

SMH 9/3/1986

Tony Randall raises the roof with a fast-witted portrayal

THEATRE

By BERWYN LEWIS

The Odd Couple

By Neil Simon
St George Leagues Club,
Kogarah

Felix Ungar Tony Randall
Oscar Madison Peter Adams

Poker players: Murray
Graham Rouse

Speed Tom Oliver

Vinnie David Whitford

Roy Doug Scroope

Pigeon Sisters: Cecily
Katy Manning

Gwendolyn Penelope
Whiteley

Director: Harvey Medlinsky

March 6 to April

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Tony Randall as Felix in a scene from *The Odd Couple*.

This is 'live television' straight from New York, funny and fast-witted. Tony Randall glues the show together with his delightful portrayal of the familiar character, Felix Ungar.

In the hands of the director, Harvey Medlinsky, Neil Simon's classic play shines among the incongruity and glitter of poker machines at Kogarah Leagues Club, injecting universal wit and professional showbusiness into the theatre desert of South Sydney.

The audience doubled up with laughter at Randall's antics and smooth gags, especially the one with the cigarette lighter which contrasted and stood out against his dark suit. Little touches like this make this a remarkably slick, in the positive sense, production. Randall is backed by a flawless

team of locals. The Pigeon Sisters are acute in the touch of irony they bring to their cheese-puffy roles. The audience was charmed by them.

The lousy cop, Murray (played by Graham Rouse), is a model of trouser hitching indifference and lurking violence. The other poker players are an extremely funny and precisely-directed team.

The Neil Simon themes are familiar to everyone, divorce, alimony, drowned goldfish and obsession with cleaning and disinfecting.

Oscar (Peter Adams), in his

reverse baseball hat alternately toughs it out inviting Felix to jump from the 11th, no 12th storey window, and deflecting his pleas for sympathy.

A very balanced and enjoyable production which occasionally hovers just this side of slapstick, with its showers of potato chips and poker cards.

The hidden microphones steal some of the range from the actors' voices in the more intimate moments, but this is mass theatre and how else to do you play to a packed leagues club auditorium and compete with pokies?