

THEATRE RHINOCEROS PUBLIC RELATIONS – E MAIL – jtally@therhino.org Tel. Cell. 510-506-4924 (DO NOT PUBLISH THIS #)

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***Theatre Rhinoceros, in association with Cal State East Bay
Department of Theatre and Dance, presents:***

BLOOD AT THE ROOT

Written by Dominique Morrisseau | Directed by Darryl V. Jones | Choreographed by Laura E. Ellis.

A Live On-Line & On-Demand Streaming Production

November 6 - 15, 2020

Limited Engagement - 2 Weeks Only!

Live opening performance: Friday, November 6 at 7:30 pm.

On-Demand available Saturday, November 7 through November 15.

Performance Location: Online Streaming of Recorded Zoom Movie.

SYNOPSIS:

A striking new ensemble drama based on the Jena Six; six Black students who were initially charged with attempted murder for a school fight after being provoked with nooses hanging from a tree on campus. This bold new play by Dominique Morrisseau (*Ain't Too Proud*, *Sunset Baby*, *Detroit '67*, *Skeleton Crew*) examines the miscarriage of justice, racial double standards, and homophobia as they intersect in teen culture.

When the central character, a black female student named Raylynn, decides it's time for a change in her high school, she sits under a tree around which only white students regularly gather. In response—as was the case in Jena—nooses are subsequently hung from that tree, causing many black students to erupt in protest. Things come to a head when six black students, including Raylynn's brother, attack a gay white student and are brought up on trumped-up charges.

Shows are available on-demand and may be ordered at www.therhino.org

To arrange an interview with the director or for additional info, contact **Joseph Tally**, jtally@therhino.org

BIOS:

Dominique Morriseau (Playwright) is the author of *The Detroit Project* (A 3-Play Cycle) which includes the following plays: *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company), *Paradise Blue* (Signature Theatre), and *Detroit '67* (Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem and NBT). Additional plays include: *Pipeline* (Lincoln Center Theatre), *Sunset Baby* (LAByrinth Theatre); *Blood at the Root* (National Black Theatre) and *Follow Me To Nellie's* (Premiere Stages). She is also the TONY nominated book writer on the new Broadway musical *Ain't Too Proud – The Life and Times of the Temptations* (Imperial Theatre). Dominique is alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writer's Group, Women's Project Lab, and Lark Playwrights Workshop and has developed work at Sundance Lab, Williamstown Theatre Festival and Eugene O'Neil Playwrights Conference. She most recently served as Co-Producer on the Showtime series "Shameless" (3 seasons). Additional awards include: Spirit of Detroit Award, PoNY Fellowship, Sky-Cooper Prize, TEER Trailblazer Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, Audelco Awards, NBFT August Wilson Playwriting Award, Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, OBIE Award (2), Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, Variety's Women of Impact for 2017-18, and a recent MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow.

Darryl V. Jones (Director) is Full Professor of Theatre at Cal State East Bay where he teaches in the Musical Theatre, Acting and Directing concentrations. At CSUEB Prof. Jones has directed several west coast premieres of new plays including *Follow Me To Nellie's* by Dominique Morriseau and *Xtigone* by Nambi Kelley, which was chosen to attend the Region VII American College Theatre Festival. The list of musicals he has directed and sometimes co-choreographed at CSUEB includes *In The Heights*, *Chicago*, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *Godspell* and *The Wiz*.

Prof. Jones's professional directing work in the Bay Area includes the musical *Spunk* for The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Company and *A Soulful Christmas* in which he was also a featured performer. He directed *Welcome Home* for the Aurora Theatre's GAP series and the world premiere of the opera *Dark River*, based on the life of civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer for the Oakland Opera Company. He subsequently directed the East Coast premiere of *Dark River* at Mt. Holyoke College. Prof. Jones also directed August Wilson's *Gem Of The Ocean* for the Sacramento Theatre Company. He is an active member of Actors Equity Association and has performed for theatre companies such as The Lorraine Hansberry, Theatre Rhinoceros, Arena Stage, The Old Globe, Ford's Theatre and The Kennedy Center. He was nominated for a TBA Award for his performance in Theatre Rhino's *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, where he also directed *The Brothers Size* and appeared in *The Call*.

Prof. Jones holds a Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance from The Catholic University of America, School of Music and a Master of Fine Arts in Directing from the Boston University School of Theatre.

CSU East Bay Department of Theatre and Dance has a performance-oriented program offering undergraduate students, unparalleled opportunity to perform in major department productions beginning in their first year. Our campus is the most diverse in the entire CSU system and we have one of the most innovative theatre and dance curriculums in the state. Former students work professionally and hold teaching positions locally and across the nation in Acting, Dance, Technical Theater, Design and Stage Management.

THEATRE RHINOCEROS - Founded in 1977, The Rhino is the longest running LGBT theatre in the nation. We develop and produce works of theatre that enlighten, enrich, and explore both the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of our queer community. Our emphasis is on new works, works about under-represented members of the larger queer community, and revivals of lesser known queer classics. Over the years Theatre Rhinoceros has received many awards of recognition including: Theatre Rhinoceros Day in the City Proclamation from Mayor Gavin Newsom, State Assembly Certificate of Recognition from Senator Mark Leno, recognitions from Congressperson Nancy Pelosi and Assembly Persons Tom Ammiano and Carole Migden, numerous Cable Car, BATCC and TBA Awards and Nominations, and the GLAAD Media Award for Best LGBT Theatre.

Calendar Editors:

WHAT: *Theatre Rhinoceros in association with Cal State East Bay presents*
BLOOD AT THE ROOT

Written by Dominique Morisseau and Directed by Darryl V. Jones:

Synopsis: MacArthur Genius Morisseau's adaptation of the true story of the Jena 6, when six Black teenagers, provoked by a racial incident, attacked a gay white student and are tried for attempted murder.

WHEN: On-Demand available Saturday, November 7 through November 15.

Performance Location: Online Streaming of Recorded Zoom Movie.

Tickets are \$25 and available at www.therhino.org

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

15 seconds:

Synopsis: MacArthur Genius Morisseau's adaptation of the true story of the Jena 6, when six Black teenagers, provoked by a racial incident, attacked a gay white student and are tried for attempted murder.

BLOOD AT THE ROOT is a live and on-demand production. Tickets are \$25 and are available at www.therhino.org

30 seconds:

Theatre Rhinoceros invites you to view MacArthur Genius Morisseau's adaptation of the true story of the Jena 6, when nooses hung from trees on campus provoke six Black teenagers to attack a gay white student and are tried for attempted murder. A searing portrayal of the intersection of racism, homophobia, and teen culture.

BLOOD AT THE ROOT is a live and on-demand production. Tickets are \$25 and are available at www.therhino.org

1 minute:

Theatre Rhinoceros invites you to the first show of its new season – live and on-line.

Theatre Rhinoceros invites you to view MacArthur Genius Morisseau's adaptation of the true story of the Jena 6. When an African American student challenges tradition by sitting in the shade of a tree reserved for White students, nooses are hung from trees in response. This provokes six Black teenagers to attack a gay white student. The six students are subsequently tried as adults for attempted murder. Blood at the Root is a searing portrayal of the intersection of racism, homophobia, and teen culture.

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