

2019-20

SEPTEMBER 10 - OCTOBER 5, 2019



NOISES OFF

BY MICHAEL FRAYN

PLAY GUIDE

theatre:
CALGARY
STAFFORD ARIMA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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THE BASICS

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

GARRY LEJEUNE,
ROGER TRAMPLEMAIN
TYRELL CREWS

POPPY NORTON-TAYLOR
ANNA CUMMER

LLOYD DALLAS,
FIGHT CAPTAIN
CHRISTIAN GOUTSIS

TIMOTHY ALLGOOD
BRADEN GRIFFITHS

BELINDA BLAIR,
FLAVIA BRENT
KAREN JOHNSON-DIAMOND

SELSDON MOWBRAY,
BURGLAR
DUVAL LANG

BROOKE ASHTON, VICKI
CAMILLE PAVLENKO

FREDERICK FELLOWES,
PHILLIP BRENT
GRAHAM PERCY

DOTTY OTLEY,
MRS. CLACKETT
ELIZABETH
STEPKOWSKI TARHAN

DIRECTOR
MARK BELLAMY

SET & LIGHTING DESIGN
ANTON DE GROOT

COSTUME DESIGN
DEITRA KALYN

VOICE & DIALECT COACH
JANE MACFARLANE

FIGHT DIRECTOR
KARL H. SINE

STAGE MANAGER
PATTI NEICE

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
ASHLEY REES

APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER
CHANDLER ONTKEAN

TC MENTORS PROGRAM -
DIRECTING
CONRAD BELAU

HEAD OF LIGHTING
CATHARINE CRUMB

HEAD OF SOUND
BRONWYN BOWLBY

HEAD STAGE CARPENTER
SCOTT MORRIS

HEAD DRESSER
RACHEL MICHELLE SHERIDAN

ASSISTANT STAGE
CARPENTER
ANDREW KERR

STAGE HAND
TRISHA HERBERT

"NOISES OFF" IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.



**AM I IN SPAIN?
NO I'M NOT
IN SPAIN, I'M IN
AGONY, THAT'S
WHERE I AM!"**

THE BASICS

SETTING

The action takes place in the living-room of the Brents' country home, on a Wednesday afternoon.

ACT I - Grand Theatre, Weston-super-Mare. Monday, January 14.

ACT II - Theatre Royal, Ashton-under-Lyne. Wednesday matinee, February 13

ACT III - Municipal Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees. Saturday, April 6.

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 performance at the Theatre Royal. The action now takes place backstage, as the cracks and flaws of the 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. 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.

"NOISES OFF" HAS ONE 20-MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACT I AND ACT II.



THE BASICS

WHO'S WHO OFF STAGE/ON STAGE

DOTTY OTLEY/MRS CLACKETT

OFF STAGE A late-middle-aged American actress. Forgetful. Dating Garry, though she attempts to make him jealous by meeting with Freddy.

ON STAGE A Cockney Housekeeper for the Brent's home in England. Hospitable, though slow.

BROOKE ASHTON/VICKI

OFF STAGE A young inexperienced American actress. Pays no attention to other performers, either in performance or backstage. She seems as though she is not really present - like she is somewhere else inside her head. Is always losing her contact lenses. One-third of a Lloyd-Poppy-Brooke love triangle.

ON STAGE An English woman who works for Inland Revenue and is trying to woo Roger.

BELINDA BLAIR/FLAVIA BRENT

OFF STAGE Cheerful and sensible, a reliable American actress. She may have feelings for Freddy.

ON STAGE Phillip Brent's English wife. She is dependable, though not one for household duties.

POPPY NORTON-TAYLOR

OFF STAGE American Stage Manager. Emotional and over-sensitive, and envious of Brooke, whom she understudies. Carrying Lloyd's child. One-third of a Lloyd-Poppy-Brooke love triangle.

LLOYD DALLAS

OFF STAGE The director of the play, Nothing On. Temperamental. One third of a Lloyd-Poppy-Brooke love triangle.

GARRY LEJEUNE/ROGER

OFF STAGE An American actor who never finishes a sentence. Always is completing sentences with, "you know..." Easily fired up, repeatedly tries to attack Freddy after believing that Dotty was cheating on him with Freddy. Speech affectations disappear onstage but are ever-present offstage. Dating Dotty.

ON STAGE An English Real estate agent who is attempting to rent Flavia's and Phillip's home, but uses it for his own personal benefit.

FREDERICK FELLOWS/

PHILLIP BRENT/SHEIKH

OFF STAGE An American actor with a serious fear of violence and blood. Gets nosebleeds easily. Often questions the meaning of his lines and moves. Blames himself often for things going wrong.

