

THE MARSH BERKELEY PRESENTS
LOOK AT PROCREATION CHALLENGES
BREED OR BUST

8:00pm Saturdays, May 4 – June 8, 2024

BERKELEY, CA (2 April 2024) — The timely, entertaining, and thought-provoking solo show *Breed or Bust* by award-winning actor, director, and “story midwife” **Joyful Raven** returns to the Bay Area this spring at **The Marsh Berkeley**. This compelling one-woman production takes audiences on a subversive and hilarious journey through female reproductive options, from the taboos of abortion to the nuances often left out of these important conversations. *Breed or Bust* blends unabashedly honest storytelling, stand-up comedy, and dark humor, as Raven reckons with her reproductive choices and contends with her primal baby-making instincts. With the moments of her “clock ticking,” she reflects on the complex relationship between womanhood and motherhood. Should she surrender to the role of weird aunt, or should she start a GoFundMe to freeze her geriatric eggs? *Breed or Bust*, performed by Joyful Raven and directed by **Jael Weisman**, will have performances 8pm Saturdays, May 4 - June 8, 2024, at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. For tickets (\$20-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved) or more information, the public may visit themarsh.org.

Breed or Bust recently concluded a critically acclaimed run at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where it garnered an Off West End Theatre Award (Offie) nomination. Critics in Scotland praised the show calling it a “masterful approach to storytelling. Seductive, shocking, and heart-warming to the extreme” (*Theatre Weekly UK*), “a fun and feminist look at one of life’s perennial dilemmas, freshly told,” (*The List UK*) and “a riveting personal story that is funny, shocking and insightful, offering a sensitive and innovative exploration of the pressures and taboos surrounding female reproductive choices” (*The Independent UK*). This riveting and riotous show

made its world premiere at PlayGround San Francisco in its 2022 Solo Performance Festival and was given an encore limited run in fall 2022 at the Potrero Stage where the *San Francisco Examiner* lauded Raven, noting that she “tells it openly, without self-pity or sentimentality. And she tells it funny.” It has also been performed in Los Angeles at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, where it received a Producer’s Encore Award, a Gold Medal from *TV-olution*, and was nominated for Best Comedy amongst more than 400 shows. *BroadwayWorld* hailed ***Breed or Bust*** as “heartbreaking and deeply heartfelt, taking a serious subject and offering an often humorous look at what women go through when it comes to breeding decisions. It’s a difficult subject, and Joyful made it an easy one to watch.”

ABOUT THE CAST AND CREATIVES

Born into an iconic political theater family, **Joyful Raven** (Writer/Performer) has been devising theater for over 20 years. She has directed and mentored hundreds of storytellers, co-founded the award-winning theater company Rococo Risqué, and co-authored four plays for the Prize of Hope-winning company Human Nature. She also wrote and starred in the solo comedy *Tales of a Sexual Tomboy*, which enjoyed an Off-Broadway run and won Best of the Fringe at the San Francisco International Fringe Festival. *Tales of a Sexual Tomboy* was deemed “one of the funniest shows now on display on Bay Area stages” by *San Francisco Chronicle*. She also teaches regular storytelling and solo theater classes at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre and her own studio in Oakland, California.

Multi-Obie-winning director, **Jael Weisman** (Director/Developer) is a founding member of the Dell’Arte Players Company and a trailblazer in actor-based theater. With Dell’Arte, Weisman’s works have toured extensively in the U.S., South America, and Europe, earning him numerous Dramalogue Awards for Directing. He has directed acclaimed productions including *Whiteman Meets Bigfoot*, *Performance Anxiety*, and *Mad Love*. Other noteworthy projects include *The Dragon Lady’s Revenge* with The San Francisco Mime Troupe, which traveled to New York and was awarded an Obie; the American premiere of *Red Noses; Uncle Gunjiro’s Girlfriend* at the Adelaide Festival; and *Mermaid Meat* for the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra. He has collaborated with luminaries like Carlo Mazzone-Clementi and Joe Chaikin and worked with renowned Bay Area performance artists including Jeff Raz and Brenda Wong Aoki.

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 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 a platform to continue 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 with its Monday Night Marsh, Tell It on Tuesday, and Marsh Rising series. The theater company also collaborates with over 25 San Francisco public schools providing a year-round youth program as it serves students at the theater and in the classrooms.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: The timely, entertaining, and thought-provoking solo show ***Breed or Bust*** by award-winning actor, director, and “story midwife” **Joyful Raven** returns to the Bay Area this spring at **The Marsh Berkeley**. This compelling one-woman production takes audiences on a subversive and hilarious journey through female reproductive options, from the taboos of abortion to the nuances often left out of these important conversations. ***Breed or Bust*** blends unabashedly honest storytelling, stand-up comedy, and dark humor, as Raven reckons with her reproductive choices and contends with her primal baby-making instincts. With the moments of her “clock ticking,” she reflects on the complex relationship between womanhood and motherhood. Should she surrender to the role of weird aunt, or should she start a GoFundMe to freeze her geriatric eggs?

***Breed or Bust* is:**

Written and performed by Joyful Raven
Directed and developed by Jael Weisman

WHEN: **May 4 - June 8, 2024**
No show June 1, 2024

SHOWS: **8:00pm Saturdays**

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: \$20-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved

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

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PRESS: Contact Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.
courtney@cb-pr.com | 650-308-4390

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