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Cannonball Takes the Plunge into Third Year with Over 150+ Shows at Philly Fringe

📅 July 28, 2023 👤 CircusTalk 💎 Festival, Press Release

The Largest Hub of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival presents over 600 performances in four venues for the Die-Hard-Fringe Goers and the Festival-Curious

PHILADELPHIA – Audiences should prepare to dive into all kinds of performance and art at this year’s Cannonball. Cannonball, the largest hub of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, is getting ready for an exciting September. This year the hub runs September 1-30 and truly features something for everyone. From experimental upstarts to masters of craft, audiences can get lost in a lineup of 150+ shows and find themselves at Cannonball. This line-up includes Philly’s boldest artists, the future of American contemporary circus, an invasion of clowns from Brooklyn, dance ensembles that embody a political

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revolution, intimate pop-up performances in the corners of a magical garden, a park full of performances for kids, and more.

Now in its third year, Cannonball has revitalized the Philly Fringe an influx of festival energy. Presenting shows back-to-back, audiences can see multiple offerings every night at each of Cannonball's four venues (the slowest night at Cannonball this year will feature 13 different productions!), enjoying a drink at Garden Bar in between each show, and running into friends, artists, and other fringe-goers. This hub returns to the Maas Landing and the nearby Icebox Project Space, adding jamming at Fidget in Kensington and free, outdoor performances at Liberty Lands Park for families. With a focus on defining who Fringe is for and what it looks like, Cannonball offers special programs like Blind Date tickets—which allow audience members to get paired with a stranger for pre- and post-show conversation and drinks—free “Deep Dives” which allow audiences to go deeper with artists with talkbacks, panel discussions and more, as well as pop-up “Secret Treasures” that surprise and delight audiences who happen to be in the right place at the right time.

Cannonball disrupts traditional arts presenting models by centering artist-to-artist curation, pooling and redistributing resources to provide small-scale, high-impact production opportunities for wild, under-resourced performances, and building a sustainable arts ecosystem from the ground up—helping everyone make a splash. “We’re thrilled to see how much Cannonball has grown in just three short years—a testament to the power and brilliance of Philadelphia’s independent artist community, who crave togetherness as much as audiences do! We can’t wait to open each of this year’s four venues,” said Founding Producer Ben Grinberg.

By pooling resources, Cannonball offers affordable production opportunities to performing artists of all disciplines. The Cannonball experience is one of community and exchange: they offer lots of support to artists, create social events and preview

opportunities, and carefully curate fun and inclusive social spaces to hang out in all festival long. Alongside buy-in options, co-presenting options, and split bills, Cannonball offers four stipend tracks. The stipend tracks are competitive presentation and/or development tracks which come with additional opportunities and resources. Each stipend track is panel-adjudicated and requires additional application questions. This will mark the second year of the BIPOC New Work Presentation Track, which offers a stipend to BIPOC artists presenting new full-length works of any discipline. New this year are the Performance for Young Audiences Development Cohort (PYAC,) which offers mentorship, development support, and a stipend; the CSAW Award for New Work by Circus Artists of Color which comes with a stipend; and Snack Track for Small Audience and Immersive Works. Overall, Cannonball awarded over \$37,000 for artists to produce in the hub, opening up the producing space during Fringe to even more artists, who may have never been able to produce in the festival before.

Cannonball returns to the Maas Building, 1325 N. Randolph St, where the festival started. Maas features an open-air Garden space (complete with bar!), a Cottage with exclusive performances for 15 audience members or less, and the Studio, which seats 55. Cannonball also returns to the Icebox Project Space at 1400 N American Street. Last year the festival added Icebox to the performance venues and shows sold out. It is the largest venue for Cannonball and will house circus, large company, and high-flying performances. New this year will be an intimate space at Fidget, 1714 N. Mascher Street. Plus, Cannonball is debuting a space just for family-friendly programming. Every weekend of Cannonball there will be a treasure trove of free programming at Liberty Lands Park, 913 N 3rd St. This programming is designed to give audiences of all ages a Cannonball experience.

“Even as we grow in size, the goal of Cannonball remains the same: to cultivate a space of warmth, sharing, and belonging—

by and for artists who have often, by their own admission, been overlooked by many of the city's other presenting organizations," adds Core Producer Colby Calhoun. This year's line-up features theatre, dance, circus, and more. There are local favorites and artists from all over the world. There are tons of artists who have never produced during the Fringe Festival and artists who are Fringe regulars.

