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June 9, 1998

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Veteran TV, Film, Broadway Actor
Jonathan Farwell, to Perform
In "Noises Off" at Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A professional actor for almost 40 years, Jonathan Farwell may be best known for the distinctive characters he played on television's most popular soap operas. This summer, the man who brought life to the vicious Judge Martel on "All My Children" and the mysterious George Rawlins on "The Young and The Restless" will lend his acting expertise to the Illinois Wesleyan School of Theatre Arts' production of "Noises Off."

Kicking off the McPherson Theatre's summer playbill, "Noises Off" will feature Farwell and the talents of Illinois Wesleyan students and members of the local community.

For the past three years, the School of Theatre Arts has invited an experienced guest artist to collaborate on one of their summer productions. Farwell's appearance continues this tradition and adds a unique flavor to Michael Frayn's comedic Broadway hit.

In addition to his widely-recognized television roles, Farwell has performed with Yul Brynner in Broadway's *The King and I*, and with Maggie Smith in *Night and Day*. He also toured the United States and Canada playing Antonio Salieri in *Amadeus*.

Ticket Information

Performances of "Noises Off" are scheduled for June 17-20 and 23-26 at 8 p.m. Two additional shows are slated for June 21 and 28 at 2 p.m.

Individual tickets are \$10; tickets for children and senior citizens are \$9.

Season tickets for the two IWU summer productions are \$18. The second production, "Greater Tuna" by Jaston Williams, Joe Sears and Ed Howard, will be staged July 9-11 and 16-18 at 8 p.m., as well as July 12 and 19 at 2 p.m.

For ticket information, contact: McPherson Theatre Box Office, 304 E. Graham St., Bloomington or call 309/556-3232. Box office hours are: 12:30-5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

"Noises Off"

"Noises Off" is a farce about a farce that takes the clichés of the genre and shakes them inventively through a series of kaleidoscopic patterns. In British theater terminology, "noises off" means unwanted sounds behind the scenes.

The play follows a traveling troupe as their off-stage antics create a larger farce than the one they are performing on-stage. The play opens with the company doing their final rehearsal of "Nothing On," a sly bedroom comedy. Even though it is hours before their show is to open, confusion runs rampant on the set. Farwell plays the part of Selsdon, a deaf thespian, in this show which the *New York Times* pronounced "a joyous and loving reminder that the theatre really does go on, even when the show falls apart."

From flawed rehearsals to disastrous performances, this production takes a satiric but affectionate look at the theatre. "Noises Off" gives the audience the best seats in the house -- both facing the stage and behind the scenes.

Farwell has appeared with actor Richard Chamberlain in *Richard II* at the Ahmanson Theatre (L.A.) and Kennedy Center (D.C.). He has spent about 20 years in regional theatre throughout the country, playing over a hundred leading roles ranging from Shakespearean and Siamese kings to Transylvanian vampires; from the tragic Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* to the whimsical Strider in the Russian musical fantasy, *Strider: The Story of a Horse*. Through the Library of Congress, Farwell has also recorded close to 50 Talking Books for the Blind.

About Illinois Wesleyan University

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994 and a \$25 million science center opened in fall of 1995. The \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts, a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities, business and economics, and

interdisciplinary studies' faculty, opened in August 1997, as did a new \$6.8 million residence hall. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 159 highly-selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual U.S. News & World Report rankings. Barron's Profiles of American Colleges, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive +" in its latest edition.