



## **STUDY GUIDE**

This Study Guide includes suggestions about preparing your students for a live theatre performance in order to help them take more from the experience. Included is information and ideas on how to use the performance to enhance aspects of your education curriculum: with exercises that respond to the themes presented in the performance and the dramatic and musical elements.

Please copy and distribute this guide to your fellow teachers.

### **BOOKING INFORMATION**

Please contact the Tour  
Coordinator for more  
information.

Local: 604 669 0631

Toll Free: 1 866 294 7943

Email: [tours@axistheatre.com](mailto:tours@axistheatre.com)





## CONTENTS

Synopsis	3
Origins of the Story	3
About the Author	3
Connections	4
Activities:	
Pre-Performance	5
Post-Performance	6
About Axis	11
Appendix	12
Characters	12
Vocabulary	12
Pantomime	14
Story Development	15
Song Lyrics	16

## CREDITS

- » Adapted from the novel by Daniel Defoe
- » Adapted for stage by Colin Heath
- » Original Design by Michael Wolski
- » Directed by Chris McGregor
- » Set Design by Yvan Morissette
- » Original Music and Sound Design by Jeff Tymoschuk
- » Costume Design, Puppets, and Props by Jessica Oostergo
- » Stage Management by Jillian Perry
- » Performed by William Hopkins as Robinson Crusoe  
and Sarah Roa as Friday



## 1. SYNOPSIS

### "No man is an island unto himself"

*Robinson Crusoe and Friday*, is a play about survival against all odds, man's ability to adapt to foreign environments, the strength of the human spirit but most importantly, it is about friendship. An English sailor, shipwrecked on a remote island, works against all odds to survive alone for 25 years. Until one day, he rescues a stranger from brutal savages and the two develop a remarkable friendship. Adapted from the classic novel by Daniel Defoe, this imaginative retelling emphasizes communication, embracing cultural differences and empathy. Set sail with Robinson and Friday on an adventure full of comedic miscommunication, history and heart!

## 2. ORIGINS OF THE STORY

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.

## 3. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin grew up in Victoria and subsequently lived and worked in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. He trained at the University of Victoria and l'École Nationale de Cirque. He has worked as acrobat, actor, musician, composer, and clown, as well as playwright. He has received several Jessie Richardson awards including one for his script *For Art's Sake* (Axis Theatre). He has also been nominated for Dora Mavor Moore, New York Drama Desk, and Bay Area Theatre awards. Theatre companies who have produced his work include Axis, Belfry, Arts Club, Caravan Farm, Mirvish, Centaur, Marin Shakespeare, Theatre New Brunswick, Quest, Geordie, Great Canadian Theatre Co. and others. Colin is currently based in Montreal and touring as a clown with Cirque du Soleil.



## 4. CONNECTIONS

### THEMES

- » Survival
- » Companionship/ friendship
- » Courage, Cooperation and Honour
- » Puppets, Music and Songs as a Form of Communication

### ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM CONNECTION K-7

- » Drama: responding to, reflecting on and analyzing drama presentations.
  - People create art to express who they are as individuals and community.
  - Dance, drama, music and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating.
  - People connect to the hearts and minds of others in a variety of places and times through the arts.
  - Experiencing art challenges our point of view and expands our understanding of others.
- » Music: responding to, reflecting on and analyzing music performances. Music is created and performed within a wide range of historical, cultural, and social contexts.
- » Literacy: Recognizing advanced vocabulary, analyzing oral language and communication strategies, reading and demonstrating comprehension.
  - Exploring stories and other texts help, us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
  - Everyone has a unique story to share.

### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PERFORMANCE CONNECTION K – 7

- » The themes in the production support an understanding of the importance of contributing to community, solving problems in a peaceful way, defending human rights and exercising democratic rights and responsibilities.



## 5. PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

### MOTION PICTURE VERSUS LIVE THEATRE

Talk about the similarities and differences between watching a movie, a television show and a “live” theatre presentation. Include discussions about how the performers prepare for their roles in each of the situations. For instance, how an actor in a movie or a television show can redo a scene if a mistake is made versus an actor in a “live” performance must carry on regardless of mistakes. Also discuss how an audience impacts each type of performance.

### HOW TO BE A POSITIVE AUDIENCE MEMBER

Remind your students to notice the way that the set, costumes and live music help make the performance of *Robinson Crusoe + Friday* exciting and fun to watch!

Next, prepare your students for watching a “live” performance by discussing the characteristics of a positive audience member. For example, a positive audience member:

- » Will sit quietly so everyone around can see and hear the performance
- » Will listen attentively and remain focused on the actors and musicians will not distract performers by moving about or by waving or calling out to performers
- » Will laugh and applaud appropriately
- » Will contribute to the performance when asked

### CHARACTERS AND VOCUBULARY

Review the list of characters and vocabulary words, found in the Appendix, and choose what information is most useful and appropriate to share and discuss with your class prior to viewing the performance.



