

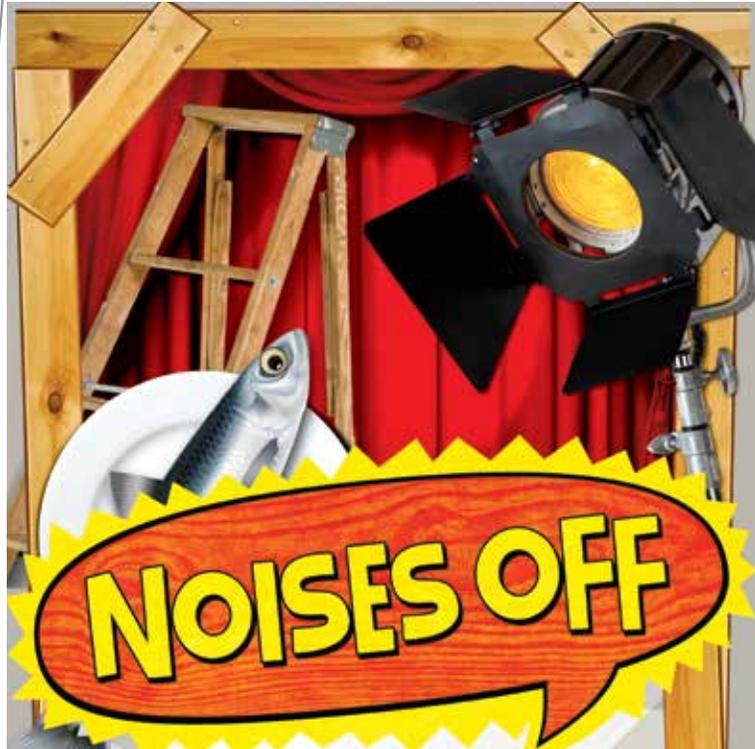
# WU?<sup>@</sup>therep

## NOISES OFF

by Michael Frayn  
Directed by Edward Stern

### CONTENTS

- 2 The 411
- 3 A/S/L
- 4 FYI
- 6 F2F
- 7 HTH
- 8 IRL
- 9 RBTL
- 10 B4U
- 12 SWDYT



MAJOR SPONSOR:



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BY:



# the 411

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth

slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F2F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

## CU@therep!



### The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org), for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

**NEATO!**

## WELCOME!

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

All of your students have found themselves in a situation where missed timing and crossed communications have made them feel their lives are out of control. In short, they have found themselves in the middle of their very own farce. Hopefully, they were able to find the humor and laugh at themselves as they moved on from there. They will definitely see the humor in this play. Bottom line—it is grand fun.

It would be a good idea to take a minute on the bus to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has one intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and halfway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy of what is happening on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

Marsha Coplon, Director of Education

#### REP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Director of Education  
Associate Director of Education  
Education Programs Manager  
Study Guide Writer

Marsha Coplon  
Sarah Brandt  
April Strelinger  
Laura Schlereth

## CHARACTERS OF *NOISES OFF*

**LLOYD DALLAS:** The stressed director of *Nothing On* who's not sure how the play is going to be ready in time—but who has found the time to romance both Poppy and Brooke

**DOTTY OTLEY:** A veteran actress who's making a long-awaited return to the stage, but her romantic involvement with Garry makes her comeback a tad erratic

**GARRY LEJEUNE:** An anxious actor whose nerves take a hit after Dotty seeks to make him jealous

**BROOKE ASHTON:** A young and inexperienced actress who has a hard time keeping her focus

**FREDERICK FELLOWES:** A somewhat dimwitted actor who fears violence and is prone to scaredy-cat nosebleeds

**BELINDA BLAIR:** A cheery, levelheaded actress who is protective of her fellow actors

**POPPY NORTON-TAYLOR:** The emotional assistant stage manager who lives in Brooke's shadow as her understudy and main competition for Lloyd's affection

