

STAGE NORTH PRESENTS

THE
PINK
PANTHER
STRIKES
AGAIN



BY WILLIAM GLEASON

DIRECTOR ROB LAVENTURE
PRODUCER TWYLA JORDON

February 18, 19, 24, 25, 26

North Peace Cultural Centre at 7:30pm

Adults \$25 Students and Seniors \$20 Children \$15

Tickets available at the NPCC Box Office or
online at tickets.npcc.bc.ca

The Pink Panther Strikes Again is presented by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing



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Alaska Highway News



UNUSUAL CLUES IN A CLASSIC COMEDY

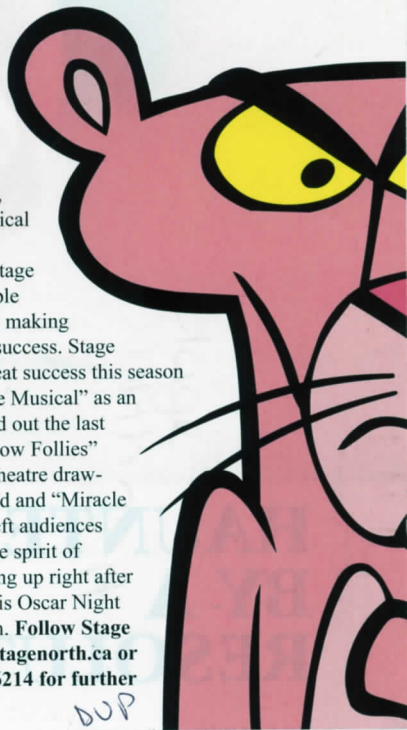
SUE POPESKU

The comical and well-loved Inspector Clouseau of the famous Pink Panther films is preparing to solve another bizarre mystery in Fort St. John on the stage of the North Peace Cultural Centre. Peter Sellers created the original role of the clumsy, though seemingly, brilliant Inspector Clouseau who established a following of Pink Pantherites throughout the world.

Stage North features The Inspector, along with 35 other actors, in "The Pink Panther Strikes Again" opening Friday, February 18 for 5 performances. This dangerous caper finds Inspector Clouseau the target of the evil Paul Dreyfus, once his long-suffering boss, now turned into a raving lunatic. Dreyfus holds the world at bay with THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE and threatens to vaporize continents if the nations of the world do not deliver Clouseau to him...alive, or, better...dead.

Have dinner with the Pink Panther on February 4, at the Uptown Grill. Richard and Melanie, owners of the Uptown Grill, have long been Pink Panther film buffs. They have a special Pink Panther mystery drink, the contents of which will leave you clueless. Reservations are suggested.

Stage North Theatre Society welcomes all volunteers who wish to try acting, directing or technical theatre work. For every person on stage there are 3-4 people behind the scenes making the production a success. Stage North has had great success this season with "Chicago the Musical" as an opener which sold out the last 2 nights. The "Snow Follies" Improv Dinner Theatre drawing a hearty crowd and "Miracle on 34th Street" left audiences filled with the true spirit of Christmas. Coming up right after the Pink Panther is Oscar Night on the Big Screen. **Follow Stage North at www.stagenorth.ca or phone 250-785-6214 for further information.**



FEB 2011

DUP

MAY 10, 2011

Curtains up on theatre festival

ALEISHA HENDRY
Staff Writer

It's going to be the most fun you can have with the curtains open, according to the posters.

The Peace River Zone Theatre Festival opens on May 10, and brings together dedicated thespians from around the region to compete for the right to show their play at the provincial festival, Mainstage.

Festival Chair Jim Peltier has high hopes for this year's series of performances.

"The quality of the plays that come out of here and go to Mainstage... In 2008, The Monument won, and that blew people out of the water down South," said Peltier.

"They don't understand the very thing that happens in the North is, if you want to go to

the theatre on a regular basis in a town this size, you're likely going to have to get involved in theatre. If you want theatre to happen...you're going to have to do something to make it happen."

Opening the festival on May 11 will be Stage North's production of *Fuel*, a show that tells the story of playwright Jerod Blake's struggle with addiction.

