

THE MARSH BERKELEY PRESENTS
AWARD-WINNING SOLO DEBUT
PEARL ONG'S
NIGHT DRIVER

Written and Performed by Pearl Ong

Directed by David Ford

July 11 – August 8, 2026

BERKELEY, CA (17 June 2026) — Audiences can catch another ride with **Pearl Ong's** critically acclaimed *Night Driver*, which will be back for an encore run at **The Marsh Berkeley**. The 2025 *BroadwayWorld* San Francisco Bay Area Awards winner for Best Cabaret/Concert/Solo Performance *Night Driver* chauffeurs audiences on the unexpected journeys of a model minority gone rogue. What is a Hong Kong princess doing behind the wheel of a cab? And how does her very proper mother react? This captivating story vividly revisits the vibrant, free-spirited gay scene in San Francisco from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, blending humor, rebellion, and cultural clashes to portray a life fiercely determined to defy expectations. Written and performed by **Pearl Ong** and directed by **David Ford**, *Night Driver* puts the keys back in the ignition **July 11 – August 8, 2026** with performances at **5:00pm Saturdays** at **The Marsh Berkeley** (2120 Allston Way). For tickets (\$25-\$35 general admission sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved, plus a \$3 convenience fee per ticket) or more information the public may visit themarsh.org.

"Pearl Ong is the perfect example of what is possible through The Marsh's new work development pipeline," said The Marsh Artistic/Executive Director **Stephanie Weisman**. "*Night Driver* was nurtured and encouraged out of Pearl through classes with David Ford, *In Front of Your Eyes Performance Festival*, and real audience feedback. This incredibly powerful show continues to amaze and inspire us and we can't wait to share it with the East Bay as audiences experience a new take of San Francisco."

The solo show first made its appearance at The Marsh at its *In Front of Your Eyes Performance Festival* where it won awards for Best Newcomer and Best Attended Solo in the summer of 2024. *Night Driver* began its Marsh run in San Francisco on March 1 and played until April 5, 2025. Described as “witty and sharp” by *The Daily Californian* and that “her passengers, and the lesbian barflies who make up her social life, are just as colorful” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Ong brings a nostalgic lens to a lost San Francisco with candidness and irresistible personality. The show has earned high praise from both audiences and critics alike, with *Theatrius* calling it a “hugely promising debut,” *Stage and Cinema* hailing it as “a perfect fit for San Francisco” and “*Night Driver* is about perseverance and tenacity and captures a specific and almost forgotten time in San Francisco, which makes for a fun ride in the theater.” *Theatrius* also commended Ong’s writing and performance, noting that she “zeroes in with sharp details to create vivid scenes” and “drops ironic one-liners with great delivery.”

ABOUT THE CAST AND CREATIVES

Pearl Ong (*Playwright/Performer*) embarked on her performance journey in 2019 at Stage Werx in San Francisco. Since then, she has showcased short autobiographical pieces at Solo Sundays at Stage Werx, Tell It On Tuesday at The Marsh Berkeley, Monday Night at The Marsh, and Marsh Rising at the San Francisco Marsh. She also performed her first full length piece *Night Driver* at Marsh Rising and The Marsh’s In Front of Your Eyes Performance Festival at The Marsh San Francisco. In December 2025, *Night Driver* won Best Cabaret/Concert/Solo Performance in the *BroadwayWorld SF Bay Area Awards*.

David Ford (*Director*) has been collaborating on new and unusual theater 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, and 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: Audiences can catch another ride with **Pearl Ong**’s critically acclaimed *Night Driver*, which will be back for an encore run at **The Marsh Berkeley**. The 2025 *BroadwayWorld* San Francisco Bay Area Awards winner for Best Cabaret/Concert/Solo Performance *Night Driver* chauffers audiences on the unexpected journeys of a model minority gone rogue. What is a Hong Kong princess doing behind the wheel of a cab? And how does her very proper mother react? This captivating story vividly revisits the vibrant, free-spirited gay scene in San Francisco from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, blending humor, rebellion, and cultural clashes to portray a life fiercely determined to defy expectations.

***Night Driver* is:**

Written and performed by Pearl Ong

Directed by David Ford

WHEN: **July 11 – August 8, 2026**

SHOWS: **5:00pm Saturdays**

WHERE: **The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704**
Parking: Allston Way Garage, 2061 Allston Way between Milvia & Shattuck.
BART station (closest): Downtown Berkeley BART

TICKETS: \$25-\$35 general admission sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved, plus a \$3 convenience fee per ticket

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

PRESS: Contact Raymond Harris, CBCO Public Relations & Marketing.
raymond@cb-pr.com | 707-789-5274

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