**SELSDON MOWBRAY:** An elderly actor who is as adverse to his stage cues as he is prone to a whiskey bottle

**TIMOTHY ALLGOOD:** The over-worked stage manager

## CHARACTERS OF *NOTHING ON*

**MRS. CLACKETT (Dotty):** The hospitable, but somewhat slow, housekeeper of the Brent home

**ROGER (Garry):** A real estate agent who is trying to rent the Brent home—but doesn't mind utilizing it for his personal use

**VICKI (Brooke):** An IRS worker who is trying to seduce Roger, but shenanigans keep getting in the way

**PHILIP BRENT (Frederick):** The man of the Brent home who lives out of the country with his wife Flavia to avoid paying taxes

**FLAVIA BRENT (Belinda):** The lady of the Brent home whose practical nature is tested by the day's mishaps

**BURGLAR (Selsdon):** A longtime thief who is attempting to burgle the Brents' house but is met with more than one surprise

**SHEIKH (Frederick):** A fellow interested in renting the Brents' house



## BTW

Did you know there was a 1992 film version of *Noises Off*?

Unfortunately, although the play was successful, the reception to the film adaptation was less than warm, despite the stellar cast that included Michael Caine as Lloyd, Carol Burnett as Dotty, John Ritter as Garry, Christopher Reeve as Frederick, Nicollette Sheridan as Brooke and Marilu Henner as Belinda. The film got mixed to negative reviews with many critics noting the farcical elements that made it so successful on stage unfortunately did not transfer well to the screen.



## SPOILER ALERT!

LLOYD DALLAS IS under considerable stress. He is directing the farce *Nothing On*, which opens tomorrow, and his cast is horribly underprepared. There are numerous struggles during the dress rehearsal at the Grand Theatre in Weston-super-Mare. Dotty, a veteran actress who is making a return to the stage as Mrs. Clackett, is incredibly forgetful and keeps confusing her props. The young actress Brooke, who plays Vicki, is incredibly unfocused and keeps losing her contact. Frederick, who plays Phillip, is consistently interrupting the rehearsal to question his character's motivations, and Garry, who plays Roger, is terribly nervous.

THE REHEARSAL IS full of missed cues, faulty set pieces and flubbed lines, and there's also a good deal of personal conflict among the actors and crew. Tim, the company stage manager, is being worked to death by Lloyd and hasn't slept in 48 hours. Dotty is feeling the pressure of her comeback performance and has also started a relationship with Garry, something they're keeping a secret. And nobody can find Selsdon, who plays the burglar, as he is often off nursing a whiskey bottle. Not to mention the fact that Lloyd has romanced both Brooke and Poppy, the assistant stage manager, which is a huge surprise to both women.

WE NEXT SEE everyone a month later as they're performing a mid-week matinee at the Theatre Royal in Ashton-over-Lyne, and many of the relationships have changed. The night before, Dotty took a clueless Frederick out for drinks to make Garry jealous. Garry and Dotty had a huge fight, and Dotty has locked herself in her dressing room with five minutes until curtain. Lloyd is trying to visit Brooke, who is suffering from nervous exhaustion, while avoiding Poppy, but she eventually catches him and asks why he



hasn't returned her messages because she really needs to talk to him about something. Just before the show is about to begin, Garry and Dottie finally take their places, though they're both still in sour moods. Finally the curtain rises, and the first scene begins.

THE FIRST ACT STARTS as normal on stage, but any time one of the actors walks out of the scene and comes backstage, shenanigans ensue. Garry chases Frederick, who gets an anxiety-induced nosebleed. Selsdon keeps trying to get his hands on a bottle of whiskey, which distracts everyone who tries to prevent him. In a maternal effort to comfort Frederick, Belinda is then attacked by Dotty in a jealous furor. Brooke becomes irate with Lloyd and escapes to the dressing rooms refusing to come back for her cues, which causes the other actors to uncomfortably improvise. At one point Garry dumps a plate of sardines, a prop, over Dotty's head, who retaliates by tying his shoelaces together, causing Garry to fall flat on his face the next time he makes an entrance.

