

Noises Off

by **Michael Frayn**

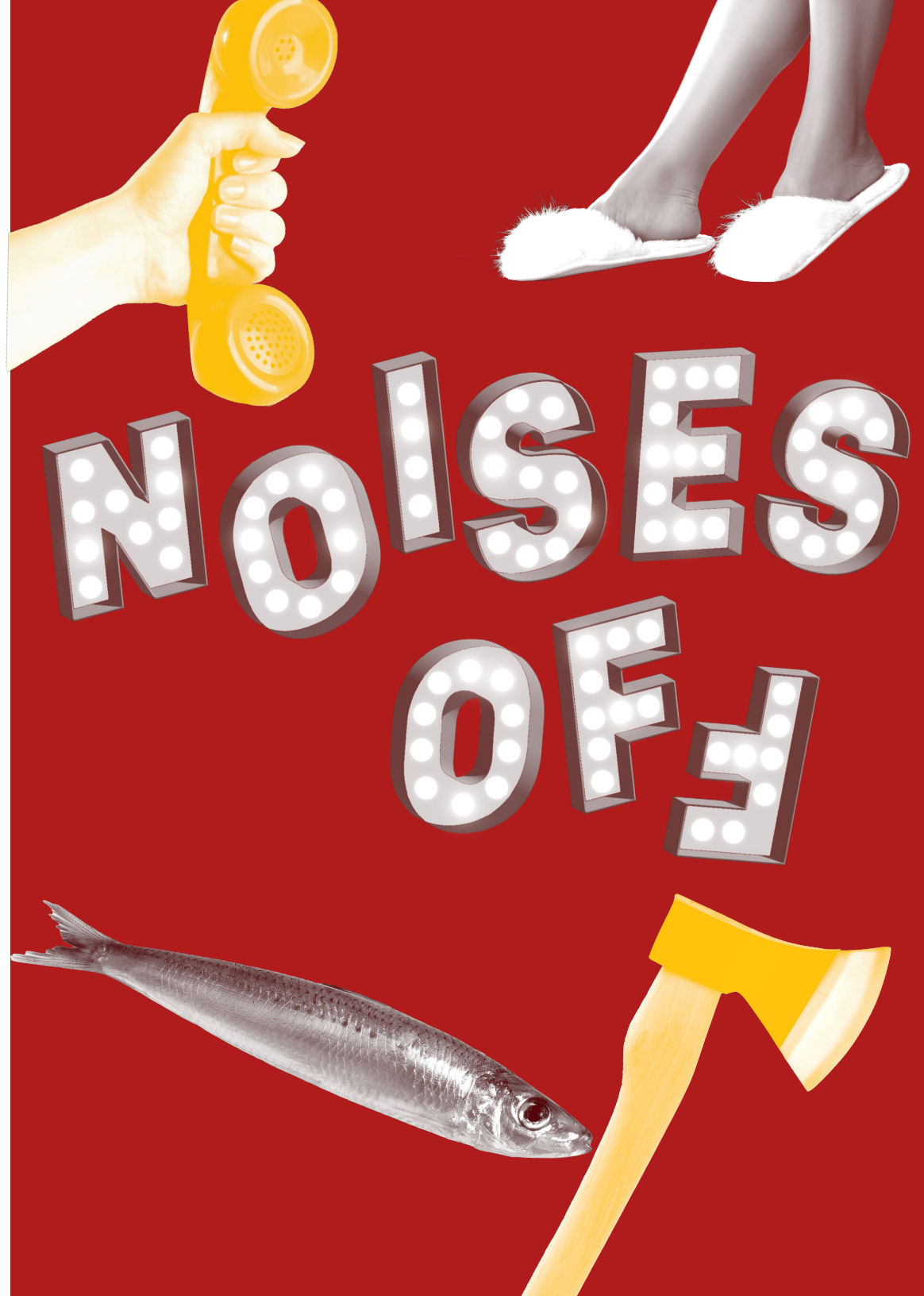
Directed by **Shelley Butler**

December 5 - 20, 2025

SPOTLIGHT STUDY GUIDE **For Teachers and Students**



Pioneer Theatre Company's Student Matinee Program is made possible through the support of Salt Lake County's Zoo, Arts, and Parks Program, The Simmons Family Foundation, and The Meldrum Foundation Endowment Fund.





CHARACTERS

Dotty Otley: A late-middle-aged British actress. Dating Garry, though she attempts to make him jealous by meeting with Freddy.
(On-Stage Character: **Mrs. Clackett:** A Cockney Housekeeper for the Brent's home in England.)

Garry Lejeune: A British actor who never finishes a sentence. Dating Dotty.
(On-Stage Character: **Roger:** An English Real estate agent who is attempting to rent Flavia's and Phillip's home, but uses it for his own personal benefit.)

Timothy Allgood: An overworked Assistant Stage Manager. Understudies Selsdon and Freddy.

Brooke Ashton: A young inexperienced British actress. Pays no attention to other performers, either in performance or backstage.
(On-Stage Character: **Vicki:** An English woman who works for Inland Revenue and is trying to woo Roger.)

