

THE MARSH BERKELEY PRESENTS WHY WOULD I MISPRONOUNCE MY OWN NAME?

Written and Performed by Irma Herrera

Developed with David Ford

Directed by Rebecca Fisher

September 23 – October 21, 2022

BERKELEY, CA (25 August 2022) — Writer/performer **Irma Herrera** returns to the stage of **The Marsh Berkeley** this fall with her solo work, *Why Would I Mispronounce My Own Name?* Weaving history and comedic insights into stories about names, this hit solo show sheds light and throws shade on societal prejudices and assumptions. When giving her name its correct Spanish pronunciation, she often gets the “where are you from?” question. The assumption: that she is a foreigner. Irma’s family has been in South Texas for generations, and the award-winning social justice activist, lawyer, and journalist thinks of herself as American as apple pie. Irma’s observations from the front-lines, notes from American history, and laugh out-loud humor invite audience members to consider what it will take for everyone to get along. “What’s in a name?” asks Herrera, “a minefield of misplaced notions.” *Why Would I Mispronounce My Own Name?* will be presented **September 23 – October 21, 2022** with performances at 7:30pm Fridays at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. For information or to order tickets (\$20-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved), the public may visit www.themarsh.org. Each show will be followed with a post-performance talkback.

ABOUT WHY WOULD I MISPRONOUNCE MY NAME?

Herrera has been praised by *TheatreEddys* as an “ever-smiling, sparkly-eyed dynamo,” pulling from her own experiences to portray the stories of her life with heart and humor. Lauded by *The Mercury News*, *Why Would I Mispronounce My Name?* “speaks volumes about the ingrained power structures in American society” and offers “food for thought about how the dominant culture asserts and imposes its dominance.” Pasco’s Perspective on KXSF Radio described the work as “creative, clever, and critical . . . addresses themes of identity, courage, and prejudice in ways that are relevant to America today.”

Why Would I Mispronounce My Own Name? was originally presented in The Marsh’s “Rising Series” in late 2017. The show earned a Best of 2017 San Francisco Fringe Award and is always

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evolving with new material related to current social justice issues. *Why Would I Mispronounce My Own Name?* was last seen at both The Marsh San Francisco and The Marsh Berkeley in 2019, where it received multiple extension runs, playing to sold-out houses and garnering glowing reviews from critics and audiences.

Herrera also hosts talkbacks following each performance, with social justice leaders tackling a range of topics – from reproductive rights to prison pipeline, reparations, right wing politics, and more. The post-show talkback schedule includes the following:

Reproductive Rights and Justice in a Post-Dobbs World

Friday, September 23

Beth Parker has spent the past several decades on the front lines of the abortion rights legal battles. She is General Counsel for Planned Parenthood California Central Coast and Adjunct Professor at UC Hastings College of Law.

Formerly Incarcerated People’s Performance Project (FIPPP)

Friday, September 30

Retired Public Defender **Mark McGoldrick** is a solo performer who co-directs the FIPPP, which joins two of his passions -- storytelling and advocating for criminal justice. For this event, McGoldrick will dive into storytelling that explores the inhumanity of the carceral system.

Special guest TBA

Friday, October 7

Please check The Marsh’s website for more updates.

Right Wing Politics in the U.S.

Friday, October 14

In 2009, **Larry Rosenthal** founded UC Berkeley’s Right-Wing Studies Center, where he serves as Chair and Lead Researcher. He has written extensively about right-wing movements in the United States and Europe.

California’s Reparations Task Force

Friday, October 21

Leading Civil Rights Attorney **Don Tamaki** is part of the legal team that overturned the Korematsu case, which challenged the rounding up and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. He co-founded StopRepeatingHistory and was appointed to the Reparations Task Force by Governor Gavin Newsom.

