

A NEW PLAY BY RICHARD HERRING

I KILLED RASPUTIN

'I don't know of an instance in modern history where so many reputable as well as disreputable historians have solemnly repeated such a patently improbably story as if it were gospel' – EM Halliday

NICHOLA McAULIFFE & JUSTIN EDWARDS JOIN THE CAST OF I KILLED RASPUTIN

The cast has been announced for RICHARD HERRING's new play I Killed Rasputin, which will run at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe from 31st July to 24th August (press night Saturday 2nd August). *Laurence Olivier Theatre Award* and double *Stage Award* winner Nichola McAuliffe and *Thick of It* and *Best Newcomer Perrier Award* winning star Justin Edwards will join a critically acclaimed cast in Richard Herring's fifth play based on a real life interview between American journalist EM Halliday and Prince Felix Yusupov, one of Rasputin's assassins.

The full cast is: Nichola McAuliffe, Justin Edwards, Eileen Nicholas, Joseph Chance, Joanna Griffin and Stephen Leask.

March 1967 – American journalist EM Halliday visits the aged Russian Prince and conspirator in the murder of Rasputin, Felix Yusupov, improbably still alive half a century after his infamous crime. Ostensibly he is there to discuss a new film about the death of the Mad Monk, but Halliday is keen to discover the truth about what really happened on that fateful night in St Petersburg in December 1916. What were the Prince's real motives for the crime? How did he convince Rasputin to come to the Palace, when he knew his life was in danger? Was the Holy man really so difficult to kill or was the truth more gruesome and prosaic? Who actually fired the fatal shot? Did the assassin and the victim have a sexual relationship? And what happened to Rasputin's legendary penis?

This new play by Richard Herring tries to finally reveal the truth about this horrific, yet oddly hilarious murder, while examining the dark humour of the collapse of Tsarist Russia and the insane profligacy of the aristocracy that precipitated revolution and repressed sexuality.

Plus you will find out some amazing facts about the man who claimed to have pulled the trigger:

- He was once the richest man in Russia, so obscenely wealthy that he discovered a palace that his family had forgotten they owned.
- He was a transvestite, who looked so convincing in women's clothes that he attracted admiring glances from Edward VII.
- He was courted by Hitler to become the Tsar of Russia if the Nazis won the war.
- He's the reason that all movies now come with the disclaimer "Any similarity to persons dead or living is entirely coincidental"

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Joseph Chance

Joseph's theatre includes A Midsummer Night's Dream/Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night/Taming of the Shrew (Propeller Tour); Cyrano de Bergerac (Manchester Royal Exchange); The Spanish Golden Age Season - Pedro, The Great Pretender, The Dog in the Manger, and Tamara's Revenge (RSC). His television work includes; Wallander (BBC One), Family Business and Bloody Britain.

Justin Edwards

Justin won the *Perrier Best Newcomer Award* as part of sketch trio The Consultants, and was nominated for the main award as Jeremy Lion. His television credits include The Thick of It (BBC 2), Harry and Paul's History of the 2's (BBC 2), Black Mirror (Channel 4) and VEEP (HBO).

Joanna Griffin

Joanna Griffin is an accomplished stage actress, having performed in Privacy and The Same Deep Water As Me (both Donmar Warehouse) and in Clown Slut: a one-woman show, written and performed by Joanna, which she is taking to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this August.

Stephen Leask

Stephen Leask's credits include One Man, Two Guvnors (Theatre Royal Haymarket), Newsrevue (Edinburgh Festival), and new BBC drama Our World War.

Nichola McAuliffe

Nichola remains the only person to have twice been named *Best Actress* at the *Stage Awards For Acting Excellence* (2001, 2012). She also received a *Laurence Olivier Theatre Award* for her performance of Kate in Kiss Me Kate (RSC). Other stage credits include Alan Bennett's 'The Lady in the Van', and TV work includes seven series as Sheila Sabatini in Surgical Spirit (ITV), as Drusilla in Blandings (BBC) and in 'The Only Way is Shakespeare' for Live at the Electric (BBC).

Eileen Nicholas

Eileen Nicholas is an international (and Edinburgh Festival) award-winning actress whose work includes playing Ewan McGregor's mother in Trainspotting, the critically-acclaimed multi award-winning film Bomber and work in London's West End, The Traverse, The Royal Lyceum, The Bush, The Donmar and The Royal Court.

Hannah Banister, Director

Theatre credits as Director include *Gardening: For The Unfulfilled and Alienated* (fringe first award winner and Sell out run at the Edinburgh and Latitude Festivals 2013), *Trapp* (24 Hour Plays/The Old Vic), as associate director *Another Country* at Trafalgar studios.

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Writer Richard Herring is a comedian and writer involved in almost every Edinburgh Fringe since 1987. I Killed Rasputin is his fifth play: previous works include Punk's Not Dead and Excavating Rita. He also wrote the ITV1 comedy drama You Can Choose Your Friends and is developing a satire of modern day politics for Channel 4 entitled Little Hitler.

Set/Costume Designer: Stephanie Williams

Casting Direction: Amelie Powell

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Richard Herring – I Killed Rasputin

Venue: Assembly George Square Theatre

Date: 31st July – 24th August

Time: 15:35

Box Office: 0131 623 3030

Web: wearelivecomedy.com

For more information, cast or writer interviews and press tickets, please contact:

edinburghpress@avalonuk.com or phone: Lottie Doran, Victoria Wedderburn or Danica Priest

Fans of Richard Herring can buy a combo ticket for I Killed Rasputin and Richard's brand-new stand up show Lord of the Dance Settee at a discounted price of £20 (weekdays) and £25 (weekends).

Lord of the Dance Settee: After covering weighty issues like death, love, religion and spam javelins, "The King of Edinburgh" (List) returns with a show about daftness, being uncool and bouncing joyously on the sofa.

"Dependably funny" Chortle.