ON STAGE (PHILLIP) An Englishman who lives out of the country with his wife Flavia to avoid paying taxes. He enters the country knowing that if he is caught by Inland Revenue, he will lose most of the year's income.

ON STAGE (SHEIKH) A Middle-Eastern, Interested in renting Flavia's and Phillip's home and is the spitting image of Phillip.

SELSDON MOWBRAY/BURGLAR

OFF STAGE An elderly alcoholic Englishman who hides his bottles onstage. If he is not in sight while rehearsing, the stage crew must find him before he passes out. Is hard of hearing when he wants to be.

ON STAGE Old Cockney man in his seventies, breaking into the Brent's home.

TIMOTHY ALLGOOD

OFF STAGE An over-worked American Assistant Stage Manager. Understudies Selsdon and Freddy.

EXPLORATIONS

DOOR MATH, FARCEPTION, AND LAUGHTER INDUCED HEADACHES



DIRECTOR MARK BELLAMY AND SET AND LIGHTING DESIGNER ANTON DEGROOT TALK BRINGING NOISES OFF TO LIFE

Mark Bellamy, Director, and Anton de Groot, Set and Lighting Designer, had their work cut out for them when tasked with bringing one of the best farces ever written to Theatre Calgary. A farce in itself is complex. But when you think about *Noises Off*, it's a farce within a farce. Or 'Farception,' as Mark coined it.

"In a typical farce, there's one character who's the centre of a cyclone, standing in the eye of the storm, and the rest of the world revolves around them," said Mark. "In *Noises Off*, it's about actors in a play, where everything goes wrong. It's a farce about a farce. It's organized chaos."

Mark, considered one of Calgary's masters of comedy, took a great deal of time and thought to prepare for this production. And a lot of that work was a collaboration between himself and Anton, as the set also plays an important role in this show.

"It's driven by circumstance and events that spiral out of control so you have to be very specific when you create the physical world around it, and the set needs to function in a very particular way. That's when Anton and I had to work very closely."

Anton shares it was one of the most technically complex sets he's ever

worked on, specifically because of the amount of doors on the set...which is 10. And come Act II all doors are in use.

"I had to take a different approach than I usually would with this set. My process generally starts from the abstract to the concrete. For *Noises Off*, it was the opposite. Everything has to be set up in a certain way. If we take liberties with the physical structure or bones of the set, then we could very easily impede the staging."

But wait, isn't this a play about a play where everything is *supposed* to go wrong? Have we lost you yet? It goes back to what Mark was saying about organized chaos. Anton has incorporated the doors on set to make that chaos work on the stage.

"The doors need to be where they need to be because it's baked into the dramaturgy of the piece."

Much of the team's preparation for this show was about door math. Both Anton and Mark say that the door math was the most interesting thing they had to figure out. Which way does each of these 10 doors have to open? Where does this character have to come out? When that character comes out, what door do they exit? Mark shares he spent about half a day figuring out how the doors open. Then, he had to track the decisions made throughout the three acts of the play to make sure it worked.

"For *Noises Off*, I had to develop a completely different process than I had

ever used before. With this show you have to be very particular about the staging, it's just like a choreographed dance on the stage."

With the hard work of the cast and creative teams, Anton and Mark are excited to hear and see the joy audiences experience.

Mark started going home with headaches during rehearsals from too much laughter, which is the best kind of problem to have, so he wants to share that with the audience.

"There's so many experiences you get in theatre, but this is about laughter. Releasing everything in your life to watch what's going on stage with these people getting into horrible situations and how hilarious it can be."

Both Mark and Anton reflect that getting here was collaboration in its purest form. They had a wonderful playwright in Michael Frayn, who took 20 years to hone this script. It was a great base to start from, and together, with the creative team, they realized this play to its greatest potential. ●

BY HEATHER OLIVER

DOOR PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

EXPLORATIONS

“I WANT TO CREATE THIS EXPERIENCE FOR OTHERS AND PASS IT ON.”

CONRAD BELAU SHARES THEIR EXPERIENCE AS THE FIRST MENTEE IN THEATRE CALGARY'S NEW SEASON

When you sit across from Conrad, you can feel their (Conrad uses non-binary pronouns) enthusiasm and passion, it's infectious. They're one of those individuals that get you excited about what they're saying and doing, and it's clear they've embraced the amazing opportunity to be mentored as a director for Theatre Calgary's first show of the season, *Noises Off*.

Conrad graduated from theatre school in 2012, and began to discover their unique voice as an artist. They realized through the years of acting that followed they wanted to create projects that would bring more diverse stories and voices to the stage that would challenge audiences' perspectives and beliefs.

