

'Hypnosis' will keep the audience guessing

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STAFF WRITER

ENGLEWOOD — With almost every seat filled in the house, volunteers of the Lemon Bay Playhouse wait to see what "Hypnosis" has to offer.

"Hypnosis," the second show of the 30th season, will have audiences not only laughing, but also scratching their heads.

The show, which is told in two acts and 11 scenes, is directed by Bob La Salle.

La Salle, who is well-known both on and off the Lemon Bay stage, is proud of his cast and the work they have done.

"It has been marvelous, all three are longtime actors and have been easy to work with," said La Salle.

La Salle mentions the hardest part of this show is the extensive amount of scene changes the stage hands have

to do. The show moves fast from the moment it opens, and this is especially true of the second act.

The show opens with a spotlight, where the audience sees The Great Gordo, and they are just joining him in the middle of his hypnosis show and he is about to bring up the volunteer.

Gordo is played by Charlie Tyler, whom audiences will remember from last season's "Plaza Suite."

That volunteer turns out to be Alan Briggs, a cop who claims he can't be hypnotized. It is here the audience members get their first taste of the ride the show will be.

Briggs is played by Nick Nichols, who is gruff, unpredictable and very funny especially in the physical elements of the show. Tyler complements Nichol's gruff and moody behavior with his over-the-top facial expressions and body language.

Briggs forces Gordo into his extensive master plan, which is revealed as the show progresses.

This plan eventually brings in Briggs's wife Helen, who he believes is having an affair.

Helen is played by Michelle Strauss, and audiences will find she is very animated in both her line delivery and the way she carries herself on the stage.

Along the way, the audience learns different things about all three characters and the master plan created by Briggs.

Throughout the show there are plenty of jokes with double meaning, and Tyler seems to almost break the fourth wall when he delivers the punchline.

The cast maintains high levels of energy throughout the performance and can switch quickly between the rapidly moving scenes and the changing



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEMON BAY PLAYHOUSE

The mesmerizing cast in "Hypnosis" take time from rehearsals to pose for a picture. Seated left to right are: Nick Nichols (Alan Briggs), Michele Strauss (Helen Briggs), and Charlie Tyler (Gordo). The play runs from Wednesday, Oct. 19, to Sunday, Nov. 6; 7:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, and 2-4 p.m. on Sundays, at Lemon Bay Playhouse, 96 W. Dearborn St., Englewood. Tickets are \$18 each; students \$12, available at the box office, 941-475-6756, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Friday, or at LemonBayPlayhouse.com.

timeline of the show.

Audiences should pay close attention, because just when they think they have figured it out, they haven't.

"The audience won't know what is going on until the very end," said La Salle.

"Hypnosis" is a classic whodunit meets a

comedy and audiences can find out who did do it tonight when the curtain goes up at 7:30 p.m.

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