



The Creators of *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy* and *'Til Death: The Six Wives of Henry VIII* return with
THE FIRST VAMPIRE

“Monster Theatre is money in the bank” -CBC

Toronto Fringe Festival — Prepare for a spooky, stylish, sexy, heartfelt yet completely irreverent journey through time as Monster Theatre unveils *The First Vampire*. This highly anticipated production stars new Monsters Madeleine Humeny as Lord Byron and Rebecca Wass as John Polidori, and is written and directed by Monster founder and Artistic Director Ryan Gladstone.

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 English 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!

Monster Theatre has been touring fringe hits since 2000. They have evolved to become one of the most successful fringe acts of all time. Last in Toronto in 2022 with their hit *Juliet: A Revenge Comedy* and in 2019 with *Til Death: The Six Wives of Henry VIII*. Ironically, both of these stories were later adapted by others into Broadway hits, so keep an eye out for a Broadway musical based on Polidori and Byron!

Praise for past Monster creations:

“A romp of farcical proportions that will keep your head, your heart, and your funny bone active from beginning to end.” ★★★★★ -Front Row Center, NYC

“...one of the most impressive acting feats in the festival!” ★★★★★-Kevin Prokosh, Winnipeg Free Press

The First Vampire

A Monster Theatre Production
Starring Madeleine Humeny and Rebecca Wass
Written and Directed by Ryan Gladstone
Costume and Projection Design by Nita Bowerman

Toronto Fringe Festival June 30-July 12
Soulpepper Theatre's Michael Young Theatre
50 Tank House Lane - Distillery Historic District

Media Contact: Ryan Gladstone 778.928.0693 monstertheatre@gmail.com

**MONSTER
THEATRE**