“I became very passionate about social causes, and I wanted to be able to bring topics like gender and sexuality to the stage. I wanted to influence change through art.”

Conrad shares the very first production they saw on the Theatre Calgary stage was *A Raisin in the Sun*, and that was what made them realize it was possible to bring those types of works to the stage.

“I realized that as a director, I could create a space and environment for that kind of play to exist and it really impacted me. That was the moment where I said okay, this is what I have to do.”



MARK BELLAMY (LEFT), AND CONRAD BELAU, SHARE A LAUGH DURING A REHEARSAL FOR NOISES OFF.

Conrad made a departure from acting, dedicating their time to cultivating their experience as a director and finding opportunities to grow in this space. This ultimately led to their application and acceptance into the TCMentors program.

They shared that working on a production like *Noises Off* was a departure from the project they would typically be involved with, as Conrad tried to work on projects that held social importance to them. And working in comedy, specifically on a farce, was a genre and art form they had never been exposed to.

“When I applied for the TCMentors program, I had been wanting to work with Mark Bellamy for a long time. I also saw the challenge ahead of me because I had never worked on a farce. It's one of the hardest things to direct. But, Mark being the comedy master, who better to learn from?”

Conrad shares it was a surreal experience working with Mark, and the cast and creative team for *Noises Off*. They learned the amount of preparation and thought that goes into directing a farce, since so much has to do with timing and mathematics.

“Farce is like a dance, it's choreographed and it's quick. Each cast member has to be in a certain place at a certain time for it to work. It's about math, it's complex and difficult to stage.”

Conrad's experience has been invaluable, giving them the confidence in their ability as a director, and exploring a new art form such as farce. As an emerging artist who's

been working so hard to get to the next level, Conrad feels this experience will help in their future endeavours. Conrad's not only grown their knowledge and confidence, but they have had the unique experience working with top talent in the theatre world.

“Working with A-list actors in Calgary is an incredibly rare opportunity for someone like myself. They are not only endowing Mark's brilliant direction, but are completely blowing it up into hysterical and genius comedic work. I can't stop talking about how amazing each and every one of them are in their roles in this show. It truly is a treat to have the opportunity to be in the room with the best-of-the-best that Calgary has to offer.”

Conrad's next project is directing a 17-person cast in the musical, *The Boy from Oz*, with Front Row Centre Players in Calgary. They share the experience as a mentee in *Noises Off* will help them be successful in this next project and overall, will open up doors to them that were not there before.

“Being accepted as a mentee through this program made me feel that the work I've been doing and my voice as an artist actually matters. The community sees the work I'm doing and I'm being encouraged to continue to create, build new relationships and beautiful friendships that come out of these projects,” said Conrad. “I'm really thankful for this opportunity. I realize a lot of people went for this and I feel blessed that I was chosen. I hope that I can pass this experience on to others and I can make Theatre Calgary proud.” ●

BY HEATHER OLIVER

TERMS TO KNOW

AIRING CUPBOARD

A built-in wardrobe containing a heater of some kind.

1 BALLCOCK

A valve, like in a toilet, that automatically regulates the amount of liquid in a tank with a hollow ball and lever attached to a tap.

BUST-UP

A quarrel, often between lovers.

DISTRAINT

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

INLAND REVENUE

The British government's tax collection agency, similar to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA), or Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

LETTING

Renting or leasing for temporary possession.

LOO

A slang term for the bathroom.

MARBELLA

A famous resort city of about 140,000 on the Costa del Sol in Andalusia in southern Spain, about 50 miles from Gibraltar.

2 MYRA HESS

A British classical Pianist. During World War II, she organized a series of almost daily lunchtime concerts at the National Gallery in order to boost British morale.

OAP'S

Old Age Pensioners, older patrons who receive government supported income assistance.

3 POSSET MILL

Posset is an old English drink, much like eggnog, but also refers to a small amount of spit-up milk from a baby after feeding. So a "posset mill" would be a place that served posset.

4 QUID

A British Pound, equal to 100 Pence.

ROW

In this context, to "have a row" with someone indicates a fight between two people.

5 TAPS

The two separate faucets commonly found in British sinks. In contrast to many western societies containing one faucet, most sinks found in the UK contain two faucets: one hot and one cold.

6 TURBOT

A flat, circular fish, not at all like sardines.

V.A.T.

Stands for Value-Added Tax in the United Kingdom. A tax on the amount by which the value of an article has been increased at each stage of its production or distribution.