Here is a sampling of shows to see at Cannonball:



CalArts Sharon Disney Lund school of Dance – Winter Dance Concert final dress.

Sugar Houses

Icebox Project Space
Thu, Sep 21, 2023, 8:00 PM; Fri, Sep 22, 2023, 6:30 PM; Sat, Sep 23, 2023, 8:00 PM; Sun, Sep 24, 2023, 2:00 PM

Sugar Houses is an evening-length dance theater piece created by Rosanna Gamson. This work is inspired by the story of "Hansel and Gretel," the fairy tale's

historical underpinnings, coded antisemitism, and violent imagery. Through a deconstructed narrative and jump-scares from horror movies, the choreography explores the extremes of physicality, evoking the grotesquery and violence of fairy tales, and the savage intimacy of siblings.

About the Artist: A native New Yorker, Rosanna Gamson studied composition with Hanya Holm, Bessie Schonberg, and Phyllis Lamhut and earned a BFA and MFA in Dance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts under the chairmanship of Lawrence Rhodes. She performed internationally as a member of Andrew DeGroat & Dancers and in the dances of Yvonne Rainer, workshop

performances of Robert Wilson, and in many others' dance projects. Additionally, Gamson studied with poets Charles Simic, Louise Glück, and Thomas Lux, and her poetry has been published in a number of literary magazines and journals. Since moving to Los Angeles, Gamson has created eleven evening-length dance theater pieces as Artistic Director of Rosanna Gamson/World Wide (RGWW). Gamson's continuing investigation of improvisation and group-authored performance practices has developed into her game system GO, which she began teaching internationally in 2017. Gamson has served as dramaturg, mentor, and consigliere to both young and established choreographers and directors, and actively supports the development of the Los Angeles dance community through her Terra Nova Choreographic Residency program. Gamson is on faculty teaching composition at CalArts at the Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance, where she serves as the Interim Dean of the Dance Department and Program Director of the MFA in Choreography.

The presentation of *Sugar Houses* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Production residency funded by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

ReFlection

Icebox Project Space

Thu, Sep 14, 2023, 8:30 PM; Fri, Sep 15, 2023, 7:00 PM; Sat, Sep 16, 2023, 7:30 PM; Sun, Sep 17, 2023, 6:30 PM

ReFlection is a story of self-acceptance through the lens of a transmasculine experience and the milestones that shape how he views himself and the world around him. Through a powerful



combination of circus arts, dance, and cinematic storytelling, we experience the joys and challenges of this deeply personal journey. As our protagonist learns to embrace his truth, we explore a time when what he sees in the mirror does not yet

reflect who he is, thus reminding us of the lessons of love and trust that are dynamically essential to our lives.

About the Artist: Toni Cannon is consistently working on finding new ways to express himself through acrobatics. He finds the challenge thrilling, and very relatable to life's milestones. Toni started his circus career later in life; however, that didn't stop him from diving deep into his newfound love and passion. He has trained under amazing coaches like Master LuYi and Dominik Wyss, learning Chinese Pole, Partner Acrobatics, and Hand-to-Hand, and been a part of phenomenal companies and productions like Circus Bella, *The Rainbow is enuf*, Topsy Turvy Circus, and This is Acrosanct.



The Other Gardners

Icebox Project Space
Sat, Sep 2, 2023, 8:00 PM; Sat, Sep 9, 2023, 3:30 PM; Mon, Sep 25, 2023, 9:30 PM

What happens to (y)our gardens when we can no

longer tend to them? When do the things and thoughts we leave behind become burdens, and when are they gifts? Can we both be refreshing fountains of reprieve for others, while we remember to pour into ourselves? What to do when our cup runneth over, and what to do when she's dryyyyyy ... we don't know, will you help us find out? *The Other Gardeners* is a multidisciplinary dance theatre performance created collaboratively by Very Good Dance Theatre by and for Black artists and/or those from African lineage. This work premiered as part of Cannonball's Miniball festival in April 2023 and returns to Cannonball this fall as a BIPOC New Work Track recipient. *Gardeners* playfully (re)imagines what remains of Eden after its more popular residents (Adam & Eve) have moved on, and reminds us that paradise cannot be destroyed, only lost. This project explores questions around lineage, diaspora(s), liberation, and asks all those in its midst to grapple with which burdens have been placed on them, by who, and how we can one another shoulder them. *The Other Gardeners* is a Black queering of our origin stories, both a prequel and a sequel, and a conjuring of all the auto-biographies that never came to be. ... or at least not yet? Expect sobbing and laughing, remembering and visioning, dreaming and forgetting, and loving and loving and loving. Come to learn, come to share, come to mourn, come alone (or not), leave together – connected – nurtured, just as gardens should be.

