



Jeremy Roth.

HIGHLIGHT

The Musicker's Tribunal at Frinj of the Frinj

Thursday, August 5; Frinj of the Frinj runs through August 15 at Center for Independent Artists; 612.724.8392

In *The Road to Oz*, L. Frank Baum defines a *musicker* as someone who emits clear harmonies from inside himself: "So as I breathe to live, you know, I squeeze out music as I go." Jeremy Roth and his trombone pursue that tradition in this show from the third annual Frinj of the Frinj, a festival of world music, comedy, drama, dance, and video that runs from July 28 through August 15 and is not to be confused with its similarly intended homonym that also begins this week. If Roth's *The Musicker's Tribunal* is any indication, the Frinj should be on your radar as much as the Fringe. Written and scored by Roth and Paul Cameron and produced by their Walking Boxes Productions, the short play begins with Roth's song, which seems to both

cleanse the space and invite us to take off our coats and stay a while. He portrays Lorance Johnson, a subway horn-blower and Civil War vet trapped in limbo. An unseen deity (played by Cameron) sentences him to return to the "realm of substance" until he can die a satisfied man. He relives his Confederate days when his horn brought solace to both rebel compatriots and Union victors; he incarnates a 13th-century Ottoman POW, a soldier in Stalin's WWII army, and an aid worker in Hiroshima, all with the hope that his musical abilities will be able to save or free both friends and enemies. He wishes to serve his sentence by using war music for good (rallying troops to defend the homeland against the Nazis, for instance), but the musicker finally arrives at a pacifistic position: "I don't believe in a righteous army anymore." Although the study of the musicker's pain is often pedantic, the compelling journey is through the trombone, the piano, the guitar, and particularly the non-Western instruments. The production and performances are disarmingly simple, suggesting that Roth and his characters are all desperately striving—an expected response during wartime. Presented by the Center for Independent Artists, the Frinj of the Frinj promises great variety in addition to that trombone, including an e-book reading by Mark A. Garcia, Pandora Theatre's interpretation of the Antigone legend, and the return of audience favorite Leslye Orr and her 16 characters in *Women Who Drink*. —Matt Di Cintio