

PLAY GUIDE



Noises Off

By Michael Frayn



Heralded by the New York Post as the funniest farce ever written, Tony Award winner Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* is not one play but two -- simultaneously a traditional sex farce, *Nothing On*, and the backstage shenanigans that develop during *Nothing On*'s final rehearsal and tour. The two begin to interlock as the characters make their exits from *Nothing On* only to find themselves making entrances into the even worse nightmare going on backstage. In the end, at the disastrous final performance, the two coalesce into a single collective nervous breakdown.

"Bumper car brilliance ..." -New York Daily News

"As side-splitting a farce as I have seen." -New York Magazine

"Spectacularly funny ... a peerless backstage comedy." -New York Times

"Ingenious ... Madcap ..." -Wall Street Journal

(Noises Off contains some adult language and subject matter. *Suggested for students 13 and older.*)

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Noises Off

Play Guide by Shela Jennings

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From the **Director**

Sardines. Sardines. So ... where *are* the sardines?

Judith Allen
Director



JUDITH ALLEN was named 2002 Best Supporting Actress in a Comedic Role by *The Denver Post* for her role as Chris Gorman in OpenStage Theatre's production of *Rumors* and most recently was seen as Leigh Sangold in *Splitting Infinity*. She currently serves as the Associate Artistic Director for OpenStage, a Producing Artistic Director for *openstage etc* and is an ex officio member of the Theatre's Board of Directors. Her numerous directing credits include recent productions of *Picnic*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *The Drawer Boy* (OpenStage OPUS Award for Best Play and Best Director), *Romeo and Juliet* (OPUS for Best Director), *Henry IV Part 1*, *The Living* and *My Three Angels*. Some of Judith's favorite roles with OpenStage include Eleanora Duse in *The Ladies of the Camellias*, Titania in *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream (OpenStage OPUS Award for Best Actress), Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Lizzie Morden in *Our Country's Good*. She also has designed sound and make-up for numerous productions. Judith received the 2001 OpenStage Founder's Award for her exceptional contributions to the Theatre.

Michael Frayn's Humorous Notes on *Nothing On*

Nothing On is the title of the play being performed onstage as we watch the onstage and backstage shenanigans of the cast. The cast list and program notes for *Nothing On* as dreamed up by Frayn are set forth at the back of the script of *Noises Off*. The cast listing below includes the role names of the current actors in *Nothing On* and their role corresponding names in *Noises Off*.

NOTHING ON

By
ROBIN HOUSEMONGER

Cast in order of appearance

Nothing On

Mrs. Clackett
Roger Tramplemain
Vicki
Philip Brent
Flavia Brent
Assistant Stage Manager
Company/Stage Manager
Burglar

OpenStage Theatre Cast

Denise Burson Freestone
Eric W. Corneliuson
Nikki Gibbs
Kurt Brighton
Sydney Parks
Thomas Herrera
Brenna A. Freestone
Bruce K. Freestone

Noises Off

Dotty Otley
Garry Lejeune
Brooke Ashton
Frederick Fellowes
Belinda Blair
Tim All-Good
Poppy Norton-Taylor
Selsdon Mowbray

Production Credits

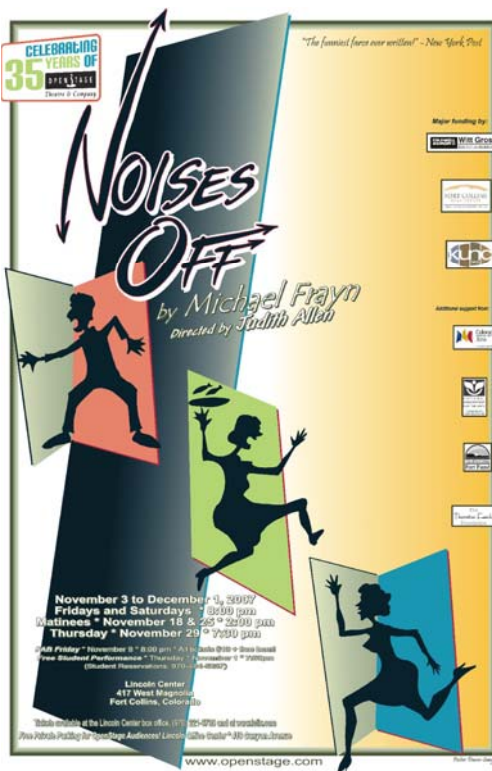
Sardines by Old Salt Sardines. Antique silverware and cardboard boxes by Mrs. J. G. H Norton-Taylor [Poppy's Mother]. Stethoscope and hospital trolley by Severn Surgical Supplies. Straitjacket by Kumfy Restraints Ltd. Coffins by G. Ashforth and Sons, Miss Ashton's lenses by Double Vision Optical, Ltd.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of EUROPEAN BREWERIES in sponsoring this production.