About the Artists: Very Good Dance Theatre is a queer-led, BIPOC-centered, collaborative collective of artists that play with the ideas of what is dance, what is theatre, and what is “good.” We work collaboratively, devising movement and text with each other, to create work somewhere in-between the scope of dance, theatre, and performance art to explore, experiment with, and expand what performance can be and do, while questioning what gives it value and why. Very Good Dance Theatre was founded by Colby Calhoun in the summer of 2018, appearing on stage for the very first time at FIT Underground with *Elephant Antonyms*. Afterward, we returned to the Festival

of Independent Theatres (FIT) as a part of the 2020 festival on the mainstage with *The 1st Annual Gay Show*, which featured five queer performers of color and devised their personal stories into a beauty pageant of sorts which revealed the failures, the dangers, the pain, the beauty, the triumphs, and the diverse truths of living as a queer person of color in America. *F.A.G.S.* went on to be featured as “Best Physical Theatre of 2019” by Frank Garrett at TheaterJones, showing the power of pushing boundaries and affirming our passion for the work we had just begun to make. Our work has always featured voices from the margins of our society while telling stories that are meant to uplift these communities, ask questions about why our world is the way it is, and start conversations about what we can do and must do for one another. Since 2018, Very Good Dance Theatre has been asked to return to a virtual version of FIT in 2019, selected to participate in AT&T PAC’s 2020/21 Elevator Project Season, was chosen amongst the first cohort of Artists In Residence at Arts Mission Oak Cliff in 2021, and has been selected as a Cannonball 2023 BIPOC New Work Track recipient. Very Good Dance Theatre continues to make work as an independent theatre group through festivals, residencies, and other opportunities like this.

Misket

Fidget Living Room

Sat, Sep 2, 2023, 6:30 PM; Sat, Sep 9, 2023, 8:30 PM; Sun, Sep 17, 2023, 8:00 PM; Sun, Sep 24, 2023, 9:30 PM; Sat, Sep 30, 2023, 8:00 PM

Two koceks (traditional male dancers) have been dancing to Turkish Folk Music and entertaining audiences to make a living in a Pavyon called Misket in Ankara, Turkey. However, the love they share has been a secret that they’ve had to conceal from the conservative society of Turkey for a long time. Now, after returning from their mandatory military service, it is time for

them to address the unspoken and make a decision. An immersive experience in a traditional nightclub where people drink, dance, and witness the story of the impossible.

About the Artist: Faysal Can Dakni is an international actor/performer and theater director from Turkey. He made a great deal of his observations about life, people, and *Le Jeu* in a small park in Ankara where swans and pigeons were present. In his theater, he creates familiar spaces with endless possibilities, transcending reality by using elements of surprise and culture. He strives to tell impossible stories that elicit laughter and tears from everyone. Faysal is one of the co-artistic directors of *Sahne 367*, a theater company based in Istanbul. He has been actively performing for the company since 2017. He holds a BA in Acting from Bilkent University. He was awarded a Fulbright Master's Grant in 2019. Currently he is studying Devised Performance at Uarts/Pig Iron School.

Privy Privy

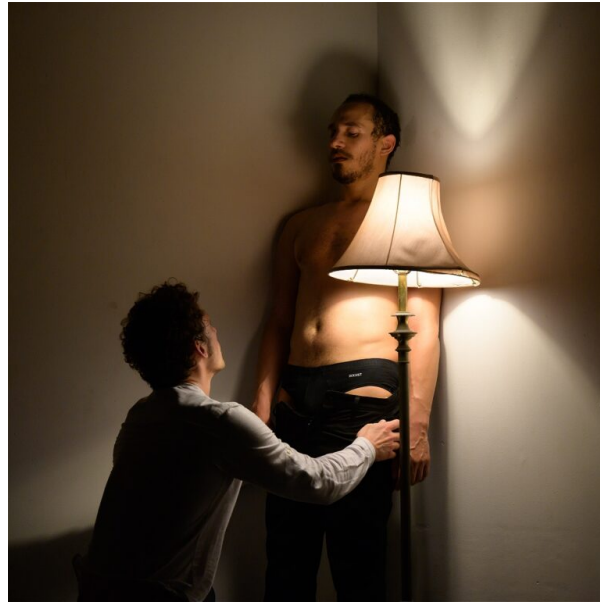
Icebox Project Space

Tue, Sep 26, 2023, 6:30 PM; Thu, Sep 28, 2023, 6:30 PM; Fri, Sep 29, 2023, 6:30 PM; Wed, Sep 27, 2023, 6:30 PM

