

The School for

by richard brinsley sheridan



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Pardoe Theater
September 29–October 16, 1999

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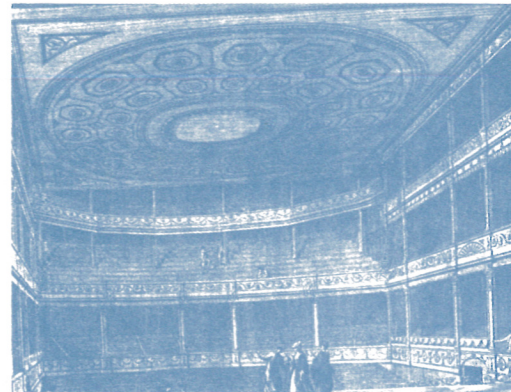
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the drury lane theatre

setting

London, 1777

act one

- 1–Lady Sneerwell's residence
- 2–The Teazles' residence

act two

- 1–The Teazles' residence
- 2–Lady Sneerwell's residence
- 3–The Teazles' residence

act three

- 1–The Teazles' residence
- 2–Charles Surface's residence

act four

- 1–Charles Surface's residence
- 2–Charles Surface's parlour

intermission

- 3–Joseph Surface's library

act five

- 1–Joseph Surface's library
- 2–The Teazles' residence

Sheridan after School

by Nola Smith

May 8, 1777. Twelve-year-old Frederic Reynolds was quietly making his way through the pit passage of the great Drury Lane Theatre, when he “heard such a tremendous noise over my head, that fearing the Theatre was proceeding to fall about it, I ran for my life . . .” Fortunately for young Frederic, the boy was not witnessing a disaster, but a triumph. As he later recorded, he “found the next morning that the noise did not arise from the *falling* of the house, but the *falling* of the screen, in the fourth act; so violent, and so tumultuous were the applause and laughter” (Quoted in *Life* 68). Frederic had heard the wild reaction of several thousand patrons to the very first performance of the infamous “screen scene” of *The School for Scandal*—when disaster and poetic justice strike on stage with the force of a comic lightning bolt. It was the highest moment in the theatrical career of playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

And where was the popular playwright on that magical evening? He confessed to Lord Byron many years later that “he was so drunk in the street that he was nearly taken up by the watch” (68).

The playwright may have missed the opening, but the local papers did not. Of the event, the *London Evening Post* observed: “On Tuesday last Mrs. Sheridan, wife of R. B. Sheridan, Esq., was delivered of a child *still born*. And, on Thursday night, at her house in Drury Lane, Mr. Sheridan’s muse was delivered of a fine chopping female, *likely to live for ever*” (68). In a sense, the press notices sum up Sheridan’s entire

career—a strange mix of failing personal life and public acclaim, of high aspirations and low behavior.

Sheridan was born to the stage: his father was a successful actor and his mother a novelist and playwright. It was a time when all London adored its theatres. At any given week of the season about 12,000 of the 750,000 Londoners, high and low class alike, packed the hard benches of the Royal Patent houses demanding four or five hours’ entertainment.



portrait by Reynolds

But Sheridan wanted more than his father had accomplished. Despite his glowing achievements in drama and theatrical management—he was groomed as heir by the greatest actor-manager of them all, David Garrick—he soon abandoned both his writing and his Irish roots, and chased the more glittering prize of a seat in Parliament.

One biographer describes Sheridan as primarily a socialite, politician, and celebrity, and only rather incidentally a playwright. He was an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales and moved in the highest circles of London society (*School* 4). He rode high along with his political mentor, the illustrious Charles Fox, leader of the Whig party. Sheridan was a generous companion, and an electrifying though ultimately ineffective speech maker in the House of Commons. He was also plagued by debt, scorned by the opposition of party for his ignoble background, and hampered by his dissolute habits.

Although he longed to be remembered for his political contributions, Sheridan’s legacy is as the creator of what may be the most delightful comedy of manners ever penned. Even his contemporaries—the nobles who ignored him in his final penury, but attended his ceremonious funeral—noted that he wished to be buried next to Fox in Westminster Abbey. Ironically, he was buried instead between

Handel and Jonson and close to Garrick in the Poets’ Corner he despised.

Sheridan’s famous falling-screen-scene reveals his characters’ true natures. Likewise, over time, Sheridan himself emerges not in the form of the public political persona he tirelessly cultivated, but rather as what he truly was: a rare theatrical genius. ❖

Sources:

Rothwell, Connelly, et al., *The School for Scandal*: Thomas Rowlandson London.
James Morwood, *The Life and Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*.



Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, portrait by Thomas Gainsborough, (probably 1785–86) National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

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PROGRAM

concept & design / gilberto schaefer design - photographic contributions by erik ostling, steven caras, bill cooper

A black and white photograph of a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, shown in profile from the chest up. She is looking down and slightly to the right. She is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved top with thin straps over her shoulders. A watch is visible on her left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.



photos by Bob Nelson



So, so; then I perceive your prescription
is that I must sin in my own defence,
and part with my virtue, to secure my
reputation?

Lady Sneerwell and The School



Ruth Ellen Atkinson
“Lady Sneerwell—Mistress” of Scandal, plotting with Joseph Surface to win his brother Charles.

Doug Heder
Snake—Employed by Lady Sneerwell for errands of intrigue.



Brandon Michael Bringhurst
Joseph Surface—Older brother of Charles, nephew of Sir Oliver; seeks Maria’s money and her hand.



Benjamin Stull
Sir Benjamin Backbite—A self-proclaimed wit and a poet who also seeks Maria.

Rebekah Ruth Estrada
Lady Teazle—Sir Peter’s young wife from the country, trying to find her place in this new class



Kevin Peterson
Crabtree—A windbag who enjoys the sound of his own voice and that of his nephew Backbite.



Sir Peter & Friends



R. Jeremy Selim
Sir Peter Teazle—Guardian of Maria, husband of Lady Teazle and opposed to the “School”; Joseph’s advocate.

Martin Juul Sorensen
Sir Oliver Surface—Wealthy old friend of Sir Peter and uncle to Joseph and Charles, just returned from India to name his heir.



Anna Elizabeth Worthen
Maria—Ward of Sir Peter, and the embodiment of all that is good and innocent.

Steve Adami
Rowley—Former servant of Sir Peter’s best friend, Joseph and Charles’s late father, now a self-made man; Charles’s advocate.



Charles & Company



Casey Paul Griffiths
Charles Surface—The younger prodigal brother of Joseph. Enjoys drinking, gambling and good friends.



Jonas Wetzel
Moses—The Jewish broker who underwrites the follies of Charles, and makes a great profit.

Jason J. Hoyt
Careless—Charles’s drunken best friend.



Old School

The world of *School for Scandal* is one of childish rumor. Overgrown characters spread overgrown stories with gleeful delight, and we laugh at their antics.

Some of us may even know people today who relish the retelling of scandal almost as much as Mrs. Candour. Fortunately, none of us commits such moral offenses.

And yet when

Richard Brinsley Sheridan wrote this piece over two hundred years ago, he addressed observable contemporary behavior. He wrote about the habits of the very people who attended his play. However, rather than abuse his audience with dark, depressing drama, he attacked the evils of gossip through delightful comic exaggeration.

We scorn the *National Enquirer* for continuing the tradition of scandal and are grateful that, personally, *we* do not suffer the same sickness. We are not malicious, mean and spiteful, “a character dead at every word” (II.ii). No, we simply pass on “information”—information that may be none of our business—often simply for drawing connections between friends: “Oh, you are seeing Dr. S_____? My friend Mrs. K_____ saw Dr. S_____ last year when she was going through_____.”

By telling stories, howsoever innocently, that may be none of our business, we may do as much damage and cause as much pain as Lady Sneerwell’s “students.” ❖



Mr. W. Forren as Periwinkle by John Cumberland

the company

Steve Adami (Rowley), from Lethbridge, Alberta, a theatre education major, is in his second mainstage production. He was a dresser for *Romeo and Juliet*, and expresses his appreciation to those who will now wash *his* tights.

Ruth Ellen Atkinson (Lady Sneerwell), from Overland Park, KS, is a theatre education senior in her first mainstage production. Favorite credits include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Children of a Lesser God*.

Brandon Michael Bringhurst (Joseph Surface), from Delta, UT, a theatre education major, is in his first BYU mainstage production. He has worked for two years as de Jong Concert Hal stage manager. He stage managed *Odyssey*.

Theresa Dugan (Maid), from Grant's Pass, OR, is a theatre education major. She appeared as Sister Mary Leo in *Nunsense*, Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

Rebekah Ruth Estrada (Lady Teazle), from Thousand Oaks, CA, is a theatre studies major and is a member of the Divine Comedy troupe.

Brittany Garston (Maid), from Portland, OR, is a broadcast journalism major. Her credits include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *State Fair*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Pippin*. She thanks her mom and all her friends.

Casey Paul Griffiths (Charles), from Delta, UT, majoring in theatre, plans to be a seminary teacher. His credits include Williams in *Henry V*, Chorus in *God, Curly*, in *Oklahoma*, and Bernardo in *West Side Story*.