THE CHAOS ONSTAGE moves Dotty, Belinda and Lloyd to take a page from Selsdon's book as they all start taking swigs of the whiskey. Brooke eventually comes back but loses her contact and stumbles blindly onstage. Lloyd even gets stabbed in the rear by a cactus, which is the biggest shock of the night for him until Poppy announces—a little louder than she intended—that she's pregnant.

THE NEXT PERFORMANCE is near the end of the 10-week run, and we get to see the events from the front again. The tension between everyone is higher than ever. We hear Belinda telling Frederick to stop pursuing her, while Dotty yells at Belinda that she's the pursuer. Then we hear a slap right before the curtain comes up.



Dotty—who was obviously the recipient of the slap—carries on with the opening scene even though she's clearly flustered.

ONSTAGE, MISHAPS eventually begin. The phone ends up in the garden. Dotty accidentally sits on the plate of sardines, and thinking it was placed on the couch by Belinda, she dumps the sardines down Belinda's dress. Frederick slips on sardine oil and suffers a nasty fall causing Tim to have to go on for him in the middle of the show, and Brooke gets locked in the cupboard briefly before losing her contact again. Tim thinks he has to also go on for Selsdon and makes an entrance as

the Burglar, right before Selsdon ends up making his entrance as the Burglar; then Lloyd, who also thinks he has to go on for Selsdon, makes his entrance as the Burglar. As there's now amazing confusion on stage, the actors simply begin ad-libbing and say they just need a happy ending, which gives both Dotty and Belinda the idea to do an impromptu wedding. Belinda pushes Brooke to Lloyd's side as Dotty pulls Poppy onstage and stands her on Lloyd's other side, and the three of them "get married" just before the final curtain closes—and of course gets stuck.

# IRL

## THE MEGA APPEAL OF METAFICTION

*Noises Off* falls into an artistic style called "metafiction." Viewed as a form of irony, metafiction is when works of literature use self-reference as a distinguishing factor. For example, *Noises Off* is a play about a play. By drawing attention to itself as a work of invention, metafiction self-consciously and reflectively examines the line between make-believe and reality. Feel like your brain might implode now? The concept's complexity is actually in its simplicity. Still befuddled? The best way to view metafiction is through example, so here are just a few works of metafiction that you're likely familiar with:

- Carly Simon's song "You're So Vain": "You're so vain, you probably think this song is about you..."
- The TV show *Arrested Development* made several meta-references to the show's own low ratings; the last episode has a character pitching her family's story as a TV series to Ron Howard, *Arrested Development's* actual narrator and producer. Howard rejects it but says it might make a good movie.
- The 2006 Will Ferrell comedy-drama film *Stranger Than Fiction* features a main character who is aware he is the real-time protagonist in a novel currently being written.
- Sara Bareilles' "Love Song": "I'm not gonna write you a love song..."
- The television comedy *30 Rock* revolves around the production of a comedy show loosely based on series creator Tina Fey's experiences as head writer at *Saturday Night Live*.



# Face 2 face

**BORN IN LONDON** in 1933, playwright and novelist Michael Frayn grew up in Surrey. After two years in the National Service, during which he learned to speak Russian, Frayn attended Emmanuel College in Cambridge, where he studied Moral Sciences. Following his graduation in 1957, Frayn got a job as a reporter at *The Manchester Guardian*, where he wrote various theatre reviews and columns.

**DURING THIS TIME**, Frayn published several award-winning novels, including *The Tin Men* (1965), winner of a Somerset Maugham Award, and *The Russian Interpreter* (1966). His ability to speak Russian came in handy as he eventually became what many consider the best translator of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, adapting some of his most famous plays including *The Seagull*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard* in English.

**HIS BEST-KNOWN** novels include *Headlong* (1999), a story about the discovery of a lost painting by Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Bruegel, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction, and *Spies* (2002), a tale of childhood set during World War II England, which won the 2002 Whitbread Novel Award and the 2003 Commonwealth Writers Prize.

