

# Milton Players present Odd Couple

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

Oddly enough, there's nothing odd about The Odd Couple.

Instead, it's an enduringly popular play penned by Neil Simon, who weighs in as one of the century's most accessible playwrights.

It was the basis for a long-running television series, and is now poised to hit the boards at the Senior's Activity Centre.

Presented by the Milton Players Theatre Group, the show is produced by Virginia Bancur and directed by Geoff Ford.

It'll run Saturday Nov. 4, Friday Nov. 10 and Saturday Nov. 11 as a dinner theatre, and Friday Nov. 3, Wednesday Nov. 8 and Thursday Nov. 9 as show only.

Tickets cost \$12 for show only, and \$30 for dinner theatre.

A tried and true classic is the best way to bring people out to local theatre, said Mr. Ford.

"Everyone in the world knows The Odd Couple," he said. "It's Neil Simon's best play We like to start the season off with a bang."

## Sticks close to original play

The play chronicles the story of two bachelors who share an apartment. Felix tends to believe that neatness and cleanliness are next to godliness. Oscar, on the other hand, believes they may be next to Akron, or some other place he hasn't been. The play is set in the 1960s.

"The women will relate to Felix and the men will relate to Oscar," said Mr. Ford. "Every man wants to be a slob. And Felix is a guy you love to hate."

Along with the two main characters, there's an entertaining ensemble cast.

Several Milton Player favourites as well as at least two new faces will hit the stage in the production.

"They're a real tight cast. We always go to the pub after rehearsals and that makes you closer and closer because you're socializing," said Mr. Ford.

When actors gel, it becomes easier to side-step the inevitable flubs that stem from live performances.

"There isn't a play goes by where there isn't a screw-up somewhere," said Mr. Ford. "If there's a screw up, they're going to bail you out."

Since finely nuanced performances work better on the silver screen than the stage, he encouraged the actors to play their parts broadly, trusting him to reel them back in when appropriate.

"I've told them to go over the top, just like it's a farce, and then let me pull it back," he said. "I'll drag it right back to where I

want it." To keep the intense rehearsal periods humming, Mr. Ford will encourage the actors to play the scene in a variety of styles. "Some nights we'll do it as a porno, sometimes as a heavy drama," he joked.

## Plenty of prep work required

But the amount of work that goes into each production is no joke. All told, about 17,000 man hours are sunk into the play, said Mr. Ford.

Capping off the Players' 21 season are productions of the comedy Just A Little Crazy and farcical Don't Dress For Dinner.

For The Odd Couple, the bar opens at 6:30 p.m. on dinner theatre evenings, with dinner being served at 7 p.m. The curtain rises at 8:15 p.m.

The production kicks off at 8 p.m. during show-only nights.

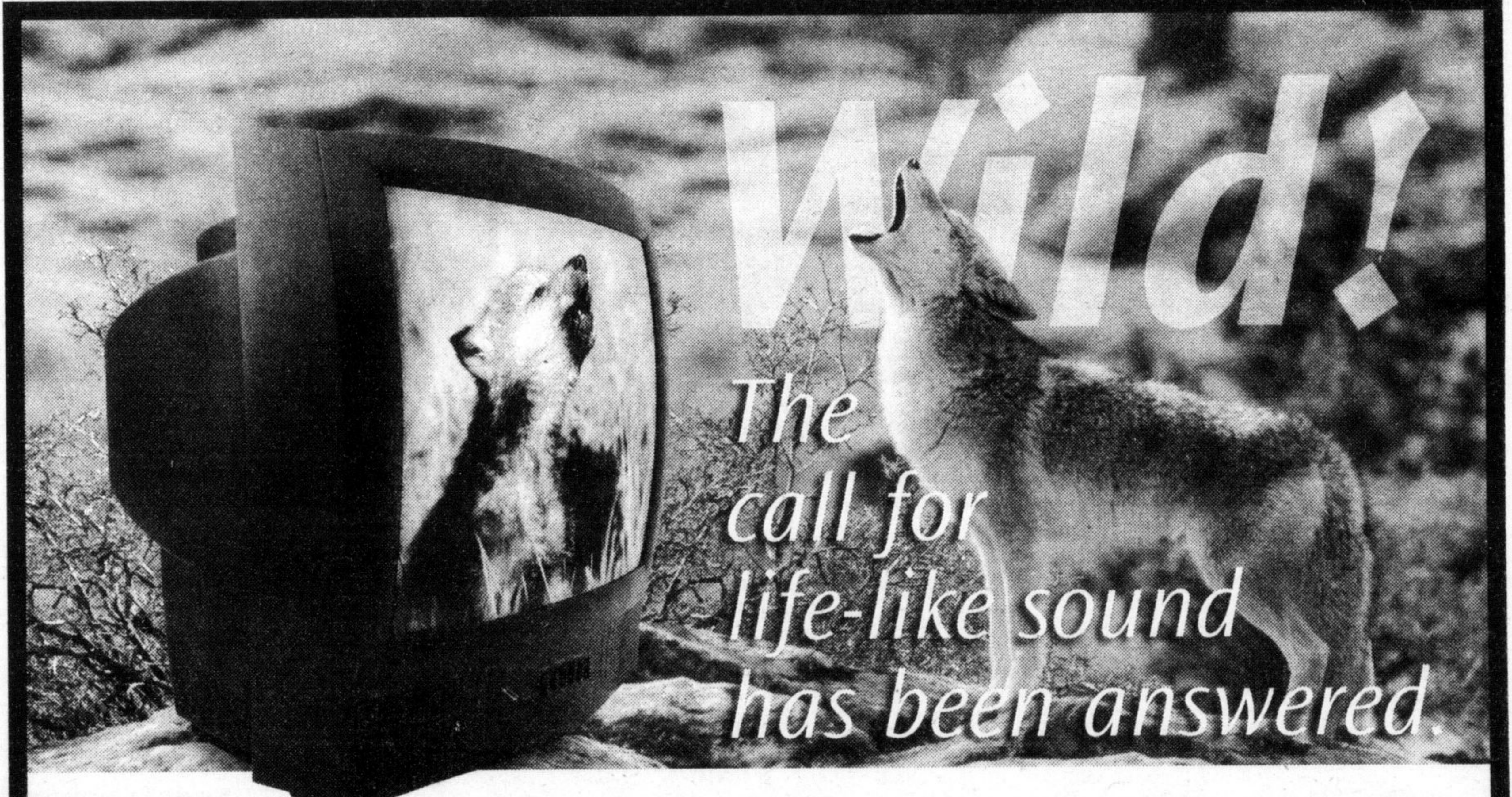
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