

**THE MARSH BERKELEY PRESENTS
LIMITED RETURN ENGAGEMENT OF
BRIAN COPELAND'S HIT**

GRANDMA & ME: An Ode to Single Parents

Written and Performed by Brian Copeland

Developed by David Ford and Brian Copeland

Directed by David Ford

September 9 – October 20, 2023

BERKELEY, CA (29 August 2023) — Award-winning playwright and actor **Brian Copeland's** acclaimed solo show *GRANDMA & ME: An Ode to Single Parents* will return for a limited run at **The Marsh Berkeley** this fall. Copeland, known for hit shows including the record-setting *Not a Genuine Black Man*, as well as lauded productions of *The Waiting Period*, *The Scion*, and *The Jewelry Box*, brings his trademark blend of humor and poignancy to *GRANDMA & ME*, which takes audiences on a journey back to 1979 when his mother died suddenly, leaving behind five young children for his bereaved but fiercely protective 57-year-old grandmother to raise alone. Twenty-two years later Brian found himself in the same single-parent predicament when his marriage ended, leaving him with three children to bring up. Through the lens of time, Copeland compares and contrasts the trials of single parenting in the 1970s with the myriad new challenges brought by the dawn of the tech-infused 21st century. *GRANDMA & ME* offers a deep look, from both sides, at what children need and crave when a parent is lost, and all the agonizing, infuriating, encouraging, and above all helplessly loving acts that go into being a father. *GRANDMA & ME* will play **September 9 – October 20, 2023**, with performances at 5:00pm Saturdays (September 9 - October 7) and 7:30pm Fridays (October 13-20) at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. For information or to order tickets (\$25-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved), the public may visit themarsh.org.

Since its opening in October 2022, this work has performed to sold-out crowds and captivated Bay Area theatregoers, with critics calling it a “beautiful tribute” (*Theater Dogs*) that “hits that

sweet spot between funny and moving” (*BroadwayWorld*). It was also hailed by *Theatrius*, which noted, “Copeland’s reservoirs of talent and empathy make him a unique, unforgettable artist. A must see,” while the *San Francisco Chronicle* declared, “solo performer Brian Copeland... is fearless with introspection, acute with observation, deadly with wit and compassionate with his audiences.” The *San Francisco Examiner* added, “if you are or have a single parent in your life, you need to see this show.” Copeland’s work is dedicated to the memory of his grandmother, Lena Mae Arbee.

ABOUT BRIAN COPELAND

Brian Copeland (Writer/Performer) has been in show business since he first stepped on the comedy stage at age 18. Soon, he was headlining clubs and concerts across the country and opening for such artists as Smokey Robinson, The Temptations, Ringo Starr, and Aretha Franklin, in venues from The Universal Amphitheater to Constitution Hall in Washington DC. Copeland then branched off into television, appearing on comedy programs on NBC, A&E and MTV. Copeland was recently seen on the big screen in the SMASH Marvel film, *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*. He spent five years as co-host of San Francisco FOX affiliate KTVU breakfast program *Mornings on 2* and two years hosting San Francisco ABC affiliate KGO’s Emmy Award-winning afternoon talk show *7Live*. His first network special, *Now Brian Copeland*, premiered on NBC after *Saturday Night Live* for West Coast audiences in January 2015. In 1995, KGO Radio premiered *The Brian Copeland Show*. With his unique blend of humor and riveting talk, the program was the most listened to program in its time slot, reaching more than 100,000 listeners. Copeland’s other theatrical works include *Not a Genuine Black Man*, the longest-running one man show in San Francisco history; his acclaimed play *The Waiting Period*, a story of combatting depression; *The Scion*, a taken-from-the-headlines tale of privilege, murder, and sausage; the critically-acclaimed Christmas classic, *The Jewelry Box*; and *The Great American Sh*t Show*, a collaboration with Charlie Varon featuring monologues on life in the Age of Trump.

ABOUT DAVID FORD

David Ford 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 Theater, 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 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 debut of MarshStream International Solo Fest 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: Award-winning playwright and actor **Brian Copeland's** acclaimed solo show ***GRANDMA & ME: An Ode to Single Parents*** will return for a limited run at **The Marsh Berkeley** this fall. Copeland, known for hit shows including the record-setting *Not a Genuine Black Man*, as well as lauded productions of *The Waiting Period*, *The Scion*, and *The Jewelry Box*, brings his trademark blend of humor and poignancy to ***GRANDMA & ME***, which takes audiences on a journey back to 1979 when his mother died suddenly, leaving behind five young children for his bereaved but fiercely protective 57-year-old grandmother to raise alone. Twenty-two years later Brian found himself in the same single-parent predicament when his marriage ended, leaving him with three children to bring up. Through the lens of time, Copeland compares and contrasts the trials of single parenting in the 1970s with the myriad new challenges brought by the dawn of the tech-infused 21st century. ***GRANDMA & ME*** offers a deep look, from both sides, at what children need and crave when a parent is lost, and all the agonizing, infuriating, encouraging, and above all helplessly loving acts that go into being a father.

WHEN: **September 9-October 20, 2023**
No performances September 16 and September 30.

SHOWS: 5:00pm Saturdays (September 9 – October 7)
7:30pm Fridays (October 13 – 20)

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: \$25-\$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 Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://cbpr.co/press/grandmaandme>