

# PRESS RELEASE

**STUDIO**

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**DAEL ORLANDERSMITH'S *UNTIL THE FLOOD* STAGED AS AN ENSEMBLE PIECE FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH FELICIA CURRY, ORA JONES, BILLIE KRISHAWN AMPLIFYING THE URGENCY OF RACIAL JUSTICE BY EMBODYING ONE COMMUNITY'S PAIN AND RESILIENCE**

***Until the Flood***

Written by **Dael Orlandersmith**  
Directed by **Reginald L. Douglas**  
Streaming at [studiotheatre.org](http://studiotheatre.org) from April 16 – May 9, 2021  
Press streaming begins April 15, 2021—RSVP for a digital ticket

“Orlandersmith gives expression to America’s racial stalemate with lyrical flow. Written with as much empathy as outrage...Until the Flood assures that the struggle lives on.”

—*Los Angeles Times*

“An urgent moral inquest.”

—*The New York Times*

In his directorial debut at **Studio Theatre**, Associate Artistic Director **Reginald L. Douglas** has reimaged Pulitzer Prize finalist **Dael Orlandersmith**’s searing solo work ***Until the Flood*** as an ensemble piece for a multigenerational cast of Black women that captures how tragedy in one community became a flashpoint for racial justice across the United States. Starring **Felicia Curry, Ora Jones, and Billie Krishawn**, *Until the Flood* will stream on Studio’s website ([studiotheatre.org](http://studiotheatre.org)) from **April 16 – May 9, 2021**. Commissioned by the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Orlandersmith wrote *Until the Flood* in response to the 2014 murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri at the hands of a police officer, integrating dozens of interviews with local residents into a documentary theatre piece about pain, resilience, unanswered questions, and deep division that remains as salient today as ever.

“I am honored to be making my Studio debut with this poignant, urgent play about the importance of a diverse community coming together to reflect on the history of injustice in our country while sparking a new dialogue about the hope and change that we can inspire together,” said Douglas. “I believe wholeheartedly in the power of theatre, and plays like *Until the Flood* specifically, to catalyze conversations that can spur civic change and empathy and am excited to share this fervent call to action with DC audiences.”

“Dael Orlandersmith is one of the stalwarts of solo performance in the United States,” said Studio Artistic Director **David Muse**. “Her plays are vivid and deeply humane, both intensely personal and broadly relatable. With *Until the Flood*, we welcome her back to Studio with a timely story of a community in the aftermath of a shooting that changed the conversation about racial justice and police brutality in the United States.”

### **About *Until the Flood***

When Michael Brown was shot by a police officer in Ferguson in 2014, the outrage and protests that followed were a wake-up call to some and familiar, exhausting news to others. Dael Orlandersmith draws from dozens of interviews across Ferguson’s communities in *Until the Flood*, using one specific flashpoint of race and power to look at the ongoing pain of a litany of Black deaths at the hands of police. Studio Associate Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas reimagines Orlandersmith’s solo play with a cross-generational ensemble of three Black women, celebrating the resolve for justice that remains as urgent today as it was seven years ago.

### **About Dael Orlandersmith**

Dael Orlandersmith returns to Studio after premiering her play *Stoop Stories* here in 2009. *Until the Flood* was commissioned by St. Louis Rep, where it premiered in 2016. It has also been produced at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Milwaukee Rep, the Goodman Theatre, ACT Theatre, and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Dael’s other work includes: *Forever* (premiere at Center Theatre Group, 2014); *Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men*, a co-commission between the Goodman Theatre and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where it premiered in 2012; *Horsedreams* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, 2011); *Bones*, commissioned by and premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in 2010; *The Blue Album*, a collaboration with David Cale (Long Wharf Theatre, 2007); *Yellowman*, commissioned by and premiered at McCarter Theatre Center in 2002 in a co-production with The Wilma Theater and Long Wharf Theatre (Pulitzer Prize finalist, Drama Desk Award finalist); *The Gimmick*, commissioned by McCarter Theatre, where it premiered in 1998 (Susan Smith Blackburn Award winner); and *Monster* (New York Theatre Workshop, 1996). She is working on a new play called *New Age* for Milwaukee Rep, and another play for the Goodman Theatre. She is also currently working on a book of autofiction.

Dael has toured extensively with the Nuyorican Poets Café (Real Live Poetry) throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. *Yellowman* and a collection of her earlier works have been published by Vintage Books and Dramatists Play Service. She is the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant, the Helen Merrill Award for Playwrighting, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2005 PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a playwright in mid-career.