## 6. POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

Now that your students have seen *Robinson Crusoe and Friday* it is the perfect time to expand on their excitement and interest in drama and music and to discuss ideas and themes presented in the performance.

There are a variety of ways for students to respond to, reflect on and analyze drama and musical performances: for example, through talking, writing, stories, art, singing and playing drama games.

The following suggestions will help to engage your students in activities where fun and laughter are as important as the building of skills to increase critical thinking, self-awareness and confidence. Choose the activities that are best suited to your grade level and, if necessary, modify the skill level of the activities to meet the needs of your students.

### DISCUSSION ABOUT SURVIVAL

In *Robinson Crusoe and Friday*, Crusoe is shipwrecked and wakes up on a deserted island. When do we find ourselves in moments of survival? Is it always between life and death? How does it feel when we are in a moment of survival? Would you change as a person? Why or why not?

Have students imagine 1 week of being stuck on a deserted island. Have them write or draw pictures of their first week on the island. What challenges would they encounter?

### IMAGINARY ISLAND

In groups or individually, have kids create their own imaginary island. Where is it located? What kind of plants and animals is the island home to? What things on the island would help them survive if they were stuck there? If you have been learning about ecosystems, this is a fun & creative way for your students to demonstrate their understanding, by creating and presenting their own ecosystem!

### JOURNALLING

Have students keep a daily journal for 1 week in the style of Robinson Crusoe. Start each entry with "day \_\_\_" make notes and include drawings, interesting observations, thoughts, conversations and new discoveries.

### REVIEWING ROBINSON CRUSOE AND FRIDAY

The following questions can be used for whole group discussions or for sharing with a partner or in a small group. After sharing with a partner or small group, students can take turns sharing ideas with the whole group.



If using the questions as sentence starters for a writing activity, the students can also draw pictures to accompany their writing.

- » Who was your favourite character? Why?
- » How did the actors use their voices and bodies and movements to make the characters more believable in the performance?
- » What character would you like to have as a friend? Why?
- » What character would you not want to have as a friend? Why?
- » If you could be an actor in the *Robinson Crusoe + Friday*, which character would you like to be? Why?
- » How did the music make the performance more interesting?
- » What do you think it takes to be a good actor or musician?
- » What was the scariest part of the performance? Why?
- » What was the funniest part of the performance? Why?
- » What part of the performance surprised you the most? Why?
- » If you were the writer of the play, what would happen next in *Robinson Crusoe + Friday*?
- » Crusoe work hard to gain Friday's trust. Have you ever have to work hard to become someone's friend and gain their trust?
- » What did you notice about the costumes and puppets in the performance?
- » How did the costumes and puppets make the performance more interesting?

### **HAVE FUN WITH DRAMA GAMES: PANTOMIME**

A great way to start playing with drama is with simple pantomimes. Explain to your students that acting is showing. By NOT using words during a pantomime, they become forced to show, not tell.

Copy the list of animals, found in the Appendix, and cut out the names of the animals. Have students draw an animal, by himself or herself or with a partner, and take turns acting like their chosen animal. Encourage the students to exaggerate their body movements in order to help their classmates guess the animal they are portraying.

The students may also be encouraged to come up with their own ideas for pantomimes. Get them started with these suggestions: tying a shoe, brushing teeth, eating spaghetti, riding on a skateboard, playing basketball, or painting a mural.

### **HAVE FUN WITH DRAMA GAMES: MIRRORS**



A game of mirrors is a great group activity that gets students working together and paying close attention to each other. Have the students pair off in A/B partners around the classroom. To begin, A will be the actor and B the mirror. The two partners face each other and partner A begins to move and partner B will mirror everything that partner A does. When you call out “freeze,” partner B will become the actor and partner A will be the mirror. Do this a few times throughout the activity.

### **PLAYING WITH SONG AND STORY**

Using a familiar song that the students love to sing, write a class story related to the song. Add characters, simple dialogue and actions that can help to make the song come alive! By combining the story and the song, the students will experience the fun of participating in a musical drama. Challenge the students to vary the tone of their voices and to use body movements to help portray the personalities of the characters in the story. Experiment with using simple sound effects, props and costumes.

### **MASKS AND PUPPETS**

Children love the magic and intrigue associated with masks and puppets. Although creating your own masks and puppets in the classroom requires extra time and effort, the result will most certainly outweigh all considerations. The use of masks and puppets will enhance the enjoyment and deepen the understanding of many classroom activities related to drama, storytelling, music, singing, body movement and art.

### **HAVE FUN WITH DRAMA GAMES: WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

In a circle – One person in the centre is doing an activity, someone jumps in and asks, “What are you doing?” the person in the centre says something different from what they are doing; the person who jumped in does that new activity.

I.e. person in middle is cutting the lawn, person jumps in and asks “What are you doing?” the person in middle says “screwing in a light bulb” the person that jumped in does that activity...and so on around the circle.

