

Hats off to noises off report samples

[Politics](#)



I. Thesis Statement

Given the space limitations in the Shelton Theater, their production of Noises Off! Represents consummate skill in the conversion of one environment to suit the needs of a challenging play.

II. Overview

1. The name of the play is Noises Off!.
2. The author of the play is Michael Frayn.
3. The Shelton Theater assembled the company that performed the play.
4. I saw the play at the Shelton Theater.
5. I saw the play on Friday, January 3, at 8: 00 PM.
6. The ticket cost \$10 plus online ordering convenience charge. I ordered it through the Goldstar website.
7. The Shelton Theater offers general admission. I regret that I neglected to note my seat number.
8. My mother went to the play with me. She has seen the film adaptation of this play, as well as several other stage adaptations, and she was very excited to see it with me. She is a huge fan of the slapstick and of the comedy of errors, and she found this particular version of it to be hilarious.

III. Plot

1. The play is told in chronological order and involves a play within a play, meaning it has the INTERNAL plot form.
 2. In keeping with the INTERNAL plot form, the inciting incident is actually the opening of Act Two, when the play's scenery is turned around 180 degrees, and the viewer sees what is really going on behind the scenes.
 3. The major conflicts that inform this INTERNAL plot form center around the stresses that go along with being in a traveling company for months at a
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time; the cast members hate each other, Dotty and Garry are having an affair that is unhappy, the usually absent director has a temperamental mistress on the cast, and Selsdon Mowbray, one of the principal actors, spends his time between scenes drinking.

4. As is common with the INTERNAL plot form, the play comes to climax at the end, when the actors perform their own play, Nothing On, successfully, and things wrap with the line “ When all around is strife and uncertainty, there’s nothing like a good old-fashioned plate of curtain!”

5. Because the climax comes so close to the end in the INTERNAL plot form, the denouement comes as the curtain falls and the actors take their bows.

IV. Theme

As with many farces, the theme at work here is just the absurdity that can arise when creative people are thrown into a stressful situation.

V. Characters

Director Lloyd Dallas is the protagonist; his play is on the verge of disaster, and he has come on the road to meet the crew and try to mend it. While there is no principal character who plays his antagonist, one could argue that the chaos in the play is serving quite well in that role.

VI. Literary Quality or Diction

As with many plays, Noises Off! centers around the pun. The closing line (“ When all around is strife and uncertainty, there’s nothing like a good old-fashioned plate of curtain!”) is just one example, substituting the word “ curtain” in for “ certain” in a way that would have made Shakespeare chortle.

VII. Music and Musicality

The joviality of the recorded background music is in keeping with the lively

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antics of this farce. There were peppy piano sequences as well as some brass instrument sequences that helped move things right along.

VIII. Spectacle

The Shelton Theater used a proscenium arrangement to hold the play. In the first act, the staging looks like a normal set, with characters popping off and on the stage, looking like they are preparing to put on a play. The conversation and action closely resemble what one would expect in the hours before a performance, long before the audience is permitted to come in and take a seat.

In Act II, the scenery basically reverses, and we see what one would see behind the stage. There is a backdrop that shows what one imagines the audience area would look like, because the play's audience is now looking out through the stage. However, most of the scenery consists of the things that are normally hidden behind the curtain and the sets.

Throughout the whole play, there is very little in the way of accent lighting or backlighting. The lighting set up is fairly simple, with a full bank of stage lights illuminating the stage and the characters as they make their way through the plot.

The costuming is contemporary, as the Nothing On play within a play is also set in the present day. While the stage costumes that the actors don when they are preparing to put on the play are more colorful, the fashions overall are roughly the same as what they wear in their own everyday lives.

IX. Convention

The only conventions worth mentioning are the use of some scaffolding to represent the back side of a curtain and the backdrop that appears in Act II to show the audience where the "audience" of the play within the play

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would sit.

X. Acting and Directing

It is easy to overplay farce, because the temptation frequently is to let the comedy take itself over and let the laughter propagate itself. The problem with this is that the best farce has its own unique rhythms, and the pauses where the audience waits for the next line or the next pratfall are just as important as the loudest laughs.

The strongest part of *Noises Off!* is its control of these rhythms. Both the director and the cast have an uncanny sense of when it's time to ham it up and when it's time to dry up and deliver a line with perfectly wry vigor.

Particularly in a situation that is depicting an overwrought cast, the temptation is to let chaos ensue, but there is a definite management to the storm of emotions that makes the play strong.

The “director,” Lloyd Dallas, does his share of shouting to get his actors in line. However, it is his understatement that is even more impressive, as his looks often convey far more than his words. Particularly when he is dealing with his temperamental mistress, the humor is outstanding, even when he doesn't say a single word.

Selsdon Mowbray is the token drunk actor who spends his days working his way through a bottle of whiskey. It's easy to slip into the stereotypical slurred speech, to the point where the audience can't even understand him. However, his ability to pick and choose when to wobble and when to fire off the perfectly enunciated one-liner makes his performance a genius one.

XI. Outstanding Moment

The climax at the play's end is a finely done moment, but that has been referenced earlier. When the props explode and part of the “stage”

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collapses in Act III, it seems like the play is going to collapse, and Nothing On will ultimately fail. The timing of the explosions, the raving from Dotty, and Garry's drunken imitation of Selsdon indicate that the play is rapidly heading downhill. The end of this chaotic scene, which shifts to the actual "performance" is a fine moment because it shows the totality of the chaos.

XII. The Event as Theater

What makes this play fit our class' definition of theater for me is that it captivated me and took me out of my seat. When the actors were on the stage, I felt like a fly on the wall in their own personal dramas, and in their collective performance. Even the intermissions seemed like more of a distraction than any return to reality. That captivation is what made this play theater.

XIII. Summary

The Sheldon Theater is not a large space. The fact that such a rollicking comedy of errors can come off so well in this environment is a testimony to the director, the stage designers and the members of the cast. Pulling off a farce in any setting is enough of a challenge, but in this instance the director and actors have pulled together a performance that moves tightly and keeps the audience laughing.

XIV. Works Cited

Frayn, Michael. *Noises Off*. New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, c2010.