Directed by Blair Scott, the show has only two actors – the addict, played by Gilles Francoeur, and the personified condition, *Addiction*, played by JP Wood.

"The relationship between the two goes full circle – the addict has his addiction, but the addiction is also addicted to the addict," said Scott.

•SEE THEATRE ON A3

DUP 2011

Plenty of talent in the North Peace theatre scene

•CONT. FROM A1

Playing *Addiction* was a definite role reversal for Wood, who recently played Inspector Clouseau in the Stage North production of the *Pink Panther Strikes Again* in February.

"It's not something I would normally do," said Wood, but added that he's enjoyed the challenge, despite the long monologues he's had to memorize for the role of *Addiction*.

The second show on May 12 will be the North Peace Player's version of Woody Allen's play, *Death*. The North Peace Secondary School theatre company has only been in festival a handful of times, but director Clair Temple wanted to get the company in one more time before she graduates.

The third play on May 13 will be a second Stage North production – Susan Coyne's *Kingfisher Days*. Directed by Clarice Eckford, the play is a lighter-hearted show that will bring some whimsy to the festival.

Tumbler Ridge's Grizzly Valley Players will be the only non-Fort St. John company entering a play in the competition. Their play, *Nodes and Tie*, written and directed by Erin Hanna, is a

humorous look at social networking and how three friends use and react to it. It will show on May 14.

Each play will face the scrutiny of the festival adjudicator, Colin Legge, who will deliver a public review at the end of each show and discuss what worked and what didn't.

Peltier said he encourages those who love theatre to check out the "coffee critiques" of each play, which are held the morning after each performance. Legge will help each show to work out any kinks to make the performance even better.

"Sometimes the show that goes down to Mainstage is totally different than what you saw at festival," said Peltier.

Peltier said he's pleased at how supportive the community is of local theatre, and of the arts in general.

"For all the thing that this is a sports town, it's becoming more and more an arts town," he said.

The Peace River Zone Theatre Festival officially begins today at the North Peace Cultural Centre, with a technical stage workshop for North Peace Secondary School students, and runs until May 14.

DUP 2011

Fairy Tales

ALEISHA HENDRY
Staff Writer

Stage North is inviting residents to take a trip down memory lane and remember what it's like to be a small child in their final production of the season, *Kingfisher Days*.

Reliving the carefree summer of youth, friendship and fantasy are what make up the story of a precocious child and her imagination.

Kingfisher Days, written by Susan Coyne, recounts Coyne's experiences during the summer of 1963 at her family's cottage at Lake of the Woods when she was five years old and her friendship with an elderly man, Mr. Moyer.

As a way to keep Susan entertained, Mr. Moyer starts leaving messages in the fireplace that are allegedly written by a fairy princess named Nootsie Tah.

Susan winds up spending lots of time with Nootsie Tah and her Nixie entourage.

Director Clarice Eckford isn't new to the material – she jumped at the opportunity to bring the show to theatre lovers in Fort St. John.

"In 2007, I played the part of Susan in a production [of *Kingfisher Days*] in Edmonton and fell in love with the play

and then decided one day that I would direct it," she explained.

Already having thorough knowledge of the play has enabled Eckford to put her own special touches on the production, including the creation of some new characters.

The Nixies, played by Claire Temple and Corine Dyke, were not actual speaking roles in the original script, but were added in by Eckford.

"Nootsie Tah, the fairy princess, is so larger than life and she's so regal and grandiose, she kind of needs an entourage. It adds to her persona of being ridiculous," said Eckford. "Claire and Corine are so cute – I originally had them doing backstage work, producing work and that and we started to rehearse, reading the play – and their eyes looked so eagerly at me, I had to put them in."

Temple and Dyke were thrilled to be added to the cast. According to them, Dyke is the Good Nixie and Temple is the Very Naughty Nixie, who always gets in trouble.

"It's going to be so fun, I'm so excited. We get the fun parts," said Dyke, adding that the Nixies get to do the Hokey-Pokey, skate, dance and sing *On Top Of Spaghetti*.

All this fairy-like entertainment would delight any five year old, or an adult playing one, like Dawn Ljuden.