Doug Heder (Snake/Gentleman #1), from Salem, OR, graduates in April in media arts with a writing/directing emphasis. This is his first BYU production. He worked as production assistant for the TV series “Viva Variety” and “Thunder in Paradise.”

Jason J. Hoyt (Careless/Sneerwell's Servant), from Danville, CA, a microbiology major with a business minor, was recently seen at BYU in *Winter's Tale*. He thanks his parents and grandmother for coming to see him perform.

Wendi Kolei Keller (Maid), from Orange, CA, is majoring in theatre studies with a directing emphasis. She thanks AdreAnn for putting her in her place, and her husband for bringing her dinner.

Melanie Joy Kieffer (Mrs. Candour), from Bountiful, UT, is a theatre education major with a special-education minor. Her credits include Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Mouse in *Crow and Weasel*.

Andrea Kyriopoulos (Makeup Designer), from Mt. Sterling, UT, a theatre education major, has worked on student films, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Barefoot in the Park*. She designs *Much Ado About Nothing* this winter.

Roger A. Larsen (Lighting Design), from Provo, UT, is a theatre arts major with a design emphasis and a family science minor. Credits include lighting for *Romeo and Juliet*, *Gadanton*, *Saturday's Warrior*, and Clothing and Textiles InfoFashion Show. He is master electrician for the Division of Arts Production.

David M. Madden (Music Designer), from Ogden, UT, is a music major with a composition emphasis. He composed for *Odyssey* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and orchestrated for *Prophet*.

Emily Ireta Perez (Assistant Stage Manager), from Spokane, WA, is a senior in theatre education. Her roles include a duck, pig, and chicken in *Erasmus Montanus*, Nanny in *Uncle Vanya*, and Karen in *Ordinary People*. She likes puppetry and stage combat.

Kevin Peterson (Crabtree/Bumper), from Orem, UT, recently played Harry Pepper in *Barefoot in the Park* and appeared in *Toothpick Art*, *Duck Variations*, and *Sociology 389*.

R. Jeremy Selim (Sir Peter), from Peoria, AZ, is a theatre studies major. His credits include *Barefoot in the Park*, *The Prophet*, and *The Way We're Wired*.

Martin "Jules" Juul Sorensen (Sir Oliver Surface), from Landskrona, Sweden, is a broadcast communications and theatre technical design major. His credits include *The Foreigner*, *The Flying Doctor*, *Joyful Noise*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Mysti Mae Stay (Stage Manager), from Houston, TX, is a theatre education major. She assistant stage managed *Odyssey*, acted in *Annie Get Your Gun* and *They Dance Real Slow in Jackson*, and works in the production office.

Benjamin Stull (Sir Benjamin Backbite/Trip), from Great Falls, MT, was seen as Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* and in the films *Murder of My Brother* and *Different Film Techniques*.

AdreAnn Paul Sundrud (Director), from Springville, UT, is a graduate student. Her BYU credits include *The Way We're Wired*, *Without Romance*, and *Wakefield Passion*. She thanks the Theatre & Media Arts Department for giving her this opportunity, Eric and Roger for their belief in her, and most importantly, her family.

Anna Elizabeth Worthen (Maria), from Puyallup, WA, is a music dance theatre major. Her credits include *Utah!* at Tuacahn and *Brigadoon* at BYU. She thanks her family, who have supported her even when she played a tree. ❖

