

AN AXIS THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION

41 YEARS OF THOUGHT PROVOKING, AWARD-WINNING CREATIVITY

Artistic Director: Chris McGregor



From the novel by Daniel Defoe

Adapted by Colin Heath

Set Design by Yvan Morissette

Original Music and Sound Design by Jeff Tymoschuk

Costumes, Puppets, and Props by Jessica Oostergo

A tale of survival and self-discovery.

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE

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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS



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of the Province of British Columbia



AXIS
THEATRE

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AXIS THEATRE
inspiring action

ABOUT THE PLAY

ROBINSON CRUSOE, adapted by Colin Heath, is a play about survival against all odds, man's ability to adapt to foreign environments, the strength of the human spirit and the will to live. The playwrights have chosen to tell the tale with a series of flashbacks as Crusoe prepares to leave the island with his rescuers after 28 years of being shipwrecked. The towering set transforms into the multiple locations needed to tell the story and puppets are incorporated to depict the animals on the island.

The play opens with audience participation as Robinson Crusoe and his friend Friday address the school contact and the students as if they were an Admiral and sailors from a rescue ship. Crusoe excitedly tells his rescuers (the audience) his amazing story of survival and of his meeting with his friend Friday.

His first adventure focuses on the devastating storm that tosses him into the sea and his eventual washing up on the shore of a strange island. Crusoe discovers himself to be the only survivor of the disaster as he finds his ship floundering just off shore.

Crusoe makes a happy discovery when he is able to recover supplies and materials from the ship. He sets about making a livable habitat and exploring the island for human life. He is thrilled to find that the island is teeming with vegetation and wildlife. Although Crusoe's basic needs are met in terms of food and shelter, he soon discovers that he has a great need for human companionship. That is what he misses most.

Many years pass before a native of a nearby island, who was being chased by savages, arrives in a dramatic escape. Crusoe chases the savages off and slowly the newcomer learns to trust the Englishman and they become fast friends. In time Friday learns to speak English and in turn teaches Crusoe some of her customs and rituals.

One day, a ship arrives in the inlet. As Crusoe and Friday watch, a boat full of people leaves the ship and sets sail for the island. As the boat draws nearer to shore it becomes apparent that the passengers are actually the Admiral and crew of the ship being held captive by a gang of pirates. Crusoe and Friday overthrow the pirates, rescue the Admiral and reclaim the ship.

As the story concludes, Friday declares her intention to stay on the island as it has become her home. Crusoe accepts Friday's decision and after a fond farewell sets sail for England with his rescuers.

DANIEL DEFOE

ROBINSON CRUSOE, Daniel Defoe's first novel, was published in 1719 when the prolific writer of narrative realism was almost sixty. To the majority of readers, the book is simply a stirring tale of a shipwreck and adventure on a tropical island. However, the literary historian can regard Defoe as the first English novelist.



THEME AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Prologue

Robinson Crusoe is about to set sail for England after being stranded on an island off South America for nearly thirty years. He supposes the audience members to be his rescuing Admiral and crew and invites them to listen to his story of how he has come to stay on the island for these many years. He asks Friday to assist him in telling his story to the audience even though he and Friday have not yet met at this point in the story.



Scene 1 & 2

The year is 1659. Crusoe survives a terrible storm, but all his fellow sailors and the Captain of the Santa Luisa perish. He is washed ashore on an apparently deserted island somewhere close to Trinidad. Crusoe has experienced a frightening loss but he is glad to be alive.



Locate Trinidad on a world map and imagine which nearby island Crusoe was washed ashore onto.

Scene 3 & 4

Crusoe is able to rescue some provisions from the quickly sinking Santa Luisa and sets up home in a cave. He is feeling optimistic about his situation and starts recording daily accounts in a journal. He has been able to take from the ship a musket, pistol, some biscuits, various grains, a spyglass and a quill pen and ink. Crusoe goes in search of more food and to see who or what else inhabits the island.



Write a daily journal for 1 week - make notes and include drawings, interesting observations, thoughts, conversations and new discoveries.

Scene 5

In Crusoe's absence, we discover that the island is inhabited with a talking parrot and a foraging goat. In this scene we are introduced to puppets.



Discuss the use of puppetry in the play. What are some of the other ways we have to use our imagination when we are watching the play?