1



2



3



4



5



6

EXPLORATIONS

FORGET HATCHET-FACED CRITICS - FARCE IS THE QUINTESSENCE OF THEATRE

BY MICHAEL BILLINGTON | THE GUARDIAN (SEPTEMBER 5, 2013)

AS A THEATRICAL FORM, FARCE IS INFINITELY FLEXIBLE, TIMELESS AND REVELATORY ... AND SEVERAL RECENT SHOWS PROVE IT'S RIPE FOR A REVIVAL

Farce is in the ascendant right now. We've just had Feydeau's *A Little Hotel on the Side* in Bath, Ben Travers's *Thark* is running in Finsbury Park and Terry Johnson's *Hysteria* is about to be revived at Hampstead theatre.

For those of us who love farce and think *A Comedy of Errors* every bit as good a play as *King Lear*, this is excellent news. But there are clearly others who regard farce as a vaguely inhuman or sexist sub-genre.

I was certainly given pause for thought after reading Fiona Mountford's review of *Thark* in the London Evening Standard. She objected not merely to stereotypes where the men are "priapic schemers" and the women are either "shrill battleaxes" or "ditzy bimbos". She also suggested that many other women critics shared her views and implied that farce was a specifically masculine preoccupation. Could this, I guiltily wondered, be true?

My first thought was that the heated division about farce has more to do with generation than gender. One of the fiercest champions of the genre was Penelope Gilliatt, who wrote about film and theatre for the Observer and the New Yorker in the 1960s and 70s. In her brilliant book, *Unholy Fools*, which deals with "wits, comics, disturbers of the peace", Gilliatt devotes a whole section to farce, writing: "the world of archetypes that ... Travers creates, the browbeaten husbands and dithering fiances and suspicious critical matriarchs called Bone or Twine, is mysteriously ripe and timeless".

The key word there is "archetypes". I readily concede that farce doesn't deal with human character at its subtlest or most refined. What it does, from Plautus onwards, is propel stock figures into a living nightmare of mistaken identities, thwarted lusts and spiralling invention. While the protagonists are often rantipole males, that doesn't make the genre automatically sexist: it is the men who lose their dignity and their trousers while the women conventionally preserve the proprieties.

And even the fact that men have mostly written farce is now happily under threat: Catherine Johnson in *Dead Sheep* and *Shang-a-Lang*, both originating at the Bush, showed a keen appetite for the genre.

I defend farce on two grounds. The first is that, to borrow a phrase I've frequently quoted from Eric Bentley's *The Life of the Drama*, it is "the quintessence of theatre". Its starting point is the actor's body and its culmination is a universal milling around in which chaos descends. My favourite moment in all farce is in Feydeau's *Le Dindon* when an aged doctor and his stone-deaf wife retire to their hotel bed, unaware that alarm bells have been secreted under their mattress, and find their peace violently shattered by a succession of intruders on the look-out for adulterous hanky-panky. That reminds me of Jonathan Lynn's description of farce as "the worst day of your life". Or, in this case, the worst night.

My other line of defence is that farce is an infinitely flexible form. If it achieved a new status in Britain in the 1960s, it was partly because of Bentley's intellectual advocacy and partly because Comédie-Française touched down in London with its superlative productions of Feydeau.

But British dramatists quickly showed the elasticity of the genre. Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy* (in 1965) breathtakingly shows characters stumbling around a fully-lit stage during a supposed power-cut and, in the process, reveals their true selves. Joe Orton's *What the Butler Saw* (1968) uses all the stock ingredients of farce to question rigid definitions of sanity and gender. And Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* (1982), the most dazzling of modern farces, is more than a sustained joke about a stumbling rep company doing a play that goes to pieces. Like all of Frayn's work, it is about the thin line between order and chaos.

The list of modern British dramatists who've exploited the basic ingredients of the genre is a long one: Alan Bennett in *Habeas Corpus*, Caryl Churchill in *Cloud Nine*, Alan Ayckbourn in *Bedroom Farce*, Terry Johnson in *Hysteria* and *Dead Funny* are just a few of the playwrights who've used it to express their distinctive views of the world. Farce, in short, is an extremely obliging form, and one we should fight to preserve.

Of course, one could dig up duff, dated examples that find foreigners and gay men funny. But, at its best, farce makes us laugh uncontrollably while showing human beings reduced to a state of desperation. Which is, after all, what drama is all about. ●



KEVIN COREY & TYRELL CREWS IN ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS (2014-15). PHOTO BY TRUDIE LEE

THEATRE 101

FORGET EVERYTHING YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW ABOUT LEFT AND RIGHT. IN THE THEATRE WE LIKE TO DO THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY.

THE PRODUCER oversees the whole of the production process while supporting the creative. They are in charge of the production budget and finance.

THE PLAYWRIGHT writes the play.

THE DIRECTOR is responsible for the overall vision of the production. They collaborate with the cast and creative team, through design and staging, to bring that vision to life.

