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**Noises Off**  
at [Langley High School](#)

Reviewed on November 21, 2008

**REVIEWS**

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**Jodie Awudetsey**  
**South County Secondary**  
Submitted for publication to *Washington Post - Fairfax Extra*

Doors that won't stay closed, a backstage love triangle, and a bumbling alcoholic. Throw in a plate of sardines – or two – and what you get is *Noises Off*, a British farce performed to comic delight by Langley High School.

Written by Michael Frayn in 1982, *Noises Off* is actually the story of another play – *Nothing On* – being performed by a group of amateur actors with a barrage of personal problems that get in the way of their show. The title refers to the sounds that come from offstage, where most of the comedy originates. Frayn wanted to "write a farce from behind", and the cast of Langley's production brought the humor of his award-winning comedic staple to life with full vigor.

As the play opened, the cast of *Nothing On* was in the depths of dress rehearsal. From the midst of the audience, lothario director Lloyd (Wes Brandt) expressed his exasperation at the incompetence of the actors onstage. His witty, intelligent sarcasm was coolly delivered and expertly timed. Brandt's ability to draw laughs with his lines in a play that is dominated by slapstick comedy was particularly engrossing.

Exaggerated facial expressions, a crisp distinction between her character and her character's character, and an effortless Cockney accent singled out Kelly Hubell instantly. Hubell portrayed Dottie, an irate actress having an affair with her costar, Freddie (Alvin Kuai), while also playing Mrs. Clackett, the housekeeper. Another notable actress was Meg Honigberg as both the delightfully awful burglar, and the absentminded, whiskey-drowned Selsdon. Her rickety onstage stumbling and offstage antics were both enjoyable and authentic.

Although some actors lacked enunciation and energy at times in the first act, the shining jewels of this show were definitely the last two acts, where the well-choreographed slapstick was executed to near perfection, including a painfully realistic tumble down a full flight of stairs! The cast whirled around the two-story set, closing and opening doors, swinging axes, and even dropping pants in true farcical fashion, all to the audience's delight. Over 300 sound cues, designed by Yusuf Goal, were a key element to the absurdity, and worked well to enhance the show overall, despite some limited microphone feedback.

A hectic jumble of bags, boxes, and phones and a cast of playfully deranged actors did not prove to be too much to handle for the cast of Langley's *Noises Off*. In fact, they had the audience in stitches, eagerly glancing around the stage in anticipation of more hilarity as the cast began to quickly lose their minds. Doors are, of course the principle ingredient of any good farce – and as Lloyd so aptly put it: "Let there be doors that open when they open, and close when they close."

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**Mike Moratto**  
**Chantilly**  
Submitted for publication to *Washington Post - Fairfax Extra*



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**Sat, Dec, 12th @ 7:30 PM**  
[Falls Church High School](#)  
*Lend Me a Tenor*  
**Fri, Dec, 18th @ 7:30 PM**  
[Annandale High School](#)  
*The Crucible*  
**Sat, Jan, 16th @ 2:00 PM**  
[Osborn High School](#)  
*King Stag*

It's the night before opening night and the actors don't know all of their lines, the timing is off, and dealing with the props is a mess. To make things worse, one of the actresses keeps losing her contact lenses! It is going to be a long night for the director in Langley High School's production of *Noises Off*.

In 1982 Michael Frayn elaborated on his 1977 play entitled *Exits* and produced his farce *Noises Off*--an hilarious play within a play, depicting a cast struggling to pull itself together before opening night, and failing miserably.

Physical humor was the key component to *Noises Off*, to the point where the majority of Act II was silent. The cast did an exceptional job with the physical humor, although some of the actual line deliveries seemed a bit rushed. The entire cast stayed committed to its characters throughout the entire show.

The *Noises Off* stage crew and props department did a great job showing the development of the character's conflicts and frustrations with each other. By the beginning of Act III, the majority of the props in the house had been destroyed by the actors, including the telephone, which had been broken into several pieces.

