

SCENE CHANGES

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*Reviews
In The Spotlight*



The Affairs of Anatol

Austrian playwright Arthur Schnitzler may have written during the era of the sexually repressed fin-de-siècle Vienna, but his own lifestyle and prose was as colorful as a bordello parlor. Schnitzler was said to record his daily orgasms with his many girlfriends for several years, drew up yearly totals, subdivided by mistress, which will give you some idea of his mind set. It didn't go to waste; he used his own diaries as inspirations for his plays. Yet, with all his flamboyance in works like the sensational *La Ronde* (*Der Reigen*) which was so socially offensive that its author was tried for obscenity, causing him to ban the play from any production during his lifetime, Schnitzler seemed to aim for at least a modicum of moral introspection on the part of his heroes.

The Affairs of Anatol, Schnitzler's first theatrical success, didn't foreshadow the mountain of aggravation awaiting *La Ronde*, though it did attempt to deal with the hero, Anatol, a wealthy bon vivant who flits from mistress to mistress, with some depth. Schnitzler, a doctor trained in medicine, began writing at a time when Sigmund Freud was delivering his own theories of the then new fangled practice of psychoanalysis.

To the credit of this new production of **The Affairs of Anatol**, adapted by Harley Granville Barker and directed by **Sue Miner**, there's no attempt to update it as has been a practice in so many adaptations of Schnitzler's plays. On one hand it turns the production into a curious period piece, but on the other hand, by keeping it faithful to the original period in which it was written, we have to marvel at Schnitzler's bravado. Sexual references are frank and all of