

Stage North ready for new season

BRIANNE ZWAMBAG
Staff Writer

Drama, comedy and an interesting foray into Oscar fashion will mark the 2011/12 season for Stage North in Fort St John.

Seven shows are scheduled to entertain the community this year, with feature musicals, improv, drama and two hockey-themed shows that the company hopes will bring new people out.

To kick off the season, Stage North is presenting Cabaret – which was described as a roaring musical that promises to draw the audience in to a world of debauchery and decadence at the Kit Kat Klub in Germany during the 1930's.

“Chicago was such a big, huge success last year, we're doing Cabaret this year. We think it will be as popular,” said Sue Popesku, Executive

Director at Stage North.

Following Cabaret, Stage North will be hosting Spontaneous Combustion – Dinner Palooza at the Quality Inn Northern Grand. In the past, this has been an improv show. However, Blair Scott, Vice-President of Stage North, warned people not to expect the same show this year.

“Our variety show is going to be fantastic this year. We've changed the format so that it's not just improv anymore. We're mixing it up – there is going to be a little bit of improv and lots of live singers and music alongside a great meal,” said Scott.

For the holiday season, the theatre company will be performing the play You're a Good Man Charlie Brown. Scott pointed out that this show was done nine years ago, and he's excited it's coming back.

“Everybody loves Charlie

Brown – whether you're a kid or an adult. It's a great musical that is just a lot of fun as it follows the Peanuts gang,” said Scott.

The second half of the theatre season will feature new themes and events that Stage North hopes will bring more people into the seats.

“We're going to try to entice a new crowd for the second half of the season where we've got a bit of a hockey theme going,” said Scott.

According to Popesku, the inspiration for the hockey shows came from a partnership that the theatre company had with the Fort St John Flyers last year to exchange space in each other's programs for run schedules. Stage North also gave the team tickets for giveaways, which got them thinking about doing a hockey show.

•SEE BUSY ON A5



Harold Goodwin and Paul Swartz rehearse the roles of an American writer Cliff Bradshaw and the Nazi Ernie Ludwig in the up and coming production of Cabaret.

SUBMITTED PHO

DUP

LIFE IS A CABARET!





Stage North kicked off it's theatre season with a full-scale musical production of Cabaret. (Aleisha Hendry Photos)



Busy theatre season for Stage North

•CONT. FROM A1

The first play of the second half of the season is called *The Good Game*, and follows a team of old-timers who have returned to play a reunion game 30 years after their last championship win.

"The whole play takes place in the locker room. There's a lot of reminiscing and a lot of stuff going on in this dressing room that anyone who has ever played a team sport will really be able to relate to. It's hilarious," said Scott.

As part of their season, Stage North will also be hosting a special Oscar Night on the Big Screen event at On The Rocks Nightclub. People attending this event will not only get to watch the Oscars on the big screen, but also take in a fashion show.

"We've initiated a new project that's never been done. We're going to go to On The Rocks and watch the awards, but along with that, we're doing a Fashion and Form Film competition so people can actually make dresses and clothing out of recycled movie film," said Popesku.

People who would like to participate are provided with all the recycled film they need and have between now and the event to create a dress or outfit out of the film. The winning design will receive a \$1000 prize.

"This particular project is really quite timely, because as of April there will be no more film. It will all be digital," said Popesku.

Popesku explained that Stage North is in partnership with both Aurora Cinemas and Northern Environmental Action Team (NEAT) for this project.

Aurora Cinemas will be providing the recycled film from old trailers that are no longer needed, and NEAT will be helping them to promote the waste management concepts behind recycling and reusing where possible.

The final two shows of the season are festival shows that will be a part of the Peace River Zone Festival in May.

The first is *Hockey Mom, Hockey Dad* - another hockey-themed play that follows two single hockey parents from the bleachers of their children's' hockey games as they develop a unique relationship.

"It's kind of a dram-edy. There's every kind of emotion running through this play- it's happy, it's sad, it's exciting. The whole play takes place in the stands of a hockey arena and follows two single parents who meet here and form a relationship. If you've ever been a hockey parent, you're going to get this play," said Scott.

The final play of the season is a dark drama called *Death and the Maiden*, which follows a woman who takes a Doctor captive to discover if he is the sadistic man who once brutally tortured her.

Popesku said that even though this show is quite heavy, it is going to be so shocking that people will still want to see it.

Stage North hopes that the season line-up will excite people and get them out to the theatre.

"When you're in a room with other people watching the same thing, there is a feeling of community and camarade-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Cabaret's Master of Ceremonies played by Emry Mika lures in the audience to the infamous Kit Kat Club in Berlin, Germany, 1931.