Lloyd the director, played by Wes Brandt, sat in the audience off and on throughout Act I and never broke his character. It was very impressive that among all of the laughter, he could keep a straight face and continue to deliver his lines as if he alone were the one person audience. Kelly Hubbell played the role of Dottie, who played Mrs. Clackett, the house maid in the play. Kelly provided a very distinct variation between her character and her character's character and did not confuse them during the performance.

The ensemble of *Noises Off* was made up of everyone in the cast of the play within the play. Every member of the petite ensemble had made very distinct character choices that played well in their interaction with the rest of the actors. The entire cast, including Lloyd, and the backstage crew, Poppy (Becca Allen) and Tim (Ramsey Sitta) all maintained a substantial amount of energy making the show enjoyable.

The set for *Noises Off* was built by students using blueprints from a professional theatrical company. Langley's make up and costumes were simple but fit well with the characters. Poppy's costume especially went along perfectly with her timid, overly emotional character.

Langley High School knows that sometimes its good to be bad and they pulled it off in their production of *Noises Off*.

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**Kyle O'Connor**  
**South County Secondary**

Submitted for publication to *Connection*

Most people are familiar with the popular phrase "the show must go on." However, to what extent should that mantra be followed? When love interests become tangled and revenge is sought, things on stage are definitely going to turn sour. Welcome to the play "*Noises Off*," performed very energetically by Langley High School.

"*Noises Off*," written by Michael Frayn in 1982, is a British farce that focuses just as much on what happens backstage as what happens for the audience. Embodying the "play within a play" concept, the actors putting on a performance of "Nothing On" must deal with backstage mayhem and attempt to conceal it. Each act of "*Noises Off*" contains a performance of the play from a different angle, and by the end of the third act, the play has completely fallen apart. All the while, the show contains hilarity, injuries, and lots of sardines.

Performing a show such as "*Noises Off*" requires nothing short of complete precision from everybody on stage. The students at Langley High School handled the challenge well, with excellent physical comedy presented by all actors. Although some characters seemed underdeveloped and the line between "Nothing On" and the real world was sometimes not clearly defined, the amount of energy exerted from the cast more than made up for what was lacking.

Fully embodying the essence of the show, Kelly Hubbell shone in her portrayal of Dottie/Mrs. Clackett. Switching from a Cockney accent to regular speech at the drop of a hat, Hubbell never faltered in her physical and vocal characterization. From falling down a flight of stairs to maneuvering around a set with his shoes tied together, Sam Faktorow proved his dedication to the roles of Garry/Roger via his extreme antics.

Wes Brandt brought a sarcastic comedy to the role of Lloyd, the director of "Nothing On," which highlighted a nice contrast from the slapstick aspects of the show. As the slightly senile drunkard Selsdon, Meg Honigberg always drew laughs from the audience and consistently stayed in character. Alvin Huai received the biggest laughs of the night in his portrayal of Freddie/Philip, the sensitive man who always gets nosebleeds and constantly has his pants around his ankles.

Attempting to amplify actors on stage, backstage, and in the audience presents quite a daunting task for a sound team to tackle. By using personal mics in lieu of floor or hanging mics, Yusuf Goal, Sean Lyons, and Jackie Mullen made sure that all actors were constantly heard. Also impressive was the array of props, some of which were completely destroyed by the end of the show.

After experiencing the complex mayhem that occurs backstage during some productions, the cast and crew of Langley High School proved that maybe some shows just shouldn't go on in their hilarious performance of "Noises Off."

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**Steven Einhorn**  
**Robert E. Lee High School**

Submitted for publication to *ShowBizRadio.net*

Bags! Boxes! Doors! Comedic antics galore crowd the stage of Langley's production of the farcical comedy "Noises Off." Oh, and don't forget the sardines! (Dotty did quite a lot!)

Michael Frayn's "Noises Off" is a popular farce expanded from the one act "Exits." According to the playwright, the idea came to him while watching a Lynn Redgrave farce from the wings. "It was funnier from behind than in front and I thought that one day I must write a farce from behind." "Noises Off" went on to critical acclaim and was nominated for five Tony awards.

Concerning the story of a second-rate inept acting troupe, "Noises Off," follows the actors as they attempt to put on a terrible sexual farce entitled "Nothing On." As the play progresses, the tension and behavior of the cast become more intense, leading to crumbling personal relationships, wielded axes, and a lot of drinking.

