


Stratford Productions

TOUR PACK



**The remarkable story of one of the greatest
actor-managers of the 19th Century
William Charles Macready**

DRAMA KING

A compelling new solo show

Written & performed by Mark Stratford

(SMALL-SCALE) ~ BOOKING FOR 2021/22

www.stratfordproductions.co.uk

Drama King - ABOUT THE SHOW

This compelling new one-man show, written and performed by Mark Stratford, tells the story of William Charles Macready, one of the greatest actor-managers of the 19th Century.



The story of Macready - the man to whom Charles Dickens dedicated *Nicholas Nickleby* - is one of the most remarkable ever to come out of the Theatre.

With humour, drama, emotion, and an array of characters, Stratford takes us through the highlights of Macready's life including his first tentative steps on stage in a tatty country theatre to his final ever performance at the mighty Drury Lane.

Trailer video link: <https://www.stratfordproductions.co.uk/dramaking>

"One man shows, done well, are absorbing and showcase actors at the top of their game; if not they risk being entertaining for the wrong reasons. Thankfully, Stratford's performance is so good it belongs in the former category."



(CAMERON DUNHAM of 'Remote Goat', Camden Fringe - in praise of Mark Stratford's other solo show *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*.)

Length of Show:

With no interval: 80 minutes

With interval:

1st half = 40 mins, 2nd half = 40 mins

Age Suitability: 10+

Venue: Small scale

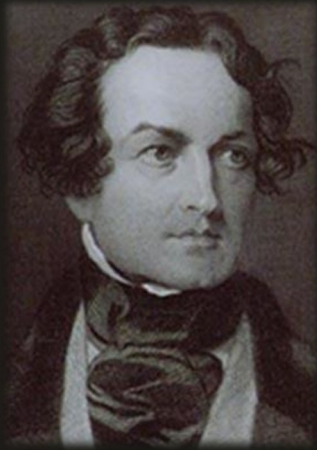


"...Stratford differentiates his cast of characters with an accomplished sprinkling of accents, physical tics and postures which effortlessly communicate differences in age, class and emotional state..."



(CAMERON DUNHAM of 'Remote Goat', Camden Fringe - in praise of Mark Stratford's other solo show *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*.)

Drama King - BACKGROUND



William Charles Macready occupied that time between the great actor, Edmund Kean, at the start of the 19th Century and the distinguished actor-manager, Sir Henry Irving, at its end. Macready is not as well-known as them, but his influence on the theatre of today is huge.

Charles Dickens was Macready's best friend and Robert Browning wrote *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* to amuse Macready's son Willie when he was ill.

When Macready first stepped onto the stage as Romeo in 1810, theatres were lit by candlelight and the acting style of the day consisted mostly of bravura gestures and histrionics - with the actor facing front and addressing the audience rather than a fellow player.

And, at that time, theatres were associated with idleness, drunkenness, frivolity and prostitution, and those who worked in them were considered to be social and artistic outcasts. Against this backdrop, Macready set about learning his craft.

But he never wanted to be an actor. Although he was born into the profession - his parents both actors - he dreamed of becoming a barrister and a gentleman. But after his education was cut cruelly short following his father's bankruptcy, Macready was plunged into the ungentlemanly world of the stage.

He became a man of many conflicts: he loved his art, especially Shakespeare, but hated his profession; in the theatre he had a violent temper but could be the kindest of men outside it.

"I wish I were anything rather than an actor - except a critic; let me be unhappy rather than vile!" (William Charles Macready)

Nevertheless, Macready became a pioneer - revolutionising the theatre of his day.

He was the first to insist on full and proper rehearsals, and ensured that the smallest part was as well rehearsed as the largest.

He restored many of Shakespeare's texts to their original versions after a century-and-a-half of rewriting by various post-Restoration "improvers."

He was the first to banish prostitutes from plying their trade in the auditorium - although there were many who didn't thank him for that...

And he did more to encourage new playwrights in his day than anyone else; Byron, Browning, Dickens, Knowles, Bulwer-Lytton, and many others, all wrote plays for him - many of which he helped to rewrite!

It is said, in fact, that Macready became - in every sense of the word - the founder of modern theatre practice. During his time as an actor-manager, he put into effect nearly every principle we now take for granted; of directing, design, lighting, costuming, as well as the training of actors.

Macready's greatest rival was Edmund Kean and they enjoyed a few "gladiatorial contests" on stage in Kean's latter years. But after Kean's death in 1835 the way was clear for Macready to become the undisputed head of his profession.



ABOUT THE COMPANY + PERFORMER & WRITER

THE COMPANY: Stratford Productions (www.stratfordproductions.co.uk)

Stratford Productions was set up in 2019 by actor/writer Mark Stratford in order to produce and tour his two one-man plays:

- ***Drama King*** - the remarkable story of one of the 19th Century's greatest actor-managers, William Charles Macready
- ***The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*** - adapted from the novella of the same name by Robert Louis Stevenson

The creation of these plays has been a labour of love for Mark and his aim is simple:

- to perform them to as many people as possible by taking them to as many suitable venues in the UK - and abroad - as possible.

THE PERFORMER & WRITER: Mark Stratford

As an actor Mark's credits include:

West End: *Singin' in the Rain* (London Palladium); *Blood Brothers* (Phoenix Theatre); *Peter Pan* (Cambridge Theatre); *The Enchanted Toyshop* (Fortune Theatre); and *The Magic Flute* (Arts Theatre).