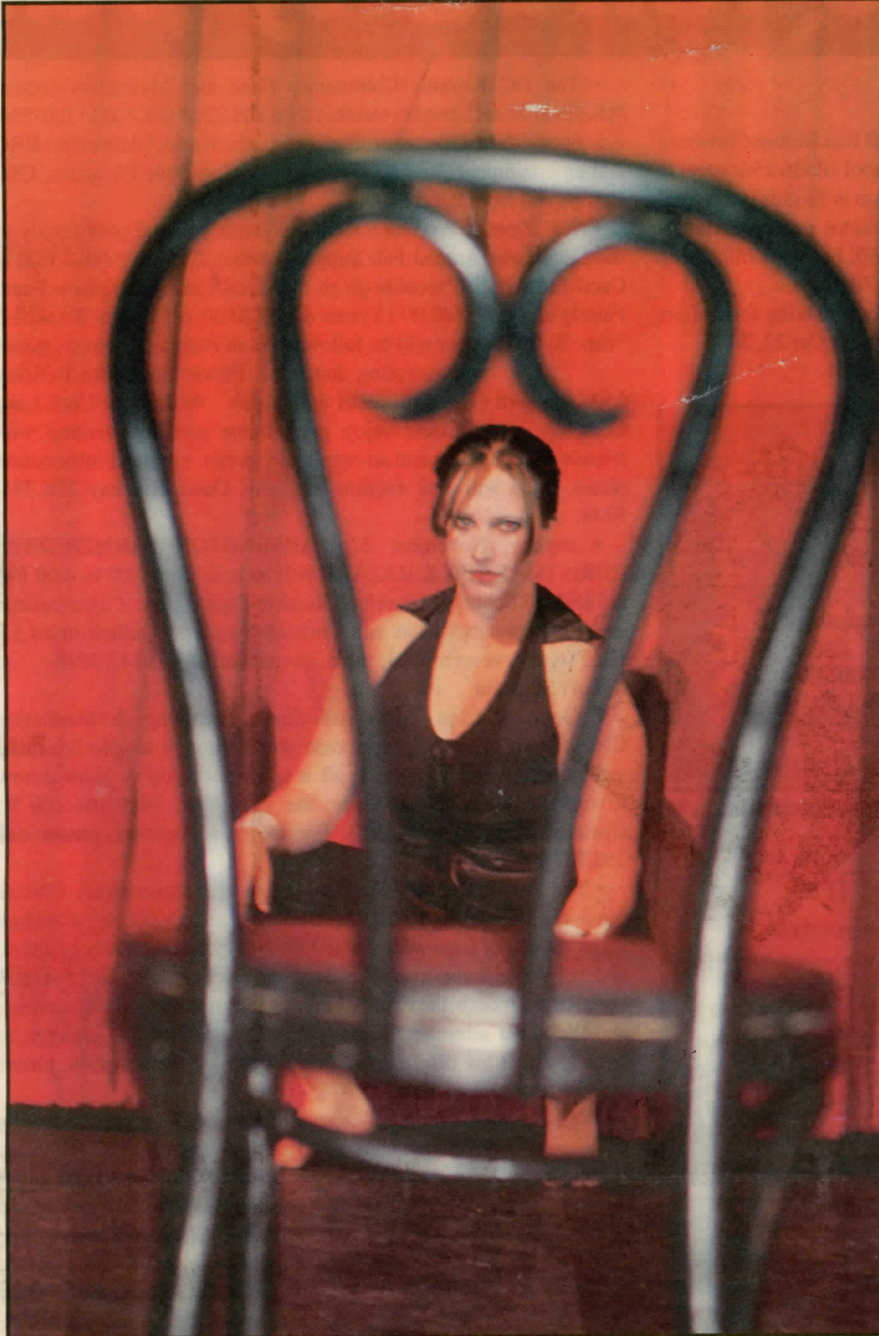
rie. You laugh together, you cry together. It is an experience rather than just another hum-drum thing," said Popesku.

"We have a committed following, but we're trying to get that following to grow. In this town, it can be a tough sell because, to put it blandly, it's an oil patch town and those guys don't go to theatre. But, boy, when we get them to go, they love it. It's really just about getting them in there that first time," said Scott.

More information can be found at stagenorth.ca.

Cabaret on stage in Fort St. John

DJP



By Kyla Corpuz

FORT ST. JOHN – Stage North’s Cabaret opens up tomorrow night.

The stage production is much different than the on-screen version of Cabaret. Producer, Twyla Jordan, said spectators should expect a “shocking” performance.

Play rehearsals have been running smoothly said Jordan and the team behind the production have worked very hard

“It’s coming together good,” she said. “It’s my first musical with them [Stage North] and I’ve been really impressed with the choreography and music.”

Cabaret stars leading male, Harold Goodwin, who plays the young writer and the main character, Naomi Shore, who plays the cabaret performer Sally Bowles.

Cabaret had an array of professionals that pulled the production together.

From vocal coach, Sandra Lemmon a professional teacher and opera singer to Margaret May, who created the masterpieces for the set’s backdrops. Oliver Hachmeister directed the show and has done countless productions for Stage North and Jasmine Large created the sexy costumes and props.

Cabaret will be running from Oct. 21 to Oct. 29 at the North Peace Cultural Centre. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at the box office or online for \$25 for adults and \$20 for students and seniors.