### **About Reginald L. Douglas**

Reginald L. Douglas is a director, producer, and advocate dedicated to creating new work and supporting new voices, and Studio’s Associate Artistic Director. His passion and acumen for both new play development and re-investigating the classics have led him to theatres across the country, including directing work at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, TheaterWorks, the Contemporary American Theater Festival, Everyman Theatre, Weston Playhouse, Pittsburgh CLO, Arizona Theatre Company, TheatreSquared, Playwrights’ Center, Profile Theatre, The Playwrights Realm, The Kennedy Center, National New Play Network Showcase at B Street Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Florida Repertory Theatre, Luna Stage, Harlem Stage, wild project, The Pershing Square Signature Center, Drama League, The Lark,

New York Theatre Workshop (where he was an inaugural 2050 Directing Fellow), and City Theatre Company in Pittsburgh, where he served as the Artistic Producer from 2015-2020.

Reginald has developed and directed plays and musicals by many acclaimed writers, including Dominique Morisseau, Cori Thomas, Angelica Chéri, Lynn Nottage, Nikkole Salter, Kemp Powers, Jen Silverman, Ngozi Anyanwu, Brian Quijada, Matt Schatz, Amy Evans, Zakiyyah Alexander & Imani Uzuri, Dave Harris, Francisca Da Silveira, Khalil Kain, Chisa Hutchinson, Tarrance Arvelle Chisholm, Josh Wilder, Larry Powell, Harrison David Rivers, Donja R. Love, Herb Newsome, Craig “muMs” Grant, Korde Arrington Tuttle, a.k. payne, Jessica Dickey, Laura Brienza, Kevin R. Free, Brent Askari, Micah Ariel Watson, and several others. He currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the National New Play Network; regularly serves on the selection committees for local and national fellowships and grants; has spoken at several national conferences and festivals; and is a guest lecturer at the New School and the O’Neill’s National Theater Institute. Reginald is a proud graduate of Georgetown University, a member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and the recipient of the National Theatre Conference’s 2020 Emerging Professional Award. [www.reginalddouglas.com](http://www.reginalddouglas.com).

### About the Cast

**Ora Jones** (ensemble) made her Studio debut in *Curve of Departure* in the 2017-2018 season. She is a member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble, where she was most recently seen in *The Children*. She also appeared in *Familiar*, *The Roommate*, and *The Doppelgänger (an international farce)* in the past few seasons there. Her Broadway roles include Madame de Volanges in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at the Booth Theatre and Mrs. Phelps in *Matilda the Musical*, both at the Shubert Theater and in the first national tour. Regional and other New York credits include performances at Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theater, Milwaukee Rep, Next Act Theatre, and a particular favorite, the role of Mrs. Muller in *Doubt: A Parable* for The Weston Playhouse in Weston, VT, directed by Malcolm Ewen. Some film and television appearances include *Consumed*, *Were the World Mine*, *Stranger than Fiction*, *Betrayal*, and *Chicago Fire*.

**Billie Krishawn** (ensemble) is a Helen Hayes Award-winning actor, visual artist, and activist originally from Washington, DC. Her theatre credits include *Blood at the Root* at Theater Alliance; *HERstory: Love Forever*, *Hip Hop* at The Kennedy Center; *Melancholy Play: A Contemporary Farce*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth* at Constellation Theatre Company; *Airness* at 1st Stage and Keegan Theatre; *Treasure Island* at Synetic Theater; *A Civil War Christmas* at 1st Stage; *Andromeda Breaks* and *America’s Wives* with Capital Fringe; *Émilie: La Marquise Du Châtelet Defends her Life Tonight* at WSC Avant Bard; *How Old is a Hero?* at Discovery Theater; *Greensboro Lunch Counter* at The Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History; and *Winnie the Pooh* and *Jumanji* at Adventure Theatre MTC. Her film and television credits include *Water in a Broken Glass* and TV One’s *For My Man*. She is a graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts and Drew University. [www.BillieKrishawn.com](http://www.BillieKrishawn.com). On Instagram at @AbsoluteReality.

**Felicia Curry** (ensemble) is an actor, singer, and performer in the DC area. She has been seen at Studio in *Bloody Andrew Jackson* and *Laugh*. In New York, her credits include *We Three Lizas* at Joe’s Pub, as well as *Dizzy Miss Lizzy Roadside Revue’s The Brontës* and *Petite Rouge* at the New York Musical Festival. Regionally, Felicia has performed in *The Mountaintop* and *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* at Gulfshore Playhouse, and numerous productions at Virginia Repertory Theatre. In the DC area, select credits include *Queens Girl: Black in the Green Mountains* at Everyman Theatre, *Fabulation...* at Mosaic Theater Company, *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* at Signature Theatre,

*Nina Simone: Four Women* at Arena Stage, and *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Boops* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. She has been nominated for nine Helen Hayes Awards, and won for *Lela & Co* at Factory 449. She is a Factory 449 Company Member, a Resident Company Member at Everyman Theatre, and an Artistic Associate at Ford's Theatre.

