

PROVINCETOWN THEATER COMPANY PRESENTS

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

REVISED, ADAPTED AND
DIRECTED BY LARRY RILEY

*Thursday through Sunday
February 16 through March 4
Provincetown Art Association and Museum
460 Commercial Street*

*Box Office Location
315 Commercial Street
Tickets, Reservations, Information
487-9702 1 PM-4 PM*

In Cooperation With The Provincetown Art Association and Museum

**Provincetown
Theater Company
Inc.**

SYNOPSIS FOR SCANDAL
 Play PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOC.
 Performed at 2/16 3/4/84 12
 From To # of Performances

P.O. Box 192 ■ Provincetown, MA 02657 ■ A Non-Profit Organization

LARRY RILEY
 Director

PAUL ASNER
 Production Manager

	Budget	Actual expenses	(If considerably higher than bud amount, mark w/ * and use back form to explain)
GAS	<u>60.00</u>	<u>60.00</u>	
Set	<u>\$ 500.00</u>	<u>\$ 481.92</u>	
Costumes	<u>300.00</u>	<u>318.79</u>	
Props	<u>100.00</u>	<u>77.78</u>	
Scripts	<u>50.00</u>	<u>65.41</u>	
Royalties	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	
Sound/Lights	<u>100.00</u>	<u>123.36</u>	
Program	<u>305.00</u>	<u>312.80</u>	
Make-up	<u>50.00</u>	<u>112.13</u>	
Publicity: poster	<u>150.00</u>	<u>136.43</u>	
flyer	<u>10.00</u>	<u>—</u>	
ads	<u>360.00</u>	<u>433.07</u>	
Tickets	<u>65.00</u>	<u>36.70</u>	*
Cast party	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	
Photography	<u>25.00</u>	<u>40.00</u>	
Office	<u>30.00</u>	<u>10.63</u>	
Auditions	<u>20.00</u>	<u>20.00</u>	
VIDEO	<u>35.00</u>	<u>35.00</u>	
LOBBY DECOR	<u>50.00</u>	<u>5.22</u>	
Sub-total	<u>\$ 2210.00</u>	<u>\$ 2269.24</u>	Sub-total
10% overrun	<u>221.00</u>	<u>444.74</u>	Bar
Bar	<u>—</u>	<u>-115.39</u>	CASH RETURNED
total Budget	<u>\$ 2431.00</u>	<u>\$ 2598.59</u>	total Spent

Box Office	\$ <u>2909.10</u>	-	<u>DONATION</u>	<u>15.00</u>	=	<u>2924.10</u>	total Box Office
Bar	\$ <u>479.90</u>	-	bank	<u>—</u>	=	<u>479.90</u>	total Bar
						<u>\$ 3404.00</u>	total Income

total Income	\$ <u>3404.00</u>
total Spent	\$ <u>2598.59</u>
Net Profit	\$ <u>805.41</u>

(Please use back of form for any comments, explanations, etc. Or to note any money from Benefits, Fund-raisers, donations in connection with the play.)

L. Riley
 Treasurer, PTC

Showcases many fine performers

'Scandal,' an enjoyable tale

By Margaret Ryan

A complex farce with plenty of visual and comic appeal, "The School for Scandal," directed by Larry Riley, opened last Thursday at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum.

An enjoyable tale of upper-class intrigue, misunderstandings and surprise revelations, "Scandal" showcases many talented actors in its large cast, the best among them being Frank Cullen, Jeffrey Kresser, Paula Schuppert, Doug Best and Sandy McGinn.

Director Riley has a knack for detail, throwing in many delightful touches such as Jane Astion's eye-catching maid bringing Helene Anninos, before our very eyes, to life as the wicked Salome Sneerwell, during the 30-minute seating period before the play begins.

Set for a reason not readily justifiable in turn-of-the-century San Francisco, the play originally was set in the London of 1777 by its 18th century playwright Richard Sheridan.

Although Riley worked hard to translate many of the antiquated phrases into modern English, he could not escape the rhythms of speech, the character's modish concerns, even the jokes themselves that bind the play so to the 1700s.