THE DESIGNERS are responsible for the way the production looks. Designers include scenic, costumes, lighting, sound, and sometimes projections.

THE STAGE MANAGER (SM) is responsible during the rehearsal process for scheduling rehearsal time, developing a prompt script with all blocking cues, and technical cues. Once the performances have begun, they are responsible for the smooth running of the show, including calling sound, lighting, and projection cues, and ensuring that the actors maintain the staging.

THE ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER (ASM) supports the SM throughout the rehearsal and performance period. They are often responsible for being 'on book' (following the script and giving line prompts when the actors ask for them).

THE COMPANY MANAGER in a touring production such as *Nothing On* is in charge of housing, transportation, payroll and other non-stage related needs of the full company, including actors, crew, and creative team.

BEGINNERS is the British equivalent of the American term 'places,' meaning that actors should be in place to go on stage for the first scene of the play.

BLOCKING refers to all of the moves that an actor makes on the stage, including entrances, exits, moving about on stage, sitting down, and standing up.

CALLS are announcements made by the SM or ASM, over the PA system to the actors or audience, informing them when the performance is about to begin.

THE DRESS REHEARSAL

or 'dress' is the final run-through of a production before it is performed for the public.

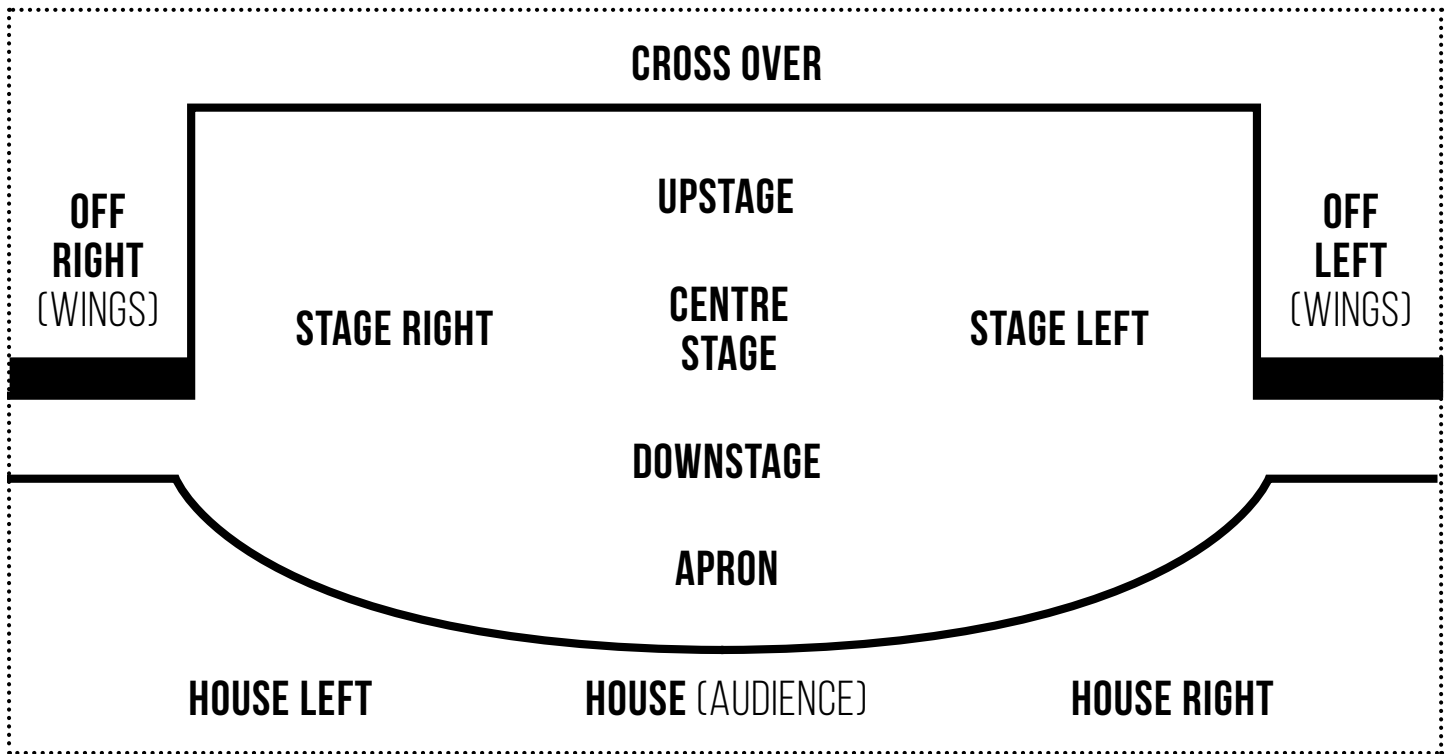
PROPS or properties are items used by actors during a performance, such as telephones, newspapers, boxes, flowers and plates of sardines.