Being a grown woman playing a small child isn't a new experience for Ljuden, who takes on the role of little Susan.

"Actually, the first time I went to a festival 20 years ago I played a five year old," she said. "It's a lot of fun, it's very freeing. It's a very free feeling to be five and not to be too worried about what anybody's thinking."

She added that she's working in a Kindergarten room this year, which helps her get into the five year old mindset.

Eckford believes that everyone who comes to see *Kingfisher Days* will enjoy it, and leave with a smile on their face.

"It's a real exploration of what happens to you when you become an adult – how you forget to slow down and take time and that your imagination is really important and beautiful, and it's also about friendship too. So anyone who likes friendship and imagination, which is hopefully everybody, [will like the play]," said Eckford.

Kingfisher Days runs on April 29 and 30, and May 5 to 7 at the North Peace Cultural Centre.



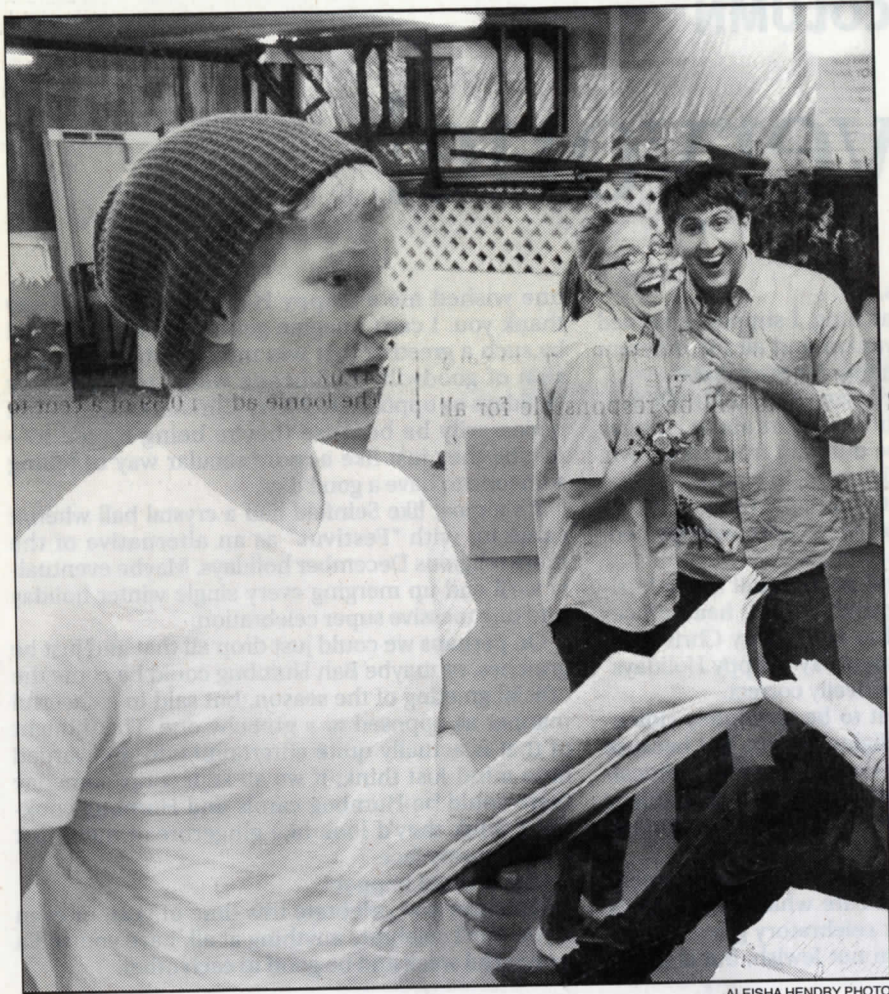
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011

ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

The cast of Kingfisher Days gets a little silly during rehearsal, listening to Dale Hillman, who plays Mr. Moyer, reading from Lewis Carroll's *Through The Looking Glass*.

Dec 23, 2011

Actors get to act like children in Charlie Brown



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Melanie Truscott and Ted Sloan ham it up while Zac Scott practices a song during rehearsal for Stage North's You're A Good Man Charlie Brown.

