



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***Noises Off* promises an uproarious start to 2020**

**Olympia, WA** – December 17, 2019 – As the Pacific Northwest enters the short days and long nights of our famously dreary winter, Harlequin Productions presents Michael Frayn’s riotous farce, *Noises Off*, January 17<sup>th</sup> through February 8<sup>th</sup> at the State Theater in downtown Olympia. Corey McDaniel will direct.

*Called “the funniest farce ever written,” (Clive Barnes, The New York Post) Noises Off presents a hilarious behind-the-scenes peek at an acting troupe rehearsing and performing the comedy “Nothing’s On.” After barely making it from final dress rehearsal to opening night, things quickly deteriorate during the run, culminating in a closing night disaster that threatens to jinx the old saying, “The show must go on.” In three acts: Act One, Act One, and Act One.*

When Michael Frayne’s comedy about a play that goes unimaginably wrong opened on London’s West End in 1982, it was an instant critical and commercial success, winning the *Evening Standard* Award for Best Comedy. In 1983 the production came to Broadway, where again it received rave reviews as well as a Tony Award nomination for Best Play and a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble. As *New York Times* critic Frank Rich wrote: “*Noises Off* is, was, and probably always will be the funniest play written in my lifetime.”

*Noises Off* is very, very funny, but it’s also a rather accurate depiction of the tempests, dramas, heights and pitfalls endemic to the backstage world of every theater. Perhaps that’s why, as director Corey McDaniel notes, it’s one of those plays most actors and directors itch to perform.

“This piece is absolutely on my bucket list and I think it’s on most actors’ and directors’ bucket lists as well. I have been attempting to get this piece staged for many years, so I am incredibly excited to be invited to direct Harlequin’s production. I have seen 6 or 7 versions and I know it to be a pure delight full of laughter and a whole lot of fun. Who doesn’t want to direct what is labeled as ‘the funniest play ever written’? Sign me up!”

McDaniel has set the play in 1982, the year it premiered. Asked what prompted the choice, he writes, “There are time specific references in the text that can only remain if the play is set in the time it was written. I’ll also add that I am, without a doubt, a product of the 80’s. Design-wise, setting the show in 1982 allows us some subtle and fun aesthetics that I believe Harlequin’s patrons will enjoy and will be very fun for us to create. And the hair! Let’s have some fun with some 80’s bangs and hairspray!”

In his Director’s Notes for the production, McDaniel highlights a Mark Twain quote that concludes, “Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.” If there was ever a time for a good laugh, it’s now. On with the show!

**Corey McDaniel** returns to Harlequin after directing *I Ought to be in Pictures* last season. In 2018 he starred in Harlequin's production of the one-man show *I Am My Own Wife*. McDaniel is the founder and producing artistic director of Seattle's Theatre22. As an actor, he has worked throughout the US and internationally and his performance credits have placed him in such reputable arenas as the Fox Theatres, the Hollywood Bowl, Teatro Sistina in Rome, and the Metropolitan Opera House of NYC. McDaniel's most recent director credits include *White, Burn This, The Pride, Wizzer Pizzer*, and *The Hours of Life* for Theatre22, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with Wooden O/Seattle Shakespeare Company, *Treasure Island* with Book-It Repertory Theatre, *Sister Act the Musical, Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Good Kids* at Cornish College of the Arts, *Julius Caesar* with Island Shakespeare Festival and *The Wild Party* for Sound Theatre Company (Gregory Award for Best Musical).

Returning to Harlequin in the cast of nine are **Jason Haws** (*I Ought To Be In Pictures; August: Osage County*), **Nicholas Main** (*Man of La Mancha; Love and Information*), **Lisa Viertel** (*Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike*), **Helen Harvester** (*Dry Powder; Present Laughter*), and **Aaron Lamb\*** (*Present Laughter; The Last Five Years*). Making their Harlequin debuts are **Alexander Samuels, Megan Ahiers, Rebecca Cort** and **Rich Hawkins**.

**WHAT:** Harlequin Productions presents *Noises Off*, Michael Frayne's uproarious farce-within-a-farce, directed by Corey McDaniel.

**WHEN:** January 17 – February 8, 2020

**WHERE:** State Theater, 202 4<sup>th</sup> Ave East, Olympia, WA 98501

**TICKETS:** Tickets are available online at [harlequinproductions.org](http://harlequinproductions.org), by phone at **360-786-0151**, or in person 12-6 pm, Tuesday-Friday and 2 hours before performances at the Harlequin Box Office in the State Theater.

General admission tickets are \$36

Senior 60+/Military \$34

Student/Youths Under 25 \$20

Rush Tickets (half-hour to showtime) General \$18; Senior/Military \$17; Student/Under 25 \$10

**SPECIAL DATES FOR THE AUDIENCE:**

**Previews:** Wednesday, January 15, 2020 and Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 7:30 pm

*Tickets to the Previews are \$20 General Admission*

**Opening Night:** Friday, January 17, 2020 at 7:30 pm

**Pay-What-You-Can:** Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 7:30 pm

**Ladies' Night Out:** Friday, January 24, 2020 at 7:30 pm

**Post-show Talkback:** Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 2:00 pm

**Pride Night:** Friday, January 31, 2020 at 7:30 pm

**CATEGORY:** Comedy

**AGE RECOMMENDATION:** All ages with guidance (some strong language)

**CAST:**

Lisa Viertel	<i>Dotty Otley</i>
Alexander Samuels	<i>Lloyd Dallas</i>
Jason Haws	<i>Garry Lejuene</i>

Rebecca Cort	<i>Brooke Ashton</i>
Megan Ahiers	<i>Poppy Norton-Taylor</i>
Aaron Lamb*	<i>Frederick Fellowes</i>
Helen Harvester	<i>Belinda Blair</i>
Nicholas Main	<i>Tim Allgood</i>
Rich Hawkins	<i>Selsdon Mowbray</i>

\* Indicates membership in the Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

*Harlequin Productions is a professional not-for-profit theater company in Olympia, WA. We seek to invigorate, educate, and empower our community and all people to feel more, think more, play more, and judge less through the mirror of real live theatre.*

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