music to "come hang out and enjoy."

Check www.theavenueconcept.com for a full schedule of events

Doherty's Is Open for Business!

 Doherty's Ale House is now open for business. While the grand opening itself is still a short time away, they are open, serving food, and yes, indeed, they have over 100 tap lines.

How, you might ask, could such a thing be possible? Well, one step through the front door will tell you. The entire bar wraps around the keg room, where tap lines twist in an ordered labyrinth to the mind-numbing number of kegs, logs, and more of the best beer Jack D could get his hands on.

Much like what the Mews was a decade ago, Doherty's Ale House has created a fun atmosphere around its incredible craft beer selection. I found myself among other beer geeks, trading favorites and stories. The first few taps are the cream of the local crop, and the nearly all-American craft beer line has some stuff that's the rarest of the rare. The food was fantastic. The sides are an interesting twist, with some rosemary-something potato wedges, or mashed sweet potatoes, green beans ... I forget the rest. The server opened a small notepad to list them all off.

Right now they're still fine-tuning some of the menu and getting the kinks ironed out for the grand opening, which is a good sign as the food was delicious, the beer was perfectly poured, and a great time was had. The best part is that it's much closer than Pawtucket, and right off the highway, so it's easy to find. I raise my glass to you, Jack! Slainte!

The East Bay Brewfest is this weekend. It's RI's newest beer festival, and they're popping up like Starbucks these days. Just in time for Father's Day, this brewfest features all the local best, including Newport Storm, Ravenous, Foolproof, Grey Sail, Revival, and more. There'll also be live brewing demonstrations and live music, and it will benefit TAP-IN, a local charity organization helping people in need. This beer bash is sponsored by Brickyard Wine & Spirits and The East Bay Home Brew Club. This is an afternoon Brewfest, so relax, enjoy, take your time. Prost!