

home of the

[Subscribe to the weekend Chronicle](#)

Search

| [Advanced](#)

[Sign In](#) | [Register](#)

[Movies](#) [Music & Nightlife](#) [Performance](#) [Art](#) [Events](#) [Books](#) [TV & Radio](#) [Horoscope](#) [Comics](#) [Games](#) [Things To Do](#)



Brian Copeland's 'The Waiting Period' review

Robert Hurwitt

Monday, February 27, 2012

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS (1)

FONT | SIZE:



Patti Meyer

Brian Copeland tackles his battle with depression in his new solo show, "The Waiting Period," at the Marsh in San Francisco.

IMAGES



[View Larger Images](#)



The Waiting

Period: Written and performed by Brian Copeland. Directed by David Ford. Through March 24. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia St., San Francisco. 70 minutes. \$15-\$50. (415) 282-3055. www.themarsh.org.

The subject is depression, but there's nothing depressing about Brian Copeland's "The Waiting Period," which opened Saturday at the Marsh. Quite the contrary.

Much of the material is intense, not to mention unsettling. Parts of Copeland's new solo show may move you to tears. But much of his dense 70-minute tale of his fierce wrestle with suicidal depression is as astonishingly funny as it is brutally honest - and all of it is admirably courageous, urgent and yet charmingly told.

Created by the popular radio and TV talk-show host with director David Ford - the solo-show maven with whom Copeland also developed his extra-long-running "Not a Genuine Black Man" in 2004 - "Waiting" generates considerable dramatic suspense as well. The story of how he coped with the mandatory 10-day waiting period, to get the gun he bought to kill himself with, has us counting down the days with him. And that's even after his sly imitation of a worried audience member asking her companion, "You don't suppose that he actually dies at the end?"

Clad in simple black shirt and pants and working on an almost bare stage - with unobtrusively effective lighting and sound effects by David Hines (also from "Genuine") - Copeland escorts us through the tale in a seamless blend of straight narrative, embodied scenes and quick character sketches.

The story runs from his first visit to a gun shop and the ominous purchase through the 10 days. Smartly planted details recap the dire trifecta that led to his deep funk: His wife left him (and their three kids), his beloved grandmother died, and he totaled his car in an accident that almost left him paralyzed and involved a very painful recovery.

Galleries

1-3 of 21



Secluded convenience / San Rafael...



Spacious flat in San Francisco's...



Limelight listing - Mary Kay Ash's...

advertisement | [your ad here](#)

MOST READ **MOST E-MAILED** **MOST COMMENTED**

1. S.F.'s parrots join flight to the suburbs
2. America's Cup organizers drop overhaul of piers
3. Sean Young: 'I was sober at Oscars party'
4. Underrated landmarks of the Bay Area
5. Gladys Knight, Gavin DeGraw among 'Dancing' cast
6. Gavin Newsom asks official who killed puma to quit
7. Pinterest's fast growth driven by women

Today's Deal in North Bay

The Last Chance for discount tickets to Whiskies of the World Expo



SALE ENDS IN
38:29:04

SAVE
31%

Get North Bay Daily Deal alerts.

Please enter your email here.

FROM OUR HOMEPAGE



Flight to suburbs

S.F.'s famed wild parrots of Telegraph Hill are now the mild parrots of Brisbane. [Photos](#)

[Comments & Replies \(115\)](#)



More attention is paid to the debilitating effects of depression. Copeland very capably laces his portrayal of the agony of the disease with comedy, from acerbic observations on his own behavior to crisp political quips. His caricatures of others are almost too broad but segue smartly from the ridiculous - a surfer-dude gun dealer, an obnoxious super-dad - through genuinely concerned friends to deeply affecting portraits of fellow sufferers and his attentive daughter.

He also slips in plenty of information about the disease, including a short list of famous depressives. "Waiting" is quite frankly a show with an agenda - to urge anyone suffering from depression, or who knows someone who is, to tell somebody before it's too late. Too often that kind of earnest motive can make for deadly entertainment. In this case, the result is positively inspirational.

Robert Hurwitt is *The San Francisco Chronicle's* theater critic.
rhurwitt@sfchronicle.com

This article appeared on page **D - 5** of the *San Francisco Chronicle*

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE

0 share



Subscribe to the San Francisco Chronicle and receive access to the Chronicle for iPad App and a gift:

- Sunday + a \$15 gift card
- Fri-Sun + a \$15 gift card
- Mon-Sun + a \$25 gift card

Select an offer

Add Your Comment

New to the site?

To use commenting, you need to sign up.

Register

Already a member?

Please log in. [\(Forgot Password?\)](#)

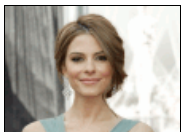
Username

Password

Remember Me

Sign In

[View Comments \(1\)](#)



Next 'Dancing' cast announced



Top Oscar trend: glamorous white



'Awake' has engaging premise



Photos: Oscars' fashion victories



Photos: Oscars' worst dressed



Underrated landmarks

See 20 local spots Peter Hartlaub would chain himself to in order to protect them. [Do you agree?](#)

[Comments & Replies \(0\)](#)



Fire on the track

Explosion at Daytona 500 as car, truck filled with jet fuel collide. [Photos | Matt Kenseth wins](#)

[Comments & Replies \(53\)](#)

Top Jobs



SOFTWARE
 ENGINEER Company Funzio, Inc

[More Jobs »](#)

REAL ESTATE



San Rafael Park home offers natural forest views

This custom-built Contemporary is in coveted San Rafael Park and has expansive views of Lucas Valley and the surrounding woodlands.

[Mega million foreclosures](#)

['The Sky House' in Dolores Heights for sale](#)
 What you can buy in Downtown for \$869,000

[Search Real Estate »](#)

CARS



Sales up for Detroit automakers

Auto sales are growing so fast that Detroit can barely keep up. Three years after the U.S. auto industry nearly collapsed, sales are surging.

[Tesla batteries: Not so easy to kill](#)

[Driverless cars can be licensed in Nevada](#)
 Charger, Dodge's large sedan, impresses

[Search Cars »](#)



2010 Range Rover HSE - Practically New!



Practically new!



Cobalt Blue Chinese Porcelain Garden Stool End...



Dog Cages and Puppy Playpens



Titleist VG3 Irons at Best Price With Free...

[Browse ads](#) | [Place an ad](#) »

[Home](#) [News](#) [Sports](#) [Business](#) [Entertainment](#) [Food](#) [Living](#) [Travel](#) [Shopping](#) [Find Bay Area Jobs](#) [Real Estate](#) [Cars](#) [Site Index](#) [\[return to top\]](#)

Company Info: [Contact Us](#) [Hearst Corp.](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Work for Us](#) [Chronicle in Education](#) [Events & Promotions](#) [Submissions](#)

Advertising Services: [Advertise with us](#) [Place a Classified](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Public Notices](#) [Local Businesses: Business Directory](#)

Reader Services: [Home Delivery](#) [Subscribers](#) [iPad](#) [E-Edition](#) [Mobile](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Newsletters](#) [Feedback](#) [Buy Photos](#) [FAQ](#) [Corrections](#) [Get Us](#)

Local Services: [Air Conditioning Contractors](#) [Car Dealerships](#) [Cleaning Services](#) [Family Doctors](#) [Furniture Stores](#) [Injury Attorneys](#) [Local Restaurants](#) [New Car Dealers](#)
[Real Estate Agents](#) [Real Estate Attorneys](#)

© 2012 Hearst Communications Inc.

HEARST *newspapers*