

BILLY SOLO

One-man, One-hour Storytelling Soirée Salon

with **BILL ZARCHY**

EPIC Final Project Report

Bill Zarchy
EPIC Storytelling Program
Stagebridge, Oakland CA
May 17, 2018

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Elsewhere in this report, please check out:

- Event flyer for BILLY SOLO show
- Program for BILLY SOLO show
- Photos by Peter Logan, Ben Tucker, and Daniel Zarchy

EPIC

Spring, 2018 marks the end of the second year of the EPIC Storytelling Program at Stagebridge in Oakland.

I'm thrilled with all I have learned in the various courses and with all the telling techniques and fantastic genres to which we have been exposed. I appreciate the hard work and good cheer of the teachers in the program: Kirk Waller, MaryGay Ducey, Olga Loya, and Jeanne Haynes.

Final Project

I decided to produce and perform a one-man storytelling show.

I named my show

BILLY SOLO

One-man, One-hour Solo Storytelling Soirée Salon with Bill Zarchy

In early February, I booked the venue, scheduling the show for 7pm Friday, April 20, 2018, at Silk Road House on University Avenue in Berkeley.

Tickets

The third Friday of each month at SRH is reserved for members of the Storytelling Association of California to perform (and produce) their own storytelling events. In keeping with former practice, I decided to charge a \$10 donation (or whatever folks could pay), all proceeds going to the SAC. I set up an Eventbrite account for BILLY SOLO, so the audience could buy tickets online in advance.

Because the venue is small, when friends or acquaintances contacted me to say they were planning to come, I urged them to buy tickets in advance. By two weeks before the show, I was amazed that we had already sold ten tickets. A week later, 15.

Of course, most people purchased their tickets in the final week, but having so many presales made handling the door much easier. Most people brought their printed tickets from Eventbrite, a few showed their tickets on their phones. Folks who bought tickets at the door paid cash. All my PR stressed that Silk Road House was a

six-minute walk from BART, and the printed tickets showed parking suggestions in the area.

In all, we sold 29 tickets online (where purchasers also paid their own credit card fees) and 14 at the door. Total 43 paid admissions. \$430 for the SAC.

That's the capacity of Silk Road House. We sold out! Every chair and seat was in use. Terry Stokes, who sets up and cleans up from each SAC Third Friday event at SRH, said it was the largest crowd he had seen there. My son Danny, who was at the door, gladly gave up his chair and sat on the floor.

Promotion

During the two months or so before the show, I had a number of opportunities to promote it, sometimes in person. Whenever possible, I stood up, introduced myself, and told the group about my upcoming solo show.

Gratuitous self-promotion worked!

I decided I needed to make a colorful, self-explanatory flyer for the event. People kept asking me what my show was about, so I wrote this bio and show description and printed them on the flyer:

A playful, poignant potpourri of Comedic, Travel, Personal, & Traditional stories, told in the timeless oral tradition: no notes, no text.
BILL ZARCHY filmed projects on six continents during his 40 years as a Cinematographer. Now he likes to write novels, tell tales about his work and travels, and talk of many things.

I designed and printed the flyer on card stock at home, left some on the table at Stagebridge, and trailed the rest behind me wherever I went

- I had two other storytellings (at Lunchtime Storytelling on March 1st and at Orinda Tale Spinners on March 22nd) and a story reading (at Weekday Wanderlust in SF on March 15th) scheduled during the lead-up to Billy Solo, and I promoted my solo show at these events
- I promoted my show at every other Lunchtime Storytelling at Stagebridge and at two other Silk Road House events, distributing flyers
- I promoted my show (and other events) relentlessly in my own classes with Kirk and in Olga's and Jeanne's classes
- I made sure the Stagebridge staff and faculty knew all about the show and I benefited from their support and mention of my event in the Stagebridge bulletin and Facebook page

Between February and April, I sent five heavily alliterative promotional emails (through MailChimp) to my main email list of about 840 people

- I promoted all my Spring '18 events, culminating in the solo show
- In one of them, I referred to the event as “Bill’s Splendidly Scrumptious, Sensationally Scintillating, Solo Storytelling Soirée”
- In another, it was “Billy’s Fab Friday Solo Storyfest”

Facebook: Several times a week, I posted my flyer, announcements about the show, links to the ticket site, and other info about storytelling on my own Facebook page, on the FB pages for my blog (“Roving Camera”) and for my memoir (*Showdown at Shinagawa: Tales of Filming from Bombay to Brazil*), as well as other FB groups I belong to, incl. the Stanford Graduate Documentary Program, Left Coast Writers, Historical Fiction Society, Bay Area Travel Writers, my high school graduating class from Long Island, etc.

