

FringePVD 2021: An opinionated list



FringePVD 2021, the annual festival of off-off-off-Broadway unjuried theater performances, running now through July 31, adopts a hybrid model with both live outdoor and online virtual performances. Coordinated by the Wilbury Group, all five of the live performance venues are in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence: Farm Fresh, ISCO, Nicholson File Art Studios, The Steel Yard and the WaterFire Arts Center. There are 23 live shows and 20 online shows, usually each performed more than once. Most shows have a ticket price of \$5-\$15, some are pay-what-you-can, and an all-access festival pass costs \$95. I went through the list and chose a highly opinionated selection, which in the nature of Fringe is almost totally uninformed because I've seen only one of these shows before, emphasizing

artists with local connections.

Live outdoor

Family Fringe, a totally free three-hour live event for all ages, will be at the WaterFire Arts Center, Sun, Jul 25, 3-6pm, featuring performances by Moonshadow Puppet Theatre, PVD World Music, Manton Avenue Project, and Woonasquatucket River rangers. No advance tickets are required for Family Fringe.

katxup, mantxup, batukada (at the WaterFire Arts Center Drive-In Stage: Sat, Jul 24, 5:30 pm) examines the history of the Cape Verdean experience in the Fox Point neighborhood of Providence, along with Cape Verdean music from the 1800s to the present. From Sylvia Ann Soares along with a number of musicians and storytellers.

Write Rhode Island: Short Stories (at the WaterFire Arts Center Drive-In Stage: Sat, Jul 24, 4:00 pm) showcases original stories written and performed by talented young writers. From Write Rhode Island (WRI), a creative writing partnership by Goat Hill and School One.

Chicago: A Two-Woman Extravaganza (at the WaterFire Arts Center Loading Dock Stage: Thu, Jul 22, 7 pm; Wed, Jul 28, 7 pm; Thu, Jul 29, 7 pm; Fri, Jul 30, 8:30 pm) is a very small re-interpretation of the hit Broadway musical *Chicago*, fueled by “the tragic combination of liquor and jazz which led to the creation of this show.” From 2Woman Productions, a collaboration between Alex Brassard and Sara Slusarski, whose previous productions have included similar takes on *Wicked* and *Grease*.

Booby Trap! (at The Steel Yard: Sat, Jul 24, 7 pm; Thu, Jul 29, 8:30 pm; Fri, Jul 30, 8:30 pm; Sat, Jul 31, 5:30 pm) is a cabaret where two sisters play a ritualized game with tennis balls to resolve a time paradox. From Dugway Proving Ground, a Providence-based collaboration by John Bender, Adam Kotin, Lily Mathews, and Kate Teichman, whose *Pretty Bird* premiered at a prior FringePVD.

HAMSTEAK; Alive and in Person! (at the BackLot Wilbury Stage: Tue, Jul 20, 7 pm; Fri, Jul 23, 7 pm; Sat, Jul 24, 8:30 pm; Tue, Jul 27, 8:30 pm; Wed, Jul 28, 7 pm) is a mock performance by “87-year-old country music legend Betty ‘Hamsteak’ Funkis on her ‘Come See Me Before I’m in the Ground’ tour, with her trademark wit, her one note range.” From Aaron Blanck and Brian Kozak who are well known in the RI theater scene from their work with Wilbury Group and Burbage Theater Company.

Zahak & Zeus (at WaterFire Drive-In Stage: Wed, 7/28, 8:30pm; Thu, 7/29, 10pm) is a modern interpretation inspired by Persian mythology from about 1,800 years ago, now involving “Uber rides in a flaming chariot and the questionable advice of a devious new demi-god named Siri.” From Baha Sadr and the Rhode Island Ukulele Armada.

