



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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University
of Victoria

PHOENIX THEATRE NAME DROPS AND DISHES THE DIRT

18th century classic “The School for Scandal” goes to Hollywood!

2007/2008 Season

4 THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*

March 13 – 22, 2008

By Richard B. Sheridan

The gossip, intrigue and razor-sharp wit of this 18th century classic continue to ring true for today's Hollywood and tabloid-driven world of celebrity.

Directed by Fran Gebhard

Set Design by Nathan Brown & Brian Culp

Costume Design by Kate Costin

Lighting Design by Tim Herron

Sound Design by Theatre 205 Sound LAB

FREE Preshow Lecture:

Friday March 14 at 7:00pm

with Dr. Gordon Fulton, Associate Professor
Department of English and specialist in 18th
century literature

**“The Unusual Case of Mr. Morton” with Mexican Guest Director Martín Zapata which was previous scheduled in this time has been postponed by the Director because of family reasons. Season subscribers for the Phoenix Theatre will be able to use their issued tickets for Morton to attend The School for Scandal, and do not need to exchange their tickets.*

George Clooney, Britney Spears, Amy Winehouse, Heath Ledger, Tom Cruise. Their extravagances, follies, triumphs and failures pervade our everyday lives through a barrage of media like *eTalk Television*, *People Magazine* and the *National Enquirer* – believe it or not, just as the upper class in 18th century England once did through the tabloids of their day!

Join University of Victoria Phoenix Theatre as they dig the dirt, drop names and kill off characters in director Fran Gebhard's reinterpretation of Richard B. Sheridan's classic tale of romance, hypocrisy and gossip – ***The School for Scandal***, running March 13 to 22, 2008.

“Upon reading the script, I was immediately taken with the striking similarities between the gossip-driven scandal society of Sheridan's time and the celebrity cult culture of today,” says Gebhard.

Having performed previously in the play and directed it twice, Gebhard is familiar with her material. Originally set amongst the 18th century upper classes, she has been hard at work setting the play in the present day Hollywood and fusing its witty, 18th century restoration period language with contemporary pop culture references. Fraught with paparazzi, fashionistas and its own famous “self-help” TV psychologist, the play mirrors our culture where, as Gebhard reflects *“We are fascinated by the lives of today's genuine celebrities and those we have raised to the level of celebrity. We have become a nation of voyeurs. We love nothing more than when celebrities end up destroying themselves.”*

Hollywood fashion also inspires the aesthetic of the play's set and costume design. Student co-designers Nathan Brown and Brian Culp's minimalist set evokes the simple, sleekness of California modernist mansions, complete with clean-lined, Italian-style furniture. Fourth year theatre student, Kate Costin's costumes create a synergy between designer runway fashions and high-end streetwear and have inspirations from the high-fashion chic of Beverly Hills to California's beach culture. Guest Lighting Designer, Tim Herron brings the warmth of the southern sun to the stage and students studying sound in the theatre 205 course have stepped out of their technical role to design the sound elements of the play.

Central to the plot of ***The School for Scandal*** is the May-September relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Teazle (Morgan Cranny and Sarah Pelzer) – in this case “Dr. Peter” Teazle – who's lives are publicly meddled with by the likes of Mrs. Sneerwell (Reille Braid), Joseph Surface (Brian Culp) and brother Charles Surface (Jesse Collin).

Leading a life of scandal himself, including elopements, politics, numerous marriages, financial success and a descent into poverty, Richard B. Sheridan is considered one of the most successful “comedy of manners” authors in English speaking history. First performed in 1777, ***The School for Scandal*** remains to this day Sheridan's undisputed masterpiece. Please join us for a **FREE Public Lecture** on Friday, March 14 at 7:00pm with Dr. Gordon Fulton, an Associate Professor in the Department of English and a specialist in 18th century literature.

The performance schedule for ***The School for Scandal*** at the Phoenix Theatre @ UVic is as follows:

Public Preview Performances 8pm: March 11 and 12

Evening Performances 8pm: March 13 (Opening Night), 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

Matinee Performances 2pm: Saturday, March 22

Single Tickets: \$10.00 - \$20.00 (Previews \$5.00)

Phoenix Box Office opens March 6 in person or by calling: **(250) 721-8000**.

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