I was disappointed to see that nothing about my event was posted on the websites of either the Silk Road House or the Storytelling Association of California, even though the latter organization posted some other events during this time. The latest issue of SAC’s ePulse newsletter likewise made no mention of my event. Of course, I can’t complain ... the turnout was terrific, but no thanks to the organization which gets the proceeds from the event.

Program

I designed and printed the paper program on card stock at home.

I originally announced that the show would be one hour long, pretty sure I could fill that amount of time. Then I calculated that what I had in mind — eight stories in all — would take close to 80 minutes. That’s when I realized I needed to plan for an intermission. Four stories before, four after. That gave me and the audience a needed bio-break and allowed me to make a small wardrobe change.

I was thrilled that MaryGay Ducey agreed to introduce me! A week before the show, I told her that I was concerned about forgetting things and making mistakes. Her response was priceless:

Forgetting? Remember if you do, wait a second or two. Mistakes? Never apologize; never explain. (Gratuitous advice from your pal. No charge.)

The order of stories:

- **Anansi**
from *Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock*,
retold by Eric A. Kimmel from an African folk tale

- **Dog Years: Pop, Sophie and the West Wing**
from *Showdown at Shinagawa: Tales of Filming from Bombay to Brazil*, by Bill Zarchy
- **The Seven Lies**
from *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another*, by Peninnah Schram
- **Chartres**
from “Ecstasy at the Altar,” *San Francisco Chronicle* Sunday Travel section, January 22, 2006, by Bill Zarchy

Intermission (15 minutes)

- **FDR: Fear Itself**
- **Evelyn’s Story: Alex and the Cole Porter Show**
from Evelyn Zarchy Miller
- **Mendocino: The Essence of Nature**
- **Snow Story: The Moon and Dr. Zhivago**

Why eight stories? I wanted to challenge myself, and I wanted to try telling stories in various genres: two folk tales, one historical story, the rest a blend of personal/travel/family/poignant/comical/fanciful stories.

I am SO glad I did such a long program! I learned a lot about my stamina, about performance, holding a crowd’s attention, toying with them by stretching out the timing, some dialogue slow and some super fast. What fun! I could do this every week.

During the week or two before the show, I tried to do two full run-throughs of the show each day at home. Always *without* an audience, for reasons I can’t explain. All that practice helped! On the day of the show, I didn’t rehearse at all.

Wardrobe and Props

I wore a short-sleeved, black collared shirt for most of the first half. I removed it just before “Chartres,” last story in the first half, revealing a black t-shirt below, printed with a colorful image of the Incarnation Window at Chartres Cathedral, which I referenced during the story. I also briefly used a bright red overshirt as a prop during the Chartres story.

I started the second half with the short-sleeved, black collared shirt again, but this time with a white bowtie for “FDR,” first story in the second half of the show. I also used a cigarette holder, foldable cane, and pince nez glasses for FDR.

After FDR, I kept the black shirt, but got rid of the bow tie and props. For the final piece, “Snow Story,” I removed the black shirt, revealing a dark green Dartmouth College t-shirt below. I started that piece with a Dartmouth cap, which was soon replaced by two warm wool caps, two scarves, gloves, and a deflated football, as I described the bitter Vermont winter. Eventually a brand-new-looking Stanford cap saved the day.

Assistance / Logistics

I am grateful for the assistance of my dear wife Susan, who recorded the show on her iPad and shopped, planned, and laid out the refreshment and drink spread. I’ve done a number of book talks, and she has often been involved in planning. She is truly generous and multitalented!

Terry Stokes told me he would arrive at the venue at 6 pm on the day of the show (one hour before) to put up the chairs, put out the banner outside (which says “Storytelling here,” or something like that), answer questions, and put on water for tea. I asked my son Danny and our friends Judy Brown and Jennifer Chinlund to come early and assist with the set up. They were a huge help!