**FRAYN EXPERIENCED** immense success with his acclaimed play *Copenhagen* (1998), which tells a fictional account of a 1941 meeting between physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg in Copenhagen, where they discuss morality and ethics in the context of atomic energy research. Frayn has said the idea of the play emerged from

his interest of philosophy. "The heart of *Copenhagen* is how we know why people do what they do, and even how one knows what one does oneself," he has said. *Copenhagen* was a critical smash, winning the London Evening Standard Award and Critics Circle Theatre Award for Best Play in 1998 and the Tony Award for Best Play in 2000.

**WITH A RARE TALENT** for being able to write both comedy and drama, Frayn's farce *Noises Off*, originally produced in London and New York in the 1980s, won the 1982 Evening Standard Award for Best Comedy of the Year. Giving a zany behind-the-scenes look at an English theatre production, the idea for *Noises Off* came to Frayn years earlier when he was standing backstage at a London production of a farce he had written that starred Lynn Redgrave. "It was funnier from behind than in front and I thought that one day, I must write a farce from behind," he has said.

**A LITERARY RENAISSANCE** man, Frayn also published a memoir in 2010 called *My Father's Fortune: A Life*, which was shortlisted for the 2010 Costa Biography Award and received a rave review from *The Observer* critic Elizabeth Day who wrote: "Throughout a five-decade career that has spanned almost every possible literary form... Frayn has never before dipped his toe into the waters of autobiography. And yet the memoir is perfectly suited to his combined talents. *My Father's Fortune* shows him at his very best. He expresses in a few words what it would take other writers several paragraphs to convey."



TELLY: British slang for the television

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL: the rehearsal for testing all the technical aspects of a performance (i.e. lighting, sound effects, etc.)

FORTNIGHT: two weeks

POSSET MILL: a place where a sweet and spicy drink made of hot milk curdled with ale or wine was once made

SHEIKH: the patriarch of a family in Islamic countries

PROSPECTIVE TENANT: someone who is considering renting a property

TURBOT: a European flatfish

AIRING CUPBOARD: a warm cupboard where to put newly washed clothes to dry

VALIUM: an anti-anxiety medication

FRONT OF HOUSE: the area of a theatre used by the audience

LAVATORY/LOO: the bathroom

SCENERY DOCK: a high-roofed storage room next to the stage, which is used for storing flats and other large set pieces

HAMLET'S FATHER: reference to a ghost character in Shakespeare's play

POSTPRANDIAL: after a meal, usually dinner

VAT: "value-added tax"; a form of consumption tax

TREMULOUS: timid or trembling

IRREVOCABLE: cannot be undone

TAX EXILE: a person who moves out of a country to avoid paying taxes

INLAND REVENUE: the department of the British Government responsible for the collection of taxes

INCOME TAX: a tax that must be paid by citizens, the amount of which varies based on the individual's income or profits

INCITEMENT: a common law offense that persuades, encourages or threatens another person to commit a crime

TARTY: promiscuous

BULLION VAULT: a vault that contains pure gold or silver

QUID: British slang for one pound in currency

DEMATERIALIZER: to vanish

FLOOZIE: a promiscuous woman

TAX EVASION: a crime in which a person does not pay taxes

POTENTATES: a person who possesses great power as a sovereign, monarch or ruler

*RICHARD III*: a Shakespearean play about King Richard III of England

OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

PENSIONER: a person who lives on a fixed amount paid regularly, typically following retirement from service

MARBELLA: a city in Spain

MYRA HESS: a British pianist who garnered fame during World War II when she played concerts during the Germany's aerial bombings of several British cities



## THE FABULOUS FARCE

Comedy is a cherished genre as everyone loves to laugh. But did you know comedy is an incredibly diverse art? There's parody, spoof, improvisational, observational, satirical, ironic—the list goes on and on. One of the most popular comedy forms, evident in *Noises Off*, is farce, which tells a funny story by using highly exaggerated plots and characters.

