



[New Reviews](#) [Previous Reviews](#) [Coming Soon](#) [Archives](#) [Letters](#) [Actors](#)

Ticket Holders

by Travis Michael Holder



[click here for previous reviews](#)

Orestes Remembered: The Fury Project

Ghost Road Company at the Powerhouse

The most inspirational thing about *Orestes Remembered: The Fury Project*, the third and last installment completing the Ghost Road Company's wonderfully irreverent contemporary adaptation of Aeschylus' *The Eumenides*, is that it was created by playwright/director Katharine Noone along with producer Mark Seldis and the members of this very company of players. Now premiering at the Powerhouse, *Orestes Remembered* is a significant moment in the growth of Ghost Road, a troupe of inspired artisans who seem dedicated to presenting rule-breaking theatre for all the right reasons—not the least of which is to accomplish such a monumental feat as this trilogy with a conspicuous lack of ego.

Noone's *Orestes* unfolds in a very unique way that would have certainly flabbergasted audiences gathering in some mammoth arena back in 500 BC when Aeschylus' ancient drama, known through many centuries of retelling as *The Oresteia*, was first performed.

On the otherwise bare and somewhat makeshift Powerhouse stage sits an oversized boxlike set piece designed by Maureen Weiss, which is ingeniously soon opened as though it were a giant steamer

trunk, exposing a series of tiny rooms on various levels where scenes are played out by the stalwartly game actors, who sometimes crouch low to fit into the space, sometimes wind their bodies around an obstruction in the design that keeps them from stretching out.

This is our house... or was our house... their house," the audience is told by Hermione (Margaret Bodi). "The air is heavy here and the weight of it is crushing this house... slowly. Every day something would crack and give way and now... and now... nothing will be left." Of course it was Hermione's Uncle Agamemnon who built this now ramshackle-looking House of Atreus, the great general who was killed by his wife Clytemnestra after he sacrificed their beloved daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis in order to win the Trojan War. Now, after Agamemnon and Clytemnestra's tormented only son Orestes (Ronnie Clark) revenged that revengeful act by subsequently doing in his dear ol' Mum herself, in *Orestes Remembered* he has returned home to grieve and beat himself up for continuing the cycle of violence which has destroyed his family.



Ronnie Clark - Christal Joy Johnson

In a superlative cast, Clark is particularly noteworthy as the anguished title character, trying to work through his own demons even as the gods Apollo and Athena (Jonathan Klein and a jarringly smooth and serenely successful cross-dressing turn by Brian Weir that leaves one wondering if the legendary strength of Athena maybe did indicate that she had as big a set of *cajones* as the ones that here protrude a tad more than slightly from the folds of the character's sleek gown) try to do a little Bush-style damage control—with about the same degree of success.

Add in the machinations of three pick-a-little-talk-a-little Furies, credited by Ghost Road as the “Aunties from Hell,” who are planning the demise of Orestes. “We want him to understand what he has done,” says Tess (Kelsey Barney) to their obvious leader Alex (Cathy Carleton in a hilarious can’t-take-your-eyes-off performance full of both loud Bankhead-y bluster and deliciously underplayed sarcasm and worldclass eye-rolling), who immediately corrects her with, “No, we want him to die.”



Cathy Carleton, Kelsey Barney, Julie Lockhart and Jonathan Klein

But this is only the beginning in the gurlies’ list of atrocities they eventually suggest to inflict. “Do you want to goad him?” asks Meg (Julie Lockhart), but the controlling Alex thinks they’re a little beyond the goading stage—even plucking out his eyeballs is not enough for her. “I want him fucking dead,” she suggests, swigging continuously from her omnipresent hipflask. Since these three harpies were there through the raising of Orestes, a task they acknowledge they failed dismally, Alex realizes they know all the buttons in him to push for a successful finale. “We can bare him naked down to his soul.”

Orestes Remembered: *The Fury Project* marks the final chapter of Aeschylus’ enduring tale that still leaves us lowly humans wondering, considering the horrendously

savage current state of our world and our country's own out of control dictatorship of a regime, if our obviously flawed and imperfect species has learned anything over the past few thousand centuries.

The story of Orestes is made epic once again by the fiercely committed and creative Noone and her Ghost Road Company, finally finishing off with *Orestes Remembered* their ambitious trilogy that began with *Elektra-La-La* in 1995 and *Clyt at Home* in 2001. All three chapters were workshopped over an extended period of time with the participation of the ensemble and, considering how unstoppable this quietly monumental interpretation of *The Eumenides* proves itself to be, one can only fantasize what the company will next attempt. This I guarantee: it won't be *Sound of Music* or the female version of *The Odd Couple*. Thank the gods.

Orestes Remembered: The Fury Project plays through Mar. 31 2007 at the Powerhouse Theatre, 3116 2nd St., Santa Monica; for tickets, call (866) OFF-MAIN.

Comments? Write to us at: Letters@ReviewPlays.Com