Behind the Dressing Room Doors

DOTTY OTLEY (Mrs. Clackett) makes a welcome return to the stage to create the role of Mrs. Clackett after playing Mrs. Hackett, Britain's most famous lollipop lady ('Ooh, I can't 'ardly 'old me lolly up!') in over 320 episodes of TV's *On the Zebras*. Her many stage appearances include her critically acclaimed portrayal of Fru Sackett, the comic char in Strindberg's *Scenes from the Charnelhouse*. Her first appearance ever? IN a school production of *Henry IV Part I* – as the old bag-lady, Mrs. Duckett.

BELINDA BLAIR (Flavia Brent) has been on the stage since the age of four, when she made her debut in *Sindbad the Sailor* at the old Croydon Hippodrome as one of Miss Toni



OpenStage Theatre's poster for *Noises Off*.

Tanner's Ten Tapping Tots. She subsequently danced her way round this country, Southern Africa, and the Far East in shows like *Zippedy-Dooda!* and *Here Comes les Girls!* More recently she has been seen in such comedy hits as *Don't Mr. Duddle!*, *Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?*, and *Twice Two Is Sex*. She is married to scriptwriter Terry Wough, who has contributed lead-in material to most of TV's chat shows. They have two sons and three retrievers.

'Dignity is the straitjacket of the soul. Its loss is our first stumbling step toward sanity.' –Friedrich Nietzsche

GARRY LEJEUNE (Roger Tramplemain) while still at drama school won the coveted Laetitia Daintyman Medal for Violence. His television work includes *Police!*, *Crime Squad*, *Swat*, *Forensic*, and *The Nick*, but he is probably best-known as "Cornett", the ice-cream salesman who stirs the hearts of all the lollipop ladies in *On the Zebra*.

SELSDON MOWBRAY (Burglar) first 'trod the boards' at the age of 12 – playing Lucius in a touring production of *Julius Caesar*, with his father, the great Chelmsford Mowbray, in the lead. Since then he has served in various local reps, and claims to have appeared in every company to have toured Shakespeare in the past half-century, working his way up through the Mustardseeds and the various Boys and Sons of, to the Balthazars, Benvolios, and Le Beaus; then the Slenders, Lennoxes, Trinculos, Snouts, and Froths; and graduating to the Scroops, Poloniuses, and Aguecheeks. His most recent film appearance was as Outraged Pensioner in *Green Willies*.

BROOK ASHTON (Vicki) is probably best known as the girl wearing nothing but 'good, honest, natural froth' in the Hauptbahnhofbrau lager commercials. Her television appearances range from Girl at Infants' School in *On the Zebra* to Girl in Massage Parlous in *On Probation*. Cinemagoers saw her in *The Girl in Room 14*, where she played the Girl in Room 312.

The most important technological advance in history as far as the maintenance of moral standards is concerned, was the invention of the keyhole.' – George Santayana

FREDERICK FELLOWES (Philip Brent) has appeared in many popular television series, including *Calling Casualty*, *Cardiac Arrest!*, *Out-Patients*, and *In-Patients*. On stage he was most recently seen in the controversial all-male version of *The Trojan Women*. He is happily married, and lives near Crawley, where his wife breeds pedigree dogs. 'If she ever leaves me,' he says, 'it will probably be for an Irish wolfhound!'

ROBIN HOUSEMONGER (Author) was born in Worcester Park, Surrey, into a family 'unremarkable in every way except for an aunt with red hair who used to sing all the high twiddly bits from *The Merry Widow* over the tea-table.' He claims to have been the worlds most unsuccessful gents hosiery wholesaler, and began writing 'to fill the long hours between one hosiery order and the next.' He turned this experience into his very first play, *Socks Before Marriage*, which ran in the West End for nine years. Two of his subsequent plays, *Briefs Encounter* and *Hanky Panky*, broke box office records in Perth, Western Australia. *Nothing On I* his seventeenth play.

LLOYD DALLAS (Director) 'read English at Cambridge, and stagecraft at the local benefits office.' He has directed plays in most parts of Britain, winning the South of Scotland Critic's Circle Special Award in 1969. In 1972 he directed a highly successful season for the National Theatre of Sri Lanka. In recent years he has probably become best known for his brilliant series of 'Shakespeare in Summer' productions in the parks of the inner London boroughs.

Desperation tells a thousand tales – and each of those thousand begets a thousand more. – Moldovan proverb

'A Glimpse of the Noumenal'*

[**Noumenal* - According to Kant, the object of a pure, nonsensual intuition.]

