



COMMUNITY & CONNECTIONS

Only in The Villages

LIFE IN FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

Studio Theatre Selling Out All Shows So Far in The Season

By **MICHAEL FORTUNA**
Daily Sun Staff Writer

In October, Brian Zealand left the Windy City to take part in something new: The Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol's inaugural season.

The Chicago-based actor has had roles in the theater's first two plays, "Next to Normal" and "Private Lives," and he's about to star in the third, "The Last 5 Years."

"I've done a lot of shows around the country, and nothing can hold a candle to what's happening here," Zealand said. "It's going to become a major repertory theater."

If the response to this four-play opening season at the black box theater is any indication, Zealand might be onto something.

Please See **THEATRE, A16**



Submitted photo

Brian Zealand and Whitney Morse will star in "The Last 5 Years," which begins Friday and runs through March 19 at the Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol.

THE DIGIT

200

children

Jim Waymire, of the Village of Pennecamp and president of The Villages Aviation Club, has been recognized for taking 200 children between the ages of 8 and 17 on flights as part of the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program.

The free program is designed to inspire a career in flight.

— Frank Ross,
Daily Sun

TONIGHT'S EVENTS ON THE SQUARES

Entertainment runs from 5 to 9 p.m.

Spanish Springs Town Square

Tat2
Happy hour, 5-7 p.m.

Lake Sumter Landing Market Square

Rick Melvern Trio
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

Brownwood Paddock Square

Plus 1 Duo
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.





Submitted photo

Brian Zealand, from left, Tyler Beauguard and Whitney Morse act in a scene from the play "Next to Normal."

THEATRE

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"Next to Normal" and "Private Lives" were sold out, with extra performances added to their runs.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive," said Whitney Morse, artistic director of the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. "For a brand new theater, it's done very well."

Zealand's favorite from the season so far has been working in "Private Lives."

"This group of people brought out a performance I didn't know I had," Zealand said. "To continue to grow is the mark of an artist. I'm still on the right track."

As for Morse, she had a hand in picking the four plays. She was one of the actors in "Next to Normal" and served as a dialect coach in "Private Lives."

Morse wasn't able to attend opening night of "Private Lives," but she caught a later performance.

"I was watching other people enjoy the things we do," Morse said.

The previews for "The Last 5 Years," which are sold out, began Monday, while the play's run begins Friday and runs through March 19. A few matinee performances and nights have seats available.

In this play, the actors sing the majority of the dialogue through songs written by Jason Robert Brown.

"It's as close as you can get to an opera," Zealand said.

The only people on stage are Jamie, a novelist on the rise, and Cathy, a struggling actress who is determined to get her career off the ground.

TO ATTEND THE UPCOMING SHOW

"The Last 5 Years" will be presented at 2 and 7 p.m. select days Friday through March 19 at the Studio Theatre at Tierra Del Sol. Tickets are \$30 and are available at any Villages Box Office location or online at thesharonstudio.com.

"He has a lot of pressure with his career," Zealand said.

"She's very sweet, and kind of a weirdo, but she's come a long way," Morse said.

They also are in different timelines, with Cathy starting at the end of the relationship and going backward in time, and Jamie starting at the beginning, while the two meet in the middle.

"It struck me personally," Brian said. "It's the emotion (Brown) pulls out with the lyrics. (The music is) a whole character."

"It's how honest it is," Morse said. "He doesn't sugarcoat anything. In musical theater, you see relationships that are perfect jewels. This play subverts that."

MINISTRIES

Continued from A1

National ministries also have formed to embrace popular hobbies and pastimes.

At Raceway Ministries, more than 5,500 volunteers are trained to demonstrate God's love and build relationships at every NASCAR race in about 23 states, said Elliott Yancey, the executive director of the organization.

"It's a little slice of America that shows up," Yancey said. "If the church has a passion for influencing our culture, then a great place to start is the speedway."

Hobby-oriented outreach have become the norm for many churches, said David Hackett, professor of American religious history with the University of Florida Department of Religion in Gainesville.

They serve a need in churches to connect with their members, Hackett said. He worries, however, that the message could get lost in the effort to increase participation and grow the congregation.

"These kinds of outreach strike me as an effort on the part of churches to be responsive to the needs of their members that go beyond what has been done in the past," Hackett said. "If churches are consistently responding to what members want, the church tends to be defined by what their members want and by what Christianity is. It's a good thing and not initially a bad thing."

At Oxford Assembly, Jones and his wife say they keep the church spreading the word.

The couple took up cycle riding as a hobby 12 years ago and founded OAG Motorcycle Ministries years later when they decided to become a part of the culture in which they could have an interest to make a

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\$125 installed each traditional

or

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*Certain restrictions apply.

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