### TYPICAL ELEMENTS OF A FARCE:

- **A highly incomprehensible plot** containing a series of random, or loosely related events (i.e. the climatic scene featuring characters being trapped in a lion's den or a hot air balloon). The audience is encouraged not to pay too much heed to following every plot twist (as there are quite a few); rather they should just sit back and be entertained by the crazy goings-on.
- **Stock characters** who display stereotypical personality traits (i.e. the cranky old man, the dim-witted ingénue, the erratic diva, the charming playboy, etc.) One of the earliest examples of farce comedy is the Atellan Farce in Ancient Rome, which was a collection of wacky comedies that featured stock characters, including the clown, the glutton, and the Harlequin or comic servant.
- **Exaggerated physicality** expressed by the actors through either sight gags, buffoonish dancing or—shamefully—usually one of the main characters getting physically hurt in a giggle-inducing manner (think *The Three Stooges* or *Home Alone*).



IT IS PERHAPS farce's universal silliness that makes it so appealing throughout time and across cultures. Japan literally got in on the act around the 14th century with its Ky gen plays, which, like Greece's Satyr performances, were comedic intermission interludes to the solemn Noh plays. Farce was also quite popular among English literature's most prominent luminaries, including Geoffrey Chaucer who featured many farcical elements in his *The Canterbury Tales* as did William Shakespeare in his plays *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of Shrew*. Farce's popularity exploded stateside during the 1930s in the form of screwball comedies, including *It Happened One Night*, *His Girl Friday*, *Some Like It Hot* and the *Seven Year Itch*. You're probably more familiar with farce in modern television

shows like *Arrested Development* or later seasons of *Seinfeld*.

CAN YOU THINK OF other farces you've seen? Do you enjoy farce or do you prefer your laughs from another type of comedy?



# RBTL

## JEALOUSY

Any theatre person, whether they be actor or crew member, will tell you that off-set romances are inevitable. Emotions usually run high in a theatre environment, which causes people to develop feelings for each other—but those feelings of love can quickly turn to anger if competition is involved. Jealousy plays a big role in *Noises Off* as there are two love triangles: Lloyd, Poppy and Brooke, and Dotty, Garry and Frederick (though Frederick is unaware of his involvement). This causes extreme jealousy among the group, which eventually leads to awkward moments and mild but vengeful violence for our amusement. A jealous person might make you uncomfortable in real life, but in comedy, they will usually end up making you laugh.

## OBLIVIOUSNESS

Cluelessness can be an unfortunate but endearing fault, and airheads are often used in comedy as the sort of straight man or woman who seem completely unaware of the crazy antics going on around them. Frederick, although sweet, is a bit dense and has no idea he's being used as a pawn in Dotty's game to make Garry jealous. Brooke eventually becomes aware of Lloyd's previous involvement with Poppy, but for much of the play, she remains blissfully ignorant. She often doesn't pay attention to what's going on around her, which is especially bad when things go awry on stage. Selsdon's drunken stupor can hardly be considered an admirable quality but it's an asset in keeping him mostly unaffected by all the craziness going on around him!

## CHAOS

One of the most common themes in farce is the abundance of chaos. In *Noises Off*, characters are running around most of the time trying to prevent one crisis after another, and many times unwittingly cause more crises, which they must then also resolve. What makes *Noises Off* a unique farce is that it takes place backstage during a play where the characters must be quiet so they don't disrupt the events on stage; they communicate by miming actions, which causes much to be lost in translation, resulting in misunderstanding and more mishaps. It eventually becomes a wacky chain of events where hilarity ensues—much at the expense of the characters' feelings, pride and even physical well-being in some cases.

## HIERARCHY

A tool often used in comedy is having one character order around another character because they're considered "senior" to them in some way. This causes the "inferior" person to suffer in a way that's usually funny in that it's very relatable. We've all had that terrible boss who makes you feel like a servant or been in that relationship where the other person annoyingly has the upper hand. For instance, Lloyd, being the director, constantly bosses Tim around giving him tasks, even though he's aware that his stage manager is overworked and under-rested, making Tim hapless but humorous. Also, Dotty appears to be the dominant one in her relationship with Garry, probably because she's older and a more experienced professional. Garry chases her around like a lovesick puppy but turns into a rabid beast when he feels his relationship is threatened, triggering many of the play's hijinks.



