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PORTLANDCENTERSTAGE

The Guide

A Theatergoer's Resource

Forever

By Dael Orlandersmith

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American Theater Magazine: Dael Orlandersmith Is a Poet of Life's Complexity

<http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/12/11/dael-orlandersmith-is-a-poet-of-lifes-complexity/>

“Still, despite her unconventional plays and personal topics, Orlandersmith emphasizes the basics. ‘Theatre works by storytelling and character,’ she says, recalling the time she sat in the audience for *Death of a Salesman* with Brian Dennehy and noticed a Hasidic Jew and a Sikh sitting next to each other. “They didn’t know each other, but after the show both were weeping and saying, ‘That was my father.’ That’s what I’m talking about.”

The World of the Play: from Harlem to Paris

“In *Forever*, Père Lachaise serves as a source of inspiration, a contemplative space, and a community of painters, playwrights, actors, poets, singers, and philosophers who form her artistic family.”

<http://www.pere-lachaise.com/>

“The world’s most visited cemetery, Père Lachaise, opened in 1804. Its 70,000 ornate, even ostentatious, tombs of the rich and/or famous form a verdant, 44-hectare sculpture garden. The most visited are those of 1960s rock star Jim Morrison (division 6) and Oscar Wilde (division 89). Pick up cemetery maps at the conservation office near the main bd de Ménilmontant entrance.

Other notables buried here are composer Chopin; playwright Molière; poet Apollinaire; writers Balzac, Proust, Gertrude Stein and Colette; actors Sarah Bernhardt and Yves Montand; painters Pissarro, Seurat, Modigliani and Delacroix; chanteuse Édith Piaf; and dancer Isadora Duncan.

Also of interest, more for the tale than tomb, is the Mur des Fédérés (Wall of the Federalists). On 27 May 1871, the last of the Communard insurgents, cornered by government forces, fought a hopeless, all-night battle among the tombstones. In the morning, the 147 survivors were lined up against this completely ordinary, plain brick wall, shot, and buried where they fell in a mass grave. Commemorative memorials to those who died during almost every other war in modern history lie opposite to form an emotive alleyway – it is impossible not to be moved.”

HARLEM Neighborhoods: Then and Now

<http://briefnytw.tumblr.com/post/115785260652/neighborhoods-then-and-now>

<http://briefnytw.tumblr.com/post/116401575482/neighborhoods-then-and-now-pt-2>

Dael's Artistic Family

Dael's Playlist: <http://briefnytw.tumblr.com/post/115787931927/daels-mixtape-forever-at-new-york-theatre>

Jim Morrison: Born on December 8, 1943, in Melbourne, Florida, **Jim Morrison** was an American rock singer and songwriter. He studied film at UCLA, where he met the members of what would become the Doors. Known for his drinking and drug use and outrageous stage behavior, in 1971 Morrison left the Doors to write poetry and moved to Paris, where he died of heart failure. **The Doors**, one of the most influential and controversial rock bands of the 1960s, were formed in Los Angeles in 1965 by UCLA film students **Ray Manzarek**, keyboards, and **Jim Morrison**, vocals; with drummer **John Densmore** and guitarist **Robby Krieger**. The group never added a bass player, and their sound was dominated by Manzarek's electric organ work and Morrison's deep, sonorous voice, with which he sang and intoned his highly poetic lyrics. The group signed to Elektra Records in 1966 and released its first album, *The Doors*, featuring the hit "**Light My Fire**," in 1967.

<http://www.allmusic.com/album/the-doors-mw0000650088>

Chopin: Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liTSRH4fix4> <http://www.biography.com/people/frederic-chopin-9247162>

Edith Piaf: <https://search.yahoo.com/search?p=edith+piaf&fr=yfp-t-467&fr2=p%3Afp%2Cm%3Asb>

<http://www.biography.com/people/edith-piaf-9439893>

Light My Fire

You know that it would be untrue
You know that I would be a liar
If I was to say to you
Girl, we couldn't get much higher

Come on baby, light my fire
Come on baby, light my fire
Try to set the night on fire

The time to hesitate is through
No time to wallow in the mire
Try now we can only lose
And our love become a funeral pyre

Come on baby, light my fire
Come on baby, light my fire
Try to set the night on fire, yeah

The time to hesitate is through
No time to wallow in the mire
Try now we can only lose
And our love become a funeral pyre

Come on baby, light my fire
Come on baby, light my fire
Try to set the night on fire, yeah

You know that it would be untrue
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Come on baby, light my fire
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Try to set the night on fire
Try to set the night on fire
Try to set the night on fire
Try to set the night on fire

The End by The Doors

This is the end, beautiful friend
This is the end, my only friend, the end
Of our elaborate plans, the end
Of everything that stands, the end
No safety or surprise, the end
I'll never look into your eyes, again

Can you picture what will be, so limitless and free
Desperately in need, of some, stranger's hand
In a, desperate land

Dael's Literary Family

Patti Smith's Poetry - This "godmother of punk" first published her poetry in 1972. Known for her stream-of-consciousness style, her poetry has been published in a number of collections: *Babel* (1978), *Early Work, 1970–1979* (1994), *The Coral Sea* (1996), and *Patti Smith Complete: Lyrics, Reflections & Notes for the Future* (1998). To read more, [click here](#).

