

For Immediate Release

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EXTENDED for 3 More Performances This Year!

Iconic Modern Dance Legend Celebrated in West Coast Premiere

MARTHA by Ellen Melaver

Running **Wednesdays at 8pm on July 19, August 16, and September 20, 2017**

Whitefire Theatre is located at 13500 Ventura Blvd. Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

Los Angeles, CA – Martha Graham simply refused to quit. Her influence on dance, which is often compared to Picasso’s influence on modern art and the impact that Frank Lloyd Wright had on architecture, has unequivocally transformed the art form. She pursued her vision with unwavering dedication in spite of the difficulties and challenges it brought to her life. Which were many.

“Each one of us has all of life in us, and it is our choice to decide what we will reveal. How many drops of blood have gone into making you? How much memory is in that drop of blood?” – Martha Graham

Ellen Melaver’s quintessential glimpse into the passionate heart and history of the woman who revealed a “hidden language of the soul of the body,” mines the triumphs and struggles faced by this pioneer of modern dance. Graham’s work manifested the complexities of human society, emotion, frailty, and perseverance as never before interpreted in dance. The first dancer invited to perform at the White House, the first choreographer to regularly employ a multiracial ensemble; she revolutionized set design, and was a champion for women.

Playwright **Ellen Melaver** has had her work produced at Williamstown Theater Festival, SPF, New Georges, Teatronetto in Tel Aviv, and Le Cirque Roman in Paris. Her play, *Little White Mice from Broken Homes*, was commissioned by Juilliard and *Calendar* was published by Smith & Kraus. Readings and workshops have been hosted by theaters such as Cherry Lane, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Florida Stage, Marin Theater Company, The Zephyr Theater, and Westside Arts. Television work includes pilots for *Spyglass*, *Touchstone*, CBS, and Fox, and she was a staff writer on *What About Brian* (ABC) and *Paul Reiser's Love Bites* (TBS). She is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

Director **Stewart J. Zully** has helmed new works by David Lindsay-Abaire (Pulitzer Prize winner, 2007), Romulus Linney, Peter Tolan (*Analyze This*, *The Larry Sanders Show*), Rolin Jones (*Weeds*) and Marco Ramirez (*Orange Is The New Black*, *The Royale*). Most recently he directed the Los Angeles premiere of *White Guy On the Bus*, by Bruce Graham, at the Road Theatre. He garnered a **Scenic Award (Direction of a Comedy - Intimate Theater)** for his work on *American Wee-Pie*, by Lisa Dillman. Regional directing credits include the East Coast Premiere of Kent R. Brown's *In The Middle of Nowhere* (**recipient of the Julie Harris Award**), three new works at City Theatre’s Summer Shorts Series at The Arsht Center in Miami, part of America’s Short Play Festival in conjunction with **Actor’s Theater of Louisville**. Stewart co-wrote the feature film *Perfect Opposites*, which stars Piper Perabo, Aaron Paul (*Breaking Bad*), Joe Pantoliano, and Jennifer Tilly. The movie is based on the stage play *A Piece of My Heart*, by Matt Cooper, which Stewart directed at The Odyssey Theater in Los Angeles.

MARTHA runs Wednesdays at 8pm on July 19, August 16, and September 20, 2017. The Whitefire Theatre is located at 13500 Ventura Blvd. Sherman Oaks, CA 91423. Tickets are \$25 and can be reserved at www.marthasoloplay.brownpapertickets.com. For more information: 818 990-2324.

A dancers career is usually short, but Martha Graham continued to dance into her seventies and choreographed until her death at age 96. For most artists, a life away from the arts feels impossible but when is it time to say..."when?"

Christina Carlisi (Martha) has worked as a dancer along side notables such as **Chita Rivera, Bernadette Peters, Stanley Donen, Gower Champion, Ringo Starr, Rod Stewart, and Kenny Ortega**. She has toured the world for Disney Productions and starred as the ballerina in the acclaimed production of *Tamara* in Los Angeles. Selected stage credits include *Burn This, The Rivals, Juno and the Paycock*, (**Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award Nomination - Best Actress**) *Lady-Like* (**Drama Logue Award - Best Actress**), *Reckless, Shivarree* (**Drama Logue Award Best Actress**), *Seascape, The Boor, The Immigrant, Trojan Women, and A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Recent film and television credits include *All About Steve, The Soul Collector, Wave Babes, Hear No Evil, and ELI* (**Winner Best Short - Comic-Con**). (Web Series) *Luke 11:17* (**Series regular, nominated for two Webby Awards**), (Television) *Bones, Supernatural, Rizzoli & Isles, Criminal Minds, CSI, Glee, Six Feet Under, Ugly Betty, NYPD Blue, Providence, Picket Fences* and *Crystal Empire* (series regular).

PRODUCTION TEAM: Windy Productions (Producers), David Svengalis (Technical Director), Derrick McDaniel (Lighting Design), Candice Cain (Costume Design), Camille Loftin (Choreographer)

Calendar Listing Information:

What: "Martha"

Playwright: Ellen Melaver

Directed by: Stewart J. Zully

Where:

The Whitefire Theatre
13500 Ventura Blvd
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

When:

Schedule: Wednesdays at 8pm on July 19, August 16, and September 20, 2017

How:

For reservations: www.marthasoloplay.brownpapertickets.com

Information: 818 990-2324

How Much: \$25

Description: A glimpse into the life of Martha Graham, the legendary pioneer of modern dance and the fierce, witty, trailblazing feminist, who refused to let age define or confine her. An electrifying performer who danced into her 70's and choreographed into her 90's, she was a major artist of the twentieth century, who possessed a gift for revealing emotion and the complexities of humanity through the dances that she created. For an artist like Graham a life away from the arts feels impossible, but when is it time to say..."when?"