

Thomas Meloncon's
The Diary of Black Men

PRESS RELEASE

9 June 2013



"How Do You Love A Black Woman?"

*The longest touring and most successful stage
play in black theatre history
returns to England*

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**THE DIARY OF BLACK MEN:
HOW DO YOU LOVE A BLACK WOMAN
by Thomas Meloncon**

**Celebrity/Press night: Thursday 15th August May, 7.30pm
Fairfield Halls, Croydon 15th -18th August 2013
The New Bingley Hall, Birmingham 11 August**

The phenomenon known as "*The Diary of Black Men*" is an exciting and tantalizing theatrical production that has played to sold-out audiences in America and England for nearly a quarter century. Written by Houstonian Thomas Meloncon, this choreo-poem is the longest touring and most successful stage play in black theatre history.

"I'm the most talked about man in America... the black man. Haunted and backed up against the wall by researchers and writers..." - Excerpt from The Diary of Black Men

The plays subtitle "**How Do You Love a Black Woman?**" provokes thoughts of a historical nature and magnitude. Originally penned in the late 70's, this newly updated version addresses the issues of love, trust and black family values that have long been discussed cross-culturally, by economists, politicians, theologians, social scientists and the like, thus making the black man, in the words of Mr. Meloncon, "**...the most talked about animal in America.**" This observation could very well be the catalyst that has consistently packed venues in every corner of this country and abroad. The play attempts to address that statement and the aforementioned question of *black love* through a series of vignettes and scenarios examining the relationships between Black men and women using six male stereotypes: The Player, The Blue Collar Worker, The Militant, The Wall St. Brother, The Black Muslim and "Slick" The Hustler.

The show passionately combines prose, poetry and dance that complements each other in a highly dramatic style. It is a revolutionary piece that delivers art and social commentary creating an emotional response from its audience. It opens with the men perched upon pedestals in tableau. As the warm specials individually illuminates the men, they all, being true to their stereotype and character, offer their pitch to impress the lone female character in the play. The Muslim for instance, offers protection, but with it goes submission. "Come my sister, learn your place as my wife." The Player, a glib smooth operator claims, "I am all man, from head to toe." The Working Man boasts that he "always supports his family." The Militant says he's "not the problem but he is the solution." The Intellectual claims to possess "the three main ingredients any Black woman seeks in a Black man: education, intelligence, and a solid bank account." Slick, a new-age pimp, promises a better way of life brimmed with excitement and romance. The plays' one female character is an exceptional dancer, represents Black women but has no speaking part in the production.

The cast includes **Russell Andrews** (The Player 'Slick'), **Oris Erhuero** (The Muslim), **Clayton LeBouef** (The Militant), **Edwin Lee Gibson** (Blue Collar Man), **Lawrence Gilliard Jr.** (The Lover) and **Daryl Keith Roach** (The Wall Street Brother) and female lead tbc.

Listings information

The Diary of Black Men - Birmingham

Date: 11 August 2013, 8pm

Venue: The New Bingley Hall, 1 Hockley Circus, Birmingham B18 5PP | www.theticketsellers.co.uk

Box Office: 0121 554 6561

The Diary of Black Men - London

Date 15th – 18th August 2013 | **Celebrity/Press Night:** 15th August 2013, 7.30pm

Venue: Fairfield Halls, Park Lane, Croydon CR9 1DG | www.fairfield.co.uk **Box Office:** 020 8688 9291

Online: www.diaryofblackmen.com **Twitter:** [@originaldiary](https://twitter.com/originaldiary) | **Facebook:** [The Diary of Black Men: "How Do You Love A Black Woman?"](https://www.facebook.com/TheDiaryofBlackMen)

CAST

RUSSEL ANDREWS (The Player 'Slick') NAACP©, LA Ovation©, Olivier© Award winner as actor/producer Russell Andrews was a long time collaborator of the late August Wilson. On TV he has had recurring roles in Harry's Law, The Nine, and The Defenders and includes unforgettable turns as The Deacon in Bernie Mac, Agent Huthchins in The In-Laws and Jimmy Weeks in Marvel Comics The Punisher. He also directs The Diary of Black Men.

ORIS ERHUERO (The Muslim) Among his many television and film credits, he's best known for Thames' Television The Bill, HBO's Sometimes In April and The Adventures of Sinbad. As a highly sought after model, Oris has been in international campaigns for the highest esteemed clients in the fashion industry. Among those are Armani, Ferre, Dior and Versace.

CLAYTON LEBOUF (The Militant) An alumnus of the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University, Mr. LeBouef is best known for his breakout recurring role as Colonel George Barnfather in Homicide: Life On The Street. On his constant journey as a social and artistic activist, he's also a playwright and director and has memorable roles n HBO's The Wire and Something The Lord Made.

EDWIN LEE GIBSON (Blue Collar Man) Obie© Award winner Edwin Lee Gibson is a veteran of New York City Stages. His career spans 30 years and over 80 productions. As an author his fourth play, Five 'Til received a National Endowment for the Arts Mondo Cane Commission in 2009.

LAWRENCE GILLIARD JR. (The Lover) Best known as D'Angelo Barksdale in HBO's The Wire, Mr. Gilliard a graduate of The Julliard School in New York has many films and TV credits including The Waterboy, Army Wives and Friday Night Lights.

DARYL KEITH ROACH (The Wall Street Brother) A talented veteran actor whose career spans over four decades, Mr. Roach has starred in many TV and film projects including most recently The First Family, Cougar Town and the critically acclaimed Dirty Sexy Money.

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