Scene 6

Crusoe is very excited to see the animals and quickly domesticates them. It is now Day 26 and our hero is resigned to being completely alone on the island, save for his new animal companions. He weathers the rainy season by being very industrious. He constructs various objects such as: a chair, umbrella, candles, a basket and some clay pots. His diet changes to reflect what is available to eat around him.



Make a list of the animals we have domesticated in Canada and for what purpose. Discuss how someone's diet and lifestyle would differ if they were a carnivore, a vegetarian, or if they lived in different hemispheres.

Scene 7

Crusoe succumbs to the inclement weather and becomes quite ill. He experiences a hallucination in which his father appears and taunts him.



Describe one of your experiences of being sick with a fever. How did you get better? Discuss why you think Crusoe's father appears to him in a dream.

Scene 8, 9,10 & 11

Crusoe awakes from his illness. He emerges a new man, appreciative of what little he has gathered. Even the earth seems to be smiling upon him, as crops magically appear. Once again our hero is grateful for his survival and the natural resources about him. Buoyed by his good luck, and the watchful eye of his guardian angel, he makes bread and cheese, wine and even constructs some clothing from the wool of the goat. It is Day 5180, and we see Crusoe lonely and longing for conversation – even if it's with the parrot. The passing of his fortieth birthday makes Crusoe long for his old life in England.



How many years has Crusoe spent on the island so far? Record (in the format of your choice) your goals for when you are 40 years old - job, where you will be living, what are your hobbies and leisure activities, etc. Keep your record in a safe place for future reference.

Scene 12 & 13

Crusoe's prayers are answered. A woman appears! The intruder seems fearful for her life and our hero comes to the rescue. After bandaging her wounds, Crusoe and his new island mate sleep, eat and teach each other their names. His new friend Friday admires all of Crusoe's possessions, including his musket. Friday has obviously had limited and frightening experiences

with guns and she takes the time to study and understand how the tool works.



Imagine what you would do if you wanted to make friends with someone who did not speak the same language as you. Are there useful and harmful ways guns are used as tools?

Scene 14 & 15

Friday and Crusoe learn to work together. They thoroughly enjoy and each other's company as they build a fence. When Sunday rolls around, Crusoe wants to rest as is his cultural tradition, but Friday is ready for work and is confused by the custom observed by her friend. They share a meal and Friday teaches Crusoe her own custom of thanking the earth for what you are about to eat.



Why do we have a "day of rest" in Canada? Do all Canadians rest on the same day? What are some other treasured Canadian customs?

Scene 16

In this scene, the climax of the play, the two friends reach an emotional level of conflict. Crusoe, busy with his own work, ignores Friday, without explaining why he needs to have some time alone. Friday dislikes being shunned and her feelings are hurt by the selfish actions of Crusoe.



Demonstrate verbally with a partner effective ways of letting your friends know you want to be left alone or that you want to do something different.

Scene 17

Here we see a contrite Crusoe reconcile with Friday. They bond together over a death-defying feat that Friday insists they both participate in.



List some ways you seal a friendship. What are some of the things you do to 'make-up' with a friend you have had a disagreement with?

Scene 18 & 19

The closing scenes deal with the circumstances of how the rescue ship arrives at the island. It is also the portrayal of a fond farewell between two friends. Crusoe is eager to return to his homeland and Friday is thrilled to remain on the island with all that they have built up over the years. In the end, there is only one thing that they value above everything else - their friendship.



Discuss whether you think this is a happy or sad ending to the play.

SONG LYRICS

SCENE 3 PROVISIONS

There's rice and oats and barley corn
A musket and a knife

And more rope than I could hope
To use in all my life!

Hammers, nails and powder kegs
Flour, sugar too!

Rice! Nice. Dates! Great.
Pepper? Ah-choo!

And what have we here? A fantastic box! If
only they'd left me the key for the lock.

There's everything here I could ask for and more
I'll construct a fine raft to transport it to shore.

After I stowed it into my cave
I then watched as my ship slipped under the waves.

SCENE 8 RAISING CROPS & COUNTING BLESSINGS

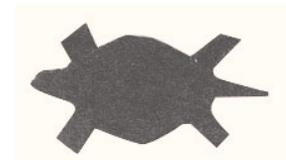
Upon this morning English barley corn is born where nothing grew before.

Hairy goats are tethered only paces from my door.

I have a house, a home, my health
water, wealth and I remain alive.

There's nuts and grapes and turtle eggs,
Clothing, muskets, and powder kegs and knives.

