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BERKELEY REP ANNOUNCES 10th ANNIVERSARY PRESENTATION OF BRIAN COPELAND’S NOT A GENUINE BLACK MAN

The longest running-show in the Bay Area comes to the Theatre’s Osher Studio this April

January 9, 2014 – Today Berkeley Repertory Theatre announces the 10th anniversary presentation of Brian Copeland’s Not a Genuine Black Man, the longest-running solo show in San Francisco history. After over 700 performances in its initial seven-year run in more than 30 cities including San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as off Broadway, Copeland’s acclaimed show comes to Berkeley Rep’s Osher Studio for 18 performances this April. Copeland, a writer, actor, comedian, and radio talk-show host, recounts his story of growing up black in the 1970s in San Leandro, California, a city once nationally known as one of the most racist in America. With wit and heartfelt passion, he explores the themes of racial identity and ultimately, belonging. “Very funny,” raved the San Francisco Chronicle. “Copeland is a winning, magnetic performer. More than that, he’s got an important tale to tell!” Directed and developed in part by David Ford, Not a Genuine Black Man previews on April 23, 2014, opens April 25, 2014, and plays through May 31, 2014. Tickets are on sale now.

“Brian's personal history offers fantastic fodder for an evening of theatre,” says Michael Leibert Artistic Director Tony Taccone. “His stories paint vivid characters that populate a diverse emotional landscape. Not a Genuine Black Man looks at race relations with an unflinching honesty, yet at the same time isn't afraid to crack a joke. We’re glad Brian will celebrate the 10th anniversary of this show in our Osher Studio this spring.”

“I'm thrilled to be performing Not a Genuine Black Man at Berkeley Rep — a theatre I have long admired,” remarks Copeland. “I never imagined the show would be so well-received and have this incredible longevity. But I’ve come to realize the show’s mix of comedy and pathos makes people really think about who they are and who we are as a nation and a people. After all these years of performing the show, I feel that my portrayals of the characters have become sharper. I continue to find things in the play that can evoke a laugh or an emotional reaction that I hadn’t thought of before. I hope the audience leaves feeling that they have had a great evening of thought-provoking, entertaining theatre.”

Since its 2004 premiere at the Marsh, Not a Genuine Black Man has received effusive praise on every stage it has been performed. “A beautiful mix of wry humor and heartbreak, indignation and inspiration!” hails the San Francisco Chronicle. “Copeland is a GENUINE discovery!” declares the Los Angeles Times. “A singular story of extreme isolation that speaks to anyone who’s ever felt out of place.” “Engaging!” proclaims the New York Times. “Copeland’s ability to captivate an audience rivals many a celebrated solo predecessor from Ruth Draper to Spalding Gray to Whoopi Goldberg…”

(MORE)
Brian Copeland has been in show business since he first stepped on the comedy stage at the tender age of 18. Soon he was headlining clubs and concerts across the country and opening for such artists as Smokey Robinson, The Temptations, Ringo Starr, and the queen of soul Aretha Franklin, in venues from the Universal Amphitheater to Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. Soon, Copeland branched out into television, appearing on comedy programs on NBC, A&E, and MTV. He spent five years as co-host of San Francisco FOX affiliate KTVU’s breakfast program Mornings on 2 and two years hosting San Francisco ABC affiliate KGO’s Emmy Award-winning afternoon talk show 7Live. In 1995, ABC affiliate KGO Radio premiered The Brian Copeland Show. Its unique mix of talk and entertainment soon made it the most listened to program in its time slot. In 2004, Copeland premiered his first solo play, Not a Genuine Black Man at the Marsh. This critically acclaimed exploration of race and identity created an audience-pleasing blend of laughter, tears, and sociology that led to the show becoming the longest-running solo play in San Francisco theatrical history. Successful runs in Los Angeles and off Broadway and a bestselling book adaptation followed. Copeland’s other theatrical work includes The Waiting Period, a solo play about his lifelong struggle with depression, and the Christmas play The Jewelry Box, which opened November 2013 at the Marsh.

Director David Ford is a Goldie Award-winning playwright who has worked on countless solo shows over his 25-year career in the business. Frequently working on projects at the Marsh, Ford has collaborated with many Bay Area favorites including Charlie Varon, Marilyn Pitman, Geoff Hoyle, and Cherry Terror.

Tickets start at only $30 – half that for anyone under 30 years of age. Additional savings are available for groups, seniors, and students – meaning discounted seats can be obtained for as little as $14.50. For tickets or information, call (510) 647-2949 or simply click berkeleyrep.org.

ABOUT BERKELEY REP
Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its core values of imagination and excellence, as well as its educated and adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. In four decades, four million people have enjoyed more than 300 shows at Berkeley Rep. These shows have gone on to win five Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, and many other honors. In recognition of its place on the national stage, Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. Its bustling facilities – which include the 400-seat Thrust Stage, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, the Osher Studio, and a spacious new campus in West Berkeley – are helping revitalize a renowned city.

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FACT SHEET

NOT A GENUINE BLACK MAN

WHO: Written and performed by Brian Copeland
Developed by Brian Copeland and David Ford
Directed by David Ford

WHAT: Berkeley Rep presents Brian Copeland in Not a Genuine Black Man. It's the show that blew the lid off racism in San Leandro... and made us laugh about it, back for its 10th anniversary. “Very funny,” raved the Chronicle. “Copeland is a winning, magnetic performer. More than that, he’s got an important tale to tell!”

WHERE: The Osher Studio, 2055 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94704
Located in the Arts Passage on Center Street between Shattuck and Milvia—just a block from Berkeley Rep

WHEN: 18 PERFORMANCES: April 23 – May 31, 2014
• Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM
• Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays @ 8:00 PM

HOW MUCH: $30 - $45 (subject to change)
Tix & Info: (510) 647-2949 or berkeleyrep.org
Discounts:
• Half-price tickets available for anyone under 30 years of age
• $10 discount for students and seniors one hour before curtain
• Groups of 10 or more, contact (510) 647-2918 or groups@berkeleyrep.org


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