Privy Privy is an interactive installation that recreates the architecture of a public restroom one would find in a bar, club, or other queer haven. Central to this architecture are glory holes: holes cut into the walls and partitions of the space's "stalls," through which a stranger could stick an appendage, in order to give and receive anonymous sexual pleasure. However, in this installation, the appendage that comes through each glory hole is a hand holding an ice cream cone. *Privy Privy* is a piece of creative protest building on the legacy of work by art collectives like Gran Fury and activist groups like ACT UP. At once a voyeuristic homage to public restrooms as sites of underground cruising, an oblique absurdist take on

consumption and pleasure, and a pointed retort to current legislative agendas, the project uses humor to get people to come together.

About the Artists: Donna Oblongata & Patrick Costello have been collaborating on the edges of social practice, theater, and creative activism for over a decade. Our shared insistence on play, surprise treats, and collaborative joy as vital forces in the struggle for liberation unites all of our work. Together, we've toured our collaborative work throughout the US, New Zealand, and Europe.



Fix Me

Living Room at Fidget
Sun, Sep 17, 2023, 5:00
PM; Wed, Sep 20, 2023
8:00 PM; Fri, Sep 22,
2023 6:30 PM;
Tue, Sep 26, 2023, 8:00
PM;
Wed, Sep 27, 2023, 8:00
PM;

Fri, Sep 29, 2023, 6:30 PM;
Sat, Sep 30, 2023, 5:00 PM;
Thu, Sep 14, 2023, 8:00 PM

An Egyptian Muslim dancer and an American Jewish acrobat, finding, loving, and using each other. *Fix Me* is a full-length dance theater piece that explores queer male impulses across disparate cultural contexts and sheds light on the precariousness of intimacy, free expression, and relationships. The duet uses dance, physical theatre, and acrobatics to tackle a universal cause and concern, sharing their side of the struggle with one another and merging two individual stories into one. This project is part of "Egyptian Queer Uprising," a three-part

performance and research project centering queer expression in Egypt. The piece had residency showings in Philadelphia in April, and Cairo in June. This is the world premiere performance run before it will return to Egypt in November 2023. The piece will be available for tour starting in early 2024.

About The Artists: This is a collaboration between Almanac Dance Circus Theatre (Philadelphia, USA) and NÜT Dance Company (Cairo, Egypt), created and performed by Ben Grinberg and Hazem Header. Ben Grinberg (he/they) is a Philadelphia-based performing artist, director, clown and educator working at the intersection of contemporary circus and ensemble dance theatre. His work embraces the earnest awkwardness of connection and the mess of existing in a world of collapsing structures. He is a graduate of the inaugural class of the Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training (now the Pig Iron UArts MFA, where he is also on Faculty). Grinberg is co-founder and longtime Artistic Director of Almanac Dance Circus Theatre, an award-winning and internationally touring physical performance ensemble, and from 2017-2021 was a founding core faculty member at Circadium, the nation's first certificate-granting program in contemporary circus performance. He is a founding producer and program manager of Cannonball, a guest coach in performance skills for Pitch Catch Circus, and was a 2022 Breaking Walls Festival invited choreographer in Cairo, Egypt. With Almanac, they won a 2020 Rocky Award, a 2017 Suraya Award, and a 2019 Barrymore Award for Outstanding Movement/Choreography for xoxo moongirl, which they also directed. Grinberg's work has been presented by Jacob's Pillow, FringeArts, New York Live Arts, Bill T. Jones, Philadelphia Contemporary/Reggie Wilson Fist and Heel Performance Group, the Mexico City International Festival of Contemporary Dance, Assembly Festival, Circus Now, and more. Hazem Header is an Egyptian contemporary dancer and choreographer. After studying personal training, biomechanics & kinesiology, and after leading a long career in sports, Hazem decided to focus on contemporary dance in 2009. Hazem

studied at the Cairo Contemporary Dance Center, a governmental center at the Cairo Opera House.



Sad Boys in Harpy Land

Icebox Project Space
Thu, Sep 28, 2023, 9:00 PM; Fri, Sep 29, 2023, 9:00 PM; Sat, Sep 30, 2023, 7:00 PM; Sat, Sep 30, 2023 9:30 PM

Alexandra Tatarsky collages narratives of

artmaking and despair into a semi-autobiographical tour-de-farce, as told by a young Jewish woman who thinks she is a small German boy who thinks he is a tree. Equal parts sad clown, demented cabaret, and extended crisis of meaning, this unhinged solo performance takes place in the hellscape of the mind, to ask what we might learn from our own demons.

