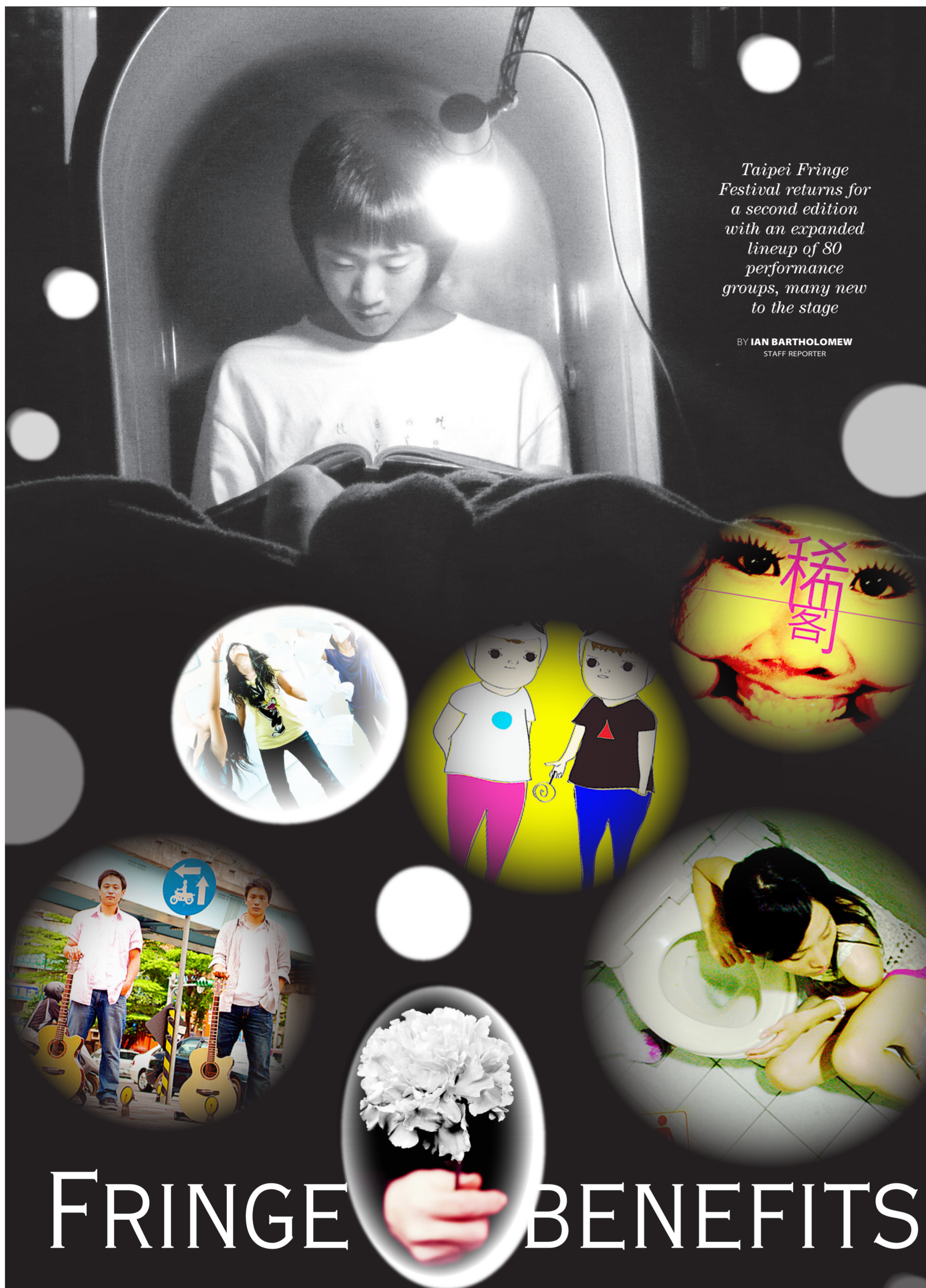


## AROUND TOWN

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Taipei Fringe Festival returns for a second edition with an expanded lineup of 80 performance groups, many new to the stage

BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW  
STAFF REPORTER

### Weird, wonderful and downright wacky

#### Why Not & Flashings (一試無妨·夢驚) by the Hong Kong Fringe Mime & Movement Laboratory

A collaboration between South Korean director Yoon Jongyeon and Mime Laboratory, the group aims to develop an Asian "form of mime characterized by Hong Kong cultural traits." With a history going back to 1988, this is by far the most experienced fringe group participating in the festival. Why Not was shown at the Macau Fringe and Chuncheon International Mime Festival.

■ Sunday at 3pm and 7:30pm at the Comedy Club. Tickets are NT\$400, available at the venue or through Books ticketing (tickets.books.com.tw)



#### Only If You Know (只知道(的)不能) by Sarah Kane Theater (沙拉肯劇團)

Formed last year by a group of independent performance artists, Only If You Know is a commentary on the debasement of language within Taiwan's political system.

■ Tuesday through next Friday at 8pm at Taipei Artist Village's Barry Room (台北國際藝術村百里廳). Tickets are NT\$300, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

#### Games and a Play by Guts Improv Theatre (勇氣即興劇場)

Founded in 2004, Guts Improv bills itself as Taiwan's first improvisational theater troupe. Starting with a title provided by the audience, the actors set about creating their work of art. What's it going to be about? As the group's tagline states: "Don't ask! There is no script."

