

Look back and Weep

Woman in the Woods 4th Annual Fundraiser Party!

Michell (Mitch) Marshall

Woman in the Woods Productions is delighted to announce that its 4th annual fundraiser will be held, Sunday, June 5th, in the Madrona Room at Orcas Center. Doors open at 5:00PM. Tickets can be purchased at The Office Cupboard.

We are pleased to be sponsored by: Tom Baldwin & Miriam Ziegler, Joe Cohen & Martha Farish, Inclusion Innovates, Island Market, The Lower Tavern, Windermere Real Estate and Bill Wulff & Betty Corbett.

The headline artists for this year's event are gonna cook up some great jazz: Steve Alboucq & Oliver Groenewald Jazz Quintet, which features three stars of the Seattle jazz scene: Max Holberg, Shawn Schlogel and Greg Feingold. A special dinner will be catered by the amazing Chef John Cox, of The Orcas Hotel.

The theme for this year's fundraiser is taken from my father's Memoir, which he wrote back in the 1960's. He wanted his children and grandchildren to know about his childhood growing up in Texas, and the good and bad memories that all helped create the person he became as an adult. By that time, he was one of the few black engineers working at Boeing, a singer with the Seattle opera, and our neighborhood's piano teacher. He chose to title his memoir "Look Back and Weep".

Now, as his daughter "looks back" at how Woman in the Woods Productions has grown since its inception in 2017, I shed tears full of gratitude for this community's wonderful support for our goal of bringing first rate artists who will "excite, entertain, and enlighten" us, in ways that make us think. You don't have to agree with the approach that an artist or a production takes. We welcome all comments and criticisms, because they mean you are thinking about what you saw. Sharing open thoughts makes us all more aware, and that is a good thing.

It also has been very exciting and rewarding to follow the progress of the talented artists we have brought to Orcas. Our first event was "Dragon Lady", a 2017 dinner theater presentation by Seattle based artist Sara Porkalob. We sold out two performances at the old Random House. Sara was still developing what has become a three part one-woman show about her family's experiences as immigrants leaving the Philippines for Seattle. Her trilogy of "Dragon Lady, Dragon Baby and Dragon Momma was headed for Broadway when the pandemic turned off the lights. In 2018, Sara won the Gregory Award for Outstanding Actress in a Musical, was called one of 2018's most influential people. She soon will be headed to N.Y. to star in "1776",

at the American Repertory's Theater. As The Boston Globe stated, "in short, she's a force and a phenomenon." We were fortunate to have booked Sara before she exploded into stardom.

I first saw Marc Bamuthi Joseph in 2016 at Seattle's Intiman Theater, where he directed and performed his, "Red Black Green A-Blues." I was blown away and found myself actually shaking when I left the theater. Yes, he was that powerful. I found myself wanting to bring to Orcas that type of powerful art, and shared that thought with friends. Within a few months, Woman in the Woods was being formed.

So, I was overjoyed when Marc and Daniel Bernard Roumain came to Orcas Center in June of 2018. Marc is now the Vice President and Artistic Director of Social Impact at The Kennedy Center, as he continues engaging in an impressive and successful artistic career. DBR continues to produce endless performances and compositions, while maintaining his day job as an Arizona State University Professor. He has collaborated with Phillip Glass, Bill T. Jones, Lady Gaga and many more.

I never will forget Paul Rucker, Anastacia-Renee, Alex Dang, Paul Miller (DJ Spooky), Jon Boogz and Robin Sanders, as well as Amontaine Aurore's play "Don't call it a Riot." All are magnificent artists who continue to grow and develop their craft.

Looking back, I can remember many of you stopping by to tell me how much you learned from the Q&A that followed the performance by Bamuthi and Roumain. Or to talk about the impact that Paul Rucker had on you. Or to share how Alex Dang's poetry had spoken directly to you. Your sharing has helped make this all worth while!

One of our goals has been to charge ticket prices that most islanders can afford. We make these expensive performances affordable and accessible by raising supplemental funding - from foundations and from sponsors and from people like you. Our annual fundraising party is a fun way to help accomplish that goal. Please join us on Sunday, June 5th. Great music, wonderful food, auction items, a couple of games, and a lot of laughter.

It's wonderful to be back at Orcas Center!