

THE MARSH BERKELEY RETURNS LIVING THE SHUFFLE

Written, Performed, Directed, Co-Produced by Robert Townsend
Co-Produced by Don Reed

January 31 – March 9, 2025

BERKELEY, CA (3 December 2024) — **The Marsh Berkeley** will present the return of *Living the Shuffle*, a captivating one-man show by renowned actor and director **Robert Townsend**.

This rollercoaster journey takes audiences through the highs and lows of show business, as Townsend shares his trailblazing career. From navigating the dangerous streets of Chicago to performing *Julius Caesar* at a pimp convention in New York City, Townsend chronicles his path to creating the groundbreaking film *Hollywood Shuffle*, which launched his career and established him as a pioneer in Black cinema. Written, performed, and directed by **Robert Townsend** and produced by both **Don Reed** and Townsend, *Living the Shuffle* will run **January 31 — March 9, 2025** (press opening: February 7) with performances **8pm Fridays and Saturdays** and **5pm Sundays** at **The Marsh Berkeley** (2120 Allston Way, Berkeley). For tickets (\$40 general admission, \$50 and \$100 reserved) or more information the public may visit themarsh.org.

When Robert Townsend's *Living the Shuffle* debuted at The Marsh Berkeley in 2019, it received rave reviews from critics and audiences alike. *Theatrius* wrote, "Townsend expertly weaves deeply personal moments with laugh out loud comedy," asserting that it was "an experience unlike any [they've] seen before." *BroadwayWorld* applauded it as "Fascinating and inspirational, 90 minutes of captivating tales and good humor."

ABOUT THE CAST AND CREATIVES

Nicknamed one of the "Godfathers of the Independent Film World," **Robert Townsend** (Writer/Performer/Director/Co-Producer) is an actor, director, writer, and filmmaker with over 30 years in show business and a recurring role on the FX/Hulu Emmy Winning juggernaut dramedy "The Bear." Noticing the difficulty Black actors had finding jobs and the lack of good work available in the film industry led Townsend to create opportunities for himself and fellow artists. He co-wrote, directed, produced and starred in his first film, financed by his personal

credit cards and a miracle—the critically acclaimed *Hollywood Shuffle*, a satire depicting the trials and tribulations of Black actors in Hollywood. Nominated for 30 NAACP Image Awards, Townsend’s prolific television work has been seen on Disney, Fox, NBC, MGM, HBO, WB and MTV. His credits include creating, executive producing, and starring in “The Parent ‘Hood” (The WB); creating the variety series “Townsend Television” (Fox TV); and directing “Carmen: A Hip Hopera” starring Beyoncé (MTV films), “Livin’ for Love: The Natalie Cole Story” (NBC), and “10,000 Black Men Named George” (Showtime). Townsend’s myriad film projects include co-writing and directing “The Five Heartbeats;” writing, directing, and starring in “The Meteor Man,” the first African American superhero movie; and directing Halle Berry in “B*A*P*S,” Eddie Murphy in “Eddie Murphy Raw,” and “Why We Laugh: Comedians on Black Comedy,” a documentary on the history of Black comedians including interviews with Chris Rock, which was an official selection at the Sundance Film Festival. As an actor, he has starred opposite Denzel Washington in “A Soldier’s Story,” and appeared with Diane Lane in “Streets of Fire,” Kevin Costner in “American Flyers” and Angela Bassett in “Of Boys and Men.” Recently, he directed “American Soul,” the story of “Soul Train” founder Don Cornelius (BET); directed the 2019 NAACP Image Award-nominated film “Making The Five Heartbeats,” a documentary about his cult-favorite film “The Five Heartbeats;” and directed and appeared in “Black Lightning,” the Netflix/ CW TV series based on the DC Comics character of the same name.

Don Reed (Co-Producer) was the 2016 Theatre Bay Area winner for Outstanding Solo Production for *East 14th* and is the co-producer of filmmaker Robert Townsend’s solo hit *Living the Shuffle*. Reed has earned recognition from the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle, as well as three nominations from the NAACP for Best Actor and Best Playwright. Reed is currently the host/creator and producer (with Mike Ghiringhelli) of *Redwood Nights: Storytelling Under the Stars* at Deer Park Villa. Additionally, he played a leading role in the Amazon Prime comedy series “Bartlett,” which was co-financed and featured recurring appearances by *Hamilton* creator Lin-Manuel Miranda. Recently, Reed finalized an agreement with Carson Entertainment Group, granting him access to the entire library of “The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson.” This enables him to share his Hollywood tale emphasizing the significance of perseverance through his solo production, *The Never Too Late Show*. He also has an extensive background in writing, producing, and directing across various mediums, including short films for HBO, and works for the Oprah Winfrey Network. Reed has also performed in the Netflix feature film “Unleashed,” and his voice has been featured in popular productions such as “Spiderman,” “Johnny Quest,” “Saturday Night Live promos,” and “2 Broke Girls.” Reed was also the opening act/warm-up comedian for “The Tonight Show” with Jay Leno for over 1,000 episodes and has shared an excerpt story from *East 14th* on NPR/WYNC’s “Snap Judgment.” Audiences may tune in to KQED’s “The California Report Magazine” to hear his recent story, “The Fruitarian.”

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 will present the return of *Living the Shuffle*, a captivating one-man show by renowned actor and director **Robert Townsend**. This rollercoaster journey takes audiences through the highs and lows of show business, as Townsend shares his trailblazing career. From navigating the dangerous streets of Chicago to performing *Julius Caesar* at a pimp convention in New York City, Townsend chronicles his path to creating the groundbreaking film *Hollywood Shuffle*, which launched his career and established him as a pioneer in Black cinema.

Living the Shuffle is:

Written/performed/directed/co-produced by Robert Townsend

Co-produced by Don Reed

WHEN: **January 31 – March 9, 2025**
No performance: February 9 & 22
Press opening: February 7

SHOWS: **8pm Fridays and Saturdays**
5pm 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

TICKETS: \$40 general admission, \$50 and \$100 reserved

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:
<http://cbpr.co/press/livingtheshuffle>