Frederick Fellows: A British actor with a serious fear of violence and blood.
(On-Stage Characters: **Phillip Brent:** An Englishman who lives out of the country with his wife Flavia to avoid paying taxes. Also plays **Sheikh:** A Middle-Eastern interested in renting the home - and is the spitting image of Phillip.)

Lloyd Dallas: Director of the play *Nothing On*.

Belinda Blair: Cheerful and sensible, a reliable British actress. She may have feelings for Freddy.
(On-Stage Character: **Flavia Brent:** Phillip Brent's English wife. She is dependable, though not one for household duties.)

Selsdon Mowbray: An elderly alcoholic Englishman who hides his bottles onstage.
(On-Stage Character: **Burglar:** Old Cockney man in his seventies, breaking into the Brent's home.)

Poppy Norton-Taylor: Stage Manager. Emotional, over-sensitive, and envious of Brooke, whom she understudies. Carrying Lloyd's child.

SYNOPSIS: Act I begins during the final dress rehearsal at the Grand Theatre, Weston-Super-Mare for the regional tour of the new British farce, *Nothing On*. The director, Lloyd Dallas, tries to keep his tired and frustrated cast together to pull off the rehearsal, as they forget their lines, blocking and props. To top it off, off-stage personal problems add to the mayhem as they struggle to finish running Act I.

Act II takes place one month later with *Nothing On* up and running, and a matinee performance at the Theatre Royal. The action now takes place backstage, as the cracks and flaws begin to surface. As the relationships start to deteriorate, we see backstage squabbles, late entrances, misplaced props and surprising revelations all come forth in a manic fashion.

Act III takes place as *Nothing On* is about to wrap up its run at the Municipal Theatre a few months later. The frayed relationships we saw in Act II are now fully flushed out. Things go from bad to worse, with the blocking, lines and concentration of the cast completely out the window. Somehow, the cast manages to pull the show off, but it is a far cry from what it resembled in Act I.

Playwright, Michael Frayn's Idea

Since 1982, when Michael Frayn first staged *Noises Off*, his fast-paced comedy about actors in a production of a farce, it has become a staple crowd pleaser around the world.

Frayn admits that as a newspaper columnist he frequently made fun of theatre. "I would say how embarrassing it was: the whole idea of people standing around in artificial groups, speaking in loud voices. I was slowly drawn into it at the end of my 30s – late for a dramatist."

The author, who wrote for the *Observer* newspaper in the late 1960s and early 70s, has since produced serious plays and admired novels. Usually, he says, the decision to tell a story on stage or in a book comes early. "Ideas immediately suggest one thing or the other, and *Noises Off*, obviously, had to be a play."

THE FIRST IDEA

"The idea came to me in 1970. I'd written a series of short plays." They were a take on a five-character farce which, with a cast of just two, involved silly quick-changes and theatrical illusions. "One night I was watching from the wings, seeing the actors dashing between the different doors backstage. It occurred to me that it was all far funnier from behind than it was in front. But I didn't get round to working on anything until 1977, when I wrote a 15-minute version for a charity event." Stage producer Michael Codron saw its potential and commissioned a full-length version. "I said I was very busy and he said: 'Fine, fine. Take as long as you want.' Then he rang me every week," says Frayn.

EXPANDING THE IDEA

Noises Off takes its title from a common stage direction instructing that certain sounds come from offstage. "I could see a way to do it by separating it out into three acts so that I was not trying to show everything simultaneously," says Frayn.

"I found it extremely difficult to write – it's so complex, essentially two plays in one. "First, you needed to see the play and get to know the cast. In the first act, the audience sees a



Michael Frayn, 1979. Photo by Evening Standard/Getty Images

not especially good theatre company rehearsing a terrible farce called *Nothing On*. Then we needed to see what went on backstage

between the actors. So in the second, we watch the same company performing exactly the same thing a month later, this time from backstage. The third act is a later performance still, by which stage everyone is at each other's throats. But it took me a long time."

The playwright was convinced actors would find it too tricky to learn all the variations of the repeated actions. "I thought: 'No one is ever going to do this' – and indeed it is extremely difficult. Actors have to sort of start the mime over again each time in their head. They also have to play a lot of it to the back wall of the theatre, while we watch from behind. In the end, I thought: 'If I can just get it finished, then I can forget about it.' So I was amazed when Michael Codron still wanted to do it, suggesting some helpful changes."

COMEDY IS NEVER DONE

"When I made changes, I had to do them in triplicate because every time you changed one act, you had to change the other two. It was like building something out of jelly. Eventually Nicky Henson – who was playing Garry, the spokesman for his fellow actors in the play – stood up on behalf of the rest of the cast and said that they weren't prepared to cope with any more changes. It was rather delightful, because that's exactly what his character would have said."

