

Chapter 1 : Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men, Berkeley Review | CultureVulture

*Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men, written and performed by Dael Orlandersmith (pictured) and directed by Chay Yew. Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men Production Photos Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men, written and performed by Dael Orlandersmith (pictured) and directed by Chay Yew.*

Her work powerfully describes an American underclass, people marginalized by race, class, and often, addiction. She cycles through stories told by various boys and men whose names are projected on both sides of the wall beside the thrust stage. Each of the stories riffs on similar tales of sexual and physical abuse and the drug addiction or prostitution that allows these boys and men to survive economically or spiritually the degradations and deprivations of their lives. Perhaps the most chilling story comes from a perpetrator of sexual violence, who relates almost proudly how he seduced and then raped an year-old boy in his car. And because her presence as a performer is insistent and powerful—that is, she hardly disappears behind her characters, and never changes costume—her editorial style sometimes overwhelms the lives she narrates. Orlandersmith But while she dares the mostly white, at the performance I attended audience to look away, to shut their eyes and ears to these lives, what she wants the audience to do with what they see and hear is unclear. Her performance comes with an implicit ethical imperative embedded in an explicit critique of a ruined social system in which white people with class privilege are clearly complicit. But Orlandersmith never articulates the challenge to action that her critical, urgent gaze seems to bear. The play displaces the iconic addiction story from people of color living in impoverished circumstances to an upper-middle-class white family, who employ an African American nanny. In the one-act play, Desiree Roxanne Hope and Loman Michael Laurence meet in a club at which both of them do lines of coke to garnish their drinks. Their attraction pulls them into a relationship neither of them are equipped to manage. His money and her desire keep them in the drugs that sharpen their lives. When she gets pregnant, they marry, move precipitously to Westchester, and both try to go straight. Loman continues to move up the ranks of his law firm and Desiree begins to suffer a fatal boredom that makes her crave the party life she gave up too soon. They celebrate the birth of their son, Luka Matthew Schechter, with deep ambivalence, and then fall back into the clutches of addiction. Desiree soon dies from getting high on cocaine mixed with heroin cut with quinine an ingredient in rat poison. Loman tries to go straight, moves back to the city with Luka, and before long, is once again snorting cocaine, which leads him again to use heroin. Horsedreams, Orlandersmith observing from stage left Throughout the inevitably tragic story, Orlandersmith lurks like a disapproving Cassandra. Mira is studying to be a nurse, determined to improve her own circumstances and, metaphorically, to heal others and herself. The simple set boasts a few chairs, a bottle of Macallan 12 and a shot glass, an ironing board, and long tubes of fluorescent lights hung diagonally over the playing floor like the harsh light of reality. Desiree and Loman are too one-dimensional and uninteresting and privileged for us to really care about their downfalls. Because of their privilege and wealth, this family represents the flip-side of the characters Orlandersmith writes in Black n Blue Boys. But the story she tells about all these people is oddly the same. Although Horsedreams is a more conventional play than Black n Blue Boys, with multiple characters, a bit of dialogue, and separate scenes, Orlandersmith writes it as a set of interlocking monologues. Some of the writing evokes her trademark poetry. But the direct address makes it difficult for the characters to build relationships with one another, even though director Gordon Edelstein does a lovely job creating stage pictures that draw out their feelings with subtlety and nuance. Horsedreams Orlandersmith demonstrates that rich white folks suffer the drug abuse for which poor people of color are too often demonized. She also clarifies how racism threads through this scene. She dies with a needle stuck in her arm on the floor of her Westchester bathroom, the victim, in many ways, of her own racism. As a performer, Orlandersmith is a galvanizing presence, and in Black n Blue Boys her performances of masculinity are sharply observed and virtuosic. If you enjoyed this article, please consider sharing it! Leave a Reply Your email address will not be published.

Chapter 2 : Review: 'Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men' at Berkeley Rep | Stark Insider

*With Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men, these are fictional stories. Of course you want there to be some deeper truth that resonates, and you want to reach people. Of course you want there to be some deeper truth that resonates, and you want to reach people.*

In the hands of artists of great skill, topics that we normally shun or find unbearable can become both riveting and entertaining. But in each case they were shocked by the degree of empathy they felt, resulting in a viewing experience that was riveting and even revelatory. Dael Orlandersmith has embarked upon a similar journey, taking the experience of boys and men who have been abused and transmuting their stories into a compelling, theatrical narrative. She approaches character as if each person is a song, a unique blend of melody and rhythm that demands to be heard and sung on its own terms. Her scripts look like jazz scores, the rhythm of each phrase denoted with slash marks, words capitalized frequently to mark emphasis, the grammar presented on the page as a visual expression of identity. The final product resembles not a traditional play script but a linguistic installation, a testament to the fact that these word-songs can only be delivered and fully received through performance. And that they are, in rather spectacular fashion. A woman telling these particular stories creates both distance and empathy. She is reaching out as both an artist and a human being, giving voice to boys and men who are dealing with trauma, lending understanding and love to what lies outside her direct experience as a woman. And that, my friends, is a formula for great theatre. Sincerely, Tony Taccone