THE RIGGING in a theatre is a system of pipes that hang over the stage to hold scenery and lighting equipment, as well as ropes or cables and pulleys that raise and lower the pipe.

STALLS is the British term for seats on the floor level, what we in North America would call orchestra seats.

TABS is the British term for most masking drapes, as well as the grand drape.

THE TECHNICAL REHEARSAL or 'tech' is the rehearsal in which the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, sound and sometimes projections are added into the rehearsal process before public performances begin. Typically they are long rehearsals with frequent stopping and starting.



DOWNSTAGE (DS)

is the area on stage closest to the audience.

UPSTAGE (US)

is the area on stage furthest away from the audience.

STAGE LEFT (SL)

is the area on stage to the actors' left (to the audience's right.)

STAGE RIGHT (SR)

is the area on stage to the actors' right (to the audience's left).

CENTRE (CS)

is the area on stage in the centre.

WINGS

are the areas to either side of the stage, where the actors make entrances/exits.

DRESSING ROOMS

are where the actors prepare to go on the stage, where they get dressed in their costumes and apply makeup.

THE GREEN ROOM

is a waiting room or lounge where the cast can relax before and during performances.



NOISES OFF MOVIE NIGHT

1 **A FISH CALLED WANDA**

In London, four very different people team up to commit armed robbery, then try to doublecross each other for the loot.

STARRING JOHN CLEESE, JAMIE LEE CURTIS, KEVIN KLINE

1988 | Feature Film | 14A | 1h 48m | Director Charles Crichton

2 **RAT RACE**

A Las Vegas casino magnate, determined to find a new avenue for wagering, sets up a race for money.

STARRING WHOOP! GOLDBERG, SETH GREEN, JOHN CLEESE, ROWAN ATKINSON

DID YOU KNOW? RAT RACE WAS FILMED IN AND AROUND CALGARY! THE DESERT SCENES OF LAS VEGAS WERE SHOT IN DRUMHELLER, WHICH WAS A PERFECT DOUBLE FOR THE SANDY TERRAIN OF LAS VEGAS AND SILVER CITY.

2001 | Feature Film | PG | 1h 52m | Director Jerry Zucker

3 **NOISES OFF**

A travelling theatre group find so much action going on behind-the-scenes, they almost ruin the performances.

STARRING MICHAEL CAINE, CAROL BURNETT, JOHN RITTER, CHRISTOPHER REEVE

1992 | Feature Film | NR | 1h 41m | Director Peter Bogdanovich

4 **FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL**

Over the course of five social occasions, a committed bachelor must consider the notion that he may have discovered love.

STARRING HUGH GRANT, ANDIE MACDOWELL

1994 | Feature Film | PG | 1h 57m | Director Mike Newell

5 **CLUE**

Six guests are anonymously invited to a strange mansion for dinner, but after their host is killed, they must cooperate with the staff to identify the murderer as the bodies pile up.

STARRING TIM CURRY, MADELINE KAHN, CHRISTOPHER LLOYD, EILEEN BRENNAN

1985 | Feature Film | PG | 1h 34m | Director Jonathan Lynn

4 **WHAT'S UP DOC?**

The accidental mix-up of four identical plaid overnight bags leads to a series of increasingly wild and wacky situations.

STARRING BARBRA STREISAND, RYAN O'NEIL, MADELINE KAHN

1972 | Feature Film | G | 1h 34m | Director Peter Bogdanovich

CONVERSATIONS

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Why is timing so important in comedy? Where do we see the importance of comedic timing in this production? What are some problems that may arise if the timing of the humour is off?

Physical comedy is a key ingredient in the humour of this show. What were some physical moments in the show that were humorous to you?

What makes farce different than other plays you have seen? Can you identify the elements of farce having witnessed *Noises Off*?

Much of the humour in *Noises Off* comes from the dysfunctional relationships between characters. What other stories feature funny dysfunctional relationships (plays, movies, TV, novels)? Why do you think dysfunctional relationships are such a common device for creating humour?

Can you think of examples of comedic misunderstandings or mistaken identities in the play, or in similar plays, books, movies, or TV? What makes these misunderstandings funny? What funny misunderstandings have happened in your own life?

EDUCATIONAL EXERCISES

PROPS

For this game, you'll need to assemble a collection of random objects. These might include a wooden spoon, a ruler, a scarf; or better yet, use objects whose actual purpose you don't know. Divide into teams of two, each team claiming one object. Then have the teams take turns coming up with alternative uses for their object. For instance, the wooden spoon may become a microphone, an oar, a conductor's baton, a light saber, the possibilities are endless. Teams should switch from one to another as quickly as possible without hesitating; if a team hesitates or can't come up with a new idea on their turn, the members of that team are out.

