

# 'Bob's Your Elf' brings Christmas laughs early

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ENGLEWOOD — Lemon Bay Playhouse's third show of the 30th season brought not only Christmas cheer, but plenty of laughs.

With a full house and Christmas lights twinkling, "Bob's Your Elf" took the audience to not only the North Pole, but the little town of Thithelville.

In Thithelville, audiences will not only learn to pronounce the town's name, but they'll get to watch Bob try and help the helpless Thithelville Thespians try and put on their holiday show.

"Bob's Your Elf" is told in two acts and four scenes, and goes by quickly with plenty of absurd situations and over-the-top characters to keep the audience laughing.

The play is directed by Tim Fitzgerald, and warns audiences that Bob is not your typical elf. "Bob is a unique elf, who is in search of some meaning."

Bob's unique personality and look is something that becomes evident as soon as the audience meets him, when he goes in for a meeting with Santa.

Bob is played by newcomer Jim Griesmeyer, who brings to life Bob and his worst qualities

## 'BOB'S YOUR ELF'

"Bob's Your Elf" opens at Lemon Bay Playhouse tonight and runs until Dec. 18. Curtain is 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$18 and \$12 for students with proper ID, and can be bought online at [www.lemonbayplayhouse.com](http://www.lemonbayplayhouse.com) or by calling 941-474-9610. Tickets can also be bought at the box office, 96 W. Dearborn St., between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays, as well as an hour before curtain.

— which are what makes Bob so likable.

Griesmeyer brings Bob's clueless nature to life and hits his comedic marks with ease.

Alongside Griesmeyer is Paul Mullen, who plays Santa Claus and the always hungry Howard Widebottom.

Mullen plays a pretty typical Santa, but stands out as the endearing but sometimes annoying Widebottom, who doesn't fit in his Santa suit and would rather snack than act.

Mullen's Widebottom is over the top in everything he does. From leading in Rudolph to eating a doughnut, none of his actions are missed.

Widebottom, like fellow thespian Fiona Putzle, can be quite clueless when it comes to not only acting but just life in general.



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The cast of "Bob's Your Elf" is Jeffery Cima, Jim Griesmeyer and Paul Mullen in the back row. Jenifer Lewis, Wendi Scianna and Marilyn Barton in the front.

Putzle is played by Marilyn Barton, and Barton is hilarious, due to her facial expressions and out-of-turn exclamations.

Rounding out the thespians is Amber Faircastle, a character who is more of a pretty face than an actress. Faircastle is played by Wendi Scianna, who is not only funny, but also comes across as sweet despite her dislike of most of her fellow thespians and her director's rough nature. Playhouse regulars will remember Scianna from her role in the drama "Proof" last season.

Leading the thespians is Gord Ford, played by Jeffery Cima, who is not only loud and annoying, but clueless to everything around him.

Cima's Ford, like all the characters, are a caricature of people the audience may have met or even know in their lives.

One character who falls victim to Ford's comments is stage manager Leslie Banter, played by Jenifer Lewis. Lewis is loud and just as clueless as the thespians as she tries to manage the show. Expect a running gag between Lewis' Banter

and Cima's Ford.

Along with the seasoned actors are members of the Lemon Bay Playhouse Lemon Drops Summer Theater Camp. The young actors make up the children's choir. They get called names by Ford and yet still manage to keep smiling.

Out of the choir Dylan Bilharodt stands out and will make audiences smile as he deals with Ford and his snide comments.

"I loved this cast and the kids have been so great," said Fitzgerald.

Audiences should keep note of the names of nearby towns, the characters facial expressions, and the large use of alliteration. Which is using words that start with the same letter or sound close to the next word in the sentence.

Like many of the shows at Lemon Bay Playhouse, expect a twist at the end, especially with Santa in charge of the whole thing.

"Bob's Your Elf" is a true

holiday story at its core and audiences should expect to laugh and shake their heads at the over-the-top and silly behavior by the cast.

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