

# THE MARSH BERKELEY EXTENDS 180 DAYS. TO DIE. TO LIVE.

Written by Stephanie Weisman

Directed by Robert Kelley

Developed with Marc Montserrat-Drukker, Kathryn Keats, Bruce Bierman

Dramaturg: David Ford

Performed by Anne Darragh, Josiah Polhemus, Stephanie Weisman

**Saturdays: November 30 & December 7, 2024**

**Sundays: December 1 & 8, 2024**

BERKELEY, CA (27 November 2024) – **The Marsh Berkeley** extends **Stephanie Weisman’s** *180 Days. To Die. To Live*, for four *encore* performances featuring **Anne Darragh, Josiah Polhemus**, and playwright and founder of The Marsh **Stephanie Weisman**, directed by acclaimed TheatreWorks Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus, **Robert Kelley**. A compelling and deeply personal look at those facing imminent death and the living, who help them navigate final choices. Seen through two people's end-of-life journeys, the play finds a woman coping with the final precious months of her husband’s life, as well as of a friend’s, both diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. While the husband undergoes chemotherapy, the friend opts for no treatment—with both finally deciding to use California's medical-aid in dying (MAiD), legalized in 2016 but still largely unknown. While reliving the overwhelming and yet universal experience of saying goodbye to loved ones, the play also offers humorous looks at the convoluted eligibility requirements and the challenges of navigating the healthcare system for this option. As she learns, the ins-and-outs of how life ends, the woman, a widow, and cancer survivor herself, takes up qigong and other healing practices to stay vital and living, as she moves through caretaking, grief and bereavement. *180 Days. To Die. To Live*, offers audiences a first-hand look at the choices available at the end-of-life, touching on personal decisions, healthcare options, and legal considerations. This production was developed with **Marc Montserrat-Drukker, Kathryn Keats**, and **Bruce Bierman**, with dramaturgy by **David Ford**. *180 Days. To Die. To Live.*, will extend November 30 and December 1, 7, 8, 2024 with performances on Saturdays and Sundays

at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. In addition, three talkbacks with members of End-of-Life Choices California will follow the performances on December 1, 7, and 8. For tickets (\$25-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved) or more information, the public may visit [themarsh.org](http://themarsh.org).

### **ABOUT THE CAST AND CREATIVES**

**Stephanie Weisman** (Playwright & Actor), Founder and Artistic/Executive Director of The Marsh, has led the organization since its inception. Under her guidance, The Marsh has expanded from a weekly performance series to producing more than 600 shows annually on its San Francisco and Berkeley stages. The Marsh also runs a year-round youth program and offers a wide array of performance programs and classes. Recently, Weisman spearheaded a new “In Front of Your Eyes Festival” this past August, featuring new works by established and emerging playwrights/performers. Her contributions have been recognized with the Meritorious Achievement Award from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) and designation as a Local Hero by the *SF Bay Guardian*. Weisman’s journalism, prose, and poetry have been published nationally, and she received a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts for her Master’s thesis, a poetry performance titled “Dancemasters.” Her performances include the opera *Aphrodisia* and two solo performance musicals, *Breed & Rescue* and *Planet DoReMi*. Additionally, Weisman is a certified Radiant Lotus Women’s Qigong teacher and is currently learning Korean.

**Robert Kelley** (Director) is the Artistic Director Emeritus of TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, which he founded in 1970. Following the company’s 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award, he retired from his post as Founding Artistic Director. During his 50 seasons at the helm, he directed more than 175 TheatreWorks productions, including dozens of World and Regional premieres. At The Marsh, he directed the premiere of *Two Minds* by Lynne Kaufman. In 2003 Kelley was honored with the SFBATCC Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement, in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the SFBATCC, and in 2019 he received a TBA Legacy Award. Kelley also received the TBA Award for his direction of *Daddy Long Legs* and SFBATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Caroline, or Change*. He most recently co-wrote and directed TheatreWorks’ 2024 World Premiere production of *Being Alive: a Sondheim Celebration*.

**Anne Darragh** (Actor) has been performing new works for over 30 years, including the world premieres of plays by notable playwrights such as Neena Beber, Michelle Carter, Anthony Clarvoe, Anne Galjour, Barry Gifford, Rebecca Gilman, Miranda Rose Hall, Allan Havis, Julianne Jigour, Denis Johnson, Lynne Kaufman, Tony Kushner, Julie Marie Myatt, Peter Nachtrieb, Edna O’Brien, Bridgette Dutta Portman, Amy Sass, Bill Talen, and Brian Thorstenson, among others.