ABOUT IRMA HERRERA

Throughout her 30 plus years as a civil rights lawyer, **Irma Herrera** (Writer/ Performer) fought on behalf of marginalized communities: farmworkers, students of color, and women (of all backgrounds, but in particular women of color). A writer, former journalist, and visiting professor of social justice and education law, Herrera’s notable accomplishments include the

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Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award from the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Profession, National Person of Distinction by Santa Clara University School of Law, and California’s NOW Safety, Health and Equal Opportunity (S.H.E.) Award for promoting educational opportunity. In response to COVID-19, Herrera created her Stairwell Teatro Series which told short stories (five minutes or less) from La Scala, the stairwell in her home. Her entire series is available here: <https://www.irmaherrera.com/stairwell-teatro>.

ABOUT DAVID FORD

David Ford (Developer) has been collaborating on new and unusual theatre for three decades, and has been associated with The Marsh for most of that time. The San Francisco press has variously called him “the solo performer maven,” “the monologue maestro,” “the dean of solo performance,” and “the solo performer’s best friend.” A week rarely goes by when residents of the Bay Area cannot enjoy one of his productions. Collaborators include Geoff Hoyle, Brian Copeland, Charlie Varon, Echo Brown, Marilyn Pittman, Rebecca Fisher, Wayne Harris, Jill Vice, and Marga Gomez. Ford’s work has been seen regionally at the Public Theatre, Second Stage Theater, Theatre at St. Clement’s, Dixon Place, Theatre for the New City (New York), Highways Performance Space (Los Angeles), and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co. (Washington, D.C.). His work has also been featured in most of the fringe festivals in North America, as well as at theaters around the Bay Area including Berkeley Repertory Theatre, the Magic Theatre, and Marin Theatre Company. Ford’s directing has garnered several “Best of Fringe” Awards and a Goldie Award.

ABOUT REBECCA FISHER

Rebecca Fisher (Director) is the creator of The Marsh’s Writing Cabaret and the co-producer of the long-running Marsh series *Tell It on Tuesday*. Her solo performance work has been called “smart, challenging, and unmistakably affecting” by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and has won a San Francisco Best of Fringe Award. She has directed solo shows in national fringe festivals, as well as Mark Kenward’s *Nantucket* and Diane Barnes’s *My Stroke of Luck*, both presented at The Marsh. Fisher was a teaching artist with The Lincoln Center affiliated arts education program in Bay Area schools, and has directed theater camps with the Berkeley Playhouse/Julia Morgan Center for the Arts and The Marsh.

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.” Since its launch in April 2020, the theatre’s digital platform MarshStream has garnered more than 100,000 viewers. Notable MarshStream moments include the debuts of MarshStream International Solo Fests 1 and 2, The Marsh’s first-ever digital festivals, and the U.S. premiere of *The Invisible Line*, a new documentary about one of the world’s most famous

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social experiments gone wrong. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic MarshStream has hosted over 700 LIVE streams, providing some 300 performers a platform to continue developing and producing art. The Marsh will continue to offer digital content on MarshStream, as well as in-person performances.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Writer/performer **Irma Herrera** returns to the stage of **The Marsh Berkeley** this fall with her solo work, *Why Would I Mispronounce My Own Name?* Weaving history and comedic insights into stories about names, this hit solo show sheds light and throws shade on societal prejudices and assumptions. When giving her name its correct Spanish pronunciation, she often gets the “where are you from?” question. The assumption: that she is a foreigner. Irma’s family has been in South Texas for generations, and the award-winning social justice activist, lawyer, and journalist thinks of herself as American as apple pie. Irma’s observations from the front-lines, notes from American history, and laugh out-loud humor invite audience members to consider what it will take for everyone to get along. “What’s in a name?” asks Herrera, “a minefield of misplaced notions.” Each show will be followed with a post-performance talkback.

WHEN: **September 23 – October 21, 2022**

SHOWS: 7:30pm Fridays

WHERE: **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley
Parking: Allston Way Garage, 2061 Allston Way between Milvia & Shattuck
The Downtown Berkeley BART station is one block away on Shattuck

TICKETS: \$20-\$35 sliding scale; \$50 and \$100 reserved

INFO: For information or to order tickets visit themarsh.org or call (415) 282-3055 (Monday through Friday, 1:00pm-4:00pm).

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PRESS: Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.
sydney@cb-pr.com

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: <http://cbpr.co/press/whywouldi>