The result is a little like seeing an authentic Cape Cod home after New England Brickmaster has got through with it. The house may last a few years longer, but it's just not the same house anymore.

In an historical play chock full of many clever lines and knife-sharp observances, much of the pleasure comes in realizing that these same words are more than 200 years old. This pleasure was diminished

somewhat by the wrong setting, and the fact that one wasn't sure if many of the words were authentic or not.

Another hurdle was the extreme pace of the proceedings which, judging from comments heard, made more than one theatergoer's mind race to keep up with the intricate plotline.

After acknowledging these incongruencies, one then tried to put them aside and simply enjoy the farcical elements being unwoven on stage.

Bonnie Fuoco's wonderfully impressionistic mauve and orange sets, and the jazzy, glittery and historically accurate costumes by Sandy Busa and Jason Richter were marvelous to look at and fit the period to a tee. And some of the acting was simply splendid.

Doug Best as the outrageous Benjamin Backbite, in a trend that seemed to hold true for the most successful characterizations, showed that the more faithful one was to the original period, the truer and more enjoyable the lines became.

The character of Benjamin Backbite, who along with a roomful of the most malicious gossips this side of "Falcon Crest" rips anyone not present into caty shreds, is just not at home in the old American West. With a prissy moue for every verbal arrow slung, Best's Backbite, along with Glen Lane—who also does a first-rate job as his schmaltzy German counterpart Crabtree—are Sheridan's drawing room equivalent of a Greek chorus, intended to provide a scathing look at the scandalmongers of the era.

Best's appearance as a lavender cowboy in the last act, with pink boots and a rose in his hat, unintentionally upstaged all the rest. His wonderfully

mobile face, with its peevish expressions and scornful glances, and eloquent body language, made a moral as well as comic statement about backstabbing more effectively than words could have.

Among the alumni of the School for Scandal Sandy McGinn gives a rousing performance as the comical Kitty Candour, the biggest gossip of them all, who punctuates every vicious snipe with a shrieking, self-congratulatory laugh, and commands the stage in her low-cut, lilac satin gown.

Here we are also introduced to Joseph Surface (broadly played by Ron Weissenberger), a smarmy lounge-lizard if there ever was one, with his bright orange shirt, thin cigar, painted-on pants and ripply hair. The irony of the plot is that it is this brother who is well regarded by his rich uncle, while the ne'er-do-well, but basically good-guy Charles (acted with nice sincerity by Max Reagan) is consistently criticized. How Charles gets his come-uppance comprises the main plot line of the story.

Another sub-plot is the story of middle-aged Peter Teazle and his stormy marriage to a young country girl who is dazzled by city life. The Teazles, portrayed with professional secureness by a warmly paternal Ed Sorrell and the mischievous-faced Paula Schuppert, were the characters the audience seemed most readily able to relate to and were given some of the cleverest dialogue.

Complaining about Peter's lack of generosity in buying her the latest clothes, Schuppert pouts that he has no taste, and "You had no taste when you married me!" Glancing skyward, Sorrell sighs, "That's very true."

The second play of the season for Schuppert, she is an actress who is showing greater promise with each role.

A third sub-plot in a story whose in-

Plangently portrayed by newcomer Wendy White, this Maria displays her expressiveness with some wonderfully heartfelt looks but delivers her lines in an oddly prissy, whining voice.

It is Salome Sneerwell's designs to break up the love affair, and to do so she has her accomplice, Snake (played by J. Tobias Everett), plant letters of affection between Charles and Teresa Teazle. Anninos's Sneerwell is a tad hysterical; she doesn't temper her performance in the least, and while providing funny moments, creates shrillness where there should be an evil, oiled quality.

Everett tries to bring out the immoral dastardliness of Snake but either he is too fresh in our minds from last year as the loveable Alan Felix in "Play it Again, Sam," or has simply not mastered the "Theater of Cruelty," but though sneering and skulking, Everett's Snake ends up skirting the delicate line between villainy and parody.

