



intermission



REVIEWS: Toronto Fringe Festival 2026

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The Toronto Fringe Festival and an Ontario-based performing arts magazine walk into an arcade.

As they settle in for a round of Street Fighter II, the Fringe asks: “Are you gonna do a giant rolling file of reviews like you did the last couple of years?” The 2026 festival runs from June 30 to July 12 and features a total of 123 shows, mostly selected by lottery. There’s 27 venues, including new additions Sweet Action Theatre and Young People’s Theatre. And the Fringe hub is back at Souleppper Theatre in the Distillery District.”

“Well yes,” replies the magazine as it furiously mashes its controller. “We’re thinking 10 critics, reviewing a total of around 60 shows.”

“Game on!” exclaims the Fringe, before ending the duel with a Hundred Hand Slap.

This year, *Intermission* will publish Fringe capsule reviews from contributors [Krystal Abrigo](#), [Melissa Avalos](#), [Ferron Delcy](#), [Liam Donovan](#), [Sania Hameed](#), [Sulaiman Hashim Khan](#), [Gus Lederman](#), [Ilana Lucas](#), [Shivani Nathoo](#), and [Columbia Roy](#).

Reviews will be published below as they come in. For ease of navigation, new entries will be added to the top of the post. If you’re looking for a review of a specific show, we recommend using your device’s “find on page” function.

***Nostos* (Souleppper Theatre’s Michael Young Theatre)**

by Liam Donovan

This rich and challenging dark comedy from Nowadays Theatre Company packs an incredible amount into its 75-minute runtime.

Beeta (Tina Bararian), an Iranian refugee woman, runs a dog-sitting business in Toronto while teaching digital dance classes for women back home. As she hangs

out with her sister Atousa (Parya Heravi), two dogs (Mahsa Ershadifar and Aida Keikhaii) hold a lively private conversation, while an A.I. android (Niloufar Davari) serves as Beeta's personal assistant, providing encyclopedic factoids and domestic labour.

Writer-director Mohammad Yaghoubi's play begins amid the January 2026 uprisings in Iran, when security forces killed thousands of protestors. The sisters and the dogs both debate the political and ethical implications of this event, pulling in references from sources spanning the philosophies of Adorno and Iranian social media activists. The dialogue grows even more heated after a time jump to the aftermath of Ali Khamenei's killing in February.

Sequences featuring Farsi-language radio broadcasts signpost *Nostos* as partially intended for an Iranian audience. As someone less familiar with the debates around the uprising, I had to work hard to keep with the conversation — but many of the show's most powerful elements operate on a physical level. Ershadifar and Keikhaii embody their dogs with inexhaustible energy and a playful lack of restraint, while Bararian performs lyrical dance interludes that give visceral shape to her character's steadfast ideals.

I hope and expect that this confident production will return to Toronto — perhaps with a slightly expanded runtime — and I look forward to revisiting it then.

***Above the Hospital* (Soulpepper Theatre's Weyni Mengesha Theatre)**

by Sulaiman Hashim Khan

Writer-director Beau Han Bridge has set out to write a contemporary drawing-room play. Rather than high-society Victorians running in and out of a parlour, we follow a group of sad young artists above a vet clinic in Vancouver getting ready for a Death Cab for Cutie concert.

The run-down apartment belongs to Lauren (Cydney Watson), a film-school dropout considering a career change, and her partner Cameron (Hasson Babar), an