

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:** Michael Straus, (415) 766-1271, MysticMilkman@gmail.com

**“After I’m Dead, You’ll Have to Feed Everyone”**

~ The Rollicking tale of Ellen Straus, Farmland Conservation Pioneer ~

A one-woman theatrical show, written & performed by Vivien Straus (Ellen’s daughter)

Thursday, October 26, 2023

United Solo Theatre Festival, Theatre Row, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, NYC

“One of the best celebrations of life imaginable”

- Barry Willis, President, SF Bay Area Theater Critics

**New York City, NY** (July 10, 2023) - “After I’m Dead, You’ll Have to Feed Everyone,” is a daughter’s comical love letter to her immigrant mother, Ellen Straus, a European city kid who fled the Nazis, grew up in NYC, found love on a California dairy farm and emerged as an environmental pioneer and matriarch of the organic dairy movement.

In her portrayal of her mother and best friend, Vivien combines insightful glimpses into Ellen’s formative life events - fleeing from the Holocaust, witnessing racial injustice, and death-bed conversations about chicken salad - along with Vivien’s own whimsical cow-inspired wisdom and poetry. In a 75-minute mad-cap tribute, Straus portrays 13 characters (12 humans and 1 cow).

Ellen, whose family escaped Amsterdam just weeks prior to the Nazi invasion, soon fell in love with a German Jewish dairy farmer in West Marin. Then, when their stunningly beautiful, agriculturally rich region was threatened with sprawl development, Ellen dug in her heels (err, muck boots) and fought to protect it, soon emerging as one of the region’s most vocal environmental advocates. Of her many accomplishments, Ellen is perhaps best known as the co-founder of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, the nation’s pioneering agricultural conservation organization. Per the *New York Times* obituary, when honored as *Steward of the Land* by the American Farmland Trust, Ellen said World War II had taught her a lifelong lesson about standing up for one's beliefs: "That we, as individuals, are responsible for what is happening in our communities, and that we must become activists."

***After I’m Dead*** debuted in Fall 2023, in the restored 160+-year old historic hay barn at Straus Home Ranch, with a 6-week run, 17 sold-out performances, 2,100+ attendees, and scores of rave audience reviews. ([Read the reviews](#)) In that same barn, Bill Straus had milked his very first cows; Ellen grew shiitake mushrooms (before they were cool); and Ellen & Bill celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary back in 2000. It was the first theatrical performance in the barn since 1971, when Ellen directed Vivien in 4-H skit called *The Scooby Dooby Washtub Band*. Ellen would sit way in the back, wiggle her right ear and call out in her strong Dutch accent, “I can’t heeaaaaar you!”

## THE CAST (aka Vivien, in order of appearance)

- **Tessie the Cow** - There has to be a cow, of course!
- **Vivien** - Pretending to be herself.
- **Mom** – A Dairy Godmother to all.  
**Therapist** – She’s just had her hair done.
- **Oncologist** – He knows about steroids.
- **Opa** – An honest hero.
- **Oma** - Well, we’ll let her speak for herself.
- **Dad** - A much smaller role than the last show.
- **Rancher** - The one that spoke for all.
- **Marica** - pronounced “Maritha”
- **Hospice Nurse** - Came without the drugs.
- **Rabbi** - It had to be a man. Dad insisted.
- **Cemetery Manager** - Need one of these, don’t we?

### About Ellen & Bill Straus:

- [NYT obit \(Ellen\)](#)
- [NYT obit \(Bill\)](#)
- NYT “[North of San Francisco, Cream Rises to the Top](#)” by R.W. Apple

Watch the trailer, read audience reviews & media coverage: [www.VivienStraus.com](http://www.VivienStraus.com).

### ABOUT VIVIEN:

Vivien - a writer, performer and career actress who spent decades pursuing stardom in NYC and LA - grew up on her family's dairy in Marshall (in western Marin County, SF Bay Area), but fled for the bright lights of civilization, where she dined with mobsters, helped a con man slip out of prison, and hitched a ride with a murderer. She wrote and performed in the sold-out critical hit ***E-i-E-i-OY! In Bed with the Farmer's Daughter***; and won a **MOTH StorySlam** telling the embarrassing story, “**Peeing in Nepal.**” She’s been in numerous films with small parts (though, as the saying goes, “There are no small parts, only small actors”) including ***Peggy Sue Got Married, Thirteen Days, Heaven and Earth*** and ***One Good Cop***. Her television credits include recurring roles in ***Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide, Capital News*** and ***Freddy's Nightmares*** (where she died ... twice). Plus, she's performed in the NYC sketch comedy group **BOB**, and acted in more than 30 plays. Vivien is the managing partner of Straus Home Ranch, created the highly-respected California Cheese Trail (CheeseTrail.org), and serves as a board member of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust. Previously, Vivien served as VP Sales & Marketing for *Straus Family Creamery*, the first organic dairy west of the Mississippi.

### TICKETS:

- **WHAT:** “After I’m Dead, You’ll Have to Feed Everyone” – Limited NYC run
- **WHO:** Written and performed by Vivien Straus. Directed by Elly Lichenstein. Produced by Michael Straus and Denise Rocco-Zilber. Dramaturgy by Jayne Wenger.
- **WHERE:** United Solo Theatre Festival, Theatre Row, 410 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, NYC

- **WHEN:** Thursday, October 26, 2023, 7pm.
- **DURATION:** Show runs approx. 65 minutes, no intermission.
- **ADMISSION:** \$50
- **TICKETS:** [www.UnitedSolo.org](http://www.UnitedSolo.org)

###