(Condensed from J. G. Stillwater: *Eros Untrousered—Studies in the Semantics of Bedroom Farce*)

The cultural importance of the so-called 'bedroom farce,' or "English sex farce," has long been recognized, but attention has tended to centre on the metaphysical significance of mistaken identity and upon the social criticism implicit in the form's ground-breaking exploration of cross-dressing and trans-gender role-playing. The focus of scholarly interest, however, is now beginning to shift to the recurrence of certain mythic themes in the genre, and to their religious and spiritual implications.

In a typical bedroom farce, a man and a woman come to some secret or mysterious place (cf *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, etc) to perform certain acts which are supposed to remain concealed from the eyes of the world. This is plainly a variant of the traditional 'search' or 'quest', the goal of which, though presented as



Eric Idle cross-dressing in *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.

being 'sexual' in nature, is to be understood as a metaphor of enlightenment and transcendence. Some partial disrobing may occur, to suggest perhaps a preliminary stripping away of world illusions but total nudity (perfect truth) and complete 'carnal knowledge' (i.e. spiritual understanding) are perpetually forestalled by the intervention of coincidental encounters (often with other seekers engaged in parallel 'quests'), which bear a striking resemblance to the trials undergone by postulants in various esoteric cults (cf *The Magic Flute*, *Star Wars*, etc.). ...

A recurring and highly significant feature of the genre is a multiplicity of doors. If we regard the world on this side of the doors as the physical one in which mortal men are condemned to live, then the world or worlds concealed behind them may be thought of as representing both the higher and more spiritual plane into which the postulants hope to escape, and the underworld from which at any moment demons may leap out to tempt or punish. When the doors do open, it is often with great suddenness and unexpectedness, highly suggestive of those epiphanic moments of insight and enlightenment which give access to the 'other', and offer us a fleeting glimpse of the noumenal.

Another recurring feature is the fall or loss of trousers. This can be readily recognized as an allusion to the Fall of Man and the loss of primal innocence. The removal of the trousers traditionally reveals a pair of striped underpants, in which we recognize both the stripes of the tigers, the feral beast that lurks in all of us beneath the civilized exterior suggested by the lost trousers, and perhaps also a premonitory representation of the stripes caused the whipping, which was formerly the traditional punishment for fornication.

The confusion of identity caused by chance resemblance has always played a significant part in human affairs. Edward IV had a lookalike, Leofric Leadbetter, a tallowboiler from Stony Stratford. ... On one occasion

Leadbetter gave the royal assent to three statues and probably fathered the future King Edward V before the imposture was detected. ...

Farce, interestingly, is popularly categorized as 'funny'. It is true that the form often involves 'funny' elements in the sense of the strange or uncanny, such as supposedly supernatural phenomena, and behavior suggestive of demonic possession. But the meaning of 'funny' here is probably also intended to include its secondary sense, 'provocative of laughter.'

This is an interesting perception. It scarcely needs to be said that laughter, involving as it does the loss of self-control and the spasmodic release of breath, a vital bodily fluid, is a metaphorical representation of the sexual act. But it can also occasion the shedding of tears, which suggests that it may in addition be a sublimated form of mourning. ... The danger of laughter is recognized in such expressions as 'killingly funny,' and 'I almost died.' There is a lurking fear that even more spectacular violence may ensue, and that a farce may end with a bloodletting as gruesome as in *Oedipus* or *Medea*, if people are induced to 'split their sides' or 'laugh their heads off.'

Fear of the darker undertones of bedroom farce has sometimes in the past led to its dismissal as 'mere entertainment'. As the foregoing hopefully makes clear, though, financial support by the Arts Council or a private sponsor for the tour of a bedroom farce would by no means be out of place.



Gourmet Grilled Sardines

Sidebars in Frayn's Text

The common sardine. 13.4 million are eaten daily in Great Britain alone. The word is derived from the French, *sardine*.

Sardines are even more plagued than their human cousins by the problem of doubles and look-alikes.

Posset (milk curdled with ale or vinegar) was one of the fast foods to be processed by industrial methods. In the sixteenth century virtually every village had its posset-mill, though few have survived. Their functioning was based on the common observation that milk tends to curdle more readily on thundery

summer days. In a posset-mill production was maintained throughout the year by allowing the milk to run into a heated curdling chamber where the flow of incoming ale or vinegar was ingeniously harnessed to operate a kind of simple theatrical thundersheet. The product was then packed in small 'yoggy pots', made from the scrota of wild yogs.

