

THE MARSH BERKELEY EXTENDS UNIQUE DERIQUE'S FOOL LA LA GIFT

WITH SPECIAL ADDED CONTENT IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February 19 – March 12, 2023

BERKELEY, CA (9 February 2023) – **The Marsh Berkeley** celebrates Black History Month with special added performances of **Unique Derique**'s family-friendly *Fool La La Gift*, shining light on different African American entertainers who contributed to the performing arts – from Sammy Davis Jr. to The Nicholas Brothers and more. In honor of these monumental figures, Unique Derique will present a brief, pre-show multimedia segment on February 19 and 26 about the historical entertainers' contributions, showing videos and photographs of their brilliance in action. Wrapped with goofy goodies and full of circus surprises, *Fool La La Gift* invites audience members (ages 3 and up) to dive into the imagination of Unique Derique as he embarks on a whimsical adventure. Following the show, Unique Derique welcomes audiences to enhance their circus fun with a COVID-19 safe workshop that will incorporate the skills that each entertainer was known for, including tap dance, hambone, and gumboot dance. *Fool La La Gift* will be presented live on stage – and offered via livestream – on **February 19 – March 12, 2023**, with performances at 2:00pm Sundays at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. For more information or to purchase tickets (Live show: \$15-\$35 children and adult general admission, sliding scale; \$50 and \$100 reserved; Livestream: \$20 per computer/device), the public may visit themarsh.org. *NOTE: Strobe lights are used briefly during a portion of the performance.*

ABOUT UNIQUE DERIQUE

The *San Francisco Examiner* wrote that Derique “leaves them laughing coast to coast,” adding “he plays himself and the result, percussive and dynamic, is exhilarating.” *Fool La La: Holiday Gift!* encourages kids from 1 to 102 to let their imaginations take flight. Hailed by *The New York Times* for “his rapid-fire hands as they passed over his body in a blur of motion,” he was also lauded by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which declared, “Derique will be back... remember the name.”

Unique Derique is a longtime San Francisco Bay Area favorite whose dual careers merge the performing arts and healing with the belief that the world can be a brighter place, one breath—and one laugh—at a time. Internationally acclaimed “Clown Prince” Unique Derique’s appearances have spanned the globe from South Africa to Scotland, Taipei, London, Paris, and Tokyo—and he has shared the stage with entertainers such as Bobby McFerrin, The Temptations, Laura Nyro, Jim Nabors, Tuck and Patti, Lou Rawls, and Sammy Davis, Jr. His clowney past includes the famed Pickle Family Circus, Children’s Fairyland, Prescott Circus Theatre, and Bread and Roses Presents. Past television credits include PBS-KQED, Univision, and the Disney Channel. Derique’s *Fool La La* plays annually at The Marsh with a delightfully different twist each season. When not entertaining audiences as Unique Derique, Lance McGee is a Trauma-Informed Wellness Consultant and Mindfulness Coach providing support to school educators, administrators, staff and students. He also leads workshops on trauma-informed care practices and mindfulness for non-profit organizations, health clinics, colleges and educational systems.

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 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: The Marsh Berkeley celebrates Black History Month with special added performances of **Unique Derique**’s family-friendly *Fool La La Gift*, shining light on different African American entertainers who contributed to the performing arts – from blues musician J.C. Burris to South African gumboot dancers, songwriter Jack Hammer, and more. In honor of these monumental figures, Unique Derique will present a brief, pre-show multimedia segment on February 19 and 26 about the historical entertainers’ contributions, showing videos and photographs of their brilliance in action. Wrapped with goofy goodies and full of circus surprises, *Fool La La Gift* invites audience members (ages 3 and up) to dive into the imagination of Unique Derique as he embarks on a whimsical adventure. Following the show, Unique Derique welcomes audiences to enhance their circus fun with a COVID-

19 safe workshop that will incorporate the skills that each entertainer was known for, including tap dance, hambone, and gumboot dance. *Fool La La Gift* will be presented live on stage and offered via livestream.

DATES: **February 19 – March 12, 2023**

SHOWS: 2:00pm Sundays

All shows will be available to view in-person or via livestream.

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

INFO: For information or to order tickets (Live show: \$15-\$35 children and adult general admission, sliding scale; \$50 and \$100 reserved; Livestream: \$20 per computer/device), visit themarsh.org.

-30-

PRESS: Contact Sydney Albin, Carla Befera & Co.

sydney@cb-pr.com

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