

Theatre Aurora's 'Noises Off!' a homecoming for Kirsty Campbell

Theatre-goers don't often see what goes on behind the scenes, but Theatre Aurora is signing off on its 2024-2025 season with a hilarious look at exactly that.

Theatre Aurora's final show of the season, Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*, is set to open May 2, running on select dates and times through May 10.

'Called 'the funniest farce ever written,' *Noises Off* presents a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop called *Nothing's On*, say organizers. 'Doors slamming, on and offstage intrigue, and an errant herring all figure in the plot of this hilarious and classically comic play.'

Noises Off was last mounted by Theatre Aurora in 2011, featuring a cast that included Kirsty Campbell as Brooke Ashton, a young ingenue involved with leading man Lloyd Dallas, who is a somewhat hapless sexpot.

Fast forward 13 years and Campbell is poised to return to the show as Dotty Otley, a veteran television star who is not only the top-billed in the production, but a star with a financial stake in the success of the play. Within the play, Dotty plays doddering housekeeper Mrs. Clackett, who is at the heart of the action.

'Coming back to do this role, personally it was a little sad for me knowing that I am now 14 years older and I'm not playing the younger role anymore - that was kind of hard, but Mrs. Clackett is such a wonderful role, so it totally made up for it and any sadness went away!' Campbell jokes.

'I really enjoyed doing this show the first time because it is such a fun show - it's a farce and there is so much going on in it and it is really hilarious. I thought if there is one play I would really like to do again, it certainly would be *Noises Off*, so I was absolutely delighted to see Theatre Aurora is doing it again. I had to go out for it.'

Asked why the show endures for more than 40 years, Campbell says it's simply funny and timeless.

As are the characters within.

'Dotty is just very funny and because she has a financial investment in the play, she gets a little bit irritated with some things,' she says. 'She's a veteran, too, so she doesn't like it when the rehearsal isn't quite as it should be. She's just a very different character to the character that I played before - Dotty keeps her clothes on! Dotty has way more lines than Brooke does, and I think there is a little bit more depth to her character because Brooke is very much out-to-lunch and not with it. Dotty, on the other hand - well, although Dotty is a bit dotty, she is with it, she has this character, and she knows the audience will know who she is as soon as she steps onto the stage.'

While Campbell is taking on a different role this time around, she says what Theatre Aurora is staging now is quite different from the previous production in 2011. She encourages everyone to come out for a good laugh, but for those who were there the first time, she urges them to return for this re-interpretation as well and see how they translate a two-storey country house set to the local stage.

'This is the final show of the season and it is always great to end the season with a hilarious comedy, so I hope that anybody who is really looking for a fun night out where you need to have a good laugh and feel good, this would definitely be the show to come and see,' says Campbell. 'Come out, have a laugh, come and see - it's also a good insight into what goes on sometimes backstage or how a play can fall apart, the shenanigans that go on back stage, and also come and see this wonderful set. Come and see how we make the two-storey house on the stage at Theatre Aurora and how we turn it around and we show you everything from the backstage.'

For tickets and further information about Theatre Aurora's production of Noises Off, visit theatreaurora.com or call 905-727-3669.

By Brock Weir