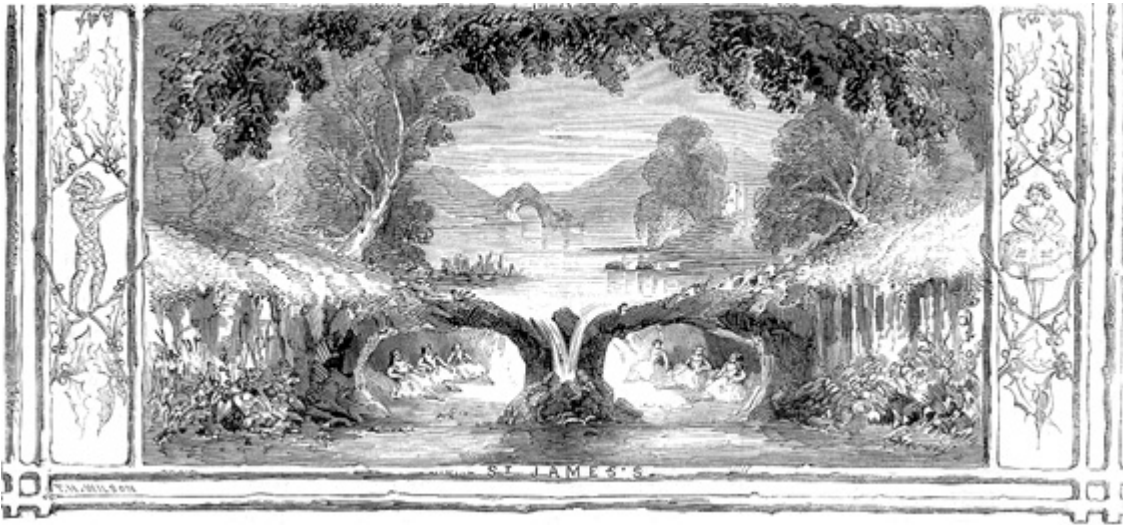
Janet Thrice *The Tudor Food Industry*

[*Nothing On* is set in "a delightful 16th-century posset mill that has been converted to a modern dwelling for which renters are solicited; the fictional playwright is appropriately named Robin Housemonger. Each of the three acts of *Noises Off* contains a performance of the first act of *Nothing On*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noises_Off]

A Brief History of **Farce**

Noises Off is the prime example of farce cited in many modern day discussions of the genre. Frayn's play perfectly matches the following definition: "a comic genre that depends on an elaborately contrived, usually improbable plot, broadly drawn stock characters, and physical humor. Most farces are amoral and exist to entertain."

The early Greeks and Romans were the first in recorded history to use farcical techniques, and the subject matter and techniques they developed have remained constant to the present day. Early examples of farce in Aristophanes, Plautus, and Terence still amuse us in modern updates like *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.



"Christmas Pantomimes and Burlesques at St. James's." By Unknown Artist

The term "farce" was first used in the Middle Ages to designate interpolations made in the church litany by the clergy. Later it came to mean comic scenes inserted into church plays. Farce emerged full-blown in 15th-century France with such plays as the anonymous *Pierre Patelin* (c.1470). In

England two of the earliest and best-known farces are *Ralph Roister Doister* (1566) and Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* (c.1593). Farcical elements like broad, ribald humor, physical buffoonery, and absurd situations can also be found in plays that are not called farces. Molière's comedies often include farcical scenes, but are defined as comedy because of the veracity of their characters. During the 19th and early 20th century farces were often termed "bedroom farces," thanks to the French. French playwright Feydeau exemplifies this genre. His plays use suggestive dialogue, erring husbands and wives, silly servants, and mistaken identity. Americans joined the parade with the films of Charlie Chaplin, the Keystone Kops, and the Marx Brothers and plays like *You Can't Take It with You* by Kaufman and Hart.

Farce probably developed before comedy. It is simple and direct without literary pretensions. Plots are often complicated and result in the confusion of the characters for our amusement. It is said that the expression "there is nothing new under the sun" applies particularly well to farce. The term "stock" in the theatre refers to successful things that are kept and reused--a kind of recycling. Stock plots involve misunderstandings, confusing twins, disguises, hiding, and chases. Stock characters are cartoonish exaggerations of real people. Sitcom characters personify these techniques. There is an abundance of physical humor which runs the gamut from such sight gags as spilling a drink, to slips and falls, and finally to physical assault. In farce the audience is asked to accept the convention that no real harm results from such mock violence. In classical farces a double-slatted paddle that made an exaggeratedly loud noise was often used to punish miscreants. The term slapstick humor is still with us, but actual slapsticks appear only in period farces.

farce and comedy often helps clarify both types of humor. In comedy truth is central; in farce it is incidental. Comedy is rooted in reality; farce throws logic and probability out the window. Comedy draws characters from life; farce cartoons its characters. Farce relies on physical rather than intellectual humor, and all elements (especially plot and character) are grossly exaggerated for comic effect. In comedy humor is used in the service of truth, in farce humor is used for its own sake. The purpose of farce is to create big laughs as often as possible without any claim to logic or any progression towards meaning or message.

