

**THE MARSH KICKS OFF SOLO PERFORMER
SPOTLIGHT SERIES IN 2021 WITH
DIVINE MADNESS**

A NEW WORK BY LYNNE KAUFMAN

7:30pm, Saturday, January 30 & 2:00pm, Sunday, January 31

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (15 January 2021) – To kick off the New Year, **The Marsh** launches its Solo Performer Spotlight series with the **MarshStream** debut of **Lynne Kaufman**'s new work, *Divine Madness*. Starring **Julia McNeal** and **Charles Shaw Robinson**, this fascinating drama recounts the true story of poet Robert Lowell and writer Elizabeth Hardwick, who were famously divorced when Lowell, who suffered frequent debilitating bouts of manic depression, left Hardwick to marry an English heiress. He then documented the end of his marriage in a volume of poetry, *The Dolphin*, that scandalized the literary world and won him the Pulitzer prize. *Divine Madness* follows the couple as they consider reuniting, and invites audiences to explore the questions: Is art worth that much? Can love survive madness and betrayal? *Divine Madness* will be presented 7:30pm, Saturday, January 30 and 2:00pm Sunday, January 31 on **MarshStream**. Prior to the MarshStream debut of *Divine Madness*, playwright Lynne Kaufman will appear on **Stephanie's MarshStream** at 7:30pm, Thursday, January 28 to discuss her new play. Actors Julia McNeal and Charles Shaw Robinson will join Kaufman for a roundtable discussion and a short excerpt performance of *Divine Madness*. For more information, the public may visit www.themarsh.org/marshstream. *NOTE: The performances will be LIVE only, not archived for later viewing.*

Lynne Kaufman (Playwright) is the author of 20 full-length plays that have been produced in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and Louisville at such theatres as Magic Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and many more. Two of Kaufman's works, *Acid Test* and *Two Minds*, have premiered on stage at The Marsh, while two of her other works, *Exposing Margaret Mead* and *Who Killed Sylvia Plath*, have appeared on The Marsh's digital platform, MarshStream. Her plays have won many awards including the Glickman Award

for Best New Play (*The Couch*), the Kennedy Center's Fund for New American Plays Award (*Speaking in Tongues*), and the Neil Simon Festival New Play Award (*William Blake in Hollywood*). Kaufman has published three novels and her short stories have appeared in *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, and *McCall's*.

A professional actress since 1984, **Julia McNeal** (Performer) holds a B.A from Dartmouth College in Drama and Classics, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1983. McNeal has appeared at numerous theatres throughout the Bay Area including the Magic Theatre, American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.), Shotgun Players, Aurora Theatre, SF Playhouse, and Marin Theatre Company, among others. Her film and TV credits include *The Unbelievable Truth*, *Flesh and Bone*, *Law & Order*, and *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. McNeal is a company member of PlayGround, and has participated in the acclaimed Berkeley literary series, "First Person Singular."

Another familiar face in the San Francisco Bay Area, **Charles Shaw Robinson** (Performer) has been seen locally in leading roles at SF Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theatre, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, as well as at theatres across the country. His regional theatre credits include the title roles in *Hamlet* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *Pericles* (Center Stage, Baltimore); *Scaramouche* (Empty Space Theatre, Seattle); and *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Word for Word, San Francisco).

ABOUT MARSHSTREAM

The program launched in April 2020 and has received overwhelmingly enthusiastic response, garnering over 75,000 viewers in its first nine months. Notable MarshStream moments thus far include the debut of MarshStream International Solo Fest, The Marsh's first-ever digital festival, and the U.S. premiere of *The Invisible Line*, a new documentary about one of the world's most famous social experiments gone wrong.

MarshStream programming varies daily, with Monday Night MarshStream (short performances by a variety of artists), Wild Card Tuesdays (everything from book/writer discussions, sing-a-longs, Tell It On Tuesday, to Sound Healing and Restorative Yoga), Wednesday Solo Arts Heal (offering stories of health, advocacy, and inspiration), Stephanie's MarshStream on Thursday nights (interview and performance excerpts, moderated by The Marsh Founder/Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman), BINGO! hosted by Josh Kornbluth, and weekend Solo Performance Spotlight featuring live full-length performances. MarshStream also offers performance development classes, a noon series that includes CJ's FitnessSing weekly singing lesson/fitness class, and a Zoomba Room. Content is typically offered at 7:30pm nightly, and

mid-day throughout the week via Zoom and YouTube LIVE. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic MarshStream has hosted 371 LIVE streams, providing some 200 performers a platform to continue practicing and producing art. This digital platform also hosted over 80 digital youth classes since the shelter-in-place.

MarshStream viewers are asked to contribute whatever they can afford. Donations can be made by joining The Marsh's membership program and via a virtual "tip jar" on the website, with funds going to support The Marsh and its artists. For more information, the public may visit www.themarsh.org/marshstream. NOTE: Most performance streams from earlier MarshStream dates are also available on the website for viewing.

In addition to nightly program offerings on MarshStream, The Marsh has also launched **Marsh Youth Theater (MYT) MarshStream**, classes offered at 4:00pm daily taught by MYT instructors. From Creative Dramatics to Storytelling, Dancing, and more, class types, instructors, and age levels vary for each class. For weekly class schedules and additional information, please visit themarsh.org/mytmarshstream.

ABOUT THE MARSH

The Marsh is known as "a breeding ground for new performance." It was launched in 1989 by Founder and Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman, and pre-COVID hosted more than 600 performances of 175 shows across the company's two venues in San Francisco and Berkeley. A leading outlet for solo performers, The Marsh's specialty has been hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "solo performances that celebrate the power of storytelling at its simplest and purest." The *East Bay Times* named The Marsh one of Bay Area's best intimate theaters, calling it "one of the most thriving solo theaters in the nation. The live theatrical energy is simply irresistible."

For Calendar Editors

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DATES: 7:30pm, Saturday, January 30
2:00pm, Sunday, January 31

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PRESS: Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/marshstream>