

NOISES
OFF
1994

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RTT

ENTERTAINMENT

RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

They all had their exits...

MICHAEL Frayn's *Noises Off* has the promising formula of a farce within a farce, played for all it's worth by Teddington

Theatre Club at Hampton Court Theatre last week.

It has a second-rate touring troupe putting on a third-rate sample of the genre,

beginning with the luvvies in the throes of the pre-opening night dress rehearsal.

Asked by a tormented actor what it was about, its director Lloyd Davies says tersely, "sardines and doors". Needless to say, it also maintained the tradition of dropped trousers and sexual frustrations.

By rights Lloyd should have been in the grip of a mounting, barely suppressed

hysteria, but Allen Dickens in the director's role seemed a mite too controlled for a man confronted by an incompetent cast and impending disaster.

There were excellent performances and marvellous timings of contrived exits and entrances in the fiendishly difficult second act when the backstage antics and intrigues of the 'real' characters in the play become increasingly frenzied. But it somehow failed to get its audience rolling in the aisles last Friday night.

Nevertheless, it was greeted with whole-hearted applause for its undoubted technical brilliance in the staging by its 'real' director, Ken Mason and an ingenious set designed by Jean Goodwin, aided by her construction team.

Jenny Scott