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Taylor University Theatre
presents

The Schools for Scandal

Richard Brinsley Sheridan's
comedy of wit and manners



Little
Theatre

April 25- 28, 1979

PROGRAM NOTES

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1751, the son of Thomas and Frances Sheridan. Thomas Sheridan was at different times an actor, a theatre manager, a lecturer on elocution and an author of several works. Sheridan's mother was also an author and playwright, two of her plays having been produced by Garrick at Drury Lane.

Young Dick received most of his education at Harrow between the years of 1762 and 1769. The family's finances were never very secure and Sheridan was forced to leave Harrow without completing his education. He joined his family in Bath where his father instructed him and had he and his brother tutored.

It was in Bath, while helping his father teach a school of elocution, that Sheridan met the lovely songstress Elizabeth Linley. In 1772 he made a romantic journey with her to France and in 1773 they married. Sheridan refused to let his new wife continue her public singing and so to provide income began his writing career. His first play, **THE RIVALS**, was given January 17, 1775, but not well received. Later rewritten, and with better actors, it was successful and was followed closely by another comedy, **ST. PATRICK'S DAY** and a comic opera, **THE DUENNA**, a collaboration with his musically talented wife and father-in-law, Thomas Linley. The opera was a resounding success and was acted 75 times that season, establishing his reputation as a playwright.

Sheridan's next play was **THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, produced at Drury Lane May 8, 1777. The play delighted audiences of that day who were particularly fond of scandal and used to reading of intrigues, actual or fictitious, in their newspapers and magazines. As Sheridan's most complete and polished work, **THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL** contains three elements of comedy that served to make it, as Johnson observed, "the best comedy of his age." The first is that it belongs to artificial comedy or the comedy of manners, as it was written by the Restoration dramatists. It confines itself to a small section of society, leaving out the general business of life and lends itself naturally to wit while making no attempt to explore the wide range of emotions or to see human nature in the round. The second is sentimental comedy, less apparent than the former in Sheridan's work, but discovered in Lady Teazle who abruptly changes her life style to be reconciled with Sir Peter, and in Charles who is transformed from an "extravagant rogue" to a gentleman by Maria's love and Sir Oliver's plots. In this respect Sheridan's plays reflect the 18th century conception of people as being naturally good. People could retain this natural goodness by following their interests but they could also be led astray by following bad examples. Such an individual could be reclaimed from vice by appealing to the natural virtuous human feelings which were momentarily obscured. Thus, Sheridan supports the traditional moral values of his day and punishes immoral behavior in characters such as Joseph and Lady Sneerwell. The third basic element is a keen perception of the ludicrous, and of the surprising contrasts in people's characters, as well as of the unexpected circumstances in which they reveal their frailties. Sheridan portrayed these human conditions so that laughter might be accompanied with understanding and sympathy.

In October 1779 Sheridan added **THE CRITIC**, another comedy, to his list of successful plays, and much later, in 1798 contributed his final play, **PIZARRO**, a translation and adaptation of German drama by Kotzebue.

In 1780 he entered Parliament and ceased to write plays. However, he continued as manager and part-owner of the theatre. He remained in Parliament for 30 years during which time he displayed his oratorical powers and was accepted among the aristocratic Whigs. Political life brought him hardly any material rewards and was a constant source of expense, especially at election times, leaving him notoriously in debt.

In 1792 his first wife died of consumption and two years later he married Esther Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester. By that time he was middle-aged (although she only twenty), drinking heavily and his fortune was beginning to decline. In 1809 the theatre burned down and with it his chief financial prop. In 1812 he was defeated in his seat in Parliament and declined to try for another, although his lifelong friend, the Prince of Wales, offered the necessary funds. He retained his warmth of spirit, essentially generous, gay and challenging, throughout the illness and financial straits that terminated in his death in 1816.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our special thanks to Barbara Dickey, Yette Williams, Joy Manda for their help in making this production possible.