Other friends came early and helped put out programs and promo postcards. Danny manned the door as people arrived. Terry took down the chairs after the event and took all the garbage away for disposal. He was very helpful throughout the process.

Reaction

By any measure, the show was a success. The audience was “entranced,” according to the totally unbiased, absolutely objective, neutral reaction of a friend of mine. As a performer, I could tell they were with me the whole way. They laughed, they moaned, they teared up ... mostly at highly appropriate times. They applauded generously, and at the end, they stood for me. Admittedly, most of them were my friends, but still ...

I received wonderful comments after the show, and nice emails afterward. It was a peak experience. Amazing beyond my wildest dreams! I never wanted to be a performer, but I’ll always remember ...

Never apologize. Never explain.

Video

Susan's iPad video of BILLY SOLO is posted online in two parts. Total running time: about 90 minutes.

Part 1 — Copy and paste the following into your browser:

<http://bit.ly/billysolovideopart1>

Part 2 — Copy and paste the following into your browser:

<http://bit.ly/billysolovideopart2>

Event flyer for the BILLY SOLO show

"An instant classic" — Wireless Magazine
 "More fun than a barrel of monkeys" — Vladimir Putin
 "Tall but Jewish" — Bill's mom
 "Oy vey" — Harpo Marx

BILLY SOLO
One-man, One-hour Storytelling Soirée Salon
 with **BILL ZARCHY**

FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 2018
 7 to 8:30 pm
 Doors open at 6:45.

SILK ROAD HOUSE
 1944 University Avenue #107
 Berkeley CA 94704
 (6-minute walk from Downtown
 Berkeley BART Station)

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$ 10
 Refreshments will be served!
 No one turned away for lack of funds.

~~ LIMITED SEATING ~~
BUY TICKETS NOW:
<http://bit.ly/billysolo>
 OR
 Go to zarchy.eventbrite.com





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 BILL ZARCHY filmed projects on six continents during his 40 years as a Cinematographer. Now he likes to write novels, tell tales about his work and travels, and talk of many things.
 He is in the EPIC Storytelling Program at Stagebridge in Oakland.
 Proceeds benefit the Storytelling Association of California.

Eventbrite
Search for events



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**BILLY SOLO: One-man,
One-hour Storytelling
Soirée Salon**

by BILL ZARCHY

\$10

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Sales Ended
DETAILS

DESCRIPTION

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SUGGESTED DONATION: \$10

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Refreshments will be served!

Silk Road House is a six-minute walk from Downtown Berkeley BART Station.



DATE AND TIME

Fri, April 20, 2018

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM PDT

[Add to Calendar](#)

LOCATION

Silk Road House
1944 University Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704

[View Map](#)

REFUND POLICY

No Refunds

 749213597933922014001	Event <h2 style="text-align: center;">BILLY SOLO: One-man, One-hour Storytelling Soirée Salon</h2>		
	Date+Time Friday, April 20, 2018 from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM (PDT)	Location Silk Road House 1944 University Avenue Berkeley, CA 94704	
	Order Info Order #749213597. Ordered by Bill Zarchy on March 26, 2018 7:33 PM		
	Type Suggested Donation (\$10 + \$1.42 fees) \$11.42		

Event Information:

Silk Road House is a 6-minute walk from Downtown Berkeley BART Station.

If you're driving, plan to arrive early to find parking. Besides street parking, the Allston Way Garage is a good option, unlikely to run out of room—a 6-minute walk from the venue at 2061 Allston Way, between Shattuck and Milvia. You can also enter this garage from Center Street between Shattuck and Milvia.

Other parking lot options:
 2016 Berkeley Way, between Milvia and Shattuck
 2109 Milvia, between Addison and Center



749213597933922014001

Eventbrite

Do you organize events?

Start selling in minutes with Eventbrite!
www.eventbrite.com

Program for BILLY SOLO show: front and back

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BILL ZARCHY filmed projects on six continents during his 40 years as a Cinematographer. Now he likes to write novels, tell tales about his work and travels, and talk of many things.

Bill's first book is a memoir titled *Showdown at Shinagawa: Tales of Filming from Bombay to Brazil*. His second book, recently completed, is a time travel novel called *Finding George Washington*.