ONE WORD STUDY

Sit in a circle and create a story together. The first person says the first word, the second person adds a second word, and so on. The only rule: don't hesitate—say the first thing that comes into your head.

QUESTIONS ONLY

For this game, you'll divide into two teams. Then, pick a simple setting for your scene (examples: shopping at the mall, visiting the zoo, going to a birthday party). Two people from the same team should begin their scene. You can make the scene go however you want it to, with only one rule: you can only speak in questions. If someone makes a mistake by saying something that isn't a question, that person is out, and someone else from their team must take their place and continue the scene.

DO IT THIS WAY

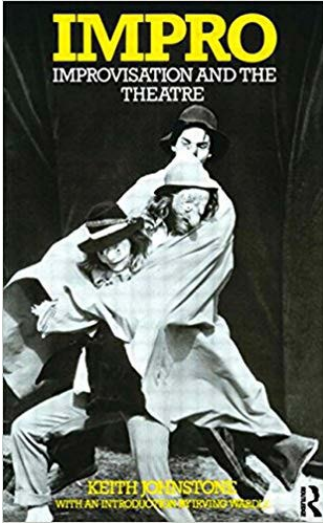
For this game, one person volunteers to be the guesser. Have the guesser leave the room. When he or she is gone, the rest of the group must come up with an adverb that might describe an action (slowly, grumpily, sleepily, etc.) Once you've picked your adverb, call the guesser back into the room. The guesser can then ask anyone in the room to perform an action in the style of the adverb they must guess (example: "eat this way" - the actor must pretend to eat slowly or grumpily, or sleepily). The guesser gets three chances to make other players act - then time is up and they must guess the adverb.



STEPHEN HAIR & MAUREEN THOMAS IN THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (1977-78). PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

CONVERSATIONS

FURTHER READING

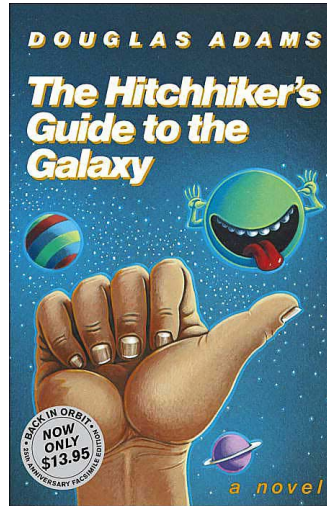


IMPRO: IMPROVISATION AND THE THEATRE

BY KEITH JOHNSTONE

Divided into four sections, 'Status', 'Spontaneity', 'Narrative Skills', and 'Masks and Trance', arranged more or less in the order a group might approach them, the book sets out the specific techniques and exercises which Johnstone has himself found most useful and most stimulating. The result is both an ideas book and a fascinating exploration of the nature of spontaneous creativity.

1992
Non-fiction

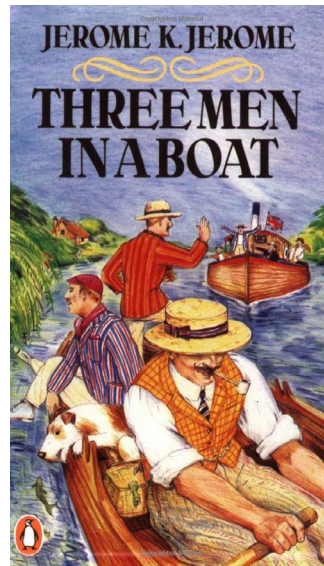


THE HITCHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

BY DOUGLAS ADAMS

Seconds before the Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor.

2009
Fiction

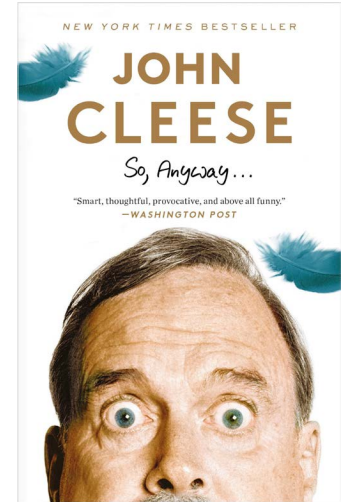


THREE MEN IN A BOAT

BY JEROME K. JEROME

Here is a perfect picture of those lazy summer days messing about in boats. After his final trip up the river Thames with his three companions--Harris, George, and Montmorency the dog--Jerome K. Jerome sat down to write his proposed book, *The Story of the Thames*. But before he could tackle the work in the serious manner intended, his humor took over and gave birth to a masterpiece of unquenchable comedy.