About the Artist: "A hilarious, finely tuned absurdist" (TheaterJones), Alex Tatarsky makes performances in the unfortunate in-between zone of comedy, theater, dance, and performance art—sometimes with songs. They perform original solo work in basements, bars, street corners, museums, galleries, and theaters including FringeArts, La Mama, MoMA PS1, The Kitchen, and Abrons Arts Center. Tatarsky also collaborates on ensemble performance projects with folks like Pig Iron, Eva Steinmetz, Lilac Co., Marianna Ellenberg, Aya Ogawa, David Levine, Lisa Fagan, and Trajal Harrell. They teach on masks, holy fools, and performance-making as community organizing at The New School. Recent writings have appeared or are forthcoming in *Viscose*, *New Inquiry*, *Hypocrite Reader*, *Vulture*, and *Serving Library*. Their past shows *Americana*

Psychobabble, *Dirt Trip*, and *Untitled Freakout* have toured widely and been called “outrageous and profane” as well as “like Brecht—with a buttplug.”

Good Person

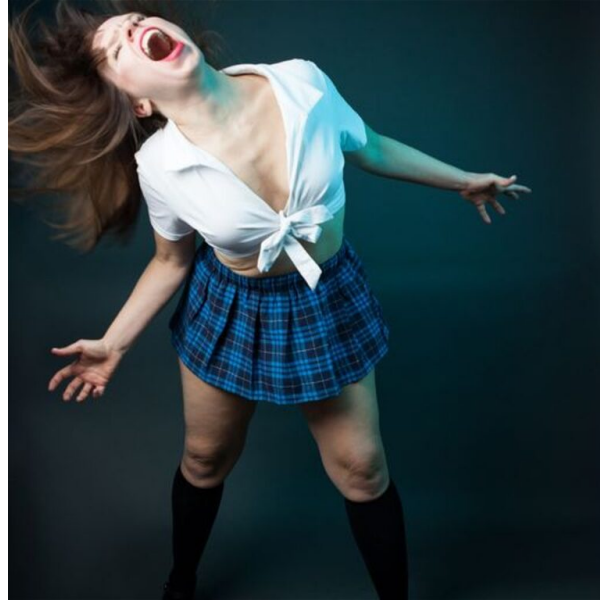
Fidget Living Room

Fri, Sep 22, 2023, 5:00 PM; Sat, Sep 23, 2023, 3:30 PM; Sun, Sep 24, 2023, 6:30 PM

Are you a good little boy? A sweet baby girl? Patricia! is rich, she’s white, and she’s a Good Person. In the world of social justice, social media, callout culture, and snowflakes, everyone’s looking and everyone’s good. But who is really good and who gets to decide? In this sharp and biting satire, Patricia! will hold your nose, open your throat and give you the dose of goodness you deserve.

About the Artist: Brett Ashley Robinson is a 2021 PEW Fellow and Barrymore Award-winning deviser, theatremaker, and educator based in Philadelphia. She is the 2021 winner of the PEN America/ Jean Stein Oral History Grant for her original work *Re-Enactment*. She is a two-time nominee for the Golden Tassel Jawn, Philadelphia’s Drag and Burlesque awards, for best comedy act as Patricia! She was a collaborator and performer in Lightning Rod Special’s *The Appointment* at New York Theatre Workshop, which was a New York Times’ Critics Pick and voted best play of 2019 in *The New York Times*, *Vulture Magazine*, *Time Out New York*, and *New York Magazine*. As an actor and deviser she has worked at The Public, Ars Nova Ant Fest, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Wilma, Lightning Rod Special, Pig Iron Theater Company, The Arden Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre Company, The Flea Theatre, Theatre Horizon, and Geva Theatre. As Patricia! she has worked with 1812 Productions, The Bearded Ladies Cabaret, Lightning Rod Special, and Agitated! As a director, she has worked with 1812 Productions, Head and the

Hand, First Person Arts, University of the Arts, and Philly Goat Project. She has taught acting at DeSales University and the University of the Arts, is a company member of Applied Mechanics and a member of the HotHouse—the Wilma Theater’s resident acting company. She loves buck-a-shuck oysters and Vino Verde.



