



Sensual act

An R-rated production of *La Ronde* lifts the risque lid on nudity, affairs and more

WORDS MICHELLE FRENCH

When Austrian playwright Arthur Schnitzler penned *La Ronde* in the early 1900s, it caused an incredible amount of controversy, resulting in riots and Schnitzler being sentenced to jail.

Skip forward more than a century and the cast performing a modern version of the play at Noosa Arts Theatre and Europe on First restaurant certainly hope audiences will take more of a liking to it this time around.

One of the actors, Sharon Grimley, hopes the play will prove thought provoking.

"It focuses on sexual relationships. Originally the play was aimed to show transmission of syphilis and the different class groups. We're not focusing so much on the infectious disease side of things, we're looking at the power plays that occur in relationships and social status," she explains.

Ten characters comprise *La Ronde* (which in French refers to a round dance) and there is a sexual encounter in every scene.

"We didn't want it to be perceived as a pornographic piece because it loses its theatricality that way. We use (the encounters) to punctuate the characters without it being in-your-face offensive," Sharon, 42, explains.

The Buderim resident, who is a doctor by day, plays the socialite.

"She was originally a male character but on a read through the play we decided it would work a lot better with a female taking on the role. She is one of the most confident and completely self-possessed characters I've ever come across, which has been a

challenge. That's genuinely not how I see myself. She strikes me as a real predator, like a vampire. They're in control and glamorous creatures and very charming. I think she fits that completely," she says.

The socialite appears in two scenes and is almost entirely naked.

"There's not a lot left to the imagination. We decided that had to be done very tastefully. It was a bit daunting initially but we got over it very quickly because rehearsals started in pairs," she says.

Part of the incentive for Sharon getting her kit off is that \$5 from every ticket sold at the Europe on First show will go to the Cindy Mackenzie Breast Cancer Foundation.

"We bounced around the concept and thought 'Wouldn't it be great to help somebody?' CMBCF came up because they just do wonderful work supporting local women and their families," she says.

"As a doctor for BreastScreen Australia I'm at the other end. I start the ball rolling in most cases because I'm doing the screening. Nudity is just a tool for putting a show on."



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What *La Ronde*

Where Noosa Arts Theatre, March 25-27, April 1-3, 7.30pm, March 28, 2pm, \$20-\$26. Also at Europe on First restaurant, Mooloolaba, dinner and show, April 9-10, 16-17, from 7pm, \$60.

Details www.noosaartstheatre.org.au or Europe on First, 5477 6288