Frayn adds, "It reminds me of an old theatre story about an actor who's terribly ill. A friend visits and the actor says: 'It's hard, dying – but it's not as hard as farce. I was still making revisions even after it opened. It's been through so many different versions now, not counting all the translations – Finnish, Japanese, Catalan and Spanish, many more.'"



Playwright, Michael Frayn's Idea

A LASTING IMPRESSION

His idea of staging a play which deliberately unravels before the audience's eyes has proved highly influential. Not only did it permanently mess with theatrical expectations, it also laid the groundwork for spoof fly-on-the-wall type television shows. More directly, it may have even inspired the *The Play That Goes Wrong* series.

Funny shows can age quickly, but when the mechanics are as finely shaped and the human confusion as universal as in this, Frayn's biggest hit, the length of the laughter appears limitless. "I am amazed that people are still prepared today to put on a play in which a rather dim young actress spends all evening in her underclothes," said Frayn.



THEATER



Patricia Routledge (Dotty) and Paul Eddington (Lloyd) in *NOISES OFF* at the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, London, 1982. Photo by Donald Cooper

FUN FACTS ABOUT *NOISES OFF*

- *Noises Off* means "offstage sounds": The play's title is a standard theatrical stage direction, instructing that sounds should come from offstage. Ironically, the most significant "noises off" in the play are the behind-the-scenes commotions made by the cast themselves.
- A play within a play: The show is a "farce within a farce." It depicts a second-rate touring theatre company attempting to perform a dreadful comedy called *Nothing On*. The audience sees three different performances of *Nothing On* at various stages of the tour, revealing the escalating chaos both onstage and backstage.
- The set turns around: For Act II, the entire elaborate set is rotated 180 degrees so the audience can watch the action (mostly pantomimed with physical comedy) from the backstage perspective, a major technical and choreographic feat for any production.
- Sardines are a central prop: The simple prop of a plate of sardines becomes a running gag and a focal point for much of the on and off-stage mayhem and confusion.
- An intense workout for actors: The show is known for its highly physical comedy and precise timing. Actors often run up and down the stairs dozens of times per show, and minor injuries (bumps and bruises) are not uncommon due to the choreographed chaos.
- Praised as "the funniest play written in my lifetime": The *New York Times* critic Frank Rich famously hailed *Noises Off* as "one of the most sustained slapstick ballets I've ever seen" and "the funniest play written in my lifetime" when it first premiered.
- The original 1983 Broadway production was nominated for the 1984 Tony Award for Best Play.
- It's a comedy of errors: The humor comes from the contrast between the "real life" drama backstage and the farcical plot of the play they are trying to perform.

A History of Farce



Farce: “A light dramatic composition marked by broadly satirical comedy and improbable plot.” - *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

“A comic dramatic piece that uses highly improbable situations, stereotyped characters, extravagant exaggeration, and violent horseplay.” - *Britannica Encyclopedia*.

No matter where you get your definition, farce is basically a form of comedy lower than comedy - it's bawdy humor and naughty behavior - the kind of stuff that might make you squirm when taking your grandmother to the theatre. And yet everyone laughs.

The elements of farce can be found going back as far as ancient Greece, such as in playwright Aristophanes' comedies that were full of over-the-top stock characters, vulgar language, and absurd situations. Typical elements found in a farce include: mistaken identities, mocking of the typical social code, rebellion done in witty ways, comic surprises and reversals of expectations, and a quick speed to the dialogue and action.



The word “farce” began being used in the 15th century, and comes from a French word meaning “to stuff,” because initially farces were short comedies used to fill in between the dreadfully serious morality plays that the church required. These comedies began to attract more audiences at a time when theatre audiences were starting to dwindle. The term expanded to describe entertainment that had elements of clowning, acrobatics, caricature and indecency. During the Italian Renaissance, this evolved into a type of theatre called commedia dell'arte.



Commedia dell'arte characters Harlequin (left) and Pierrot, illustration on paper, c. 1874–88; in Amsterdam.

These comedic farce elements attracted audiences back to the theatre because

it gave them a way to laugh and cope with the craziness of the world, and it provided a not-so-subtle opportunity to mock the elite. Farce grew in popularity and spread across Europe, with famed playwrights such as Shakespeare and Molière employing these elements in their works.

While there are many ways to trace the lineage of modern farce, it's undeniable that French comedy holds perhaps the strongest influence in our modern idea of farce. By the late 19th century, French playwright Georges Feydeau cemented our idea of the modern farce, with plays like *A Flea in Her Ear* and *The Dupe*. In writing these plays, Feydeau condensed, concentrated, and heightened the everyday antics at the heart of the New Comedy, into a manic exercise of misunderstandings bordering on the absurd. Feydeau often centered on romantic relationships and betrayal, resulting in a scandalous (and hilarious) new genre referred to as bedroom farce.