True, I have been left alone,
No company, all on my own,
No help, no hope, a lonely castaway.
But why count up what I have not,
I should give thanks for what I've got
I prayed for help and help arrived today!



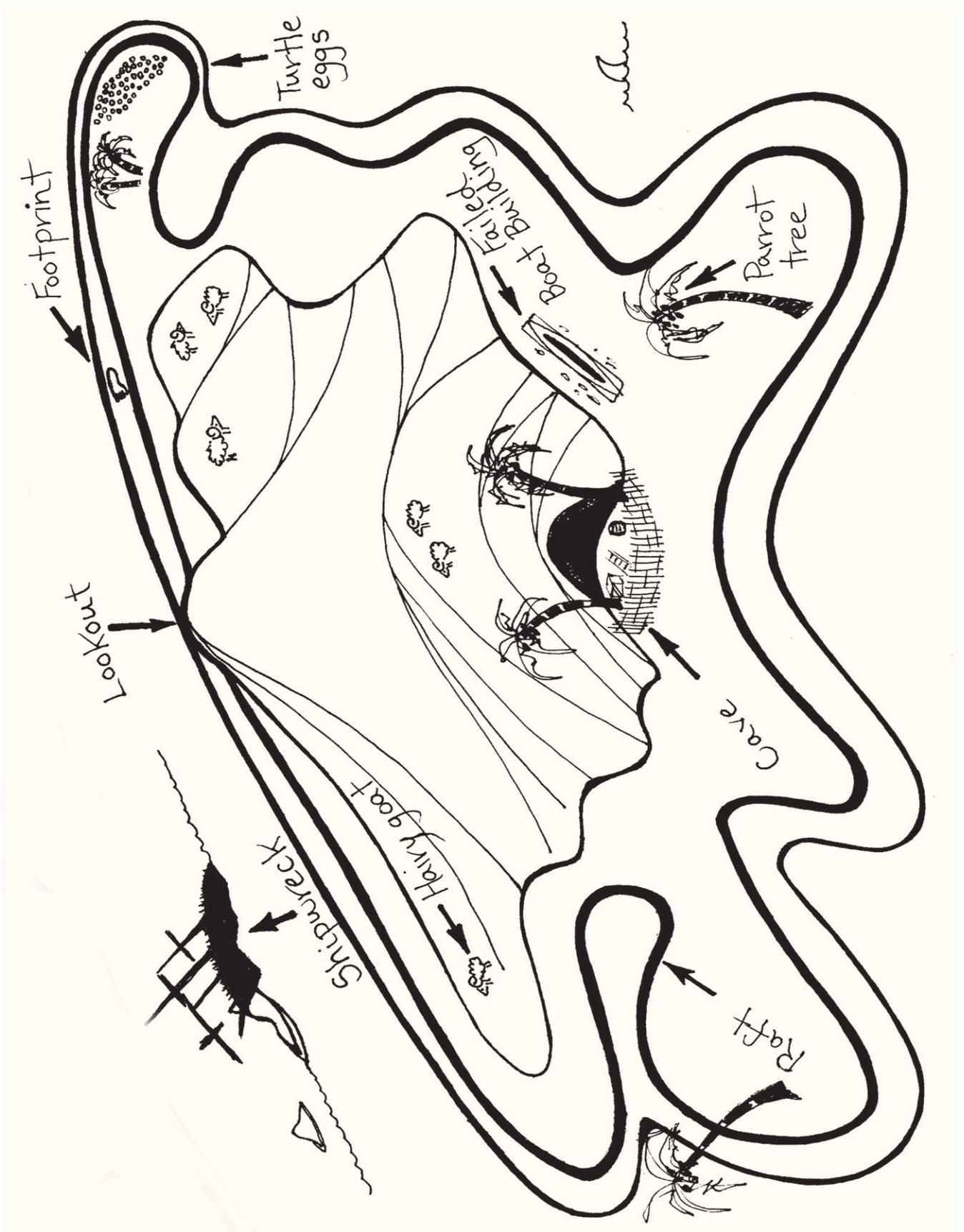
ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY TO KNOW

Port	Batten	Foundered	Castaway
Chrysanthemum	Custom	Provisions	Foredeck
Devastating	Listing	Mock	Musket
Mutineer	Starboard	Tethered	Topsail