His work has appeared in *American Cinematographer* and *Emmy* magazines, *Travelers' Tales* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul* anthologies, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Bill has a BA in Government from Dartmouth and an MA in Film from Stanford. He taught Advanced Cinematography at San Francisco State University for 12 years, as well as lighting courses and workshops at four other colleges.

He is in the EPIC Storytelling Program at Stagebridge in Oakland.

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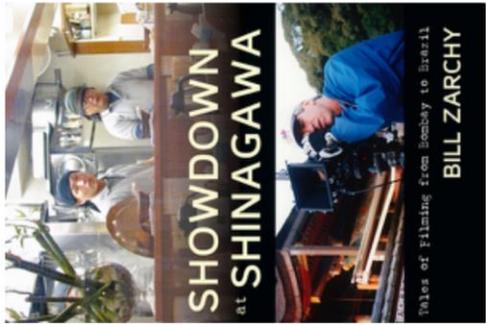
Heartfelt thanks to:

- Terry Stokes & Dana Sherry
- Silk Road House
- Storytelling Association of California
- My dear family, who support me in all my endeavors
- Kirk Waller, MaryGay Ducey, Olga Loya, Jeanne Haynes — the wonderful Storytelling teachers at Stagebridge

All stories created by Bill Zarchy, except as noted

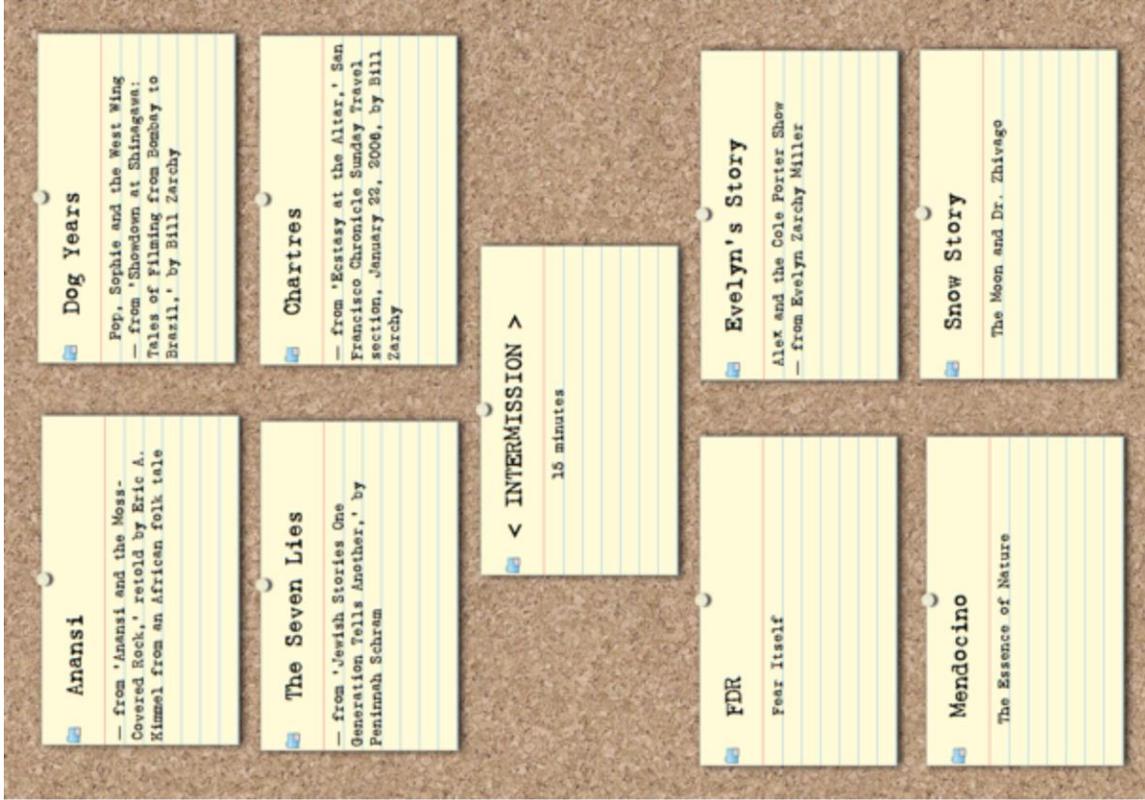
Proceeds benefit the Storytelling Association of California

Questions? Contact billzarchy@gmail.com



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Program for BILLY SOLO show: inside



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