Stage farces are relatively rare today since they often rely on elaborate settings and complicated physical components (i.e., the stairs, doors, and backstage area in *Noises Off*). These are expensive requisites and have to function perfectly to keep the farce moving. Film makes farces easier because actions don't have to take place in real time. Television cartoons and sitcoms are often pure farce.

The British are particularly fond of this genre and most of the best modern examples of farce are British. There is a long history of farce and farcical moments in comedies dating back to Britain's early history. The Christmas pantomimes the British flock to every year are solidly rooted in the farcical techniques and have probably served as a training ground for future playwrights.

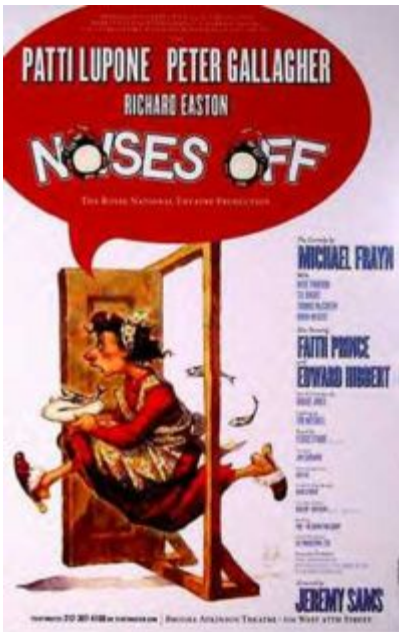


Oil painting, *Dromios: Comedy of Errors* from the Shakespeare Art Museum

Farce provides a wonderful outlet for the stress of modern life. We spend our lives being repressed by our culture - restricted in what we may do, especially in expressing our own anger, frustration, and contempt for which there are stiff penalties. Farce permits us to act out those expressions vicariously, without suffering consequences. Subjects for farce include: any form of pretentiousness, sex, morals, religion, sanctity of death, race or ethnic background, anything that is taken seriously by those who pretend to order the world. The well-kept secret of farce is that an audience can laugh at people suffering in ludicrous situations while they avoid the consequences suffered by the characters.

Edited copy from: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-farce.html>,
<http://www.fwafa.org/staff/darla.jones/Farce.htm>

Noises Off The Play



Excerpts from a Curtain Up review:

Noises Off is of course one of the funniest plays on eighteen legs, leaving some of tonight's audience snorting and chortling uncontrollably, to the alarm of the Piccadilly Theatre's paramedics. (So much so that other members of the audience look around, wondering if the display of life-threatening hilarity is part of the act.) But this enormously sophisticated play could also be seen as Middle England's *Waiting For Godot*. While Samuel Beckett found universality by blending nightmare images of occupied France with silent comic movies, Michael Frayn, with seeming diffidence, achieves something similar with the banalities of provincial England and the English theatrical farce.

<http://www.curtainup.com/noisesofflond.html>

Excerpts from a theatremania review:

Frayn reports that 'Noises Off' was rewritten many times before the rehearsals of the original production...but even after 'Noises Off' bowed, Frayn and [director] Blakemore kept at it. At one point, the original cast refused to learn

any more endings. "I simply cannot remember how many endings there were, because I simply rewrote every day," Frayn recalls, "Then we moved and every time we changed casts, I rewrote the end of Act Three. Every time you change anything anywhere in the play, it changes everything else," he continues, "if you change a line in Act One, that changes Act Two and Three. It's like trying to make a statue out of a heap of jelly."

Edited copy from: www.theatermania.com/story/1720

Noises Off The Film

Director: Peter Bogdanovich

Writer: Michael Frayn (play)

Writer: Marty Kaplan (screenplay)

Cast

Carol Burnett
Michael Caine
Denholm Elliott
Julie Hagerty
Marilu Henner
Mark Linn-Baker
Christopher Reeve
John Ritter
Nicollette Sheridan
Kate Rich
Zoe R. Cassavetes
Kim Sebastian
Louise Stratten
J. Christopher Sullivan
Kimberly Neville

Dotty Otley/Mrs. Clackett
Lloyd Fellowes
Selsdon Mowbray/The Burglar
Poppy Taylor
Belinda Blair/Flavia Brent
Tim Allgood
Frederick Dallas/Philip Brent
Garry Lejeune/Roger Tramplemain
Brooke Ashton/Vicki
Des Moines Stagehand
Miami Stagehand
Cleveland Stagehand
Broadway Stagehand
Miami Backstage Guard
Miami Usher

The Playwright **Michael Frayn**

"My works are about an ordered world breaking down into disorder."



