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Question: Account for the enduring popularity of Sheridan's 'The Rivals'.

Answer: 'The Rivals' of Sheridan is one of the most popular comedies on the stage. It is an amusing essay in light comedy, though hardly a flawless masterpiece. Sheridan came to prominence as a result of this fascinating comedy. Though on the first night it failed because of a bad cast, its revised presentation won for him an applause which has been continued till now.

The first and foremost cause of the popularity of 'The Rivals' is the sparkling conversation which always was a part of Sheridan's own talk and conversation in society and which he exhibits here in print almost for the first time with all the pleasure and joy of literary craftsman. Secondly the characters are quite charmingly drawn though they

are hackneyed, traditional and conventional. The sort of talk is always sure to make the audience pleased and happy and Sheridan gives plenty of it in the play. 'The Rivals' also proved to be very effective on the stage. It was because it had a very great advantage over the Restoration comedy. Thus all told, the coming of Sheridan with 'The Rivals' symbolized a new taste.

The end -

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