

The Odd Couple is an evening of good fun

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The Odd Couple, presented by Stage North, started its run on Thursday evening at the North Peace Cultural Centre with a special preview show. The classic Neil Simon play was directed by Dave Eaton, and starred Morris Holmes and Randolph Smyth.

This production was the directorial debut for Eaton and he has done a fine job. Under his direction The Odd Couple is a focussed and funny play.

Holmes and Smyth play the lead characters of Oscar Madison and Felix Unger, respectively. Holmes is hilarious as the sloppy Oscar. He has great comic fits of temper and never overplays his role. Oscar steps out as the fussy Felix and, after he warmed into his character, did an outstanding job as the sensitive whiner who

drives everyone crazy.

The almost insane level of cleanliness that Felix compulsively keeps draws many laughs from the audience, as he is in constant conflict with his new roommate Oscar. Both Holmes and Smyth turn in really good performances for the first two acts, and just shine in the third act. The final act is very funny and has great timing.

The supporting cast all turn in strong performances. The four poker buddies are a good balance for Oscar and Felix. At times it can be hard to believe that Felix plays poker with these guys and that they actually let Felix sit with them for a couple of hands. They manage to tie it all together with goodwill and humour.

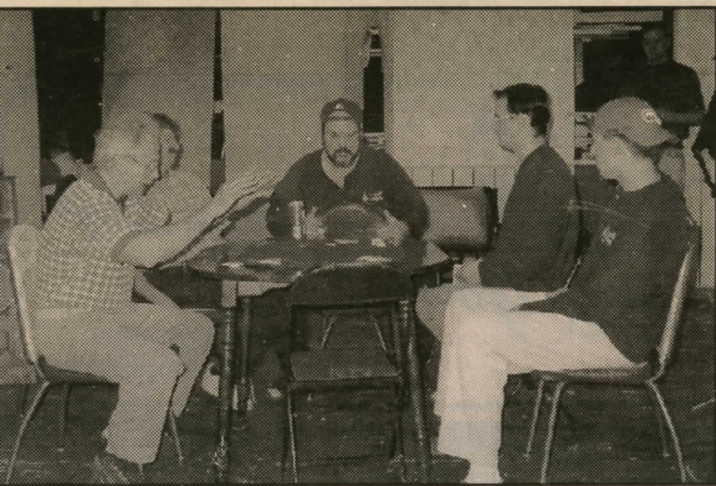
The Odd Couple is a familiar story to many people — two guys become roommates after they have both separated from their wives. They could not be

more opposite, their differences drive each other crazy yet they remain friends and roommates.

This story works very well in live theatre, the intimate friendship draws you in and you are kept entertained for the entire show. The laughs come often and are genuine. The Odd Couple is "clean" humour and will appeal to most people. This is a great way to spend an evening.

Stage North is strongly supported by many community sponsors and it is easy to see why. The production is of high quality, they did an excellent job on the set and costumes. Their backstage crew should be commended. Fort St John can be grateful that there are so many dedicated volunteers passionate about the theatre. The production deserves credit for its near flawless presentation.

The Odd Couple runs Nov. 2, 3 and 8-10.



Poker buddies hold dress rehearsal

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The cast and crew of "The Odd Couple" have been working hard to bring this Neil Simon production to the North Peace Cultural Centre Stage.

With all the characters in place, rehearsals have been ongoing since readings began in August. The cast is as ready as they're going to be and will begin their live performances on November 2.

Main Characters include Morris Holmes as Oscar, and Randolph Smyth as Felix. Other cast members include: Dean McDougall, Brian Daley, Mike Odenchuk, J.P. Wood, Jan Gretzinger and Arden Dunfield. The play is being directed by Dave Eaton and should be guaranteed to entertain.

Follow the story of two very different roommates, their troubles with women and their unlikely friendship. Cast with all local talent this funny and entertaining story should prove to be another Stage North success.

Be sure to pick up your tickets for this great performance at the Cultural Centre Box Office or by calling 785-1992.

Pictured above: Oscar (Morris Holmes) and his poker buddies fret over where Felix could be as part of a scene from the upcoming play "The Odd Couple".

The Odd Couple opens Nov. 2 at cultural centre

FORT ST. JOHN — Getting to the rehearsal for the *The Odd Couple* is not unlike the sacrifices one makes to get to a real poker game on time.

The Stage North cast of this well-known comedy is giving up everything but their day jobs to be ready for opening night on Nov. 2.

The show opens with four hilarious poker players in Oscar's not so tidy bachelor suite.

In a recent interview with the poker players, each one had a story to tell about the trials of getting to rehearsal on time. After all, if your buddies are waiting to play poker, you forego supper; you worry later about the lost keys to the house; or you promise your wife that, "Yes, you will pick up the kids from swimming, hockey and dance according to the very detailed and long list you have in your hand." This last directive requires that you leave the game off

and on all night, but you can still get in the required lines to make the rehearsal worthwhile.

The cast of *The Odd Couple* is eight dedicated people with full-time careers during the day, so rehearsals are at night, not unlike a real poker game. Poker players Dean McDougall, Brian Daley, Mike Odowichuk and Jean-Paul Wood each have funny personalities we have met sometime in our lifetime. Having them all at one poker table is what makes Neil Simon's play a classic.

Carefree Oscar, played by Morris Holmes, is a confirmed slob and enjoys every minute of being single again. He is not even distressed that his daughter's goldfish is dead in the bowl for lack of food since his family left him many months ago.

When Felix, played by Randolph Smyth, enters the scene, he has arrived for a

longer time than it takes to play few hands of poker. The fun starts when fussy Felix, totally upset that his wife kicked him out, moves in with sloppy Oscar and the mismatched roommates invite two flirtatious sisters, neighbours from upstairs, to dinner.

Dave Eaton is directing this snappy comedy set in the 1960s.

The *Odd Couple* opens on Nov. 2, at the North Peace Cultural Centre. Five shows will play Nov. 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10. Tickets are \$15 and available now at the cultural centre box office.

Stage North is a community theatre society dedicated to producing stage entertainment for the Peace Country and to providing career opportunities for young people. For further information phone June Ainsworth, Theatre B.C. representative for Stage North, at 787-7248.

— contributed



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A good poker hand is worth... some good laughs in Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*, a Stage North production opening Nov. 2. Oscar, left, played by Morris Holmes, quips about the odds with Vinnie, middle, played by Jean-Paul Wood, and Murray, right, played by Dean McDougall. Tickets are only \$15 and available at the North Peace Cultural Centre for the Nov. 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 run.