Weissenberger as the seductive Joseph Surface also has a bit of trouble establishing his character without embellishing it with too much broadly satirical emphasis. With his audible "Whew," and a visible swiping of sweat from the forehead, Weissenberger takes the easy way out in asking the audience to identify with his comical predicament in having both Teresa and Peter Teazle hiding in different portions of his room.

It is the second act, featuring Jeffrey Kresser as the inscrutable Chinese Ming, and Frank Cullen, who gives a gentlemanly and first-rate performance as the wealthy Oliver Surface, that lifts the play into high-quality theater.

Ming's purpose is to take Uncle Oliver to Charles's apartment, where the nephew is dissolutely squandering the fortune Oliver has provided, and where he attempts to sell his disguised uncle

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a remake of "Charlie Chan," Kresser's every moment on stage is a rewarding one. The decision to replace Sheridan's original character of Moses the Jew with one that does not glaringly hint of anti-Semitism was also wise. It fits in with the updated premise of the play.

Cullen, also, never falters in his sympathetic characterization of Oliver. A fine figure of a man, with his mutton-chop sideburns, top hat, and well-fitting suits, Cullen stays true to Sheridan's view of what a landed gentleman should be. The difficult speeches, which with other characters are occasionally hard to follow, trip off of Cullen's tongue as if he had just them up the minute before, as do his gleeful asides. It is hard to believe that, according to the program notes, Cullen only appears on stage every 25 years.

As the ne'er-do-well Charles, Max Reagan also contributes a believable, although lightweight quality, and manages to combine Charles's weakness for liquor and song with a charming likeableness. It serves the ending, in which he is proven to be Sheridan's ideal "man of sentiment" well.

With an incredible amount of verbiage, the play would bog down if it did not move along so quickly. Speed of delivery, however, is something Jason Richter as the Irishman Rowley, might not want to emphasize quite so much.

Richter rushes through his speeches so fast he comes off sounding like one of those Veg-o-Matic salesmen on late-night TV. While his Irish accent is good, he has a tendency to embellish his portrayal with two stock gestures, hooking his thumbs into his pockets and rocking back and forth, which become repetitive after a while.

In the minor character of Trip, Charles's servant in the original, who has been turned into a drinking buddy in this presentation, Hal Streib does fine, both at establishing the sardonic nature of his character and at a rather gratuitous bit of singing and dancing that has been thrown in.

Bradley Robinson, however, slows things down considerably as the other minor character, Careless. Pausing for several seconds before finally delivering each of his lines, his age and lack of movement do not blend in well with the sprightliness of the second act's overall atmosphere.

Bob Henckel, stepping into the tiny role of Toby Bumper at the last minute, is also a bit lackluster, though this role consists of hardly more than waving a bottle around.

The final role to be mentioned is that of William, Joseph's manservant, played with hairy chest and insouciant swagger by Laura Green, who also stage managed the production. A somewhat bizarre touch, Green's William is interesting to watch, to the say the least, and certainly spices up interest in the somewhat lagging third act.

Excellent production values complemented the frequently fine acting displayed here. Well-designed lighting by Steve Iammarino turned what was basically a one-set play into a variety of different locales. Lighting technician was Amy Germain.

The sound, too, enhanced the goings on, with a number of very different pieces of music, coordinated by Jim Zimmerman, that occasionally played softly behind the dialogue but did not distract in the least.

As mentioned before, Busa's and Richter's colorful costumes were eye-catching and did much to add to the light-hearted effect. Wardrobe mistress was Donna Gribetz. Mary Ellen Carroll's make-up was properly theatrical, but Jim Rann's hair designs for the women were disappointing. Many of the wigs looked like something the cat dragged in.

The multi-dimensional set, located this time at the front end of the theater, was more than adequate, and the ramp at the right side of the stage was a nice touch, bringing the actors closer to the audience. Master carpenters were Tom Rosenkampff, Craig Schiff and George Mattingly. Matthew Coes and Amy Ger-



Paula Schuppert as Teresa Teazle

Photo by Gabriel Brooke

main were responsible for props.