## THEATRE HISTORY 101

THEATRE IS AN ART FORM that's been around for an incredibly long time—so long that it's difficult to think of when it actually began. Storytelling is an instinctive way to pass on experiences from generation to generation, and it seems only natural that humankind would dramatize events by acting them out.



CIVILIZATIONS BEGAN to perform stories as a form of tradition and ceremony, whether it was to tell an entertaining tale of the ancient gods or to summon a plentiful crop season. Through rehearsals for these rituals, which often involved masks and costumes, theatre was born. Some of the earliest examples of theatre are from Egypt. The "Pyramid texts," dated approximately from 2800 to 2400 BC, dramatized sending a dead pharaoh to the underworld. The Abydos passion play told the story of the resurrection of the god Osiris and the coronation of his son Horus, and was performed annually at the burial site of Osiris from around 2500 to 550 BC.

HOWEVER, MANY CONSIDER Ancient Greece the birthplace of theatre as a popular art form. In Athens, performers wearing costumes and masks would sing ancient hymns called dithyrambs in honor of the god Dionysus. Another development in the sixth century BC was when the city's ruler Pisistratus established a series of public festivals, one of which, the City Dionysia, also honored Dionysus by featuring competitions in music, singing, dance and poetry. According to tradition, one of the festival's participants, a poet named Thespis, performed for audiences by not just reciting his poetry but acting out the characters as well. Considered by many to be the world's first actor, Thespis' story is how we developed the modern term "thespian."

FIRST, PLAYS WERE performed by just one actor called the "protagonist," and a chorus of people who helped the protagonist tell the story. Eventually, a second speaking role called the "antagonist" was added enabling direct enacting of scenes. Wealthy citizens learned quickly the benefits they would gain from producing theatre; they would sponsor plays by paying a tax called the choregia, in hopes a successful play would provide them with a way into politics.

THERE WERE THREE MAIN GENRES OF DRAMA:

**Comedy:** The first comedic plays mostly were satirical in nature and mocked leaders in the community for arrogance and foolishness. Some of the first comedy playwrights included:

- Aristophanes, who penned the famous works *Lysistrata* and *The Acharnians*.
- Menander, who wrote comedies that resemble today's modern sitcoms as they were mostly about ordinary people. Unfortunately only one of his works, *Dyskolos* (translated as *The Grouch* or *The Curmudgeon*), survives in its full length today.

**Tragedy:** The most popular and prevalent genre at the time was tragedy, which dealt with themes of love and loss, and the tempestuous relationships between humanity and the gods. The popularity of this genre is due to what Aristotle originally referred to as "catharsis," the cleansing of painful emotions, such as pity and fear, by witnessing that there can be nobility in suffering. There were three famous tragedians of classical Athens:

- Aeschylus, considered the father of Greek tragedy, who penned several plays that still survive today, including *The Persians* and *Oresteia*.

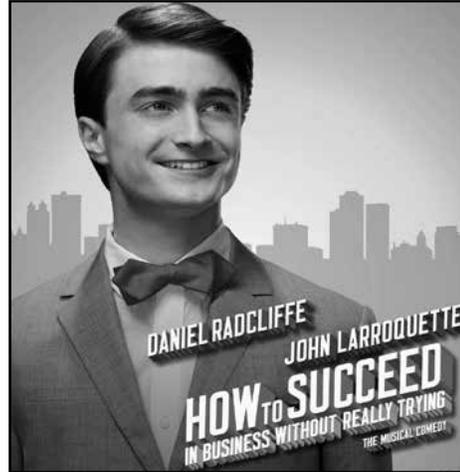
- Sophocles, who wrote the famous Theban Plays: *Oedipus the King* (also by known by its Latin title *Oedipus Rex*), *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*, which tell the story of the city Thebes during the rule of the fictional King Oedipus.
- Euripides, who wrote The Trojan Trilogy, of which only *The Trojan Women* survives, as well as two other plays about the roles of women including *The Phoenician Women* and *The Bacchae*.