•CONT. FROM A1

Zac continued: "With how the play is written, it's either terrible or everything's great, so it's really difficult to find those spots of in between where in the middle of something bad, there can be something good."

The characters in the play are all around five and six years old, which made getting into character an interesting exercise for the adult actors.

"It was actually a lot easier than it might have been. I've got two people who have never been in a play before, so two extremely fresh faces and they were the first ones to abandon all pretenses and go 'Oh yeah, I'm six! This is fun!'" said Chalene.

One of those newbies is Cody McGillivray, who plays the blanket-toting philosopher of the group, Linus.

"It's fun," said McGillivray of finding his inner child. "I get to play this five year old that is basically smarter than

everyone else around him."

Zac, on the other hand, didn't find it so easy.

"I'm still trying to find the [inner] six year old, to be honest. As someone who is just transitioning to the working world... at this point in my life it's hard to grasp that inner six year old. I'm doing my best though," he said, noting that playing in the snow is a good way to get into a six year old mindset.

Chalene has been very impressed with her entire cast and all the effort they put into their roles.

"My whole cast is brilliant and wonderful and I love working with them. It's so much fun every day to come to rehearsal and see what they're going to throw at me," said Chalene.

You're A Good Man Charlie Brown opens on Dec. 29 and runs until Dec. 31, with a special matinee performance on New Year's Eve.



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"Fuel" chronicles real life drug struggles



Michaela Garstin photo

Actor Gilles Francoeur portrays a drug addicted alcoholic character named Johnny in dramatist Jarod Blake's stage play "Fuel" mounted by the North Peace Zone Theatre Festival at the North Peace Cultural Centre.

By Michaela Garstin

FORT ST. JOHN - Fuel, a hard-hitting play dealing with the torments of addiction, has only two characters - a drug addict and the voice inside his head of addiction.

The play was performed by Stage North Theatre Society on May 11 at the North Peace Cultural Centre. It is one of four plays part of the North Peace Zone Theatre Festival.

Fuel is based on writer Jarod Blake's real-life problems with alcohol and drug addiction and his fight to become sober.

Drug and alcohol addicted Johnny, played by Gilles Francoeur, is lazy and clearly can't manage to get his life together. He's lonely and can't even manage to clean his filthy, littered apartment.

He's a writer and has lost his inspiration, causing him to fall deeper into self-pity.

The set was simple yet functional. The play takes place in Johnny's basement suite and at a restaurant where Johnny's addiction compels him to drink. The acting moves the play along; an intricate set isn't needed.

Johnny becomes sympathetic as the play progresses, leaving the audience begging him to change. At other times he's seen as pathetic and gets what he deserves. Director Blair Scott leads us through Johnny's transformation from a lazy, self-loathing addict to someone who may have a chance.

Addiction, the destructive nagging voice inside his head, battles to completely control Johnny and relishes the torment he causes.

Played by Jean-Paul Wood, the character of Johnny's addiction is deeply despised throughout the play. The actor does an excellent job playing the pompous, selfish jerk.

But the play isn't constantly serious. Comic-relief breaks the intensity by letting the audience relax for a brief moment. Off-colour jokes about prostitutes and diseases left the audience gasping but made the play that much more believable.

The bold truth of addiction, sometimes extremely uncomfortable, is apparent throughout the play. Francoeur and Wood have a deep chemistry and never show hesitation in their intense back-and-forth dialogue.