As the ever-forgetful Dotty/Mrs. Crackett, Kelly Hubbell delivered a hilarious character. Flawlessly switching between a British accent and her normal voice, her comedic timing was impeccable and had the audience bursting out in laughter with her fishy antics. As Lloyd Dallas, the temperamental director, Wes Brandt produced a sarcastic and bitter character that caused many laughs.

Sam Faktorow portraying ladies man, Garry/Roger was "well, you know...." pretty believable and had clearly defined characters. The bumbling Freddie/Phillip was portrayed by Alvin Kual. His physicality greatly enhanced his character and he was at his best while hopping around with his pants around his ankles or expressing his fearfulness of blood and violence "through the nose."

As dimwitted Brooke/Vickie, Hayley Mueller always maintained differences between her two characters and Kate DaRocha believably portrayed Belinda/Flavia and never strayed from character.

As the meek, frizzy-haired stage manager Poppy, Becca Allen gave an endearing, comical performance. Portraying the other bumbling stage manager Tim was Ramsey Sitta. Sitta, with an awkward and shy character, successfully portrayed Tim.

Yet another comical performance was given by Meg Honigberg as the smelly drinker Selsdon/burglar. Yet another comical performance was given by Meg Honigberg as the smelly drinker Selsdon/burglar. She humorously acted the forgetful drunk by 'missing her cues' and 'forgetting' her lines.

Although some scenes dragged and a few characters did not enunciate well, the cast included many talented performers who used hilarious physicality to effectively portray their characters. The show was further enhanced by the props used to advantage by the actors.

With nearly flawless sound and simple yet effective lighting and costumes, Langley's production of "Noises Off" was an enjoyable evening for all in attendance. After all, what's more deep than doors and sardines?

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**Margaret Berkowitz**  
**The Madeira School**

Submitted for publication to *Times Community Newspapers*

Put together a rotating set, actors playing bad actors in a play within a play, untruthful and jealous relationships, as well as an hysterical cast, and you've got Langley High School's production of Noises Off!

In this 1982 farce by Michael Frayn, which first debuted in Hammersmith, London, nine actors must juggle performing the confusing plot of a cast putting on a show while being disrupted by mess-ups and relationship drama, all while trying to make sense to the audience.

In the first of three acts, the director (Wes Brandt) leads six performers, including a drunken fool (Meg Honigberg) and a dumb brunette (Hayley Mueller), in the final crunch time for the show's opening night. As the second act unfolds, the entire set is turned around, giving the backstage perspective of what is going on while the show is happening. The third act reveals the absolute personal friction between the cast mates, and how this friction affects their performance.

The charismatic cast managed to obtain impeccable timing with the opening and shutting of doors in their play within a play, which attributed to the infectious laughter from the audience. Pausing after those laughs, the skillful actors conquered the task of playing bad actors in another play. As confusing as it may seem, the end product of Noises Off was thoroughly understandable and enjoyable.

Dottie and her character of the crotchety housemaid, played by Kelly Hubbell,

was excellent in her transition from her actor to her actor's character, delivering humorous lines and always exhibiting her character's cheeky smile. Sam Faktorow, who played Garry and Garry's character Roger, also exemplified great loyalty to his paranoid character, amidst all of the sexual inuendos, and had controlled yet hysterical emotional outbursts that displayed the veins in his neck.

Poppy, the flustered and discombobulated techie with distressed and frizzed hair, played by Becca Allen, stole the show with her timid and insecure voice, displaying her character's personality. And Wes Brandt's dry sarcasm, that instituted a new kind of "funny" to the show, was right on target, as were his facial expressions displayed especially in Act I while he was seated in the middle of the audience.

There were rarely any microphone glitches and props were always in hand with their actor. Also, the costumes, make-up, and props were very suitable for the time period.

In all, the difficult factors of the farce Noises Off were accomplished for the most part, and impressive dead-on timing, needed for a fast paced humored show, was one of the many traits that made Langley High School's production so enjoyable.

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