Prologue: Dael and Eve could not be more different, and yet each in her own way uses the power of storytelling to bringâ€”really to demandâ€”that we engage our hearts and minds in the lives of people from whom we rarely hear. Both women speak with an urgency that derives from their intense passion. If you are a subscriber, Black n Blue Boys is your last show of the season. Emotional Creature is funny, joyful and deeply movingâ€”the perfect complement to Black n Blue Boys. What do you think your responsibilities are as a storyteller? Of course you want there to be some deeper truth that resonates, and you want to reach people. You still have to write your plays, you still have to be in touch with the world and in touch with yourself, so when you start doing the spokesperson stuff, you limit yourself because you end up being a crowd-pleaser. And that does not interest me at all. I think that comes across not only in your work, but in your public profile, and even in preparing for this interview, I Googled you. No, there is not. So can you say a little bit about where the project came from, and how you came to want to do this one? You know, things always come to me. Years ago I used to work as a social worker, and I was working in this house for runaway kids. It was hard, because it was actually an emergency shelter, which meant there was a high turnover. And those people had interesting stories. I would hear a lot from boys about them being molested and abused by women, not just men. As a writer, an actor and a rock fan, gender stuff always comes up. I came across a blurb somewhere or a quote that said some of the best actors are people who are androgynous. If you think about it, lots of the ones who are part of the collective unconscious, like Brando and James Dean, really are. These are the people who shake your senses, when they challenge what all that [gender role] stuff means. How old is he? Oh my God, you just reminded me, he had a birthday. I gotta call him. Even when you watch Brando, there are these incredible moments when the planes of his face become almost feminine. There are varying degrees, and in terms of behavior, it has always interested me how we treat boys and how we treat girlsâ€”the conditioning of both the sexes. And going beyond that, what joins us as people. So we never really think about men being abused; we think about the penis being a weapon. I think this is where sexual stereotypes come in, when people automatically assume that if a woman can give birth, she becomes nurturing. And there are certain women who have no business having kids. Like there are certain men who have no business having kids. How do we as women play into the machoism that a lot of people despise? How did you figure out that you wanted it to be all men in the play? I guess because of what I just said. I think there is a masculine within me, and then there is a human within me. But in certain ways, I could talk to guysâ€”I mean, when I was a kid, you know the ways certain women can gather together and talk amongst themselves? I guess that might be the androgynous aspect of stuff too. You have a real fearlessness about going to dark places in your work. Is that

natural for you or did you have to cultivate that skill? There is beauty within the other. There is a dark sexuality. And then you come into a light. Or, again, the dark richness. It took me a long time to really understand Billie Holiday, for instance. I grew up around her music. You know, whether people care to admit it or not, they listen to that. You can really learn from the dark. Do people ever say it to you? Do people ever tell you your work is too dark? And do you say the same thing that you just said to me to them? I do say that. By that what I mean is this: But the work is getting darker. What is your favorite thing an audience member has ever said to you? You know who it came from?

### Chapter 3 : Chicago Tribune - We are currently unavailable in your region

*Bold, beautiful and fierce-Dael Orlandersmith delivers a riveting story in Black n Blue Boys / Broken blog.quintoapp.com gritty play portrays five unforgettable male characters, linked by their efforts to forge identities in families fractured by abuse.*

### Chapter 4 : Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men at Berkeley Rep

*Created as an arresting one-woman show, Dael Orlandersmith gives us six unforgettable male characters whose outward dissimilarities belie their inescapable I.*

### Chapter 5 : Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men â€¹ Soft Skull Press

*Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men: Solo drama. Written and performed by Dael Orlandersmith. Directed by Chay Yew. Through June Berkeley Repertory's Thrust Stage, Addison St., Berkeley.*

### Chapter 6 : Review: BLACK N BLUE BOYS/ BROKEN MEN | The Chicago Defender

*Black N Blue Boys/Broken Men Abused and abusing, the titular figures in "Black N Blue Boys/Broken Men" struggle to escape cycles of domestic violence.*

### Chapter 7 : Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men - Goodman Theatre - Chicago

*States, its territories, possessions and Canada for BLACK N BLUE BOYS / BROKEN MEN are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., Park Avenue South, New York, NY*

### Chapter 8 : Horsedreams and Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men | The Feminist Spectator

*Berkeley Rep Artistic Director Tony Taccone and Resident Dramaturg Madeliene Oldham talk with Writer / Performer Dael Orlandersmith and Director Chay Yew about the world premiere play, Black n.*

### Chapter 9 : Black N Blue Boys/Broken Men â€œ Variety

*The first thing to know about Dael Orlandersmith's Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men is that there is no intermission. The one-woman show, based on Orlandersmith's experience working as a social.*