Come Home Soon (at Farm Fresh: Fri, Jul 23, 8:30 pm; Wed, Jul 28, 8:30 pm; Thu, Jul 29, 8:30 pm) is either “a human show about dogs” or “a dog show about humans” but is not sure which, and probably does not involve a character named Sheba. From the Providence-based team of Anna Basile, Madison Weinoffer and Pablo Colacce Sosa.

i love you. i hate you. shut up & tell me everything: my trials, tribulations, & total lack of understanding about Borderline Personality Disorder (a semi-sorta-sometimes sequel) (at Nicholson File Art Studios Courtyard: Wed, Jul 21, 8:30 pm; Thu, Jul 22, 8:30 pm) is, if there is still time for the performance after reading the title, “a raw honest autobiographical exploration of what it means to be human from inside

the fractured mind of an alcoholic who has the audacity to write another play about his life.” From Teddy Lytle as writer and performer and Davis Alianello as director, the former a founding member of Spectrum Theater Ensemble and the latter a Wilbury Group veteran and regular *Motif* writer.

reptiles of the mind (walking tour starting from the WaterFire Arts Center River Stage: Fri, Jul 23, 8:30 pm; Sat, Jul 24, 8:30 pm; Fri, Jul 30 at 8:30 pm) is a 20-minute audio play intended to be listened to while walking along the Providence River, using a mobile device with earphones. From Davis Alianiello, a regular *Motif* writer.

Live Music & Comedy (at The Steel Yard: Fri, Jul 23, 7pm; at the Waterfire Arts Center Loading Dock Stage: Sat, Jul 31 7pm) is a curated performance of music, singing, and comedy. From Cas Inez and Spocka Summa who co-own Public Shop and Gallery in Providence.

Sleep Mode live performance (at The Steel Yard: Thu, Jul 22, 8:30 pm; Sat, Jul 24, 8:30 pm) from a 3-piece alternative rock band out of Providence.

Online

Trainwreck (Sun, Jul 25, 8:30 pm; Sat, Jul 31, 8:30 pm) is the one exception that I have seen, and it’s an hilarious devised puppet/object theater piece that satirically skewers the literary canon from Sherlock Holmes to Anna Karenina, a treat for the well-read. From Chick Lit, a collaboration between Kate Holden and Katie Jones, the former a Providence native whose background includes Classical High School and New Urban Arts before going on to pursue an MFA and PhD very far away.

Space Shape & Mind Mold (Thu, Jul 29, 7:00 pm; Fri, Jul 30, 8:30 pm) is “a cosmic cabaret zoom disaster” demonstrating “subterranean alien encounters hosted by the Space Transformation Station’s resident Astro-Crypto Zoologist Dr Tremendanus and his Yuranian extraterrestrial collaborators” that presumably leaves you feeling as if your brain spent some time in a brain-shaped gelatin mold. From Space Transformation Station, a satellite studio of the famed Big Nazo Lab in Providence.

Alexithymia (Sun, Jul 25, 5:30 pm; Wed, Jul 28, 7 pm; Sat, Jul 31, 2:30 pm) explores the psychology of sensory experience as perceived by a fictional being whose body fragments and needs to re-assemble. From Madison Weinoffer, a founding and active member of Spectrum Theatre Ensemble in Providence, a company focused on neurodiversity in the arts.

Mask On/Mask Off: Short Plays (Sun, Jul 25, 2:30 pm; Thu, Jul 29, 8:30 pm) is a collection of seven plays about the use of masks, both literally and figuratively. From a Providence playwriting group, in FringePVD for their 6th time, consisting of Elaine Brousseau, Kay Ellen Bullard, Susan Buttrick, Jayne Hannah, Norma Jenckes, Martha Douglas-Osmundson, and Monica Staaf, directed by Daniel Lee White.

On the Ho Chi Minh Trail & The Crisis (Fri, Jul 30, 7:00 pm; Sat, Jul 31, 4:00 pm) is a set of two one-act plays, the former looking at the Vietnam War from the perspective of the Viet Cong. From Milton Coykendall of Providence, whose day job is teaching students from various Asian countries including Japan, China, and Vietnam.

Veja Doolittle: Back Again (Tue, Jul 20, 8:30 pm; Wed, Jul 21, 7:00 pm) is an obvious pun on “déjà vu,” using stories and songs to explore memory. From Meg Sullivan, a *Motif* award winner (for dance) and Wilbury Group veteran whose day job is executive artistic director of the Manton Avenue Project, a non-profit after-school playwriting program in Olneyville.

ME7ROPOL17AN 7RANSPOR7A71ON AU74OR17Y (Sat, Jul 24, 5:30 pm) is a musical electronica multimedia homage to the New York City subway system, a concept that immediately suckered me in. From Darth Presley, who claims to be a cyborg with direct connections to his electronic instruments.