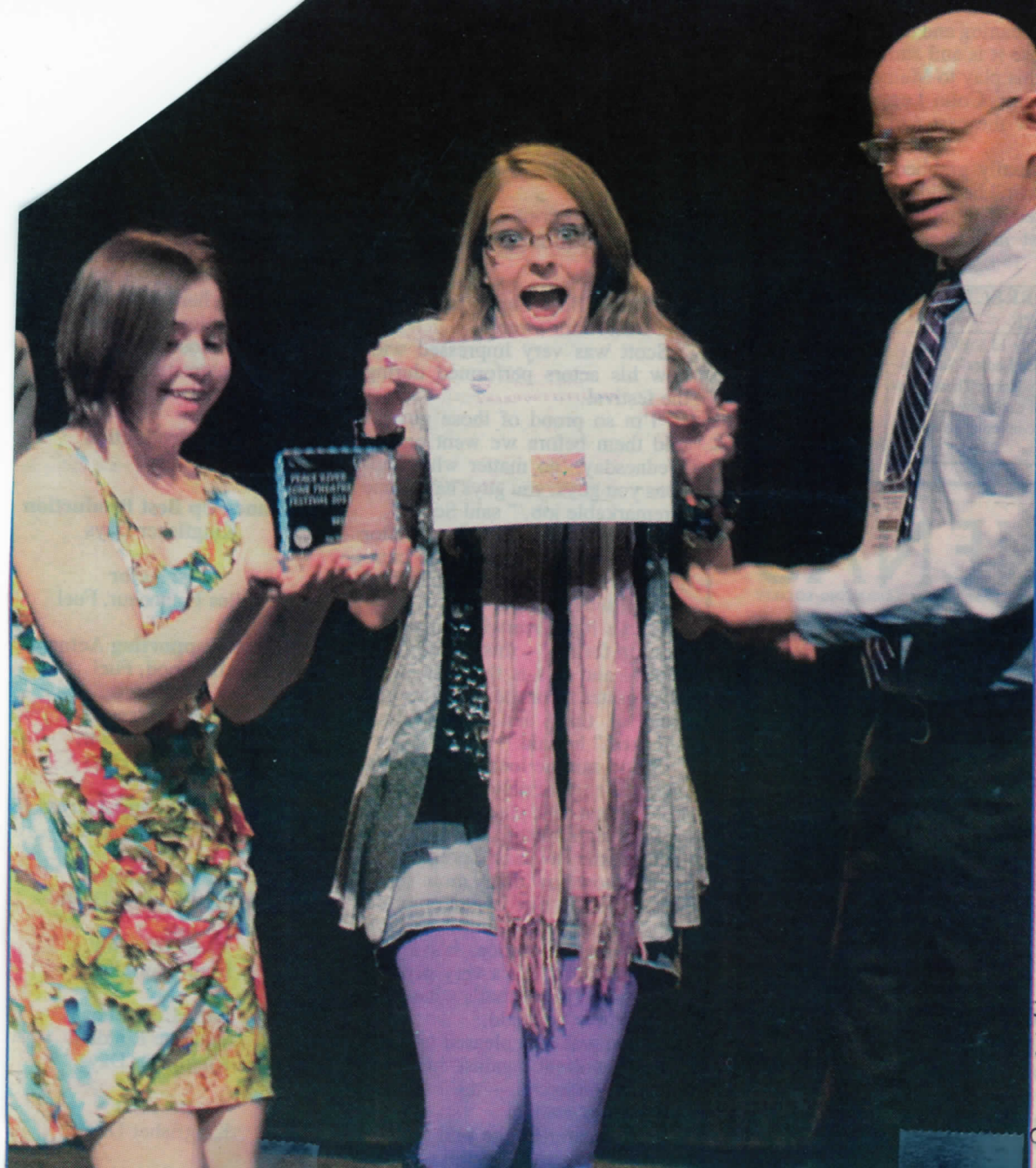
Long monologues can easily break a play, but the actors draw us in and hold our attention while their characters further develop.

This comfort stems from their long history together. They've known each other since they were two, Francoeur said after the show.

Midway through the play, Johnny puts on a long cape and dances around playfully at his addiction's command. This was the only scene that, without explanation, was out of place and couldn't end soon enough.

Johnny's inspiration for writing returns in the last scene as he gains control of his addiction. With addiction cast aside for the time being, his fate seems positive but endlessly uncertain.

2011 DWP



Melanie Truscott was just so excited that Stage North's Kingfisher Days won the Best Ensemble Award at the Peace River Zone Theatre Festival on May 14. To find out who took the top prize, check out page 2.

Aleisha Hendry Photo

MAY 20, 2011



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Nootsie Tah, played by Melanie Truscott, tells a story to Susan, played by Dawn Ljuden, during a rehearsal for the Stage North production of Kingfisher Days. See A8 for the full story.