Michael Frayn was born September 8, 1933, in the suburbs of London. His mother, Violet Alice Frayn, a promising violinist, died of a heart attack when Frayn was twelve. His father, Thomas Allen Frayn, worked for an asbestos and roofing firm, but he also wrote comic sketches for Christmas performances. He was forced to move Michael from his expensive private school to a public school after his Mother's death. Frayn found his niche in this new environment in Ewell, south London. He displayed a talent for music and poetry, and by the time he was a teenager, he knew he wanted to be a writer. He would become a well-known columnist, reporter, English dramatist, and a translator of Chekhov's plays.

Frayn learned Russian in the army, serving as a Russian interpreter during his brief stint there. He studied philosophy at the University of Cambridge, graduating in 1957 with a degree in philosophy. He began his writing career as a reporter and columnist for the *Manchester Guardian* (1957-62) and *The Observer* (1962-68). During this time, he published several collections of essays from his columns and also wrote several novels including *The Tin Men* (1965), *The Russian Interpreter* (1966), and *A Very Private Life* (1968). One of Frayn's novels, *A Landing on the Sun* (1991), was presented on the BBC in 1994, and another, *Headlong* (1999) was a contender for the Booker Prize. His latest book is a work of non-fiction, *The Human Touch: Our Part in the Creation of the Universe* (2006).

Frayn's first play was written for an evening of one-acts, but the producer rejected it. Irritated, Frayn decided he would write several more pieces and put on an evening of his own short plays. Unfortunately, *The Two of Us* (1970), starring Lynne Redgrave and Richard Briers, was viciously attacked by the critics. The production made back its money, thanks mostly to the performances of Redgrave and Briers. Undaunted, Frayn continued to write plays.

Alphabetical Order (1975) is the story of a newspaper office that loses its identity when an overly efficient employee attempts to impose order on the chaotic environment. This play received raves from the critics and won Frayn the *Evening Standard* Best Comedy of the Year Award. He followed this success with *Clouds* (1976), *Donkey's Years* (1977), and *Make or Break* (1980) which also won the *Evening Standard* Best Comedy of the Year Award. Frayn is perhaps best known for *Noises Off* (1982), a frenetic behind the scenes look at an English theatrical troupe putting on an English farce. *Noises Off* won Frayn a third *Evening Standard* Best Comedy of the Year Award and serious international attention. The play enjoyed a healthy four-year run in London's West End. *Copenhagen* (1998) dramatized a disastrous 1941 meeting between German physicist Werner Heisenberg and his former mentor and friend, Danish physicist Nils Bohr. Hailed as an imaginative and fascinating recreation of this historical meeting, *Copenhagen* again brought Frayn to the attention of international audiences. In England it won the 1998 *Evening Standard* Best Play of the Year Award and in America the 2000 Tony Award for Best Play.

Frayn translated several plays by Chekhov including *The Cherry Orchard* (1978), *Three Sisters* (1983), *The Seagull* (1986), *Uncle Vanya* (1987), and four of Chekhov's one-acts: *The Evils of Tobacco*, *Swan Song*, *The Bear* and *The Proposal*. He also translated and adapted Chekhov's first, untitled play. He called it *Wild Honey*,

His first film, *Clockwise* (1986), featured John Cleese, and his second film, *First and Last* (1990), won an international Emmy Award. The film adaptation of *Noises Off* was produced by Disney with a star-studded cast. *Alphabetical Order*, *Donkey's Years*, *Make and Break*, and *Benefactors* have all been filmed for UK television.

Frayn married Gillian Palmer on February 18, 1960. They separated in 1980 and divorced in 1990. He married Claire Tomalin, former editor of the London *Sunday Times* and currently a biographer and critic, in 1993. He has three daughters.

Edited copy from: <http://www.imagi-nation.com/moonstruck/clsc74.html>;

<http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth114>; and http://www.hollywood.com/celebrity/Michael_Frayn/186702

Michael Frayn **Publications**

BOOKS

The Day of the Dog (articles from *The Guardian*) Collins, 1962
The Book of Fub (articles from *The Guardian*) Collins, 1963
On the Outskirts (articles from *The Observer*) Collins, 1964
The Tin Men Collins, 1965
The Russian Interpreter Collins, 1966
At Bay in Gear Street (articles from *The Observer*) Collins, 1967
Towards the End of the Morning Collins, 1967
A Very Private Life Collins, 1968
Sweet Dreams Collins, 1973
Constructions Wildwood House, 1974
The Original Michael Frayn Salamander, 1983
The Trick of It Viking, 1989
Now You Know Viking, 1993
Headlong Faber and Faber, 1999
Celia's Secret: An Investigation (with David Burke) Faber and Faber, 2000
Spies Faber and Faber, 2002
Democracy Methuen, 2003
The Human Touch: Our Part in the Creation of the Universe Faber and Faber, 2006