Constructing and painting the Matisse-like set were Steven Iammarino, Fuoco, Sean Kilawee, Toby Everett, Sandy Newmann, Nicoletta Poli, Paula Schuppert, Don McNeilly, Michael Anderson and Maggie Baker.

Assisting director Riley was Sandy Busa, with Steven Iammarino listed as technical director and Paul Asher the production manager.

Riley has shown himself an imaginative director, who is willing to take

risks, most of them calculated; and who can coordinate a large cast with a difficult script and make it seem easy.

"School for Scandal" makes for an interesting evening at the theater, and in large part an enjoyable one.

The play continues Thursday to Sunday through March 4, at 8 p.m. at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 460 Commercial St. Proceeds from tonight's performance will benefit the Provincetown Rescue Squad.

lively arts

By SUSAN MILTON

Nearly 200 years ago, playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan concocted just the cure for winter doldrums in a small town.

Starting Feb. 16, the Provincetown Theater Company will offer that antidote: Its production of Sheridan's classic comedy of manners, "The School for Scandal."

The play pokes fun at wagging tongues and the gossip in any insular society and leaves audiences laughing at heroes and villains alike.

"It's a farce," says director Larry Riley. "It mocks our mannerisms and shows us through laughter our own faults. Then, at the end, he turns very sentimental and moral, which tells us we're good people after all."

Peopling the play is a delightful cast of characters whose names describe their gossiping styles.

For example, there is Salome Sneerwell (played by Helen Anninos), of whom Sheridan wrote, "Everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look than many can



Crabtree (Glen Lane), left, and Benjamin Backbite (Doug Best) sashay through a cutting characterization of a woman's looks.

SCANDALOUS FUN

laugh at these people and laugh at ourselves."

The play's plot provides plenty of opportunity for scandalous behavior by almost everyone. Two brothers, one a ne'er-do-well, the other a seeming paragon of moral virtue, stand to inherit a fortune from a long-absent uncle who wants to test their reputations.

upper-class status of the characters and their accents, another troublesome staging problem.

"I looked for a period that was a little more gutsier, an earthier era than what we think of as 18th-century London," says Riley. "Although it really was a bawdy time, people think it was effete."

In another effort to make Sheridan's language accessible to modern audiences, Riley spent a year rewriting the play, with the cast adding a last polishing in rehearsal.

"The language is arch, and I don't think a lot of people relate to it," Riley says. "Now the words are the same, but they are just rephrased."

"Sheridan was a brilliant playwright, and the way he built the play was very clever. We just take that structure and 55 percent of his language and transferred it to San Francisco. The two societies really were very similar."

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For example, there is Salome Sneerwell (played by Helen Anninos), of whom Sheridan wrote, "Everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on the side to support it."

Aiding and abetting the scandal mongering are Benjamin Backbite (Doug Best) and Crabtree (Glen Lane), both masterful character assassins, and Kitty Candour (Sandy McGinn), who kills with kindness. After all, "People will talk — there's no preventing it," she says.

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Crabtree (Glen Lane), left, and Benjamin Backbite (Doug Best) sashay through a cutting characterization of a woman's looks.

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The play's plot provides plenty of opportunity for scandalous behavior by almost everyone. Two brothers, one a ne'er-do-well, the other a seeming paragon of moral virtue, stand to inherit a fortune from a long-absent uncle who wants to test their reputations. Sheridan also stirs in a May-December match undergoing heavy weather and, just for contrast, an ingénue.

Producing a period piece such as Sheridan's play would put a drain on any theater company because of the cost of costumes and the "rigid tradition" of such Restoration-period theater, Riley says.

For those reasons, he has moved the play's setting from the late 1700s in England to San Francisco at the turn of this century. The move also left behind the

upper-class status of the characters and their accents, another troublesome staging problem.

