

ENTERTAINMENT

'Noises Off' shows the life behind the curtain

By D. M. Holiman
Emerald Contributor

It's been billed as a farce within a farce. "Noises Off," the University Theatre's second production of the year, was characterized that way in a review in the New York Daily News. The comedy originally was staged in London where it was a hit. "Noises Off" proved to be just as successful on the other side of the Atlantic when it was produced on Broadway.

The curtain goes up on the University Theatre production tonight at 8 in Villard Hall's Robinson Theatre. "Noises Off," written by Michael Frayn, is the story of a third-rate acting company performing a third-rate comedy on a tour of third-rate British theatres. Seizing upon the convention of a play within a play, the comedy allows the audience to view the backstage antics of the actors.

Directing "Noises Off" will be Jack Watson, a professor in the University's theatre department. Watson in the past has directed several other University Theatre productions, including "Gypsy," "The Rivals," "Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean," and "The Boys in the Band."

Watson was the artistic director for the Gallery Players of Oregon for eight years and has directed plays in various theatres in Portland.

"Noises Off" was first produced in 1977 in London and quickly became a popular and critical success. British drama critic Clive Ramsey was one of several enthusiastic pundits. He called the comedy a "delightful romp into the realm of absurdity."

A few years later "Noises Off" was staged on Broadway and once again the critical response was favorable.

The nine-member cast features Cynthia Besteman, David Stuart Bull, Marshall Davis, Bradford Goodman, Rob Harriman, Diane Johnson, John Leistner, Annie McGregor and Susan Page.

All but Harriman are theater majors. Harriman is a journalism major.

David Stuart Bull is the only Englishman in the cast. The rest are Americans.

The assistant directors are Joey Buttler and Johanna Schmitz. Both are theater majors.



Photo by Christophe Chabaudie

"Noises Off" cast members Cynthia Besteman, left, Marshall Davis and Diane Johnson confront each other in a scene from the comedy to be performed 8 p.m. tonight.

Sue Surdam, a fine arts major, is the costume designer. Scenic design is by Richard Harris, a member of the Lane Community College Performing Arts Department.

Lighting design is by Joseph Lund. Technical direction will be provided by Janet Rose, a University theatre instructor.

In addition to Thursday's performance, "Noises Off" will be staged at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and

Dec. 10-12. A special 2:30 p.m. matinee will be staged on Dec. 12 in addition to the evening performance.

Tickets are \$5.50 for the general public, \$4.50 for senior citizens and students, and \$3.50 for University students.

Tickets are available at the University Theatre box office in Robinson Theatre. All seats are reserved. For more information regarding tickets, contact the box office at 686-4191.

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