

MONSTER THEATRE

The play is inspired by the real life relationship between Lord Byron, arguably the most famous poet of all time and his personal physician Dr John Polidori. It's hard to imagine two more different figures. Byron is rich, aristocratic and pompous, while Polidori is poor, shy and desperate to prove himself. When Byron is chased out of England as a result of his many scandalous affairs, he hires Polidori to accompany him on his travels; to help his health which is being ravaged by insane diets, to keep him always supplied with laudanum, and to provide a punching bag for him and his friends to ridicule.

The first stop on their trip proves to be the last. They take up residence on Lake Geneva where they are joined by poet Percy Shelley and his future wife Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (soon to be Mary Shelley), and Mary's half sister Clair Clairmont who just happens to be pregnant with Byron's baby. One spooky, stormy night, Byron challenges the group to each write a horror story: Mary Shelley writes '*Frankenstein*', and Polidori writes '*The Vampyre*', the first vampire story in literature. '*The Vampyre*' goes on to essentially create the entire genre of vampire plays and books and movies that follow. The question is, who actually wrote it? When it is finally published, it is under Byron's name!

In ***The First Vampire***, Polidori and Byron find themselves together for the first time since their fiery parting, and together they recount the story that both are most famous for - THE VAMPYRE!