1. **LIST** the things you would do in order of importance, if you were stranded on a deserted island?
2. **RESEARCH** a typical family from 17th century England and America. Compare them. What did they wear? What kind of work did they do? What kind of food did they eat?
3. **DISCUSS** if there are pirates that still sail the seas and why or why not?
4. **DESCRIBE** the person you consider your best friend. What is the one thing your best friend does for you that you like or appreciate. What special thing do you do for your best friend?
5. **IMAGINE** you were stranded on a desert island – what five things would you most like to have with you? How long do you think you could survive without any other human contact?
6. **WORK** with a partner to build a hut out of toothpicks, straws and white glue. Start with a flat piece of cardboard, use enough glue on the wide end of the toothpick and hold it in place long enough for it to dry standing up. Build your foundation. Continue gluing toothpicks layer by layer until you have built your hut for shelter. Did you discover anything about working cooperatively? Did one person make all the decisions or, did you share the responsibility?
7. **PRACTICE** some of the different cultural rituals people from all over the world use to greet each other. What are some important Canadian cultural traditions?
8. **SPROUT** several kinds of seeds and vegetables as a class project and keep track of how they grow. (i.e. bean sprout, potato, avocado, grass, carrot, and sunflower)
9. **MAKE** puppets of some of the different animals that live in warm weather countries, like South America and the Caribbean Islands. Tell a story about the food they eat and how they live.

COLORING MAP OF THE ISLAND



ABOUT AXIS THEATRE

Axis Theatre Company is currently in its 41st season of producing original physical theatre plays for audiences of all ages. The Vancouver based company regularly tours provincially, nationally and internationally.

Axis produces theatre that combines mime, physical comedy, dialogue, music, masks, movement, song and puppetry with up-to-date social issues. The company has toured **HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE** to Alberta and Ontario in 2017 after a massive 230 performance tour in BC in 2015-16. **HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE** is a comedic retelling of the Pied Piper of Hamelin folktale and features live music, singing, dancing, and a whole lot of RATS!

In his second year as Artistic Director, Chris McGregor continues his commitment to produce the most thought provoking, imaginative stories for youth and family audiences. Past productions have garnered Axis Theatre Company several Jessie Richardson nominations and awards in the T.Y.A. category.



AXIS THEATRE COMPANY

Artistic Director CHRIS MCGREGOR
General Manager DAUNE CAMPBELL
Tour Coordinator SHELBY BUSHELL
Book Keeper YVONNE MILLER

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

Axis Theatre Company is a member of the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance (GVPTA), Alliance for Arts and Culture (AAC), Arts in Education Council of BC, BC Touring Council, Canadian Council of the Arts, and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). Axis Theatre engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

COMPANY BIOGRAPHIES

SARA ROA - Actor - "Friday"

Sarah Roa is an artist based in Vancouver. She is alumni of the theatre program at both UBC and Douglas College. A few of her past productions include: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (Arts Club), THE FAERIE PLAY (Mortal Coil Performance), MIS PAPAS (Rice & Beans Theatre), MR. MARMALADE (Latchkey Co-op), UBU ROI, CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE (UBC Theatre), and TWELFTH NIGHT (Douglas College). To those reading this, you are all beautiful human beings.

WILLIAM HOPKINS - Actor - "Robinson Crusoe"

William is an actor and singer born and raised in Vancouver. He is excited to be taking off on his first ever tour with Axis Theatre. He has been performing in local musical theatre for the past few years since he graduated Studio 58. He is grateful to be taking on the role of Robinson Crusoe and can't wait to get started. Past credits include: Saturninus in TITUS: THE LIGHT AND DELIGHTFUL MUSICAL COMEDY OF TITUS ANDRONICUS; Professor Claude Night/Ghost in GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET) both with Awkward Stage Productions; Oberon in A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM; Lank Hawkins in CRAZY FOR YOU with Gateway Theatre; Shrek in SHREK with Align Entertainment for which he was nominated for a Best Actor Ovation Award. He would like to thank Chris McGregor for the opportunity to be a part of this show. Enjoy!

CHRIS MCGREGOR – Director

Chris McGregor has a Bachelor of Arts (Drama) from Bishop's University and a Masters in Theatre (Directing) from the University of British Columbia (UBC). He has directed more than 100 productions across Canada and has been nominated for three Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards and four Ovation Awards for his directing. For Axis Theatre he directed the BC touring production of HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE and the world premiere of SOMEBODY LOVES YOU, MR. HATCH. Chris has taught physical theatre, mask (Commedia dell'arte) and Red Nose Clown at the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Bishop's University and Studio 58.