### About the Creative Team

**Wes Culwell** (Director of Video) is an award-winning producer and director. He founded Studiio Box Creative in 2012 and has been committed to creating visibility around social justice issues as well as establishing Studiio Box as a premier creative agency in the greater Washington, DC area. Wes has spent more than 20 years in production, including nine years producing for networks such as NBC, Bravo, Oxygen, VH1, TLC, and National Geographic. During this challenging year for the arts, Wes has focused his energies on assisting theatrical companies to bring their visions to the digital screen. He received a BA in Drama from the University of California, Irvine and an MFA in Cinema from San Francisco State University. [studioboxdc.com](http://studioboxdc.com).

**Jesse Belsky** (Lighting Designer) previously designed *Pipeline*, *P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle*, *The Remains*, *The Effect*, *Three Sisters*, *No Sisters*, and *Animal* at Studio. Regional credits include *The Magic Play* at Portland Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, and Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Lydia* and *Rough Crossing* at Yale Rep; and *The Year of Magical Thinking* at PlayMakers Repertory Company. Other DC designs include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Ford's Theatre; *JQA* and *The Year of Magical Thinking* at Arena Stage; *Oslo*, *Handbagged*, and *The Book of Will* at Round House Theatre; *The Mystery of Love & Sex* at Signature Theatre; *Henry IV, Part 1*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Folger Theatre; and *Labour of Love*, *The Invisible Hand*, and *The Magic Play* at Olney Theatre Center. Jesse holds a BA from Duke University and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. He has taught lighting design at Connecticut College and UNC Greensboro.

**Elisheba Ittoop** (Sound Designer) is a sound designer, composer, and audio producer. She returns to Studio having designed for *The Big Meal*, *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*, *That Face*, and *The Receptionist*. She has produced podcasts and written music for NPR, CNN, Audible, WGBH, Futuro Media, WFMT Radio Network and Glimmerglass Opera Festival, Wonder Media, Pinna, Three Uncanny Four, and others. Her sound designs and original music for theatre have been heard at The Kennedy Center, The Public Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company, American Repertory Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Manhattan Theatre Club, and many others across the country. She has created sound and music installations for the Bonnaroo Music Festival and the Okeechobee Music & Arts Festival. She has an MFA in Sound Design from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and a BFA in Theatre from New York University. [www.elishebaittoop.com](http://www.elishebaittoop.com).

**Adrien-Alice Hansel** (Dramaturg) is the Literary Director at Studio, where she has dramaturged the world premieres of *I Hate it Here*, *Queen of Basel*, *The Remains*, *No Sisters*, *I Wanna Fucking Tear You Apart*, *Animal*, *Red Speedo*, *Dirt*, *Lungs*, and *The History of Kisses* as well as productions of *Cry It Out*, *Translations*, *Curve of Departure*, *The Effect*, *Wig Out!*, *Straight White Men*, *Cloud 9*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Constellations*, *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *Bad Jews* (twice), *The Apple Family Plays*, *Invisible Man*, *Sucker Punch*, *The Golden Dragon*, and *The New Electric Ballroom*, among others. Prior to joining Studio, she spent eight seasons at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, where she headed the literary department and coordinated project scouting, selection, and development for the Humana Festival of New American Plays. She is the co-editor of eight anthologies of plays from Actors Theatre and editor of 10 editions of plays through Studio. Adrien-Alice holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

**Autumn J. Mitchell** (Stage Manager) (she/they) is a native of Savannah, Georgia. Last year she stage managed *Pass Over* at Studio and she is excited to return for *Until the Flood*. Notable management credits include *The Wiz* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Fences* and *The Man of Destiny* at the American Players Theatre; *Acis and Galatea* and *The Face on the Barroom Floor* at Central City Opera; Lucky Plush Productions' *The Better Half* and *Rink Life* at Steppenwolf Theatre; and Step Afrika!'s *Magical Musical Holiday Step Show* at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. Autumn is an alumna of Alabama State University and holds a BA in Theatre with a concentration in Stage Management and Technical Theatre. Along with being a stage manager, she champions authentic and positive representation of Black and Brown theatre makers in predominantly white institutions.

### **INFORMATION**

Available to stream from [studiotheatre.org](http://studiotheatre.org) on-demand from April 16 – May 9, 2021

5-Play Digital Subscriptions: \$220

Single tickets: \$37, plus service fees

### **ABOUT STUDIO THEATRE**

Studio Theatre is Washington's premier venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). One of the most respected midsized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio's work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Tickets and Subscriptions:** 202.332.3300

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