

press release

The boys are coming to town

Taggart creator Glenn Chandler brings his uproarious and acclaimed new satire to the London stage



production Springheel Productions in association with Pete Shaw and Hartshorn-Hook Productions presents **BOYS OF THE EMPIRE**

venue King's Head Theatre | 115 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 1QN

dates 16 December 2008 – 11 January 2009 | Tuesday-Sunday

time 16 Dec – 3 Jan @ 8.30pm | 6 – 10 Jan @ 9.30pm | Sunday & holiday matinees

tickets £15.00 reserved | £12.50 unreserved | £10 concessions

box office 0844 412 2953 | www.kingsheadtheatre.org

press night Thursday 18 December | 8.30pm

Glenn Chandler's sensational Edinburgh Festival sell-out comedy **BOYS OF THE EMPIRE** is coming to town this Christmas. A radical departure from a man known for his role as creator and long-time lead writer on hit TV series **TAGGART**, **BOYS OF THE EMPIRE** is set in the world of the *Gem*, *Magnet* and *Boy's Own* comics of the period. The play puts its frolics before its politics, but leaves audiences with more than laughs. Taking in themes from colonial exploitation to classroom sexploitation, **BOYS OF THE EMPIRE** is superbly silly and sharply satirical.

When Sam Pyke makes his anxious entrance to St Ethelred's School, the one thing he does not anticipate is a terrifying adventure of sinister gamekeepers, Islamicist members of the lower fifth and fagging for the lower sixth. With their lives at risk, the chums of St Ethelred's have only each other to rely on. For these boys of the empire, **Just William meets Jihad** in a tale of dastardly deeds and boyhood bravery.

An uproarious comedy with a sharp political edge may come as a shock from the creator of TV's longest-running police drama. But, like a good murder mystery, the clues were all there. As a young man in London, Glenn Chandler came to Scottish Television's attention writing powerful new theatre for the **Soho Poly** (now at the Soho Theatre). His long stint as lead writer on **TAGGART** was in many ways a clever disguise. This Christmas, London will see the unexpected truth: Glenn Chandler reveals an electrifying comedy about 1920s public schooling, terrorism, beastliness and Turkish cigarettes.

The London transfer follows a critically acclaimed **sell-out run** at the Edinburgh Festival, where the show was **nominated for a Fringe First Award** and greeted by delighted crowds. Featuring the original cast and creative team headed by director Patrick Wilde.

'Simply magnificent... an absolutely ripping yarn that's set to take the fringe by storm'

★ ★ ★ ★ *Scotsman*

for more information, images and interview availability please contact

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notes to editors

1. **Boys of the Empire** ran for the full Edinburgh Festival as the headline show at C venues and transfers to London with the original cast and creative team. The show was sold out from the end of its first week, was nominated for a Fringe First Award, and received four- and five-star reviews from major publications.

'Here's hoping Mr Chandler makes this a regular appointment with Edinburgh'

Edinburgh Evening News

2. Glenn Chandler moved from Edinburgh to London shortly after leaving school. In London, he began by writing lunchtime plays for the **Little Theatre Club** in **St Martin's Lane**, and subsequently wrote for the **Soho Theatre Company** (then at the **Soho Poly**, before the move to the **Soho Theatre**) including **A TREAT**, **BIKER'S KNOLL** and **A CURSE**. He was awarded an **Arts Council** grant to pursue his writing shortly before being asked to work on several television dramas. Robert Love, then Head of Drama at Scottish Television, first saw Chandler's work on stage and asked him to work on a three-part whodunit about a Glasgow detective, which soon became **TAGGART**, televised for more than a quarter of a century.
3. Since leaving **TAGGART** after 16 years as head writer, Chandler has written several true-crime dramas for Yorkshire Television and published two novels about a Brighton Detective, **SAVAGE TIDE** and **DEAD SIGHT**, as well as **BURNING POISON**, a factual account of an unsolved murder in Georgian Liverpool set against the background of the slave trade. **BOYS OF THE EMPIRE** is his first comedy.
4. Director Patrick Wilde's has previously directed **WHAT'S WRONG WITH ANGRY** (Edinburgh Festival, Battersea Arts Centre & Arts Theatre Leicester Square), **YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP** and the award-winning **FAILED STATES** (both Edinburgh Festival). He has written for TV shows **THIS LIFE** and **AS IF** and wrote the screenplays for films **THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU'RE 30** and **GET REAL**, which won the Edinburgh Film Festival Audience Award. In 2006, he collaborated with **Sir Tim Rice** on the London revival of **BLONDEL** (Pleasance Islington).