CBGB was the infamous rock club of the Lower East Side and the place where Dael first heard Patti Smith. To many music buffs around the world, CBGB was more than a venue – it defined and housed the Punk scene of the 70s. In 2006, the club was shut down; many saw its closure as symbolic of New York City's final departure from the culture of the East Village that Dael lived and breathed in the 70s and 80s. [Click here](#) to take a virtual tour of CBGB before its closing.

Our Lady of Flowers by Jean Genet – The 1943 debut novel of the French writer follows the journey of a male prostitute through the Parisian underworld. Originally written while in prison, Genet had to rewrite the novel after the first draft was discovered and destroyed by prison guards. Considered his masterpiece, the piece is remembered for its poetic and lyrical style.

The Bluest Eyes by Toni Morrison - This book depicts racism in the American Midwest through the story of a young black girl named Pecola Breedlove. Morrison wrote the novel while she was teaching at Howard University in 1970.

Arthur Rimbaud's Poetry - This French poet's work has influenced many 20th century artists, from Picasso to Kerouac, despite only writing poetry from the ages of 17 -20. Born in 1854, Rimbaud traveled extensively before dying from cancer in 1891 at the age of 37. Rimbaud's desire to develop new styles of poetry led to lyrical and abstract images in his work, which later influenced Symbolists, Dadaists, and Surrealists. To read more, [click here](#)

Black Boy by Richard Wright - Wright's 1945 memoir chronicles his childhood in the South and his young adult life in Chicago. Originally published as two separate novels, both parts were finally published posthumously as a single book in 1991 under the title *Black Boy* (*American Hunger*).

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoyevsky - Originally published in twelve installments in 1866, the Russian novel follows an impoverished ex-student who plans to kill a pawnbroker and use the victim's money to perform good deeds. The character is plagued internally as he attempts to understand his dilemma: can something as terrible as murder be justified if it is for a greater good?

Another Country by James Baldwin - Published in 1962, Baldwin's novel weaves together the narratives of several individuals in New York City's Greenwich Village, all tied together by jazz musician Rufus Scott. The novel explores bisexuality, interracial relationships, and extramarital affairs, among many topics.

Long Day's Journey into Night by Eugene O'Neill - Though written in 1941, the play was published only after O'Neill's death and posthumously earned the playwright a 1957 Pulitzer Prize. The drama covers a single day of the Tyrones at their seaside Connecticut home. Parallel's between the play's family and the playwright's own autobiography are often drawn. The play has spawned many international productions and several film adaptations; the most famous being the 1962 adaptation starring Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson, Jason Robards, and Dean Stockwell.

East of Eden by John Steinbeck - The novel was originally published in September 1952, and focuses on the lives of two families, the Trasks and the Hamiltons, in the Salinas Valley, California. Steinbeck considered it his magnum opus, his great work.

Oscar Wilde's Body of Work - This Irish author, playwright, and poet is best known for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. His only novel *Dorian Gray* follows the title character as he sells his soul to retain his physical beauty and later suffers the consequences of his misdeeds. *Earnest*, considered Wilde's most popular play, satirizes Victorian life. His witty humor, flamboyant personality, and public criticism of Victorian culture brought him both an adoring public and persecution by the British law.

Richard Wright: <http://www.biography.com/people/richard-wright-9537751>

Oscar Wilde: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilde_oscar.shtml

Proust: <http://www.proust-ink.com/biography/> <http://www.proust-ink.com/>

Patti Smith: <http://www.biography.com/people/patti-smith-9487150#comeback-and-legacy>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPwOfwhpiW8>

'DREAMS' Paul Laurence Dunbar

“What dreams we have
And how they fly
Like rosy clouds across the sky
Of wealth, of fame, of sure success,
Of love that comes to cheer and bless
And how they wither, how they fade
The waving wealth, the jilting jade
The fame that for a moment gleams
Then flies forever – Dreams- Ah dreams”

O burning doubt and long regret
O tears with which our eyes are wet,
Heart-throbs, heart-aches, the glut of pain,
The somber cloud, the bitter rain,
You were not of those dreams — ah! well,
Your full fruition who can tell?
Wealth, fame, and love, ah! love that beams
Upon our souls, all dreams — ah! dreams.