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“There’s no way to rehearse without the set in place,” said Mick Alderman. “It’s so physical — this is an action play. The challenge for the actors is that it all moves at a lightning pace. They don’t always have lines — they have to cue off stuff, listen and remember what they are supposed to be doing.”

He likened it to a crazy inventor’s work. “With nine people, it’s an amazing Rube Goldberg process. If one person is not where they need to be at that moment, the whole thing falls apart.”

A play about a dying play

Frayn reportedly dreamed up “Noises Off” after watching from backstage in 1970 while Lynn Redgrave performed in another farce he had written. The title comes from a script stage direction. It won awards during its first five-year run in London and has seen three productions on Broadway, one winning a Tony for Katie Finneran. A 1992 movie version starred Michael Caine and Carol Burnett.

Roles include a director involved in a love triangle, a stuttering leading man, an actress who misplaces her contact lenses, a deaf actor with a drinking problem and the long-suffering stage manager who tries to fix everything.

Coaster cast members are Cathey Ryan, David



PATRICK WEBB PHOTOS

House owner Ann Bronson’s character, right, makes a point to her nervous husband, played by William Ham, watched by a mystery man, Daric Moore, left, and housekeeper Cathey Ryan in a farcical scene from “Noises Off,” which opens at the Coaster Theatre this weekend.

‘IT’S LIKE A GIANT CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE.’

— DARIC MOORE
ACTOR IN ‘NOISES OFF’

off, and isn’t the only one who slips on a plate of sardines. “It’s like a giant choreographed dance — the whole thing depends on a bunch of people, not just one or two.”

Thomas Ryan appears with his wife, Cathey. “This play is about a play that is dying, it’s never coming together,” he said. “At the ending of the play, it’s chaos. We are so familiar with it that it doesn’t matter what you say — you just keep going.”

The Coaster production features costumes by Judith

Light, with each character having a color theme.

Alderman said friends who attended other productions have said it is the funniest play they have seen.

“If you like to laugh, you’ll like this,” he said. “At the first rehearsal, the actors had barely met each other and within an hour they were in stitches.

“You can’t catch your breath — it’s one thing on top of another. If you like the old Benny Hill comedies, this is definitely the show for you.” CW



A plate of sardines plays a key recurring part of the plot of “Noises Off.” Here, Ann Bronson’s character tries to quickly remove the sardines when Daric Moore’s back is turned.



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