International tours: *Blood Brothers* (Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto) and *Macbeth* (British Council tour to Japan and Argentina). National No.1 UK tours include: *Peter Pan*; *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe*; and *The Horse & His Boy*.

Mark has also appeared in seasons in Swansea, Edinburgh, Chesterfield, Eastbourne and the Watermill Theatre in Newbury; and has also played the principal villain in pantomimes at various theatres throughout the UK.

Almost exclusively a theatre performer, Mark has also appeared in film (*Parting Shots*, *That English Woman*) and TV (*The Four Minute Mile*).

As a writer Mark's first play was the thriller *By Way of Murder* which was published in 2012 and has been performed at various theatres since. Between 2007 and 2009 Mark wrote and performed a stand-up comedy act under the stage name 'Mike Rivers.' In 2012 Mark's 15-minute play *Once More Unto The Breach, Dear Vernon* - based on his experiences as an actor - was published in an anthology of short plays.

Mark then adapted the classic novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde* into a one-man show which he first performed to excellent reviews at the 2014 Camden Fringe. Most recently Mark has written the new one-man show that this pack is all about - *Drama King* - which he first performed at the 2019 Watford Fringe. Other writing projects are in the pipeline.



Drama King -

PRODUCTION DETAILS & REQUIREMENTS



COMPANY	Stratford Productions
WRITTEN, STAGED & PERFORMED BY	Mark Stratford
NUMBER IN TOURING COMPANY	1
AGE SUITABILITY	10+
LENGTH OF SHOW	Will ideally be performed straight-through in 80 minutes (no interval) but can also be performed in two acts of approx. 40 minutes each (with interval) if preferred.
SCALE OF VENUE	Small
SPACE NEEDED	Minimum of 3m wide x 3m deep x 3m high. Wing space is not required. A separate space to get changed in would be ideal.
STAGING TYPE	End-on staging works best, but can adapt to performing to two or even three sides (subject to length of the side rows).
VENUE TECHNICIAN & EQUIPMENT	Use of venue's lighting and sound equipment needed. Venue technician also needed for LX and SX set-up and operation. Fully marked LX and SX cue script available on day of get-in or in advance.
LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS	LX plan available on day of get-in or in advance. Ideally the show will use a small number of lighting states. These states are all 'standard,' i.e. no special effects or specialist lighting equipment required.
SOUND REQUIREMENTS	SX plan and sound files available on day of get-in or in advance. There are approx. 30 sound/music cues. The cues are all 'standard,' i.e. no special effects or specialist sound equipment required.
SET	Minimal set provided by the company: 1 small table and 4 chairs.
GET-IN	3 hours ideal for physical get-in and LX / SX plotting.
GET-OUT	20 minutes minimum.
OTHER INFORMATION	It is assumed that standard front-of-house duties will be arranged and provided by the venue. No backstage staff or stage manager required.

Drama King - SELLING THE SHOW



GENRE	Solo show, storytelling, historical biography
THEMES	Victorian theatre, Shakespeare, a man before his time, a pioneer of the stage
KEY SELLING POINTS	A brand new one-man show Little known story of theatrical significance The show is delivered with humour, drama, and emotion Powerful and faithful storytelling by an experienced solo performer using a dynamic combination of narration and an array of characters.
POTENTIAL AUDIENCES	People who like a good story - in this case a real-life one. Anyone aged 10+ (inc. suitable for families) Students of Drama and Performing Arts (GCSE, BTEC, A Level and Degree) People interested in theatrical history / Victorian period
MEDIUM COPY (100 WORDS)	This compelling new one-man show, written and performed by Mark Stratford, tells the story of William Charles Macready, one of the greatest actor-managers of the 19th Century. The story of Macready - the man to whom Charles Dickens dedicated <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> - is one of the most remarkable ever to come out of the Theatre. With humour, drama, emotion, and an array of characters, Stratford takes us through the highlights of Macready's life including his first tentative steps on stage in a tatty country theatre to his final ever performance at the mighty Drury Lane.
SHORT COPY (60 WORDS)	This compelling new one-man show, written and performed by Mark Stratford, tells the story of William Charles Macready, one of the greatest actor-managers of the 19th Century. The story of Macready - the man to whom Charles Dickens dedicated <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> - is one of the most remarkable ever to come out of the Theatre.
PRESS RELEASE	Press release available on request.
PRODUCTION PHOTOS	JPEGs can be made available via Dropbox or WeTransfer on request.
POSTERS & FLYERS	Posters and flyers provided.
PHOTO CREDIT	origin8photography.com (2019)
POSTER IMAGE CREDIT	origin8photography.com (2019)
ADDITIONAL INFO	Happy to include a post-show discussion / Q&A by advance request.

Drama King -

CONTACT DETAILS, AVAILABILITY & DEALS

Touring Availability:

All year round.
Currently booking for 2021 and 2022.

Performances:

Saturdays and Sundays only. Friday evenings also considered in certain circumstances.
Assume a one-show engagement, but two is possible if on consecutive days.

Deals:

Ideal preference is a guaranteed fee.

Contact:

For more information or to book, please contact Mark Stratford:
Email: markstratford01@gmail.com
Mobile: 07710 162928

Videos:

A 3-minute trailer is available on the website:
<https://www.stratfordproductions.co.uk/dramaking>
A link to a full video of the show can be made available on request.

Social Media:

Facebook: Mark Stratford
Facebook: [stratfordproductions](#)
Twitter: [stratfordprods](#)
Instagram: [stratfordproductions](#)

