

Comic precision makes slapstick performance an enjoyable hit

PAIGE McRAE
staff writer

Directed by Jack Zerbe, "Noises Off," Michael Frayn's classic farce about the pitfalls of a touring theater company, kicked off the Guilford theater season last Friday. After plays dealing mainly with serious social issues, we now have over-the-top hilarity.

We first see the actors rehearsing a play called "Nothing On," which just happens to open that very night. As "Nothing On" hits the road, a barrage of problems, both personal and professional, afflict the actors. Props are misplaced and at one point 3 actors appear onstage as the same character, and this is only the show the audience sees!

With a turn of the revolving stage we see the actors backstage, tension at its peak. I don't wish to give too much away, but I will say that they make use of an axe and a cactus.

This was probably the fastest moving play I'd ever seen at Guilford. "Noises Off" requires precision to make the elaborate gags come off, and the cast kept right on top of it. The slapstick and comic timing would've made the Marx Brothers proud.

After seeing "Noises Off," you're likely not to watch a play in quite the same way.



Photo by Abigail Blosser

"Where are we in the script?!"
Derrill Smith,
Mauri Wilke,
Biz Harrison,
Brian
Kilpatrick, and
Jon Fero in
action in
"Noises Off".

Guilford theater turns to the lighter side with 'Noises Off'

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contributing writer

This year's Guilford College theater program will include two comedies, which theater majors consider a welcome change. Previous seasons, they say, have been too serious and intense, which hindered their versatility.

The reason for the change was not only for the actors but to give the audience a break from all the serious topics of the plays that have been performed over the past three

years. Charles Boniface said "It is important for people to be used to being in and also seeing different kinds of theater."

Jack Zerbe, chairman of the theater studies department said, "There has always been a working assumption that we should be doing plays of different styles and periods. In the past, as Ellen [O'Brien] and I got more 'politicalized,' we tended to pick plays with more powerful social relevance." This year students wanted to do something lighter," so

we looked at plays that would be educational and still challenge the actors, but would have a greater interest to someone looking for a social event on Friday, Saturday, or Thursday."

Zerbe stated that a guest director will be directing Marivaux's "La Dispute," a classical French comedy in January. He predicts that the production will be controversial.

The third production of the year is going to be an experimental piece, consisting of a collection of

twelve one-act plays directed by Zerbe's directing class. "The reason this is happening is because Ellen didn't want to direct and I didn't want to direct two...and we needed a third show." Zerbe added, "This will give them a more practical experience..." Something he feels his class needs more of.

With the physical comedy of the contemporary farce "Noises Off" and the French classical comedy "La Dispute," you can be sure that laughter will pervade the theater. Completing this ensemble with the experimental one-act plays should meet all of your theater needs.

Events on the Town

November calendar for Reynolda House

Friday, November 17th at 8pm - "O'Keeffe and Nevelson" performed by Helena Hale. Tickets will be \$7 for this one-woman show from Santa Barbara, California. Call 725-5325 for reservations.

Saturday, November 18th at 8pm - "Mary Cassatt Speaks" performed by Helena Hale. Tickets cost \$7. Call 725-5325 for reservations.

Thursday, November 30th at 8pm - "Music of William Grant Still". Tickets for this lecture/concert will be \$5.

"Nutcracker" tickets now on sale

Tickets are now on sale for the Greensboro Ballet's production of

"the Nutcracker."

The show will be presented December 8th and 9th at 7:30 pm and on December 10th at 3:00 pm at the War Memorial Auditorium in Greensboro. This production features the talent of the Greensboro Ballet, the School of Greensboro Ballet, the Southern Piedmont Children's Choir Ensemble, and the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra.

Tickets are \$19, \$15, and \$11 with a \$2 discount for senior citizens and children 12 and under. Tickets are on sale Monday through Friday from 12 noon until 5:00pm at the Cultural Center Box Office and the Carolina Theater Box Office.

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