Production photo of the farce, *La Puce à l'oreille* (*A Flea in Her Ear*) by Georges Feydeau, 1907

In a sense, *Noises Off* is the greatest example of a bedroom farce. In fact, it's almost a parody of the genre; it focuses on a group of actors performing in a fictional farce known as *Nothing On!* whose offstage relationships mirror (and sometimes top) the ridiculous chaos of their onstage counterparts. In this way, *Noises Off* is both a farce and a commentary on farce. It's a play that acknowledges the absurdity of this type of theater, but at the same time reaffirms this absurdity by concluding that it is part of life both backstage and onstage. Though on the surface *Noises Off* may seem quite silly, it's undoubtedly one of the

A History of Farce (cont.)

most technically complex plays in the modern canon. As in all farces, *Noises Off* succeeds not because of its absurdity, but because of its striking ability to remain grounded in a strong internal logic, in which the various characters all operate with their own unique sets of motivations. This is the genius of *Noises Off*, and why it has endured as a shining example of modern farce; as in the original New Comedy, *Noises Off* centers on characters that are recognizably human, thrust into an impossible situation.

Farces where real people are in improbable and ridiculous situations exist all forms of entertainment today including cartoons, sitcoms, and movies.

Elements of Farce

Farce is all about taking situations to their most absurd extremes, creating hilariously improbable scenarios that keep audiences laughing. The plot mocks social codes, involves 'funny' violence, has a shock resolution, and a happy ending. All farces have these certain characteristics:

Identity Centered: One of the hallmarks of farce is the use of misunderstandings and mistaken identities to create confusion and chaos.

Wit and Manners: The plot toys with the concept of what should be done (is proper) and the rebellions against that code. It is the witty approach to these issues that creates farce.

Reversal of Expectations: The element of surprise can happen anywhere in the action and usually does. The resolution always includes a comic reversal.

Physical Humor: From slapstick falls to exaggerated gestures, physical humor is a key component of farce.

Velocity and Speed: Things happen quickly. It's comedy: timing, timing, timing. This includes fast-paced dialogue, with jokes and one-liners flying back and forth. Events unfold quickly and often become chaotic. The characters always feel rushed to accomplish the goal which only leads to more mistakes and humor.

Multiple and Fragile Substructures: Structure is based on social satire and it follows rules that we can see and which guide the characters. It is the written guide by which the characters are trapped.

Use of Exaggerated Character Roles: Farce often features larger-than-life characters, such as bumbling fools, conniving schemers, and overbearing parents, young lovers, witty servants, hen pecked husbands, misers, and rising socialites - a loosened, yet enhanced, commedia cast.

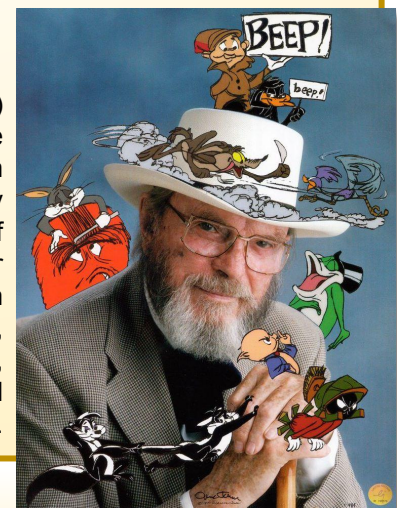
"Comedy is unusual people in real situations; farce is real people in unusual situations." - Chuck Jones

Chuck Jones directed some of the greatest cartoons in history and one of them is a perfect example of farce. The protagonist of *One Froggy Evening* is a random man working on a building site. There is nothing unusual about him at all. But he finds himself in the unusual situation of possessing a frog who, sometimes, will sing and dance. Hilarity ensues.



Most definitions of farce will include the phrase "Highly improbable situations" and that is what makes the difference. Any story that includes mistaken identities is absolutely a farce.

Charles Martin Jones (1912 – 2002) was an American animator and voice actor, best known for his work with Warner Bros. Cartoons on the Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies series of shorts. He wrote, produced, and/or directed many classic animated cartoon shorts starring Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner, Pepé Le Pew, Marvin the Martian, and Porky Pig, among others.

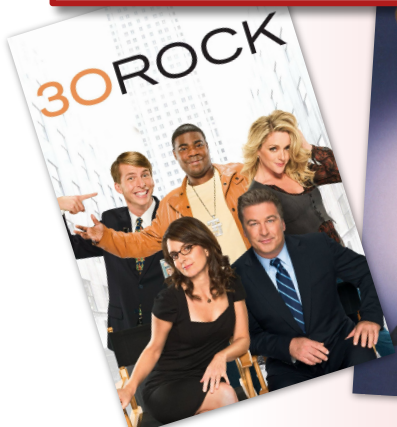


<https://www.theatrehaus.com/2023/04/the-art-of-farce/>
https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/play_analysis/farce.htm
<https://arvadacenter.org/blog/understanding-farce-in-theatre>
<https://comedyforanimators.com/2019/09/09/know-your-comedy-farce/>
<https://indd.adobe.com/view/2ed65db8-85e2-4b2f-a43d-35bee3f43121>
<https://www.orlandoshakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Noises-Off-Study-Guide-corrected.pdf>



OTHER FARCE EXAMPLES:

- *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*
- *Some Like It Hot*
- *Arsenic and Old Lace*
- *Monty Python*
- *Blazing Saddles*
- *The Birdcage* (based off *La Cage Aux Folles*)
- *Three's Company* (TV Show)
- *National Lampoon's Vacation* movies
- *Clue*
- *Mr. Bean*
- *Fawlty Towers* (TV show)
- *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*
- *Bridesmaids*
- *Step Brothers*
- *30 Rock* (TV show)



Pass the Sardines



Sardines are small, oily fish packed with nutrients. Larger fish, seabirds, and marine mammals eat sardines. Sometimes, they are turned into fish meal for animal feed. But mostly people all over the world also eat them grilled, pickled, canned, dried, salted, or smoked when they are fresh.