PLAYS

The Two of Us (4 one-act plays for 2 actors) Fontana, 1970
Alphabetical Order and Donkeys' Years Eyre Methuen, 1977
Clouds Methuen, 1977
Make and Break Methuen, 1980
Noises Off Methuen, 1982
Benefactors Methuen, 1984
Wild Honey (after Chekhov) Samuel French, 1984
Clockwise: A Screenplay Methuen, 1986
Plays: One Methuen, 1986
Balmoral Methuen, 1987
First and Last Methuen, 1989
Jamie on a Flying Visit; and Birthday Methuen, 1990
Listen to This: Sketches and Monologues Methuen, 1990
Look Look Methuen, 1990
A Landing on the Sun Viking, 1991
Audience (one-act) Samuel French, 1991
Plays: Two Methuen, 1991
Here Methuen, 1993
Now You Know (play adaptation) Methuen, 1995
Speak After the Beep: Studies in the Art of Communicating with Inanimate and Semi-animate Objects Methuen, 1995
Alarms and Excursions: More Plays than One Methuen, 1998
Copenhagen Methuen, 1998
Plays: Three Methuen, 2000
The Additional Michael Frayn Methuen, 2000

FILMS

Remember Me? 1999 Release
Noises Off (Adapted from the Play) 1992 Released
First and Last 1989 Release
The Secret Policeman's Third Ball 1987 Release
Clockwise 1986 Release

Edited copy from: <http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth114> and
http://www.hollywood.com/celebrity/Michael_Frayn/186702



Michael Frayn Prizes and Awards

- 1966 **Somerset Maugham Award**, *The Tin Men*
1967 **Hawthornden Prize**, *The Russian Interpreter*
1975 **Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy of the Year**, *Alphabetical Order*
1976 **Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy**, *Donkey's Years*
1976 **Society of West End Theatres Award for Best Comedy**, *Donkey's Years*
1977 **Society of West End Theatres Award for Best Comedy**, *Clouds*
1980 **Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy of the Year**, *Make and Break*
1982 **Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy of the Year**, *Noises Off*
1982 **Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy**, *Noises Off*
1982 **London Drama Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Best New Comedy**, *Noises Off*
1983 **Society of West End Theatres Award for Best Comedy**, *Noises Off*
1984 **Laurence Olivier/BBC Award for Best New Play**, *Benefactors*
1984 **Evening Standard Award for Best Play**, *Benefactors*
1984 **Tony Award for Best Play (USA)**, nominated for *Noises Off*
1984 **Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Play**, *Noises Off*
1986 **Tony Award for Best Play (USA)**, nominated for *Benefactors*
1986 **New York Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Play**, *Benefactors*
1986 **Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Play**, *Benefactors*
1987 **Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Play**, *Wild Honey*
1990 **International Emmy Award**, *First and Last*
1991 **Sunday Express Book of the Year**, *A Landing on the Sun*
1998 **Critics' Circle Award for Best New Play**, *Copenhagen*
1998 **Evening Standard Award for Best Play of the Year**, *Copenhagen*
1999 **Booker Prize for Fiction**, shortlist, *Headlong*
1999 **James Tait Black Memorial Prize**, short list for fiction, *Headlong*
1999 **Prix Molière (Best New Play)**, *Copenhagen*
1999 **New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Play**, *Copenhagen*
2000 **Tony Award for Best Play**, *Copenhagen*
2000 **Drama Desk Award for Outstanding New Play**, *Copenhagen*
2000 **Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play**, *Copenhagen*
2002 **Heywood Hill Literary Prize**
2002 **Whitbread Novel Award**, *Spies*
2003 **Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Region, Best Book)**, *Spies*

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Creating a **Theatrical Production**

By Denise Burson Freestone, Artistic Director and Co-Founder

From start to finish, it takes an incredible number of artists to create a theatrical production, and the greatest productions are frequently realized by individuals who respect each others' talents and abilities and develop a strong sense of teamwork — camaraderie, dedication, and joy in the work being accomplished are often the first signs that an excellent work of art will soon be created. First, and obviously foremost, is the **Playwright**. In modern theatre, the vast majority of plays are in written script form. However, other types of plays are still developed today, such as scripts that are loosely based on a "scenario" or plot line and then improvised by the actors and director with no specific spoken lines ever being formally written.

For OpenStage Theatre, the plays to be performed in a given season are selected by the **Artistic Director**, with a great deal of input and recommendations made by the Company's regular directors and key Company Members. Once the season is chosen, the Artistic Director then selects the individual **Directors** for each play. Each spring, OpenStage holds auditions for all of the shows to be produced the following season, which runs from August through the following June. The Directors cast their plays from actors and actresses who are new to the Company as well as those who have worked with the Company previously (some for as long as thirty-four years).

