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**ABBAY PRESENTS RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN'S  
CELEBRATED COMEDY 'THE RIVALS'  
AS ITS SUMMER SHOW**

28 July – 19 September 2009  
Previews: 22 – 27 July 2009

June 2009 – The Abbey Theatre presents **Richard Brinsley Sheridan's** celebrated comedy of manners **THE RIVALS** as this year's summer production. One of theatre's most enduring comedies, the national theatre's production is directed by **Patrick Mason** and opens for an eight week run on Wednesday 28 July 2009.

A sterling cast includes **Emma Colohan, John Currivan, Nick Dunning, Tara Egan-Langley, Ian Lloyd Anderson, Martin Maguire, Alison McKenna, Rory Nolan, Marion O'Dwyer, Aoibheann O'Hara, Derry Power, Marty Rea** and **Tom Vaughan-Lawlor**, hot on the heels of his award-winning performance in the lead role of the Abbey's production of **THE RESISTIBLE RISE OF ARTURO UI**. Set and Costume design is handled by **Joe Vanek** with **Paul Keogan** on lighting design duties.

A feisty and spirited celebration of the drama of everyday life, **THE RIVALS** centres around young Lydia Languish who yearns for a love affair akin to those she reads about in her romantic novels. She becomes enthralled with the idea of eloping with a poor soldier thus forcing her well-to-do suitor, Jack Absolute, to masquerade as the penniless Ensign Beverley in the hopes of winning her hand. False identities and romantic entanglements abound and, along with a generous peppering of Mrs. Malaprop's "derangement of epitaphs", all make for a hilarious night of theatre.

Playwright, impresario, orator and Whig politician, **Richard Brinsley Sheridan** was born in Dublin in 1751 to Thomas Sheridan, actor and manager of Smock Alley Theatre, and the writer Frances Sheridan. Best known as the high Georgian satirist, observer of manners, and writer of **The Rivals** (1775) and **The School for Scandal** (1777), Sheridan's career as a playwright gave way to a political path when he entered Parliament in 1780. From 1776 he managed Drury Lane, one of the largest theatres in Europe, and during his thirty-two year political career he was an unwavering advocate of reform, even speaking openly of his support for the French Revolution. He became the most renowned orator of his age, and counted the Prince of Wales and the young Lord Byron among his friends. Continuing to write throughout his political career he altered and added to many dramatic works and freely adapted a German tragedy as **Pizarro** in 1799. Upon his death Sheridan was buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey.

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