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Edited by James Morwood and David Crane
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This is the first systematic attempt to establish Sheridan as a major figure in the history of English comedy and as the outstanding playwright between Congreve and Wilde. Leading scholars address Sheridan's roles as playwright, as manager of Drury Lane theatre for more than thirty years, and, for almost as long, as a Member of Parliament, where he proved himself a master of rhetoric in another theatre of great personal confrontations.

The essays examine the theatrical world in which Sheridan worked, discuss his major plays, and include a modern director's observations on the production of his work today. The volume also contains important new assessments of Sheridan's political career and the image he projected through his speeches. It offers a much-needed contemporary evaluation of this multi-faceted man and his work.

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PETER WOOD has had a long and distinguished career as a director. At the National Theatre, as well as producing *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*, he has staged Farquar's *The Beaux' Stratagem* and Congreve's *Love for Love* (twice).

Some dates in Sheridan's life

- 1751 Richard Brinsley Sheridan born in Dublin in September or October.
- 1762–c. 1767–8 At Harrow School.
- 1766 His mother, Frances Chamberlaine Sheridan, dies at Blois in France.
- 1770–1772 At Bath.
- 1772 Elopes to the continent with Elizabeth Linley (March); fights two duels over her with Captain Thomas Mathews (May and July).
- 1773 Marries Elizabeth Linley at Marylebone Church on 13 April.
- 1775 First performances of *The Rivals* (17 and 28 January), of *St Patrick's Day* (2 May) and of *The Duenna* (21 November), all at Covent Garden. Son Thomas born on 17 November.
- 1776 Opens Drury Lane as principal manager (24 September).
- 1777 First performances of *A Trip to Scarborough* (24 February) and of *The School for Scandal* (8 May) at Drury Lane. Elected a member of the Literary Club in March.
- 1778 First performance of *The Camp* (15 October) at Drury Lane.
- 1779 First performances of *Verses to the Memory of Garrick* (11 March) and *The Critic* (30 October) at Drury Lane.
- 1780 Elected MP for Stafford on 12 September.
- 1782 Under-Secretary of State for the Northern Department (27 March–1 July).

Some dates in Sheridan's life

- 1783 Secretary to the Treasury (21 February–18 December).
- 1787 Delivers a famous speech in Parliament in the proceedings against Warren Hastings (7 February).
- 1788 Speaks at the trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall (June). Confidential adviser to the Prince of Wales in the Regency Crisis (November–December).
- 1792 Death of his first wife at Bristol Wells on 28 June.
- 1794 Drury Lane reopens on 21 April after being closed for reconstruction in 1791. First performance of *The Glorious First of June* (co-written with James Cobb) on 2 July.
- 1795 Marries Hester Jane Ogle on 27 April.
- 1796 Son Charles Brinsley born on 14 January.
- 1799 First performance of *Pizarro*, adapted from Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru*, at Drury Lane (24 May).
- 1804 Treasurer of the Navy in the Ministry of All the Talents. Wins Parliamentary seat for Westminster after the death of Charles James Fox (November).
- 1807 Defeated in the Westminster election but becomes MP for Ilchester.
- 1809 Drury Lane Theatre destroyed by fire on 24 February.
- 1811 Advises the Prince Regent in the Second Regency Crisis.
- 1812 Defeated at the Stafford election and so loses a seat in Parliament.
- 1816 Dies at Savile Row on 7 July; buried in Westminster Abbey on 13 July.