

**THE MARSH ADDS FREE PERFORMANCES AS HIT SHOW
MARKS 10 YEARS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION
BRIAN COPELAND'S**

THE WAITING PERIOD

**Sept. 22, Oct. 6, Nov. 24, Dec. 1 and 15 in Berkeley
Sept. 15, Oct. 20, and Nov. 3 in San Francisco**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (21 August 2024) — Continuing the effort of suicide prevention and hitting the milestone of 10 years of without-charge performances to the public, **The Marsh** has extended free performances of *The Waiting Period*. Offering no-cost public performances to remove all barriers for those who may be struggling with depression themselves, this deeply moving and surprisingly funny show, written and performed by award-winning playwright and actor **Brian Copeland** and developed with and directed by **David Ford**, outlines Copeland's own struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts. Featuring humorous, poignant, and riveting insights, *The Waiting Period* will play **12:00pm, Sundays, September 22, October 6, November 24, December 1 and 15**, at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley and **12:00pm Sundays, September 15, October 20, and November 3** at **The Marsh San Francisco**, 1062 Valencia St., San Francisco. Thanks to the support of generous donors, general admission tickets are FREE. Supporters may donate \$50/\$100 for reserved seats, funds which make it possible for others to see the show at no cost. To order free tickets or reserve seats, the public may visit themarsh.org.

“This play saves lives,” said Copeland. “Since we started offering free performances at The Marsh in 2014, so many audience members have told me they suddenly recognized their own symptoms or those of a loved one, in time to intervene before they committed the ultimate harm to themselves and devastate their families.”

To support this groundbreaking piece, the public can donate to its GoFundMe site. For more information about the ongoing fundraising campaign or to help The Marsh meet its \$80,000

funding goal with a tax-deductible donation, visit gofundme.com/f/nf5z9-help-us-help-people-with-depression.

The Waiting Period provides an unrelenting look at a key turning point in Copeland's life — the mandatory 10-day waiting period before he could lay his hands on the newly purchased gun with which he planned to take his own life. Laced with surprisingly comical moments that serve as a buffer against the grim reality of his intentions, Copeland hopes this very personal, and ultimately redemptive, story will reach people who struggle with depression—often called the last stigmatized disease — as well as their families and loved ones. As critic Sam Hurwitt put it in *The Idiolect*, “It’s a play I’d strongly recommend to anyone who is now or has ever been depressed or who knows someone in that situation. But honestly, it’s such a strong piece that I’d recommend it just as heartily to anyone who’s ever been human.”

The Waiting Period opened in 2012 to overwhelming critical and audience response and has been lauded by survivors and co-survivors of depression. The show won a Theatre Bay Area (TBA) Award for Outstanding Production of a Solo Play in 2015. Copeland launched this series of free performances to provide an opportunity to reach those who need to see the show but have been unable to due to the price of admission. A number of people struggling with suicidal thoughts have told Copeland that seeing his piece has literally saved their lives.

ABOUT THE CAST AND CREATIVES

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. Copeland's first crime fiction novel, *OUTRAGED*, published by Black

Odyssey Media will be released nationwide April 2024. He can soon be seen in *This Is Spinal Tap 2*, the sequel to Rob Reiner's classic film *This Is Spinal Tap*.

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.” Launched in 1989 by Founder and Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman, it annually hosts more than 500 performances 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 the 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.” In April 2020, The Marsh launched its digital platform MarshStream and hosted more than 700 live streams which provided 300 performers and its youth class participants a platform to continue discovering, developing, and producing art during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. Today, The Marsh presents both in-person live performances and content on its MarshStream, continuing to expand its reach to audiences onsite and around the world. The Marsh believes in the power of people’s storytelling and has several classes for the public to create their own works as well as through its developing work performance series: Monday Night Marsh, Tell It on Tuesday, and Marsh Risings. The theater company also collaborates with over 25 San Francisco public schools providing a year-round youth program serving students at its theater and in the classrooms.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: Continuing the effort of suicide prevention and hitting the milestone of 10 years of without-charge performances to the public, **The Marsh** has extended free performances of *The Waiting Period*. Offering no-cost public performances to remove all barriers for those who may be struggling with depression themselves, this deeply moving and surprisingly funny show, written and performed by award-winning playwright and actor **Brian Copeland** and developed with and directed by **David Ford**, outlines Copeland’s own struggles with depression and suicidal thoughts.

WHEN: September 22, October 6, November 24, December 1 and 15, at **The Marsh Berkeley**
September 15, October 20, and November 3 at **The Marsh San Francisco**

SHOWS: 12:00pm Sundays

WHERE: **The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley**
Parking: Allston Way Garage, 2061 Allston Way between Milvia & Shattuck.
BART station (closest): Downtown Berkeley BART

The Marsh San Francisco, 1062 Valencia St., San Francisco
Parking: New Mission Bartlett Garage, 3255 21st St.
(21st St between Mission & Valencia)
BART station (closest): Mission & 24th Street

TICKETS: Thanks to the support of generous donors, general admission tickets are FREE. Supporters may donate \$50/\$100 for reserved seats, funds which make it possible for others to see the show at no cost.

INFO: For information, the public may visit themarsh.org.

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PRESS: Contact Paige D'Encarnacao, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: cbpr.co/press/waitingperiod