



THEATER

San Diego's Fringe festival is under way. Here are some of our early picks for what to see





Mark Vigeant in a scene from his one-man show "Mark Pleases You" at the San Diego International Fringe Festival. (Pam Kragen/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

The festival runs through May 28 with 19 different shows at three venues. Tickets are \$10.

BY PAM KRAGEN

MAY 18, 2023 12:15 PM PT

San Diego International Fringe Festival opens at 1 p.m. today. But with 19 shows in three different venues, it can be a challenge to navigate.

To help Fringe fans better plan their schedules, performers from a dozen of the shows gave a free sneak peek on Tuesday night. Here are some highlights from that event. The full Fringe schedule and show details can be found at sdfringe.org.





Audience members lined up for the preview night of the 2023 San Diego International Fringe Festival in Balboa Park on May 16, 2023. (Pam Kragen/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

‘Mark Pleases You’

Actor Mark Vigeant honed his comic skills onstage for 10 years in New York City, so his new solo show has the polish and easy humor that were missing from many of the other homespun previews Tuesday. Using his vocal skills to inhabit two sides of his personality — the timid Earthly people-pleaser Mark and the gruff, wild-eyed devilish Mark (who surfaces after Mark dies and goes to Hell) — Vigeant has good stage presence and is a funny, engaging physical comedian. 60 min. *Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater*. PG-13. 6 p.m. Thursday; 4 p.m. Friday; 7:30 p.m. May 21 and 24; 9 p.m. May 26.





Sasha Foo at the San Diego International Fringe Festival preview night on Tuesday, May 16. Her reproductive rights play "Choice Words" is premiering at the festival.

'Choice Words'

Former KUSI newscaster Sasha Foo has spent the past year writing this play, subtitled "Monologues About the Fight for Reproductive Freedom." She has penned 13 monologues by women fighting for control of their own bodies. A brief snippet of one of the eight monologues that will be presented at Fringe this month was well-crafted and well-acted. 60 min. PG-13. *Centro Cultural de la Raza. 7:30 p.m. Friday; 9 p.m. May 20.*



Miyo Yamauchi performs from her solo play "How to Be Japanese: Your Normal is Not My Normal" at the San Diego International Fringe Festival preview on May 16, 2023.

'How to be Japanese: Your Normal is Not My Normal'

Miyo Yamauchi of Los Angeles is a natural and very funny storyteller in this solo play about her move from Japan to Orange County to become a programmer. After arriving, she realized "how weird Japan is" to Californians, and how difficult it is to pronounce words like Irvine. From the brief preview, I was intrigued. 60 min. G. *Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater. 6 p.m. Friday; 4 p.m. Saturday; 2:30 p.m. May 21 and 27; 4 p.m. May 28.*



A preview of "1996: A blink-182 Musical." (Pam Kragen/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

'1996: A blink-182 Musical'

Playwright Daniel Durston is presenting a staged reading of his new jukebox musical

featuring songs by the San Diego-born band blink-182. From the script snippet performed, it's about a struggling L.A. pop-punk band finally getting its big break as an opening act on a 1996 No Doubt tour. It seems funny and the music should be memorable. 60 min. PG-13. *Centro Cultural de la Raza*. 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 4 p.m. May 21; 9 p.m. May 26; 6 p.m. May 27; 4 p.m. May 28.



Levani Korganashvili and Kaylin Saur in "Arson 101: A Choose Your Own Adventure" at the San Diego International Fringe Festival." (Pam Krage/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

'Arson 101: A Choose Your Own Adventure'

Although hard to tell much from the preview, this interactive piece by multitalented

San Diego artists Levani Korganashvili and Kaylin Saur has potential. At 17 places in the story of a relationship, the audience will choose what happens next, and the duo will use acting, dancing, singing, acrobatics, drag and circus skills to reach one of six endings. 40 min. Rated PG-13. *Centro Cultural de la Raza*. 7:30 p.m. Thursday; 1 p.m. Saturday; 2:30 p.m. May 21; 6 p.m. May 25; 9 p.m. May 27.



A scene from Christian St. Croix's "Normal Heights," premiering at the 2023 San Diego International Fringe Festival. (Pam Kragen/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

Also worth checking out?

- **"Normal Heights"** — The latest horror-infused work from local playwright Christian St. Croix takes a look at the darker side of this San Diego

neighborhood and its weird and creepy welcoming committee. I like St. Croix's writing, so I'm going to catch this show. 50 min. Rated PG-13. *Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater*. 7:30 p.m. Thursday; 6 p.m. Saturday; 7:30 p.m. May 22; 9 p.m. May 23; 6 p.m. May 27.

- **“105 Miles from Home”** — Local playwright Alexis Hernandez based this play on her grandparents' experience as child refugees from Cuba arriving alone in the U.S. in the early 1960s. 45 min. Rated PG. *Centro Cultural de la Raza*. 6 p.m. Thursday; 4 p.m. Saturday; 6 p.m. May 22 and 24; 1 p.m. May 27.
- **“79 Ways to Die”** — L.A. playwright Veronica Rosas offers a funny and feminist take on five character death scenes in the works of William Shakespeare. 50 min. PG-13. *Centro Cultural de la Raza*. 6 p.m. Friday; 2:30 p.m. Saturday; 9 p.m. May 21; 8 p.m. May 26; 11:30 a.m. May 27.
- **“The Coffee Plays”** — Kent Brisby's latest historical play with music features five true stories on how popular and famous coffees came to be. Audience members get a free sample of each fresh-roasted brew. Who doesn't love that? 50 min. Rated PG. *Centro Cultural de la Raza*. 4 p.m. Thursday; 6 p.m. Saturday; 1 p.m. May 21; 9 p.m. May 23; 6 p.m. May 26.

San Diego International Fringe Festival

When: Runs through May 28

Where: Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater, 2130 Pan American Road San Diego; Centro Cultural de la Raza, 2004 Park Blvd., San Diego; Les Girls Theater, 3970 Riley St., San Diego.

Tickets: \$10 per show. \$5 onetime badge fee

Online: sdfringe.org



Pam Kragen

Copyright © 2023, The San Diego Union-Tribune | CA Notice of Collection | Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information