Each production rehearses for six to seven weeks, four to five times a week, usually for three hours per rehearsal. During the rehearsal process, the **Assistant Director** helps the Director in numerous capacities, including recording stage blocking, making notes for the Director, communicating necessary information to the performers and designers, etc. Prior to the beginning of rehearsals, the Director meets with the **Design Team**, which is composed of the **Set Designer, Costume Designer, Lighting Designer, Properties Designer/Set Dresser, Sound Designer, Hair Designer, and Make-Up Designer**. The Design Team determines all of the physical design elements for a production, from how an individual character's hair is styled to what quality, intensity and hue the lights will have during individual scenes. All of these elements—set, costumes, hand properties, furniture, set dressing, lights, sound, make-up, hair, and special effects (if needed)—must be coordinated so that they work together to actualize the Director's vision in the best possible way. The Design Team continues to meet throughout the rehearsal period, and their expertise in visualizing the final physical product of the play is a vital element for the play's success. The **Producer or Production Manager** oversees all of these efforts, as well as the realization of the designs—such as set construction, costume construction, etc. This realization may be accomplished by the Designers or by **Theatre Technicians**, such as **Master Carpenters, Seamstresses, Master Electricians, Sound Engineers, Hair or Make-Up Stylists**, etc. Other Theatre Technicians vital to mounting a finished production include the **Stagehands**, who run the show backstage, the **Lighting and Sound Board Operators**, and, most importantly, the **Stage Manager**, who is in charge of all aspects of the play once the design aspects and the acting are merged together. This "merging" occurs when the play "sets in," or moves out of the rehearsal and construction space and into the performance space for technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals, which usually last one week. The Stage Manager makes sure the stage is set appropriately, that all equipment is operating correctly, that all performers are present for their entrances, and "calls" all the cues during performances by telling the Board Operators and Stagehands when to execute a change in lighting, sound or stage setting.

All of these individuals are vital to the final product and, in essence, are present on the stage during the performance through their artistic contributions. They create the world the **Actors and Actresses** reside in during the actual performance. But all of these efforts would be meaningless without the **Audience**. The following quote, from the play *The Dresser* by Ronald Harwood, captures the true purpose of theatre:

"I had a friend once said, 'Norman, I don't care if there are only three people out front, or if the audience laugh when they shouldn't, or don't when they should, one person, just one person is certain to know and understand. And I act for him.' That's what my friend said."



Theatre & Company

A Brief Overview of **OpenStage Theatre & Company**

Founded in 1973, OpenStage Theatre & Company has committed itself to a professional orientation for the serious theatre artist. The organization's goal has always been to establish a nationally recognized theatre in Northern Colorado. Excellence, discipline and artistic integrity are the principles that continue to guide the Company, as evidenced by the Company receiving the 1997 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. OpenStage Theatre has been actively producing and promoting live performing arts in Northern Colorado since its inception, making it one of the longest practicing theatrical producers in Colorado. The Company has grown steadily and consistently and is a strong member of the statewide arts producing community. The Theatre produces shows for a wide range of audiences, including adult and family fare in both the contemporary and classical genres, and supplements its six regular season shows with challenging and original works through *openstage etc* and original radio drama through Rabbit Hole Radio Theatre. The Company has produced comedies, dramas, histories, grand operas, musicals and original works and has toured regionally. OpenStage Theatre continues an ambitious policy of community outreach and development, providing materials, personnel and professional advice to schools, government and social service agencies, businesses, and other art producers. The Company is an active partner in the planning efforts of Arts Alive Fort Collins, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Fort Collins, the Downtown Development Authority, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Colorado Council on the Arts and the Colorado Theatre Guild. OpenStage Theatre & Company is committed to the development of Fort Collins as an important and viable cultural center for Colorado. Its reputation for quality and consistency has been built through years of hard work and with the talents of many fine performers and theatre artists. The Company has been paying honorariums to actors and technicians since 1977. In numerous instances, the training and experience acquired through OpenStage have provided individual artists with the expertise to launch successful professional careers. During its history the Theatre has produced over 250 theatrical productions, and the caliber of its shows has been compared with professional companies in Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver and...yes...even New York.

"OpenStage Theatre Company – the trailbreaker, the stalwart, the adventurer, almost all things to all theater people in Northern Colorado for [over] thirty years..." *Loveland Reporter Herald*

"OpenStage ...can easily take its place among Colorado's best companies..." *The Denver Post*

"OpenStage productions rival anything to be seen in Denver..." *Greeley Tribune*

"Northern Colorado does not have a Radio City Music Hall, a Metropolitan Museum of Art or a Rockefeller Center. But it does have OpenStage Theatre & Company, a premiere performing arts organization whose caliber of professionalism makes Fort Collins theatre-goers feel like they are in New York City...Whether you're looking for an evening of theatrical professionalism or non-traditional innovation, OpenStage Theatre & Company is a sure bet for quality entertainment."

Scene Magazine