

Julian Clary to star in the world première of “Le Grand Mort”, a black comedy written specially for him by four-time Olivier Award nominated Stephen Clark



Julian Clary is to star in the world première of the black comedy **Le Grand Mort**.

It was written specially for him by four-time Olivier Award nominated writer Stephen Clark (*Martin Guerre*, *Zorro*, *Love Story*, and the play *Stripped*, which won him a Stephen Jefferson Award), who died at the age of 55 last October.

Directed by Christopher Renshaw, **Le Grand Mort** will première at Trafalgar Studios from Wednesday 20 September - Saturday 28 October.

Press night is Monday 25 September at 7.00pm.

In his super stylish, sterilely beautiful Notting Hill kitchen, Michael is preparing dinner for two. As he meticulously cuts the vegetables with almost a surgeon's precision, he talks, with knife-like wit, about cases in history where the human body has continued to prove useful even after death. As he slices and chops, one wonders who is coming for dinner and what the main course might be. When Tim, his young guest arrives, they engage in a series of funny, thrilling but searingly dangerous mind games, as they try to unravel the reasons why they are both there. Only when the games turn deadly do they catch a glimpse of the sadness and loss within each of them, that enables them to at least begin to connect with the truth, using whatever damaged shreds of humanity they still have left.

Julian Clary said: “In 2010 Stephen Clark took me out to lunch in Camden and told me he'd like to write a play for me. How lovely, how flattering, how unusual! Over the following few years I got the occasional email from Stephen saying 'I haven't forgotten the play!' but I decided he'd probably thought better of it. We were both busy with life, work and in Stephen's case, some serious health issues. Then, one day in 2013, it arrived. A funny, dark, beautiful play...**Le Grand Mort** will take me so far out of my comfort zone I may never return.”

Director Christopher Renshaw said: “Through our many collaborations, Stephen Clark and I became very close friends. Someone with whom I shared absolute trust, not only in our work but in our lives. A brave, honest, brilliantly funny man, who faced the many health challenges of his life without a single complaint. An inspiration. It is so very sad for me that Stephen will not be here for the first production of **Le Grand Mort**, but I know he will be watching from somewhere, sipping a glass of good red wine, absorbing and encouraging every moment of rehearsal, as he always did.”

The creative team is: Director Christopher Renshaw. Production Designer Justin Nardella. Lighting Designer Jamie Platt. Producer & Casting Director Danielle Tarento.

JULIAN CLARY

Julian Clary is a comedian, entertainer and author, who has toured across the world with his one-man shows. He became a household name in the late 1980s, and remains one of the country's most popular entertainers. Julian has appeared on numerous popular TV shows including *Sticky Moments*, *Terry and Julian*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, *QI*, *Have I Got News For You* and *Celebrity Big Brother*, which he won in 2012. He also hosted his own natural history series, *Nature Nuts*, for ITV and paid tribute to the life and works of his idol Noël Coward for Sky Arts' *Passions* series. Julian has starred in West End productions of *Taboo*, Olivier Award-winning *Cabaret* and *Cinderella* at the London Palladium, which broke box office records. In 2016, he extended his critically acclaimed UK tour, *The Joy of Mincing*, and this year published the third instalment of his hugely successful children's book series, *The Bolds*.

STEPHEN CLARK (playwright)

Stephen Clark was an award winning playwright, librettist and lyricist. His play *Stripped* won a Jefferson Award in Chicago 2003 (Circle Theatre). Other plays include *Takeaway* (Lyric Hammersmith and national tour) and *Making Waves* at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough. Stephen became involved with music theatre after studying with Stephen Sondheim at Oxford University in 1991. His first musical, *Eyam*, was produced at the Old Fire Station and The Bridewell. Stephen went on to receive an Olivier Award for his lyrics for the re-worked version of *Martin Guerre* for Cameron Mackintosh, which then toured Britain and North America. Other work includes *Forbidden City* (Esplanade Theatre, Singapore) and *The Far Pavilions* (The Shaftsbury Theatre, London). He adapted the libretto of *La Traviata* for ENO's new production in 2006. Stephen's music theatre adaptation of *The Mahabharata*, music by Nitin Sawhney, opened in 2007 at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, and toured Britain. He wrote the book and lyrics for *Zorro* (UK tour, The Garrick, London and the Folies Bergère, Paris. Now also Brazil, Tokyo, Moscow, Israel, Holland, South Korea, Atlanta, Poland, Czech Republic. Israel, China). Stephen wrote the book and lyrics for *Love Story*, music by Howard Goodall, which opened at Chichester in 2010 and opened in the West End in December 2010. *Love Story* was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Musical. This was Stephen's 4th Olivier Award nomination for that category. Most recently, he was co-writer of the book and lyrics of *Carmen La Cubana*, a version of *Carmen Jones*, set in Cuba, which opened to critical acclaim at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris in April 2016.

CHRISTOPHER RENSHAW (director)

Christopher began his career in the 1970s directing opera at Royal Opera House. His acclaimed production of *The King And I* began in Australia, was mounted on Broadway, where it won four Tony Awards and then came to the West End, starring Elaine Paige. Christopher directed *We Will Rock You*, which ran at the Dominion Theatre for 12 years. In 2002, he co-conceived and directed the world première of *Taboo*, the Boy George musical in London. It later transferred to Broadway and was revived back in London in 2012, co-produced by Danielle Tarento. His production of The Gipsy King's *Zorro*, with book by Stephen Clark, has been seen in London, Amsterdam, Moscow, Tokyo, Paris and the US. Again with producer Danielle Tarento, he co-conceived and directed *Pure Imagination, The Songs of Leslie Bricusse* at St James Theatre in 2015. Last year, Christopher's *Carmen La Cubana* played at the Theatre du Châtelet in Paris. Developed in Havana, inspired by Hammerstein's *Carmen Jones*, it embarks next year on a world tour.

LEGEND MORT

BY
STEPHEN CLARK

LISTINGS INFO

Le Grand Mort

by Stephen Clark

starring Julian Clary

directed by Chris Renshaw

Trafalgar Studios 2

14 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY



Dates:

Wednesday 20 September - Saturday 28 October

Press Night;

Monday 25 September at 7.00pm

Times:

Monday – Saturday at 7.45pm
Thursday and Saturday matinee at 3.00pm

Prices:

£20.00 - £40.00

all tickets subject to a restoration levy of
£1 per ticket and transaction charge of
£3.50 per transaction

[www.atgtickets.com/shows/le-grand-mort/
trafalgar-studios/](http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/le-grand-mort/trafalgar-studios/)

Trafalgar Studios Box Office: 0844 871 7632

Directions:

By bus: 3 11 12 24 53 77a 88 91 139 159 453

Closest Tube:

Charing Cross and Embankment
(Northern and Bakerloo)

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Twitter:
[@LeGrandMort](https://twitter.com/LeGrandMort)

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