

Play Review

'Scandal' Highlights Year With Bright, Sardonic Wit

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who was born in Dublin, became an Englishman when he was eight years old. He created something of a literary sensation when, in his twenties, he wrote "The School for Scandal."

The play was the forerunner of those of another Irishman, Oscar Wilde. And, as you might expect as such, bright, witty, mischievous, sardonic and scathing.

For the Baylor Theater's final production of the season director Jerry Talley has recreated Sheridan's social comedy in what may well be the highlight of an, at times, dim season.

The old script is as perfectly diverting and entertaining as Sheridan could have ever wished. And Talley has let the wit and

social mockery of Sheridan speak to the audience and left the conclusions to them instead of the usual arch and archaic and "were, n't-those-people -just-the-most" routine.

Although the kercheif flutterings, the curtsies, the bows and all the other business of politeness are present they are not exaggerated to the point of ridiculous burlesque. The wit and bit are still there and dominantly so.

The more memorable moments of an amusing two or so hours are the drinking bouts, the sale of the family portraits, the screen scene, and whenever Sir Peter Teazle and Sir Oliver Surface are left alone on the stage.

The two most outstanding members of a highly voltable cast are Lawrence Mooney as Sir Peter Teazle and Edward Baker as Sir Oliver Surface. Dick Hooser combines an amazing air of masculinity and femininity as Joseph Surface while Beverley Gervasi, Bob Wayne Ousley, Margaret Webb, Preston Kirk and everyone else perform their executions with verve and tenacity.

Patricia Cook has dressed the cast in the high fashion of the 18th century while J. Larry Roof has re-set the stage and lighting in Weston Theater with his usual services, which are always hard to fault.

They may not only be the happiest couple in the country but the happiest play in the town.

—Fred Binkley