1889
Fiction

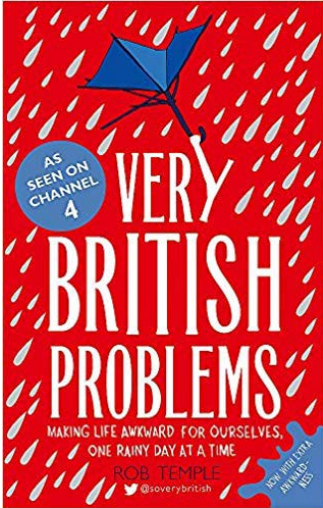


SO, ANYWAY

BY JOHN CLEESE

In this rollicking memoir, *So, Anyway...*, Cleese takes readers on a Grand Tour of his ascent in the entertainment world, from his humble beginnings in a sleepy English town and his early comedic days at Cambridge University (with future Python partner Graham Chapman), to the founding of the landmark comedy troupe that would propel him to worldwide renown.

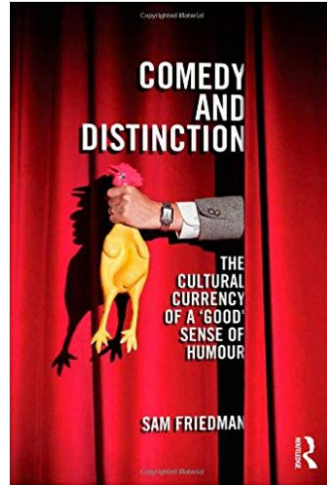
2014
Non-fiction



VERY BRITISH PROBLEMS: MAKING LIFE AWKWARD FOR OURSELVES, ONE RAINY DAY AT A TIME
 BY **ROB TEMPLE**

Rob Temple's hilarious book reveals all the ways in which Britain is a nation of socially awkward but well-meaning oddballs, struggling to make it through every day without apologising to an inanimate object. Take comfort in misfortunes of others. We are not alone.

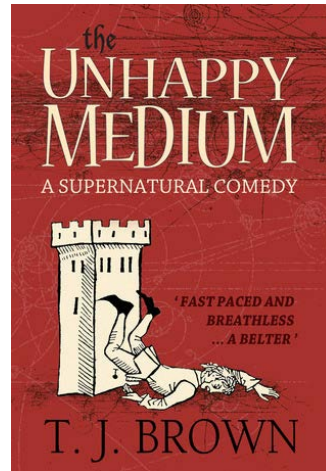
2014
 Non-fiction



COMEDY & DISTINCTION: THE CULTURAL CURRENCY OF A 'GOOD' SENSE OF HUMOUR
 BY **ROBERT BOOTH**

Drawing on a large-scale survey and in-depth interviews carried out at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, *Comedy & Distinction* explores what types of comedy people like (and dislike), what their preferences reveal about their sense of humour, how comedy taste lubricates everyday interaction, and how issues of social class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location interact with patterns of comic taste.

2014
 Non-fiction



THE UNHAPPY MEDIUM: A SUPERNATURAL COMEDY
 BY **T.J. BROWN**

Thrown headlong into a new reality that simply shouldn't exist, Dr. Newton Barlow is about to come up against the best and the worst of human nature: tooled-up vicars, paper-pushing ancient Greeks, sinister property developers, a saucy rubber nun and possibly the most mean-spirited man ever to have walked the earth (twice).

2011
 Fiction

CONVERSATIONS

SOURCES

Everyman Theatre Play Guide for *Noises Off* (<https://issuu.com/everymantheatre/docs/noisesoff-playguide-issuu>)

Forget hatchet-faced critics - farce is the quintessence of theatre by Michael Billington (<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/sep/05/defence-farce-theatre-trend>)

Guthrie Theater Play Guide for *Noises Off* (https://www.guthrietheater.org/globalassets/2-shows--tickets/201819/noises-off/noisesoff_playguide.pdf)

The Internet Movie Database (imdb.com)

Indiana Repertory Theatre Study Guide for *Noises Off* (2018) (<https://d1fl2pbib0u1tq.cloudfront.net/pdf/Study%20Guides/2017-2018/IRT%20Study%20Guide%20NOISES%20OFF.pdf>)

Pacific Conservatory Theatre Study Guide for *Noises Off* (<http://www.pcpa.org/studyguide/noisesoff.html>)

The Rep Milwaukee Play Guide for *Noises Off* (<https://www.milwaukeeerep.com/RepGlobal/archive/noises-playguide.pdf>)

Utah Shakespeare Festival *Noises Off* Study Guide (<http://bard.org/education/insights/noisesinsights.pdf>)