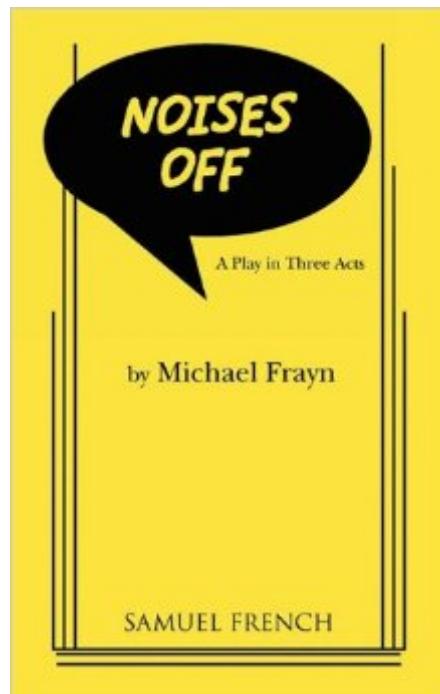


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# Noises Off



## Synopsis

Farce / 5m, 4f / 2 Int. Called the funniest farce ever written, NOISES OFF returned to Broadway with Patti LuPone and Peter Gallagher and a manic menagerie that sent reviewers searching for new accolades as a cast of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop called NOTHING'S ON. "The most dexterously realized comedy ever about putting on a comedy. A spectacularly funny, peerless backstage farce. This dizzy, well-known romp is festival of delirium." - The New York Times "Bumper car brilliance...If laughter is indeed the best medicine, NOISES OFF is worth its weight in Cipro." - New York Daily News "The funniest farce ever written! Never before has side-splitting taken on a meaning dangerously close to the non-metaphorically medical." - New York Post "As side-splitting a farce as I have seen. Ever? Ever." - New York Magazine

## Book Information

Paperback: 184 pages

Publisher: Samuel French, Inc. (February 10, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0573619697

ISBN-13: 978-0573619694

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (38 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #35,047 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Comedy #49 inÂ  Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > English Literature #50 inÂ  Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > American Literature

## Customer Reviews

It's such a shame that both the script and the movie are out of print. "Noises Off!" is the funniest comedy I have ever seen or read. In "Noises Off!" a group of actors is preparing to stage a production of the smash farce "Nothing On." This is part of why this play is so funny: The play that the actors are butchering is hilarious in itself. All of the actors and stage hands are inept in their own unique way. They forget lines and stage directions, lose contact lenses and deal with a set that won't work right. In each act, at least one actor has it out for another. Flowers, bottles of alcohol and entirely too many sardines create havoc. Frayn reaches supreme physical and verbal comedy. If you've seen it on stage, you know how funny it is (and how difficult to perform). But, the script contains hilarious "bios" of the actors that presumably appear in the playbill. And the side-by-side

scripts of the second act (lines and directions for what is happening on stage and back stage) are really funny. This play is the funniest thing I've read! Note about the movie: Unlike the movie, the play is not set in the U.S. Consequently, place names and terminology are sometimes confusing. And, the play ends differently than the movie.

This is easily the funniest play that I remember. I had tried to read it, but it doesn't easily open itself to the reader. You need to see it on stage. I saw it in a German translation, which didn't seem to damage the 'message'. You look at the stage from both sides here, and the full glory of stage craft becomes most apparent when looked at from behind the stage. Outrageously hilarious. Don't bother too much with the story, which is about a touring theatre group staging a screwball comedy. After a while, you won't be able to distinguish the actors from their characters.

NOISES OFF is the hilarious play within a play about a group of actors performing a touring edition of a British farce entitled NOTHING ON. The reader (and performers and audience members for that matter) are only allowed to see NOTHING ON from the first act. The first time they see it, it is the night of the dress rehearsal. The next time they see the act it is from behind the stage several weeks into the company's tour. The final act of the show is once again a performance of the first act of NOTHING ON, but seen from the front of the stage several weeks later. The hilarity involved ensues from the interactions of the performers and their relationships with each other. NOISES OFF displays that as funny as a play might be from the audience, sometimes it pales in comparison to the hilarity ensuing behind the scenes.

...I lose my mind with laughter. Most of the lucky minority of comedy fans who have discovered "Noises Off" probably have other favorite scenes. One bored Friday in the late '80's I scanned the movie reviews and was amazed that this movie, with its flawless cast, was playing. I hadn't seen one TV ad or movie trailer. The film shows the insanity and eccentricities of the cast, crew, and director of a farce on its way to Broadway. The first half shows the dress rehearsal, which also shows us how the play is supposed to go. Next we see a feuding cast during a Miami Beach matinee, this time from backstage. By Cleveland all hell has broken loose. Will they pull themselves together by the Broadway opening? I'm not saying. Watching this now (2008-2010), it's hard not to feel sad about the early losses of John Ritter and Christopher Reeve, with Denholm Elliott gone as well. Reeve, Ritter, and Burnett are the most spectacular of one of the best ensembles I've ever seen. Caine is the sardonic director, Marilu Henner is the upbeat cast

cheerleader, Nicolette Sheridan the cast ditz (though she gets her lines right). Special mention to Julie Hagerty and Mark Linn-Baker as crew members running themselves ragged trying in vain to keep things together. This is extra swell if you've ever been involved with theater at any level. It aspires to take everything that usually goes wrong with almost any production and shifts it into super-overdrive. I hope the cast and crew of this film had as much fun making this as I had watching it!

Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* accomplishes the impossible: It is not only a side-splittingly funny farce in its own right, but also an homage to bedroom farces and a virtuoso examination of the form. I laughed myself silly when I first saw it staged in 1983, and found it even funnier in its current (2016) staging. But there is even more fun to be had in reading the script and seeing how brilliantly Frayn structured this play as a theme and variations. The stage directions are as funny as the dialog. Don't miss the parody of an academic discussion of farce at the very end of the book. I guarantee you'll never be able to read an academic discussion of drama without bursting into laughter.

Along with "Lend Me A Tenor", this is one of the best slapstick comedies ever written. The gimmick of the second act being set backstage while the play-within-the-play is being performed on the other side - which is the real set that we see in Acts 1 & 3 - is brilliantly written and calls for sharp comic timing. On the other hand, if you're only reading this play, the 2nd act will drive you crazy trying to follow the overlapping dialogue while imagining the sight gags that are going on. But give it a shot anyway. Oh, and enjoy the misplaced sardines.

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