

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU SEE

VLT examines dishonesty in Steve Dietz's *Private Eyes*

Dception — slick, fertile, invasive deception. The Very Little Theatre's latest production, *Private Eyes*, floods the theater with the sickening ocean of emotion that comes from being lied to by a lover, then dangles a life preserver just out of reach. This funny and painful play examines the concept of deceit in every possible manner: the deceit of your spouse, your shrink, yourself, even your audience.

Playwright Steve Dietz nails it with *Private Eyes*. The plot tumbles forward in waves, eroding audience constructs of reality and leaving us with little more than the banal limitations of the human ego. Shades of Tom Stoppard-style suspense ("What is going on here?") enthrall, while the story itself is as simple as the human animal can produce. *Private Eyes* is a play about a play that can whisk you away, break every rule you've come to expect in a theater, deliver an abysmal message and still keep you laughing. Director Chris Pinto provides a fast, actor-focused production.

Without giving too much away, it is reasonable that Bradley Wilson's Matthew, an actor alongside his wife Lisa in this play within a play, seems a little unhinged. Funny and frantic, Wilson is juggling an armload of



JAY HASH, MELANIE MOSER, BRADLEY WILSON AND HAILEY HENDERSON IN *PRIVATE EYES*

octopodes in the role. But seeing as Wilson is largely in control of the quickly shifting theatricality of the script, his performance lacks emotional layering. Shifting gears with more style would have helped keep this madhouse of cards from crashing too quickly.

There are many strong elements to this production. As Adrian, the slick British director, Jay Hash is laser-

focused. Hailey Henderson brings a human sweetness to Matthew's probably cheating wife Lisa. Melanie Moser is strong as Cory. Dan Millard is refreshingly uncomplicated as Frank the psychiatrist.

Above all, *Private Eyes* is a wonderful feat of language. For an earful of Steven Dietz magic, give this play a spin. ■

Private Eyes runs through Oct. 25 at the Very Little Theatre; \$12-\$17.



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