Some people say fish shorter than 6 inches are *sardines* but fish longer than that are called *pilchards*. The names sardine and pilchard can be a bit confusing. What they mean often depends on where you are. For example, in the United Kingdom, young pilchards are called sardines.

SARDINE HEALTH PERKS

Eating a small serving of sardines daily can give you lots of important nutrients and vitamins including B and D vitamins. All B vitamins help your nervous system work well and help your body turn food into energy. Sardines are also rich in important minerals like calcium, potassium, and iron.

Sardines are a natural source of omega-3 fatty acids. These healthy fats can help reduce the risk of heart problems. Some studies even suggest that eating omega-3s regularly can boost brain function. They might also help lower blood sugar a little.

Because sardines are low on the food chain, they have very low levels of harmful substances. For example, they have much less mercury than many other fish people eat. This makes them a very safe and healthy choice.

SARDINES IN A CAN

Sardines are usually packed very tightly in small cans. These cans often have a pull tab for easy opening. Sometimes, they have a special key attached. This makes them easy to carry. They also last a long time and are a ready-to-eat food.



The way sardines are packed tightly in cans led to the saying, "packed like sardines." This phrase describes any place where people or things are crowded together - think of a busy bus. It's also the name of a children's game where one person hides and everyone who finds them then hides in the same spot. This continues until only one person is left to find the group.

Comedy & Health

We have all heard the saying: “Laughter is the best medicine.” But have you ever wondered if it is actually true? Well, it turns out that it is more than just a catchy phrase. Laughter does have beneficial, short-term, and long-term effects on our bodies.

The Physical Benefits of Laughter

Did you know that laughter is great for your cardiovascular health? When we laugh, our blood flow increases, and it improves the function of blood vessels, because when we laugh, we breathe in oxygen-rich air, which stimulates our heart and other organs. Laughter also boosts the immune system by decreasing stress hormones that would otherwise weaken it.

Additionally, laughter causes the brain to release endorphins in the brain that not only improve mood, but they also can act as temporary pain relievers! Who would have thought that laughter could serve as an all-natural pain killer?

There are muscular system benefits too of laughter. Have you ever had laughed so hard that your stomach felt sore afterward? That is because your stomach muscles are stimulated when you laugh! Afterward, your muscles relax, and you feel calm. Some studies even show that laughing can even burn a few calories!



Laughing Helps Your Mental Health

Laughter is beneficial to mental health as well. It improves mood and helps decrease issues that stem from anxiety and depression. Negative thoughts and bad moods create chemical reactions within the body that cause heightened stress levels, so laughing can be an easy way to ease your mind and improve your mental health!



Comedy Brings People Together

Have you ever noticed how contagious laughter is? Most times, it is hard to hold in the laughs when you hear others around you cracking up. This is why many sitcoms and other television shows use “laugh tracks” or film in front of a live studio audience. Laughter is contagious! When an audience or group witness comedy, connections are made through the common language of laughter. It promotes feelings of positivity and can make a stressful situation easier to deal with. Comedy can even strengthen relationships and bring people together.

Learn to Laugh

Try to surround yourself with things you find funny. There are many different types of comedy, so if you aren’t quite sure what kind you prefer...try them all! Surround yourself with individuals who make you laugh. Luckily, there is a ton of comedy out there, so go find something to laugh at today!

ACTIVITY: As you watch Noises Off, consider...

What are the differences between the characters on stage and off stage? How does one impact the other?

Remembering that Noises Off is a farce, what about these characters might feel outlandish or over the top, and how does that comedy impact your experience of the play?

In what ways might you relate to any of these characters?

Words to Know - Theater Terms

Assistant Stage Manager: The assistant stage manager supports the stage manager throughout the rehearsal and performance period. They are responsible for being “on book” (having a script in hand and being ready to cue an actor in case they forget lines during rehearsal) and making sure that all the cues (lights, sound, actor entrances, and lines) are met.

Blocking: All of the moves that an actor makes onstage, including entering, exiting, walking, sitting down, standing up, and making gestures.

Calls: Announcements made to the actors or audience by the stage manager or assistant stage manager over the PA system, informing them when the performance is about to begin.

Company: a term used for the people working on a play, sometimes more specifically referring to the cast of the show.

