

For Immediate Release: April 21, 2006

What The Butler Saw
May 11 - May 28 , 2006

TWO RIVER THEATER COMPANY
presents
WHAT THE BUTLER SAW by Joe Orton

Directed by Brendon Fox

Featuring

Matthew Boston as Dr. Prentice, Allison Briner as Mrs. Prentice, Bob Sorenson as Dr. Rance, Amanda Rowan as Geraldine Barclay, Simon

Kendall as Nicholas,

John Keating as Sgt. Match

May 11-28

RED BANK, NJ, April 21, 2006 – Two River Theater Company, under the leadership of Executive Producer Robert Rechnitz and Artistic Director Jonathan Fox, presents *What The Butler Saw*, Joe Orton's hilarious face that pokes fun at sex, authority, family relationships, and the world of psychoanalysis. The production runs from May 11 through May 28 in the 350-seat Joan & Robert Rechnitz Theater.

Widely considered a masterpiece of the modern British stage, *What The Butler Saw*, Orton's last and (what many critics consider to be) finest play, involves a sex-obsessed psychiatrist who is confounded by the arrival of his nymphomaniac wife, a lunatic supervisor, a handsome bellhop, and a clueless policeman – all in the midst of his attempts to seduce a prospective secretary. It is as outrageous as it is entertaining, and its unrestrained depiction of a world gone mad displays Orton's talent at its subversive best.

Joe Orton has been hailed as Britain's heir apparent to Oscar Wilde. In addition to the madcap *What The Butler Saw*, Orton is best known for his comedies *Entertaining Mr. Sloan* and *Loot*. Orton's brief but meteoric career as a comic playwright was cut short when he was murdered at age 34, in 1967. His plays can be read as a twisted and exaggerated autobiographical version of his life, and the juxtaposition of outrageous events with mundane language forms the heart of his comedic style. His characters strive to maintain social poses while seducing, destroying, deceiving, or murdering each other.

In the mid-seventies, years after Orton first scandalized London, Orton's plays were reintroduced by the London's Royal Court Theatre,

and Orton received wide critical acceptance as the master of modern farce. His legacy has been immortalized by the publication of John Lahr's biography, *Prick Up Your Ears*, which was made into a feature film in 1987 starring Gary Oldman as Orton. Although Orton is correctly viewed as an important precursor by the contemporary queer literary movement, he is also widely regarded as the finest writer of farce in the twentieth century.

What The Butler Saw was first performed on March 5, 1969 in London, a year and a half after its author's death. The opening was reportedly even barracked with cries of "filth." Like Orton's earlier works, this play appalled and enraged audiences with its blatant sexuality and attacks on authority and conventional morality. Although today's audiences might find the subject matter less shocking and controversial, this hilarious farce remains as bold and provocative as it was in the 1960s and has since become a contemporary classic.

The cast will feature Matthew Boston, Alison Briner (National Tours of *Les Miserables* and *Titanic*), popular off-Broadway actress Amanda Rowan (*The Ma!*), and Bob Sorenson (*Fully Committed*). John Keating (*Juno and the Paycock* at the Roundabout, McCarter's *The Tempest*) and Simon Kendall (recently seen in McCarter's *A Christmas Carol*) round out the cast. The design team for *What The Butler Saw* includes Juliet Chia (lighting), Deborah Caney (costumes), and Kevin Dunayer (sound).

Two River Theater Company, under the direction of Executive Producer Robert M. Rechnitz and Artistic Director Jonathan Fox, was founded in 1994 as Monmouth County's first professional regional theater in 30 years. Two River's mission is to perform from the world body of dramatic literature, including new works, those plays that most richly direct our gaze to the life of the human spirit in all of its shifting modes, its thought, its suffering, its passion, its joy, and laughter. As one of New Jersey's leading regional theatres, Two River Theater Company, a not-for-profit arts organization, is supported in part by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Dept. of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, in addition to contributions from many corporations, foundations, businesses and individuals. Two River Theater Company is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

Two River Theater Company, located at its new 350-seat, state-of-the-art theater at 21 Bridge Avenue in Red Bank, NJ, 07701, is easily

accessible by car from New York City (60 min. from midtown), Philadelphia (75 minutes) and New Jersey via the Garden State Parkway (Exit 109). From NY's Penn Station: NJ Transit's North Jersey Coast line offers nonstop service (approx. 90 minutes) from Manhattan to Red Bank on selected days and times, convenient for weekday matinees, evening performances and Saturday/Sunday performances. For further information call NJ Transit at 1-800-772-2222 or visit www.njtransit.com. Two River Theater Company is barrier-free and completely accessible to people with disabilities. Children under the age of four are not permitted into mainstage shows. Tickets/Information: Tickets \$25 - \$45. Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express accepted. \$15 student tickets available for any performance with current ID.

Box Office phone: 732-345-1400 Website: www.trtc.org

#