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**GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS THE HILARIOUS FARCE *NOISES OFF*
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY**

A WILDLY POPULAR, SIDE-SPLITTING LOOK AT THEATER — BOTH INSIDE AND OUT

**Previews begin Saturday, October 27; Opening on Friday, November 2;
Playing through Sunday, December 16 on the McGuire Proscenium Stage**

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) continues its 2018–2019 Season on the proscenium stage with ***Noises Off***, an ingenious backstage farce by Michael Frayn, directed by Meredith McDonough. Written in 1982, Frayn's *Noises Off* first played the West End and then went on to Broadway in 1983, winning Tony and Drama Desk nominations and awards. It was an immediate hit and has been hugely popular and often revived since. Former *New York Times* critic Frank Rich called *Noises Off* "the funniest play written in my lifetime." This marks the Guthrie's first production of *Noises Off*.

Noises Off will run October 27 – December 16, 2018, on the McGuire Proscenium Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances (October 27 – November 1), and regular ticket prices range from

\$29 to \$78. Tickets are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free) or online at guthrietheater.org.

In this rip-roaring classic, the audience is treated to a hilarious behind-the-scenes peek at an acting troupe rehearsing and performing the farce *Nothing On*. Despite nerves, dropped lines and technical difficulties, they make it through rehearsal and open the show. As time goes by, things deteriorate until pandemonium ensues and axe-wielding co-stars, drunken cast members and misplaced sardines take center stage during a disaster of a performance that threatens to jinx the old saying, "The show must go on."

British playwright Michael Frayn briefly dabbled in theater during his college days before launching his career as a journalist where he often wrote columns disparaging the theater. Yet after a short period of time writing television scripts, Frayn was drawn back into theater as a playwright. The spark for *Noises Off* came when he was watching one of his productions from the wings and found the action backstage far more interesting than what was happening onstage. "We're all afraid of losing control in life, and it's much funnier when it happens to someone else," said Frayn. "The thing about farce is that you have to set up a lot of plot. You've got to build up a house of cards before there is something for you to collapse."

"I believe that *Noises Off*, in its brilliant construction, is the only truly great contemporary farce," shared Guthrie Artistic Director Joseph Haj. "The house of cards that Frayn writes into his script is astonishing, and I can think of no one better to know exactly how to build that house — and knock it down — than director Meredith McDonough."

This is McDonough's first time directing at the Guthrie Theater. "If you make work in the American theater, making work at the Guthrie Theater is a dream come true," shared McDonough at first rehearsal. "*Noises Off* is a perfect comedy. It's a love letter to everything beautiful and joyful about making and presenting theater together. And it will make you laugh!"

The comedic choreography of opening and closing doors is prominent, as evidenced by the following in-and-out scorecard: front door (49), study (74), bathrooms (94), service quarters (27), linen cupboard (12), master bedroom (81) and upstairs corridor (23). Bonus points: "Sardines" are mentioned 228 times.

The cast of *Noises Off* features **Remy Auberjonois** (Guthrie: *Sense and Sensibility*) as Frederick/Philip/Sheikh, **Raye Birk** (Guthrie: *West Side Story*; *Othello*, *the Moor of Venice*; *Much Ado About Nothing*) as Selsdon/Burglar, **Kimberly Chatterjee** (Guthrie: debut) as Poppy, **JuCoby Johnson** (Guthrie: *BAD NEWS! i was there...*) as Tim, **Laura Jordan** (Guthrie: debut) as Belinda/Flavia, **Nathan Keepers** (Guthrie: *King Lear*, *Refugia*) as Lloyd, **Kate Loprest** (Guthrie: debut) as Brooke/Vicki, **Sally Wingert** (Guthrie: *Blithe Spirit*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *Indecent*) as Dotty/Mrs. Clackett and **Johnny Wu** (Guthrie: debut) as Garry/Roger.

The creative team for *Noises Off* includes **Meredith McDonough** (director), **Kate Sutton-Johnson** (scenic designer), **Sara Ryung Clement** (costume designer), **Paul Toben** (lighting designer), **Jill BC Du Boff** (sound designer), **Paul Estby** (sound designer), **Nathan Keepers** (movement director), **Aaron Preusse** (fight director), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (resident voice coach), **Carla Steen** (dramaturg), **Michele Hossle** (stage manager) and **Jason Clusman** (assistant stage manager).

Michael Frayn (playwright) is a British playwright, novelist and translator whose work is often compared to that of Anton Chekhov for its focus on humorous family situations and insights into society. Frayn is perhaps best known for his long-running, internationally successful stage farce *Noises Off* (1982), a frenetic play-within-a-play about the antics of an English theatrical company touring the provinces and its inept attempts at performing a typical English sex farce, *Nothing On*. Frayn graduated from the University of Cambridge in 1957 and worked as a newspaper reporter, columnist and critic for *The Guardian* and *The Observer*. In the early 1960s, several collections of essays from his newspaper columns were published, and his later travel writing for *The Observer* was collected as *Travels with a Typewriter* (2009). A wide-ranging and prolific author, Frayn has written novels, plays, documentary films and teleplays. He has also translated and adapted several plays by Chekhov.

Meredith McDonough (director) is the associate artistic director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, where she has directed *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Angels in America*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* and many others. Previously McDonough was the director of new works at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, California. Regionally, favorites include the U.S. premiere of *NSFW* and *Fair Use* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Eurydice* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *The Book Club Play* (Dallas Theater Center) and the Washington, D.C. premiere of the musical *Summer of '42*. In New York City, McDonough has developed work with Roundabout Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, Keen Company and Ars Nova. McDonough was formerly the associate artistic director of The Orchard Project and the new works director for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, and she currently serves on the board for the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. McDonough received her B.S. from Northwestern University and her M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego.

Post-play discussions and access services (ASL, Audio Described and Open Captioned performances) are available on select dates. Visit guthrietheater.org or call the Box Office at 612.377.2224 for more information.

THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, artistic director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org

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