

« For hundreds of years, mankind has been haunted by myths of vampires. Alive but not alive, human but not human, vampires can steal the bodies of those we know and love, transforming good people into monsters. Vampires hold a distorted mirror up to humanity, and vampire stories explore the nature of human evil at its most primal. Our fascination with these ancient monsters is still strong, as can be seen from the recent successes of *True Blood* and *Twilight*. But still, the most famous vampire of them all is the hero of Bram Stoker's 1897 Gothic masterpiece, *Dracula*.

Charming but deadly, educated yet feral, the unsettling and immortal Count Dracula is one of the most iconic characters of our modern age. He has appeared in books, films and television programmes for over a hundred years. In creating Dracula, Bram Stoker blended fact and fiction, appropriating the name and background of Vlad Tepes, "the Impaler" for his hero, and also drawing upon many folk beliefs about vampires. *Dracula* has proved enduringly powerful and influential. The novel popularised many of the traditions and mythology upon which modern vampire legends are based.

This adaptation tells the story of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* from the point of view of the "lunatic" Renfield, imprisoned in a private asylum in 1897. Renfield sees visions and has created his own warped version of reality. He eats bugs, spiders and birds in an attempt to achieve eternal life, and is obsessed with his dark "master", the vampire Dracula. But there are no such things as vampires - are there? As the world of Renfield's tortured imagination invades his cell, the line between reality and delusion becomes blurred. Does the evil which possesses Renfield come from within him, or is there really a sinister outside force to blame?

Vampires may look like us, but they are not human; they are "other". In dehumanising the vampire, we attempt to escape responsibility for the darker side of our own natures. This version of *Dracula* investigates the relationships between madness and sanity, repression and anarchy, good and evil. »

Emma Reeves

The play is adapted by Emma Reeves and Andrew Loudon and directed by Lucille O'Flanagan.

This team have created hit shows for Theatre En Anglais including *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *King Lear*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and, most recently, an acclaimed adaptation of

*Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*:

"Ils ont tout simplement adoré. La troupe est excellente. Félicitation à tout le monde. Le rendez-vous est pris pour l'année prochaine".(J&H)

"The staging and the adaptation were simply amazing"(J&H)