Catholic Guilt

Maas Building Studio
Sun, Sep 3, 2023, 2:00
PM; Wed, Sep 13, 2023,
7:00 PM; Mon, Sep 18,
2023, 5:00 PM; Tue, Sep
26, 2023, 8:00 PM

Kelly McCaughan (HBO,
Apple TV+) presents
Catholic Guilt. Does

daddy Jesus’ naked body on the cross make you wet? So will this show (no, seriously – there’s water). So put on your waterproof panties and get ready to unpack losing our virginity in the most holy way, abortion, a bowling experience that leads to eternal damnation, and the list goes on... Through audience participation, cringey personal recounts, and stand-up adjacent clown-y performance, Kelly’s poignant, subversive, hilarious show exposes the impossible standards of the Catholic church. This show is for anyone who wants to release shame and guilt surrounding religion. We will laugh, we will sin, and will we make it to hell together?

About the Artist: Kelly McCaughan (she/her) is an actor, writer, comedian, clown, and theater-maker. After graduating with a B.A. in theater from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, she moved to Philadelphia to dip her toes into the theater and comedy scene. There, she started doing comedy with her

award-winning sketch comedy group, High Drama. They went on to participate in multiple sketchfests including NYC, Montreal, Philly, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore. She branched out to create her own work and her solo show, *Catholic Guilt* (writer, producer, actor), was featured at The Wilma Theater's Crush Series and had multiple sold-out runs. *Catholic Guilt* will have a full run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2023 and with the legendary Underbelly. She was most recently seen as Martha in the world premiere of *Plum Bun* with EgoPo Classic Theater and Dolly right before that in *One Man, Two Guvnors* at Delaware Theater Company. Other favorite credits include Woman in Yellow House in Dan Kitrosser's world premiere of *Hannah and The Healing Stone* (Terra Nova Collective), Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida* (Revolution Shakespeare), The Maid in *La Ronde* (Die-Cast), and Katerina in *Delirium* (EgoPo Classic Theater). She has been a creator in multiple devised theater projects and continues to create her own work. She studied clown with the world-renowned Aitor Basauri; Bouffon with the critically acclaimed Eric Davis; and Improv at Upright Citizens Brigade. She made her television debut on HBO's *Crashing*, and just finished a role on M. Night Shyamalan's *Servant* (Apple TV+). IG: Kelly_mccaughan – www.kelly-mccaughan.com

Socrates: an odyssey

Liberty Lands Stage

Fri, Sep 22, 2023, 5:00 PM; Sat, Sep 23, 2023 2:30 PM; Sun, Sep 24, 2023, 11:30 AM; Fri, Sep 29, 2023, 4:30 PM; Sat, Sep 30, 2023, 12:00 PM

Socrates is an average, everyday sock—a plain sock, not a sock that anybody would particularly remember. But today, they find themselves in the worst of all situations: in the chaos of a spin cycle, they have lost their mate. Thus commences an epic odyssey of a little sock in a big house, braving mythic monsters, uncharted lands, and terrifying pets, all to be reunited with their

other half. In an interactive, fearless, and improbable world of puppetry, Socrates helps us to discover strengths we didn't know we had, and recognize the importance of community when we are far from home. The development of *Socrates: an odyssey* is supported in part by ReImagine: New Plays in TYA (a joint effort of Children's Theatre Foundation of America, Freeplay Society, The KennedyCenter, and Write Now), and Ninth Planet's Producing Incubator.

About the Artist: Eliana Fabiyi is a director, writer, and puppeteer who graduated from the Jacques Lecoq School in Paris, France. She is a founding member of La Compagnie Kumzitz, based in Paris, and co-wrote their most recent show, *Gauche Gauche Gauche, *nous sommes là pour vous aider*. She is also a sound designer and violinist, having most recently sound designed for Inis Nua on their production of *Meet Me at Dawn*. Her work spans many genres, including absurd comedy and theatre for young audiences.

This is just a sampling of what's available at Cannonball this year. With more than 160 shows, over 600 performances, across four venues, shows in Cannonball account for over half the independent side of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. Audiences can see everything available during Cannonball at the hub's website, www.cannonballfestival.org.

Tickets for Fringe Festival Members are on sale on August 1. Tickets go on sale to the general public on August 4. Tickets and more information can be found at the hub's website, linked above. Tickets and more information about the Philadelphia Fringe Festival can be found at www.fringearts.com, by phone at 215-413-1218, or in person at the Fringe Festival Box Office at FringeArts (140 N. Columbus Blvd) from August 28-September 24.