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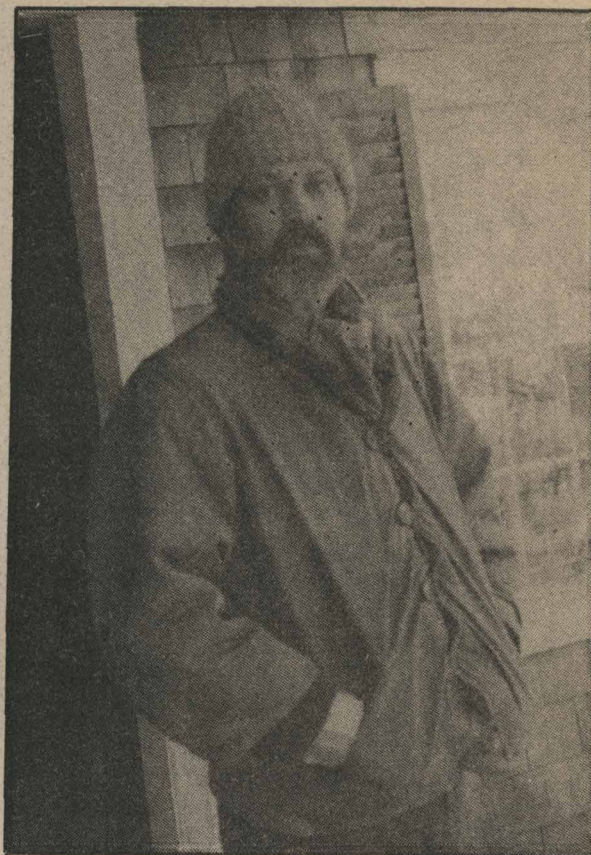
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The play will run on Thursdays through Sundays from Feb. 16 to March 4 at the Provincetown Art Association at 460 Commercial Street. Performances begin at 8 p.m..

The debut on Feb. 16 is a benefit on behalf of the company's building fund. Tickets for the opening are \$6, and include an invitation to a reception at Ciro & Sal's Restaurant following the show.

Otherwise, tickets are \$5 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, \$4 on Thursdays. For tickets or reservations, contact the box office at 315 Commercial Street, 487-9702 between 1 and 4 p.m.

School for Scandal



Larry Riley, director of *School for Scandal*

The Provincetown Theater Company's remedy for the doldrums of February is a presentation of Richard Sheridan's Restoration comedy *School for Scandal*. The script has been adapted and revised by director Larry Riley, a long-time member of the Theater Company who has participated in every aspect of production. His most recent appearance on stage was in last year's performance of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest* as Dr. Chasuble. Riley has transferred Sheridan's play from seventeenth century England to San Francisco at the turn of the century, a city—in his words—of easy money, open hands, and dirty ways.

The play requires a veritable cast of thousands. Although one role may carry more weight than another, Member Paul Asher described it as a true ensemble piece without stars. Those actors whose names you are likely to associate with previous Theater Company productions are Jeffrey Kresser, Ed Sorrel, Ron Weisenberger, Glen Lane, Bradley Robinson, Toby Everett, Doug Best, Helene Anninos, and Paula Schuppert. Cast members who are new to Theater Company

audiences include Frank Cullen, Jason Richter, Peter Knowles, Hal Streib, Wendy White, and Max Reagan.

Sandy Busa, who appeared last year in *Bell, Book, and Candle* and *Play It Again Sam*, is the assistant director of this production. Laura Green is stage manager; in the year since she joined the Theater Company she has become a member of the Board of Directors. She was also the production manager for last year's presentation of *The Shadowbox*.

Artist Stephen Iammarino is serving as both lighting director and production manager. The set has been designed by Provincetown artist Bonnie Fuoco, who designed sets last winter for the Teague's Children's Repertory Theatre. Mary Ellen Carroll will be in charge of make-up for the play. Costuming, I'm told, is being done by a number of people "in a frivolous vein to underscore the comedy."

School for Scandal will open February 16 at the Provincetown Art Association. Performances will be held Thursdays through Sundays until March 4. Tickets will be on sale in early February.