**Josiah Polhemus** (Actor) is an accomplished actor, writer, and director with extensive experience in both theater and film. In the Bay Area, he has performed with ACT, Shotgun Players, FoolsFury, RE:ACT, TheatreWorks, Word for Word, Shakespeare/Santa Cruz, and the Yiddish Theater Ensemble. He holds an MFA in acting from ACT. His film “First X” has

received numerous awards, and his latest film, “The Falling,” is currently in post-production. He has also starred in “Superpowerless,” “My Bad Dad,” and “The Scottish Tale”. A dedicated disabilities rights advocate, Polhemus is actively involved in developing stories related to that cause.

**Marc Montserrat-Drukker** (Script Development) is an award-winning director renowned for his innovative work. This is his second collaboration with Weisman, having also directed and developed, Weisman’s solo performance musical, *Breed & Rescue*. He directed and co-created with Ignacio García May *The Wave (La Ola)*, a play based on Ron Jones's Palo Alto High School experiment in fascism. The world premiere at Barcelona’s prestigious Teatre Lliure was named one of Spain’s top 10 productions of the year. He also directed the solo performance *Sombra y Cuna*, starring Pedro Almodóvar film actress Rossy de Palma, at Spain’s National Theatre (CDN) in Madrid, and in Mexico City directed Monty Python’s *Spamalot*. He co-adapted and directed the World Premiere stage version of Gabriel García Márquez’s *Relato de un naufragio (The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor)*, at Teatre Lliure. Since February 2019, he has served as Director of Production and International Relations at Antonio Banderas’s production company, Teatro del Soho CaixaBank (Málaga).

**Kathryn Keats** (Script Development) is an award-winning actor, performance artist, musician, and teaching artist. Her extensive career includes touring off-Broadway in numerous productions of *Let My People Come*, playing Meg in *Crimes of the Heart* at San Jose Stage Company, and her latest original work, *The Hummingbird*, which won Best Solo Musical at the MarshStream International Solo Fest. In 1987, Kathryn co-founded Mark Monroe Acting Studios in San Francisco and Los Angeles, where she has supported the professional training of over 600 actors. She continues to coach Method actors internationally for film and television.

**Bruce Bierman** (Script Development) is a renowned Jewish dance master, teaching artist, and award-winning theater director based in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. A former leading performer with the Aman Folk Dance Ensemble, Bierman now teaches at Oakland's Stagebridge Performing Arts Institute. He is a prominent presenter of Yiddish dance and has worked as a Yiddish dance dramaturg for productions including *Indecent* at Arena Stage and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. As the artistic director of J Dance Theatre, Bierman brings Jewish dance education and performances to venues throughout California.

**David Ford** (Dramaturg) 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:** **The Marsh Berkeley** extends **Stephanie Weisman’s *180 Days. To Die. To Live,*** for *four encore* performances featuring **Anne Darragh, Josiah Polhemus,** and playwright and founder of The Marsh **Stephanie Weisman,** directed by acclaimed TheatreWorks Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus, **Robert Kelley.** A compelling and deeply personal look at those facing imminent death and the living, who help them navigate final choices. Seen through two people’s end-of-life journeys, the play finds a woman coping with the final precious months of her husband’s life, as well as of a friend’s, both diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. While the husband undergoes chemotherapy, the friend opts for no treatment — with both finally deciding to use California’s medical-aid in dying (MAiD), legalized in 2016 but still largely unknown. While reliving the overwhelming and yet universal experience of saying goodbye to loved ones, the play also offers humorous looks at the convoluted eligibility requirements and the challenges of navigating the healthcare system for this option. As she learns, the ins-and-outs of how life ends, the woman, a widow, and cancer survivor herself, takes up qigong and other healing practices to stay vital and living, as she moves through caretaking, grief and bereavement. ***180 Days. To Die. To Live,*** offers audiences a first-hand look at the choices available at the end-of-life, touching on personal decisions, healthcare options, and legal considerations. This production was developed with **Marc Montserrat-Drukker, Kathryn Keats,** and **Bruce Bierman,** with dramaturgy by **David Ford.** In addition, three talkbacks with members of End-of-Life Choices California will follow the performances on December 1, 7, and 8.

***180 Days. To Die. To Live.* is:**

Written by Stephanie Weisman  
Directed by Robert Kelley  
Developed with Kathryn Keats, Marc Montserrat-Drukker, Bruce Bierman  
Dramaturg: David Ford  
Performed by Anne Darragh, Josiah Polhemus, Stephanie Weisman

**WHEN:** **November 30 and December 1, 7, 8, 2024**  
**December 1:** A talk back with End-of-Life Choices California board member Reina Galanes, PhD  
**December 7:** A talk back with End-of-Life Choices California advisory council member Sue Gess, PharmD  
**December 8:** A talk back with End-of-Life Choices California volunteer Judith Bishop, RN

**SHOWS:** **7:30 pm, Saturdays**  
**5:30pm, Sunday, December 1**  
**2:00pm, Sunday, December 8**

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

**TICKETS:** \$25-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved

**INFO:** For information, the public may visit [themarsh.org](http://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: <https://cbpr.co/press/180days>