Curtain: This refers to the physical curtain that is traditionally raised and lowered at the beginning and end of the show. This term also refers to the end of an act or the end of the play.

Designers: The designers are responsible for the way a production looks. In theatre, there are typically scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers.

Director: The director is responsible for creating the overall vision of the production, and by collaborating with the cast and creative team, the director brings that vision to life.

Dress Rehearsal: (sometimes just called “dress”) The final run-through of a production before it is performed for the general public. Usually, these are run under performance conditions, with full costume, make-up, lights, sound, and set.

(LX) Elecs: (short for “electricals”) This term is used by the production team to refer to the lighting cues of a show.

Exeunt: A stage direction given when more than one character must leave the stage.

Front of House: The lobby of a theatre where patrons enter.

Green Room: The area for the cast and crew to relax before and during a performance. It is sometimes painted green, but not always.

House: house can refer to the area of the theater where the audience sits, the audience itself, or the entirety of the show, as in “The first house finishes just after five, yes?”

Matinee: A performance that takes place during the day rather than in the evening.

Noises Off: A term referring to the sound, heard offstage backstage during a performance.

Producer: The producer oversees the whole of the production process while supporting the creative team. They are in charge of the production budget and Finances.

Props: (short for “properties”) Items used by actors during a performance. Examples of props in Noises Off include boxes, bags, and plates of sardines.

Quick change: when an actor must change costumes rapidly, often without the time to go back to the dressing room.

Stage Manager: The stage manager is responsible for running of the show once rehearsals have finished. During the rehearsal process, they are in charge of running rehearsals, writing down blocking, maintaining prop lists, and making sure the actors know their lines.

Technical Rehearsal: (or “tech”) The rehearsal in which lighting, sound, costumes, and sets are added into the rehearsal process. Typically, tech rehearsals are long and involve frequent stopping and starting. Also called “Technicals” in NOISES OFF.

Wings: The areas to either side of the stage from which the actors make their entrances and exits.

Writer: The writer is responsible for writing the play.



Words to Know - British Phrases

Because *Noises Off* is a British farce, some of the language, phrases, and humor are less obvious to American Audiences:

Airing Cupboard: A built-in wardrobe that contains a heater of some kind.

Ballcocks: A mechanism found in flush toilets that controls the water level.

Beginners: The actors who appear on stage first. “Beginners, please” is used in the UK just as the term “Places” is used in the US to inform actors that the play is about to begin.



Berk: a disparaging term to imply that someone is a fool or stupid.

Bloody: an expletive adjective used in Great Britain and former commonwealth countries.

Boiled Sweets: Hard candies.

Bric-A-Brac: Miscellaneous items.

Bullion Vault: A vault holding gold or silver in bulk.

Burnous: A long cloak of rough woolen fabric with an attached hood.

Bustups: An argument or fight, also refers to a breakup.

Colloquy: A formal conversation between two people, usually full of intellectual dialogue.

Company VAT: VAT (value added tax) is a consumption tax levied on goods and services.

Curtains Raiser: A short play, usually comedic, performed before the beginning of the main play.



Distrain: The seizure and holding of a person's property as security for payment of a debt or satisfaction of a claim.

Fruit machine: Cha-ching! Cha-ching! A fruit machine is Brit-speak for a slot machine.

Holdall: (also called a “carryall”) A large bag used to carry things while traveling.

Inland Revenue: The British government's tax collection agency, similar to the IRS.

Loo: A slang term for bathroom.

Madeira: An amber dessert wine from the Madeira islands.

Ministration: A task one is serving or working on.

Mullion Window: A mullion is a vertical structure that divides adjacent window units.

OAP's: Old Age Pensioners, older patrons who receive government supported income assistance.

Pensioners: the British term for retirees or those who are collecting pensions.

Pigeonhouse: a small compartment in a desk or Cabinet.

Posset Mill: A posset is an old English drink, much like eggnog. So, a “posset mill” would be a place that served posset.

Postprandial Snooze: An after-dinner nap.

Potentate: Another word for monarch, or one who rules over others.

Prompt Corner: The offstage space from which the assistant stage manager can feed actors lines if needed.

Quid: A British pound, equal to 100 pence.

Row: An argument or fight.

Stalls: The ground-level seats in a theatre.

Tannoy: A loud speaker used for announcements.

Telly: short for a television or television program.

Turbot (ter-but): A flat circular fish not at all like sardines.

WC Suite: A bathroom and shower.

Weekly rep: a system of creating theater in which the resident acting company learns a new play, rehearses for a week, and then performs the piece, with the process starting over weekly.



The “Play-Within-a-Play”

“Meta” is a Greek word, meaning “after” or “beyond.” Meta-theatre describes theatre that refers to and comments on itself. This includes plays and musicals that are not simply about plays and musicals, but go beyond that to also acknowledge the presence of the audience, the actors as actors, the built in fakeness in stage productions, and the literal experience of theatre itself.