■ Sept. 12 at 8pm and Sept. 13 at 3pm at the Comedy Club. Tickets are NT\$300, available at the venue or through Books ticketing (tickets.books.com.tw)

#### Indian Goddess (印度女神) by the Shiva Indian Dance Group (西瓦印度舞團)

For those with an interest in folk dance, Indian Goddess, which is supported by the Indian-Taipei Association, is an opportunity to see Kathak and Bollywood-style dance by both Indian and local practitioners.

■ Sunday at 3pm at Huashan Culture Park's Fruit Wine Hall (華山創意文化園區果酒禮堂). Tickets are NT\$150 to NT\$350, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

#### Explosion of Bellydance!! (引爆肚皮舞) by Shadow of Belly Dance (昕舞影舞集), Aurora (奧羅拉舞團) and Elysium (伊莉森舞團)

Bringing together three groups of belly dancers, Explosion of Belly Dance!! explores the many varieties of belly dancing that developed as the art gained popularity around the world, including American tribal belly dance, contemporary belly dance and fusion belly dance.

■ Sept. 6 at 2:30pm at Paris Night Club (夜巴黎大舞廳). Tickets are NT\$250, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

#### Brazilian Music (今夏最靚~熱情巴西音樂) by the Ilha Formosa Trio (美麗的島三重奏)

Billed as the first Brazilian *choro* group in Taiwan, Ilha Formosa Trio features musicians Damien Bernard, Ramses del Cura and Lin Chin-ping (林錦鏞) performing a repertoire aimed to "develop traditional instruments in a broader vision of styles and techniques."

■ Sept. 5 at 2:30pm and Sept. 8 and Sept. 13 at 7:30pm at Guling Street Theater (牯嶺街小劇場), the Somebody Cafe and Taipei Artist Village's Barry Room (台北國際藝術村百里廳), respectively. Tickets are NT\$300, available through ERA ticketing or online at www.ticket.com.tw

#### Regression (迴—生命回歸) by Mie Theater

In a mixture of dance, music and voice, artist Hu Chia (胡嘉) uses the philosophy of Chinese martial arts such as the monkey and crane styles of kung fu to develop a physical language that explores and expresses the vicissitudes of life.

■ Monday through Wednesday at noon, at Taipei Artist Village's Barry Room (台北國際藝術村百里廳). Tickets are NT\$300, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIPEI CULTURE FOUNDATION

# FRINGE BENEFITS

As the Taipei Art Festival (台北藝術節) winds down, members of amateur theater groups are gearing up for Taipei Fringe Festival's (台北藝穗節) second installment, which presents the talents of 80 performance groups whose shows range from political satire to male belly dancing. It's no holds barred, and anyone who wanted to get up on a stage and perform was invited, said artistic director Victoria Wang (王文儀) of the Taipei Culture Foundation (台北市文化基金會).

The quality of performances will be uneven, but the increase in the number of groups, up from 61 last year, suggests that there is a demand. "This is a chance for people to show what they've got," Wang said at the launch of Taipei Fringe earlier this month. "It's not about performing for performing's sake, and it's not just about having a bit of a laugh. The idea is to give each and every piece of work a life that extends into the future. That's what Taipei Fringe aims to achieve."

Towards that end, a discussion board on which anyone can post a comment and a critics' panel have been established to provide

ongoing feedback about the shows.

This year's Taipei Fringe begins with the Opening Parade Celebration (藝穗開幕遊行) tomorrow from 5pm to 8pm. The parade sets off from Taipei Cinema Park (電影公園廣場) on the corner of Kangding Road (康定路) and Wuchang Street (武昌街) and finishes at the Red House Theater (紅樓劇場), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號). All the scheduled acts will be joining in, doing whatever it is that they think will best express themselves, and at various stops along the way, 20 of them will put on short performances.

#### FROM LITTLE ACORNS ...

On Sunday, Taipei Fringe starts in earnest, with many of the performers taking to the stage for the first time. There will also be some experienced talent with groups like 4 Chairs Theater (四把椅子劇團), which returns for a second time. Tickets to 4 Chairs' show sold out before the festival lineup was officially announced.

While Taipei Fringe is largely a local event, the first hint of international interest can be seen in the presence of Hong Kong's Mime Lab, part of the Hong Kong Fringe Club, which takes

to the stage at the Comedy Club (www.comedy.com.tw) on Sunday.

Fourteen venues, from cafes to outdoor art spaces, including more structured theater spaces such as the Guling Street Theater (牯嶺街小劇場) and the National Taiwan Arts Education Center (國立台灣藝術教育館南海劇場), are hosting the festival.

"We want to reach into all corners of the city, and discover new types of creativity there," Wang said.

Non-mainstream theater has generally had a rough time in Taipei, especially finding suitable venues. "We see ourselves as the string that holds together a pearl necklace," Wang said. "Each and every group is a pearl, and we bring them together to create a wonderful necklace that everyone can admire."

Tickets for some events are being sold directly by performance groups, while the rest are available variously through NTCH ticketing (www.artstickets.com.tw), ERA ticketing (www.ticket.com.tw) and Books ticketing (tickets.books.com.tw). Detailed English-language information for performances can be found at the festival's Web site (www.taipeifringe.org).