Producing Staff

| | |
|--|--|
| Dean, Fine Arts and Communications | Bruce L. Christensen |
| Artistic Director | Bob Nelson |
| Division of Arts Production Director | Jon Hollomon |
| Production Manager | Michael Magleby |
| Stage Management Advisor | Loraine Edwards |
| Facility Stage Manager | Brandon Bringham |
| Costumer | Cathie McClellan |
| Assistant Costumer | Carolyn Smith |
| Cutter | Tara DeGrey |
| First Hands | Priscilla Allen, Jennifer Graff |
| Stitchers | Kori Cramer, Jenny Curley, Ruth Geilman, Janelle Jensen |
| | Alina Longoria, Aaraina Ogzewalla, Bryn Tweedy |
| Costume Crafts | Richard Clifford, Emily Hoem |
| Wardrobe | Chanel Taylor |
| Hair and Makeup Assistants | Andrea Kyriopoulos, Wendy Sanders |
| B Room | Kimberly Clayton |
| Stock | Mary Ann Wittwer |
| Resident Technical Director | Randy Mugleston |
| Technical Director | Frank G. Weight |
| Technical Assistant | Matt Smith |
| Expeditor | Paul Farnsworth |
| Master Carpenter | Frank G. Weight |
| Student Assistants to Master Carpenter | Daniel Erikson |
| | Travis Kohler, Nate Moses |
| Scenic Studio Crew | Caesar Diaz, Paul Felt |
| | Mark Goodman, Jim Harrison, Mark Henrie |
| | Ryan Kohler, Nathan Rasmusson, Nathan Smith |
| | Aaron Thompson, Travis Torngren, Jason Yancey |
| Scenic Artist | Richard J. Clifford |
| Assistants to Scenic Artist | Dan Benedict, Nathan Hale |
| Pardoe Stage Carpenter | Jason Yancey |
| Properties Advisor | Loraine Edwards |
| Prop Master | Rebecca Connerly |
| Prop Assistant | Catherine Sorenson |
| Prop Specialty Craftsman | Jared Stull |
| Master Electrician | Liz Otley |
| Scheduling Manager | Britt Pearson |
| Production Assistants | Wendi Kalei Keller, Misty Stay |
| Event Secretaries | Amy Brown, Lisa Erickson, Annie Woodbury |
| Box Office Manager | Paul Duerden |
| Box Office Accountant | T. J. Strang |
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Director.....AdreAnn Paul Sundrud
 Scenic Designer.....Eric Fielding
 Costume Designer.....Cathie McClellan
 Lighting Designer.....Roger A. Larsen
 Music Designer.....David M. Madden
 Makeup and Hair Designer.....Andrea Kyriopoulos
 Production Stage Manager.....Mysti Stay
 Assistant Stage Managers.....Emily Ireta Perez, Shauna Good
 Sound Engineer.....Brad Winkel
 Assistant Costume Design.....Kimberly Clayton
 Makeup and Hair Running Crews.....TMA 267 & 367 students
 Light Board Operator.....Denise Cutliff
 Dressers.....Michelle Caswell

Special Thanks:

Jennifer Conway and David Morgan, for vocal coaching

Full-Time Faculty

Bob Nelson
Department Chair
 Rory Scanlon†
Associate Chair
 Tom Lefler
Associate Chair

Marion J. Bentley†
 Ivan Crosland
 Dean Duncan
 Mary Farahnakian
 Stan Ferguson
 Eric Fielding
 Larrie Gale
 April Chabries Haws
 Barta Heiner†
 Darl Larsen
 David Morgan
 George Nelson
 Harold Oaks†
 Joan Oviatt
 Eric Samuelsen
 Rodger Sorensen
 Janet Swenson†
 Sharon Swenson
 Tim Threlfall

Administrative Staff

Carolyn Hanson
 Heather Price
 Cornelia Wilson

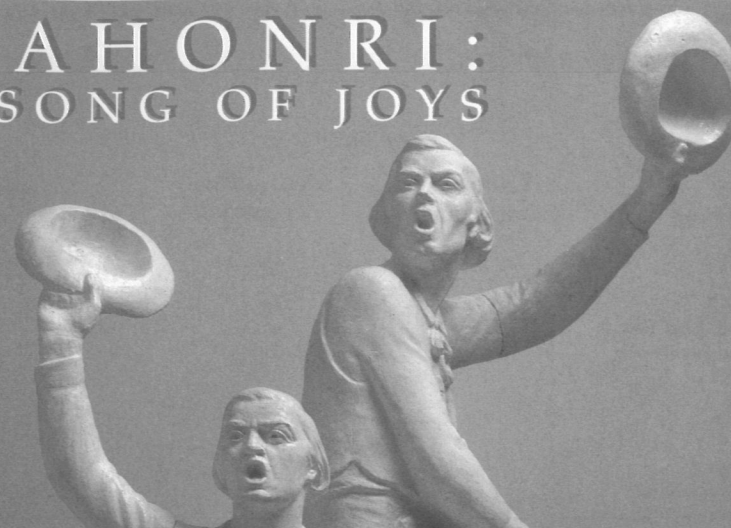
Adjunct/Part-time Faculty/Staff

Lisa Bean
 Michael Chadbourne
 Jerry Christopherson
 Elizabeth Crowe
 Peter Czerny
 James V. D'Arc
 Jim Dearden
 Loraine Edwards*
 Michael Handley*
 Anne Sward Hansen
 Elizabeth Hansen
 Shiela Heindel
 Rosemarie Howard
 Karla Huntsman†
 Lynda Lane
 Paul Larsen
 Michael Magleby*
 Cathie McClellan*†
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