Different theatrical techniques can be used in a production to make it Meta-Theatre. These include:

- “Breaking the Fourth Wall” - This term refers to the imaginary barrier separating the world of the play from the audience. When characters break the fourth wall, they acknowledge the audience’s presence and directly talk to the audience, often commenting on the play’s events, their own roles, or the nature of the performance itself.
- “Play-within-a-Play” - this is another technique that has been around a long time where the characters themselves are putting on a show. **Noises Off** is one of the most famous examples of this form of Meta-Theatre, especially in ACT III when the characters are very aware they are performing in front of and for an audience. Other Examples include:
 - **A Midsummer Night’s Dream** by William Shakespeare— One of the several plots of A Midsummer Night’s Dream follows a group of “mechanicals”—local craftsmen—as they rehearse a play for the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. Their process is full of difficulties- including the fact that their lead actor, Bottom, has had his head replaced with that of a donkey. However, in the final scene of the play, they perform The Most Lamentable Comedy and Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe to the delight of Duke.
 - **Man of La Mancha** by Dale Wasserman, with lyrics by Joe Darion and music by Mitch Leigh— This musical also has a play within a play structure. In the late 1500s, historical author Miguel de Cervantes is thrown into prison by the Spanish Inquisition, where he presents a play with the help of his fellow prisoners as Don Quixote De La Mancha.

“Theatre is what we all do all the time in life—
we’re both performing and being the audience.”
— Playwright Michael Frayn



Nothing On
Comedy
Meta Theatre
Beginners
Dotty

Green Room
Michael Frayn
Sardines
Aristophanes
Technicals

Timing
Laughter
Farce
Noises Off
Loo

Curtain
Georges Feydeau
Prompt Corner
Audience
Flavia Brent

Meet the Cast



TERENCE ARCHIE* (Frederick Fellowes) A Detroit native, Terence is pleased to make his Pioneer debut! Broadway: *Company*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Rocky the Musical*; *Ragtime*. International: *Rocky Das Musical (Hamburg)*. Off-Broadway: *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire* (Public Theatre), *1776*, (Encores), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Second Stage), *Romeo and Juliet*, Harlem Classical, *Frederick Douglass Free*; *GWC Peanut Price*, (Urban Stages). Regional: *La Cage Aux Folles* (The MUNY), *Dear Everything* (Tour), *The Hot Wing King*, *All the Way*, *The Twelve* (DCPA); *Guys and Dolls*, *Twelfth Night* (Old Globe); *The Squirrels* (La Jolla), *R&J* (ART); *Hippest Trip* (ACT SF); *The Odyssey* (Seattle Rep, Art Park), *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Edward II*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (STC). Film/TV: *Raising Kanan*, *Manhattan Love Story*, *The Blacklist*, *Blindspot*, *For Life*, *Elementary*, *Blue Bloods*; *The Mysteries of Laura*, *L&O*, *L&O CI*. Education/Training: B.F.A. Drama - North Carolina School of the Arts.



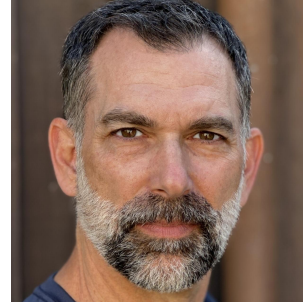
RHETT GUTER* (Garry LeJeune) returns to the Pioneer Theatre Company after *White Christmas*, *Elf*, and *Sweet Charity*. He is an actor, director, choreographer, and magician based in New York City. Rhett received his training at Southern Utah University in Dance Performance and Musical Theatre. Recent credits include: Rooster Hannigan in the national tour of *Annie* at Madison Square Garden opposite Whoopi Goldberg. Other credits include: Tulsa in *Gypsy* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Harry Beaton in *Brigadoon* at the Goodman Theatre; Curly (CCC Nomination) in *Oklahoma!* and Conrad Birdie (CCC Award) in *Bye Bye Birdie* at The Goodspeed Opera House; and eight seasons at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Choreography credits include: *Cabaret* at PCPA (Broadway World Award) and *West Side Story* at Drury Lane Theatre (Jeff Nomination). Guter serves as Artistic Director of Encore Performing Arts. Love to gorg and goose! rhettmagic.com



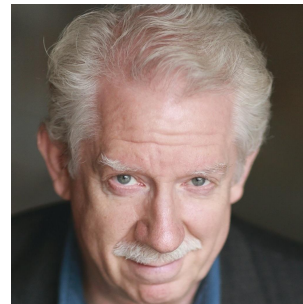
SARAH MARIE JOYCE* (Belinda Blair) is thrilled to be making her Pioneer Theatre Company debut! Most recent credits include *Normalcy* (Playwrights Horizons), *12th Night* (The Old Globe, dir Kathleen Marshall), *Murder on the Orient Express* (Syracuse Stage). TV: *Blue Bloods* (CBS). Training: Stella Adler Studio, MFA The Old Globe/USD Shiley Graduate Theater Program. Sarah is a native New Yorker and can usually be found questioning her very kind husband Nik as to why he is so interested in TV/films that are filled with tumbleweeds, excessive dirt, and mumbling characters...I cannot for the life of me understand what they are saying. @butcansheact. For Daddy.