The All Campus Student Art Show will be on exhibit downstairs in the Chronicle-Tribune Art Gallery on Friday and Saturday evening.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Directed by Jessie Rousselow
Set and Lighting Design by Ollie Hubbard
Costume Design by Jessie Rousselow

THE CAST

(in order of their appearance)

- Lady Sneerwell who leads *The School for Scandal* . Catherine Curtis
- Snake, her accomplice Doug Marlow
- Joseph Surface, nephew to Sir Oliver Harold Blum
- Maria, Sir Peter's ward Barbee Jensen
- Mrs. Candour who loves to gossip Laura Binder
- Mr. Crabtree, an English gentleman Kurt Bullock
- Sir Benjamin Backbite, his nephew Bill Wallace
- Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver's friend Mark Welch
- Rowley, servant to Sir Oliver Terry Haines
- Lady Teazle, Sir Peter's wife Kim Montgomery
- Sir Oliver Surface, wealthy English gentleman Randy Wyatt
- Moses, a Jewish broker Doug Oliver
- Trip, servant to Charles David Murray
- Charles Surface, nephew to Sir Oliver Tim Johnson
- Careless, Charles' friend Mike Burchfield
- Sir Harry Bumper, another friend Tom Albinson
- Servants Wendy Branch, Robin Chernenko, Julie Frierson, Pam Kareus, Tammy Lane, Marty Tilton

England 1777

- | | | |
|--------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Act I, | Scene i | Lady Sneerwell's boudoir |
| | Scene ii | Sir Peter Teazle's house |
| | Scene iii | Sir Peter Teazle's house |
| | Scene iv | Lady Sneerwell's drawingroom |
| | Scene v | Sir Peter Teazle's house |
| | Scene vi | Charles Surface's house |

ten minute intermission

- | | | |
|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Act II, | Scene i | Joseph Surface's library |
| | Scene ii | Sir Peter Teazle's house |
| | Scene iii | Joseph Surface's library |

MUSICAL SELECTIONS heard this evening are from the following composers: Beethoven, Guiliani, Hayden, Joplin, Loillet, Mozart, Scarlatti, Schubert, Scott, Stamitz.

A Communication & Theatre Arts Department Production

The School for Scandal will be convening in the downstairs lobby during intermission. If you would like some refreshment, we invite you to purchase their delightful pink lemonade.

As a courtesy to the actors, please do not use cameras during the performance.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director Ollie Hubbard
Assistant to the Director Eileen Woodard
Set Committee HAROLD BLUM
BRENDA CONWAY
RHONDA JETER
BILL WALLACE
Geoff Ames
Amy Artis
Rod Bare
Doug Crew
Karen Garner
Randy Jones
John Jacobi
Robert May
Jon Miller
Jodan Price
Randy Reneker
Mark Rodell
Rick Schleucher
Beth Thomas
Cindy Zink
Lighting COLLEEN COUGHENOUR
RHONDA JETER
Vicki Cruse
Mary Lou Griffith
Mike McGinnis
Make-up COLLEEN COUGHENOUR
TERRY HAINES
Lynn Cameron
Katie Cluff
Karen Garner
Dawn Gwin
Elaine Hepler
Janet Lavin
Robert May
Sharon Musto
Edie Rader
Paula Town
Karen Wolff
Kim Wright
Sound MARK COLLINS
Kevin Knickerbocker
Bill Neighbor
Alternate: Matt Welty
Properties SARA DE PREE
GLENDA GREENWOOD
Teresa Cress
Sue Schuneman
Costumes DEBBIE WATSON
Carol Askeland
Laura Binder
Karen Copeland
Sue Chow
Glenda Greenwood
Jill Laird
Bonnie Simonson
Jan Stephenson
Melissa Wills
House JOY WILSON
Cathy Breen
Lori Guy
Karen Johnson
Susie King
Lynn Livergood
Laurie Mowery
Becky Norris
Kim Weiler
Priscilla Wilson
Anita Yoder