

## Press Release

BASTARD. DRUNK. ACTOR. GENIUS.

The international Prodigal Theatre will present their multi award-winning

The Tragedian Trilogy

At [enter name of theatre] at [enter time] each day from [enter date] to [enter date and month] as part of the [enter name of festival].

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1814 Edmund Kean stepped on stage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane and changed British Theatre forever. But he was no overnight success. He was a grieving, drunken, megalomaniac. He was poetry in motion.

Created over six years Prodigal's Tragedian Trilogy details the Rise to Fame, Fall to Infamy and Decline to Legend of the first trans-Atlantic superstar.

"We use the audience as characters in the drama" Director/Dramaturge Miranda Henderson explains; "And the piece is very physical, so even though there is a lot of text the plays transcend language"

"And the story seems very familiar because of today's celebrities" O'Loughlin adds "They haven't changed a bit."

In order to accurately portray Kean O'Loughlin undertook a condensed study of tumbling, fencing, pugilism (19<sup>th</sup> Century Boxing), ballet ("The hardest of all") and singing. Kean was a well known all rounder before finding fame as leading actor. Fellow Kean fan and Prodigal's mentor Steven Berkoff introduced himself after seeing the first part of the Trilogy at the Edinburgh Fringe.

*"The show deeply impressed me; not only its skill and audacity, but the ability to bring all those aspects of acting together to serve his purpose in creating this extraordinary drama-documentary on Kean."* Mr Berkoff remembered, speaking in The Independent *"It was inventive, imaginative and dynamic."*

At the Edinburgh Festival Fringe performer/writer Alister O'Loughlin was nominated for the "Best Actor" Award at the Stage Awards for Acting Excellence, where the plays won a Three Weeks Editors Award and in the same year took "Best Actor" at the Brighton Festival.

**ENDS**

## NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Contact Alister O'Loughlin on +447880 704380 for interviews and further information
- The Tragedian Trilogy is supported by the Arts Council of England, South East and Made in Brighton.
- It was developed with the Nightingale Theatre, where Prodigal Theatre are the actor-managers.
- Steven Berkoff is the Patron of the Nightingale Theatre.
- Edmund Kean (1789 – 1833) rose from the humblest of origins to become “The first actor of the English Stage” following his Drury Lane debut in 1814. He went on to dominate the stage until his death.
- Kean was scandalised in 1825 following an affair with the wife of a London Alderman who eventually sued him for “criminal conversation”. Kean’s letters to the woman were published in the press and his reputation ruined.
- Kean was the first English actor to break America, touring both the USA and Canada to great acclaim, and causing riots there after the scandal.
- Kean’s son was with him on stage when Kean collapsed during his last performance. Kean died a few weeks later but his son, Charles Kean, went on to be one of the great actor-managers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Infamous for the drinking and affairs which eventually destroyed his health, Kean was rightfully acknowledged as the professional heir to David Garrick and the school of naturalism. Kean inherited Garrick’s “Richard III” sword and his own (possibly the same) was passed through the decades via Terry, Irving and Gielgud to Laurence Olivier, in whom his legacy lived on.
- For more information on Prodigal Theatre see [www.prodigaltheatre.co.uk](http://www.prodigaltheatre.co.uk)