OLIVIA KAUFMANN* (Brooke Ashton) Broadway: *Mean Girls* (Janis). Off-Broadway: *Vanities* (York Theatre Company). Regional: *Legally Blonde* (Vivienne, The Muny) and *Hair* (Shelia, Asolo Repertory Theatre). Olivia would like to thank her teams at DGRW and Lakey Wolff & Company as well as Pioneer Theatre Company. She would also like to thank her friends and family for their support!



ROBERT MAMMANA* (Lloyd Dallas) is thrilled to be returning to Pioneer Theatre Company, where he has appeared in *Prayer for the French Republic* and *Mary Stuart*. Other credits include—BROADWAY: *Les Miserables*; NATIONAL TOURS: *Show Boat*, *Les Miserables*, *The Sound of Music*; OFF-B'WAY: *The Twentieth-Century Way*; REGIONAL: Pasadena Playhouse (*The Father*, *Casa Valentina*, *Sleepless in Seattle*); Geffen Playhouse (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*), South Coast Repertory (*Sweeney Todd*, *Cloudlands*); Denver Center (*The Constant Wife*), Portland Center Stage (*Fun Home*, *Ragtime*, *Guys and Dolls*); Alliance (*Beast on the Moon*); Shakespeare Theatre Company (*Man of La Mancha*). TV: guest star on *The Office* (as Sweeney Todd), *Frasier*, *NCIS*, *CSI*, *The Good Wife*, *How To Get Away With Murder*, *CSI:NY*, *Days of Our Lives*, *Elementary*. FILM: *Baby Money*, *Just Say Love*, *Flightplan*. AWARDS: Recipient- 2 LA Drama Critics, LA Weekly Theatre. Nominations- 3 LA Ovation, 3 LA Drama Critics, 2 Chicago Joseph Jefferson, Helen Hayes. Robert graduated from the University of Arizona (*Cum Laude and Fine Arts Creative Achievement Award recipient*).



DAVID MANIS* (Selsdon Mowbray) has appeared at PTC in *Clybourne Park*, *A Few Good Men*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Fireflies*. Broadway: 14 shows, including *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *War Horse*, and the upcoming *Giant* with John Lithgow. Regional credits include the Guthrie, The Old Globe, The Mark Taper, The Alley, The Shakespeare Theater DC, The Acting Company, and many others. On-screen, he is best known as a telekinetic weatherman on *The X-Files*. Other TV includes *FBI: Most Wanted*, *The Gilded Age*, *The Blacklist*, and *Romeo Rosaline Potpan Juliet*.

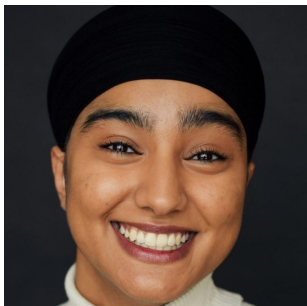
Meet the Cast



LINDA MUGLESTON* (Dotty Otley) Pioneer Theatre Company: *Christmas In Connecticut*, *Souvenir*. Broadway: *The Music Man*; *Hello Dolly*; *My Fair Lady*; *On The Twentieth Century*; *Cinderella*; *Beautiful*; *Anything Goes*; *Young Frankenstein*; *Wonderful Town*; *Nine*; *Into The Woods*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *On The Town*. Off-Broadway/Regional: *The Suffragette's Murder*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Wild Fire*, *A Christmas Carol* (DCPA); *The Sound of Music*, *Guys and Dolls* (Carnegie Hall); *Cinderella* (Geva); *Noises Off* (The Old Globe); *Sunset Boulevard* (Portland Center Stage); *Damn Yankees*, *The Sound of Music* (The Muny); *Kristina* (Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall); *Falsettos* (Huntington Theatre); *Happy End* (A.C.T.).



KILTY REIDY* (Tim Allgood) is grateful for the opportunity to return to Pioneer Theatre Company, where he previously appeared in *The Music Man*, *Newsies*, and *The Last Ship*. He most recently finished a run as Sheriff Earl in *All Shook Up* (Goodspeed Opera House). Broadway: *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *In My Life*. Tour and Regional: *Come From Away* (North American and Australian Tour), Vice Principal Panch in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (George Street Playhouse), Mr. Braithwaite in *Billy Elliot: The Musical* (National Tour), Mike Nulty in *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* (Original Cast and National Tour), Roger De Bris in *The Producers* (Kansas City Starlight), *Crazy For You* (PBS Great Performances), and Alfie Byrne in *A Man of No Importance* (B-Side). www.kiltyreidy.com



AVNEET KAUR SANDHU (Poppy Norton-Taylor) is a fourth year in the Actor Training Program, double majoring in Operations & Supply chain. She is very excited to be in her first show at Pioneer Theatre Company and working alongside this amazing cast and team! Her previous credits include *You On The Moors Now* (Spring '25) and *Townhall* (Fall '23).