**Satyr:** These short plays were performed in between the acts of tragedies as a break from the seriousness and to lighten the mood. They often made fun of the characters' predicaments. Referred to as tragicomic or comedy dramas, these mini-plays often featured mythical half-human, half-goat beings.

## THEATRE IN MODERN TIMES

We may have entered the digital age where you can watch a movie or TV show on your phone, but there's still something about theatre that resonates in a way no other medium can. Watching a live performance is unique experience that feels grand and intimate at the same time, and it's currently experiencing a resurgence in popularity. Shows like *Glee* and *Smash* that feature theatrical performances are popping up, and modern Broadway shows geared towards a younger, hipper audience, such as *Book of Mormon* and *Once*, have become wildly popular. Theatre remains an electrifying art

form for actors and the audience. It's very likely why several film actors are finding their way to the stage despite the pay cut, as Broadway actor Terrence Mann once put it: "Movies will make you famous. Television will make you rich. But theatre will make you good."



IN 2013, Hollywood heartthrob Orlando Bloom left his bow and arrow in Middle-earth to make his Broadway debut as Romeo in a contemporary staging of *Romeo and Juliet*. Young movie star Scarlett Johansson has double-dipped in theatre classics having made her debut in 2010 in the Broadway revival of Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* (for which she won the Tony Award for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Play), and then appearing in Tennessee William's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 2013. To perhaps avoid being typecast in wizardly roles for the rest of his career, Harry Potter himself, Daniel Radcliffe, has an impressive resume of theatre credits, including

London and Broadway productions of *Equus* and the 2011-2012 Broadway revival of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. It appears Radcliffe wields magic on the stage as well, as he's been nominated for Drama League and Drama Desk awards for his theater work.

CONSIDERING IT'S BEEN around since the ancient times, there's no question theatre certainly has staying power!



# SWDY?

**Poppy:** "No, I mean, if you stand anywhere near Selsdon you can't help noticing this very distinctive ..."

**Selsdon:** "I'll tell you something, Poppy. Once you've got it in your nostrils you never forget it. Sixty years now and the smell of the theatre still haunts me."

- \* Theatre is a dramatic atmosphere both in the literal and figurative sense. Do you think the playwright was poking a little fun not just at drunk and smelly Selsdon but also the dramatic tone in which some people speak? Why do you think the playwright did this? Why is it important to not take some things so seriously?

**Lloyd:** "Freddie, we've got several more minutes left before we open."

**Frederick:** "Thank you, Lloyd. As long as we're not too pushed. But I've never understood why he carries an overnight bag and a box of groceries into the study to look at his mail."

**Garry:** "Because they have to be out of the way for my next scene!"

**Frederick:** "I see that."

- \* Frederick feels that every move he makes needs to have a specific motivation. This might be understandable for an actor's character development, but why do you think Garry gets frustrated with Frederick? How do you think Frederick was put in his place here? Have you ever questioned something your parent told you to do, and they respond by saying "Because I said so!" Why is that usually so effective? This is also a great example of dry humor that's characteristic of the British. Frederick responds seriously to Garry's exasperation for being too serious. Why do you think this is humorous?

**Roger:** "Television? That's right, television, she didn't explain about wanting to watch this royal, you know, because obviously there's been this thing with the ... (He indicates the sardines.) I mean, I'm just, you know, in case anyone's looking at all this and thinking, 'My God!'"

- \* "Roger" as played by Garry is clearly trying to improvise here and not doing a very good job of it. He keeps trying to give reasoning to a situation that's already far surpassed any type of reason. Have you ever been in a position like this where you try to make sense of something that you know doesn't make sense? Did you feel flustered? How did you get yourself out of it? Did you through just throw your hands up and laugh at the situation or did you carry on awkwardly? Why do these types of situations always feel uncomfortable in the moment but funny in hindsight?