THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Director Shaun Chambers gives an insight into *Noises Off*

The term *Noises Off* means 'sounds made offstage to be heard by the audience of a play' and so this piece does exactly what it says on the tin! In fact, not only do we get to hear the offstage rumblings we get to see them. Michael Frayn got the idea for writing *Noises Off* when he was watching one of his earlier farces *The Two of Us* from the wings and felt that that particular play was funnier from behind the scenes than from the auditorium.

In *Noises Off*, Frayn lets the audience into some of the secrets of live theatre and shows us the bits that are normally hidden such as the stressful final rehearsal and the workings of a show from backstage. We also see that actors are actually actors and are going every night with their own personal baggage, problems and crises and being forced to leave these literally in the wings. What is great about the cast off *Nothing On* (the play within a play) is their determination to do their best and keep the show going in spite of their many issues both public and personal. What I have always loved about live performance is that it is a risky business and there is no greater evidence of this than this play.

Noises Off is considered by many to be the greatest example of farce. Indeed it is a farce about putting on a farce so what could possibly go wrong! I read recently that Frayn had wrote in the New York Times that farce was a 'serious business as it is about losing power and coherent thought under the pressure of events'. What we see in *Noises Off* is the characters trying to recover the various disasters but in doing so they make the situation much worse. They are caught in compromising situations and explain it with a lie then another lie and then another. *Noises Off* is certainly a landmark in British comedy.

So sardines, bags, boxes, words, doors and flowers…Enjoy the Crazy!

THE NORTHERN COMEDY THEATRE

NOISES OFF

By MICHAEL FRAYN
Presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH LTD.

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