



It's a very simple formula. Put an extremely talented actor together with one of the best writers of our time, and you're in for an outstanding show.

The King's Head Theatre in Islington, always a force to be reckoned with, is currently playing host to George Dillon's one-man show based on work by Steven Berkoff.

Graft, Tales of an Actor, tells the story of Harry. Harry is a dedicated artist, often out of work, rejected and desperate to practise his craft. From auditioning at the local Town Hall for a drama school grant, through occasional working highs and low encounters with agents and directors to his final exit at Leicester Square tube, Steven Berkoff masterfully creates the world of an ever-struggling actor.

How much is based on truth from the life story of one of the theatrical geniuses of our time, isn't known. The performer, however, admits to some of it being somewhat close to the reality of his own life experience to date. This performance should, however, ensure that this will not be the case in the future.

It is a rare occurrence that an actor can hold court on a stage, and whisk the audience away from their cramped auditorium seats and into a different life from one they have known or experienced. George Dillon achieved just that. With some obvious lessons learned from the great Berkoff himself, Dillon does a superb job on the tiny King's Head stage, and demonstrates his power to draw the audience into the sad and lonely world of Harry.

Graft, Tales of an Actor is a rich piece of theatre and well worth seeing.



Dillon's face creases up, dividing pitted skin into bundles of **angry sinew** as his cheekbones stand proud in the single overhead spot light. He is dressed all in black, barrel chest bound in a t-shirt, black combat trousers over bare feet - he looks more like **Bruce Lee** than a luvvie.

This man Dillon is ninja-hard and he struts and paces **Komedia** stage blasting the stupidly sparse audience with sheer physical presence and tight, well-drilled stagecraft.

Is he **George Dillon**, or is he **Steven Berkoff**? Twenty years of the working with the idiosyncratic Berkoff, means that the intensity of the master has rubbed off on the pupil.

The disciple starts the show in a blaze of energy. He leaps, he blasts, he swears, his hands support the narrative, his fingers claw the way through **Berkoff's** agonised exposition.

It's all about Harry. Harry is a poor, downtrodden rep actor with big ambitions and perhaps an inflated view of his own importance. Dillon spits out the tale: the tribulations of life in rep - **rehearsals, gossip, jealousy, sex** and so on.

It's a long confession, ultimately resolved in tragedy. This show is on its way to **Edinburgh**, but those of us lucky enough to be at **Komedia** were privileged to see a master class in powerful performance - this was an explosive ticket.

To get the most from it you really need to be tuned into acting, to watch the moves, the nuances of the man. Then you might appreciate the **power** and the **beauty** of **Dillon's work**.

As the extraordinary, tortured prose spits out of Dillon the younger man miraculously transforms, metamorphosing into the real Berkoff. I was stunned by the visual and verbal similarities between the two. Just what is the hold that Berkoff has over Dillon? For this almost supernatural transformation alone, **Graft is worth the ticket price**.