### **PARTNER ACTIVITY: TEACH AND LEARN**

Working in pairs, children take turns teaching and learning things about each other. One person tells their partner something they didn’t know, about themselves or something else, the other person responds with the same thing back. This activity encourages children to get to know each other and to form friendships with their peers.

### ***Suggested questions***

- » 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?



- » 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.
- » 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.
- » Imagine what you would do if you wanted to make friends with someone who did not speak the same language as you. What other ways are there to communicate?
- » 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?
- » 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.
- » 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?
- » Discuss whether you think this is a happy or sad ending to the play.

***Ask individual students or small groups of students to focus on the following components of the play:***

**Set**

- What did the students see in the set (e.g., the ship, the island, the hut etc.)?
- How did the actors use the set to represent the island in the story?
- What were the different places that the set represented The Ship, the island?
- How did the actors use the set to communicate what they were doing (e.g., climbing around, through, over, etc.)?

**Acting/Movement/Staging**

- What different ways did the actors represent their characters? What were the different characters and animals portrayed by the two actors? This includes the use of puppets.
- How do the actors change from one character to another? I.e. how Friday changes between character and animal. What techniques did the actor use to change from one character to another?

**Music**

- How did the music suggest different locations (at sea, on the island) and how did the music create mood and atmosphere?
- How did the actors create sound effects with their vocal sounds, body percussion, found objects, drums, rattles?



1. In a circle, have students share, one at a time, appropriate body sound possibilities. For example:

- Suggest an environment and have students each create and share a sound found in it (e.g., the forest, the river, by the ocean).
- Discuss and experiment with changing dynamics, volume, tempo, colour.

2. In the play, there are several locations described that inspire sound. Give small groups of students one of the following locations or situations from the play and ask them to create a soundscape:

- A peaceful beach, windy outdoor location.
- Inside the ship's hull dream.
- High above the island.
- Running in the forest.
- Under water.
- A ship in a storm.

### **COMPARE/CONTRAST**

Our play, ROBINSON CRUSOE + FRIDAY, is very different from the original novel. We have taken a story that originally depicted an unhealthy, unequal relationship between people of different cultures and turned it on its head to create a story about cultural equality, communication and friendship. As an activity for older students, you may want to compare and contrast our story with the original, how the characters of Robinson and Friday differ in each, what choices we made to create a relevant message for today's society? What were some of the moments where a cultural exchange took place and how did each character benefit from it? Use this as a jumping off point to explore modern cultural prejudices and how we, like Robinson and Friday, can better understand and accept one another.



## 7. ABOUT AXIS

Geared to young audiences, Axis Theatre's productions are performed in theatres and schools, enriching curriculum by suspending disbelief, drawing children into stories and giving them access to ideas in new ways. Axis actively pursues a multi-disciplinary style of presentation. It is deceptively simple, completely fresh and memorable. With over 40 years of history, Axis' 57 original works have earned them 17 Jessie Richardson Awards, A Betty Mitchell Award and a Drama Desk Nomination for Unique Theatrical Experience.

To book a show, please contact the Tour Coordinator by email at [tours@axistheatre.com](mailto:tours@axistheatre.com) or call 604 669 0631 for more information.

Axis Theatre is lead by Artistic Director, Chris McGregor; General Manager, Daune Campbell; and Tour Coordinator, Petrice Brett. We are located in Vancouver, British Columbia. To learn more about Axis or our team please visit [axistheatre.com](http://axistheatre.com).

*Axis Theatre acknowledges that we live, work and play on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples – skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), sel'ílwitulh (Tseil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəjəm (Musqueam) nations.*

---

Our shows are made possible through the generous support of these organizations



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
ARTS COUNCIL  
An agency of the Province of British Columbia



Canada Council  
for the Arts



Vancouver  
community board\*



Axis Theatre Company is a member of The Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, Alliance for Arts and Culture, Arts in Education Council of BC, BC Touring Council, Canadian Council of the Arts, Vantage Point Vancouver, the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, International Performing Arts for Youth and The Granville Island Business & Community Association. Axis Theatre Company engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.



## 8. APPENDIX

Please print and distribute the areas of this Appendix as you see fit with your students. Within this section you will find a list of characters and vocabulary words with their corresponding definitions. The materials for the pantomime drama game are also include within this section.

We would also like to thank you for taking the time to use the *Hamelin: A New Fable* study guide as a resource to support and strengthen your students' experience with our production. If you or your students have any questions or comments we would love to hear from you. We also welcome letters and drawings from the class and accept mail at Axis Theatre Company, 1405 Anderson Street, Vancouver, BC Canada V6H 3Y7. We wish you all the best in the school year and hope your experience is a positive one.

## CHARACTERS

**ROBINSON CRUSOE** – the main character. He is a sailor from England, who ends up stranded on a deserted island

**FRIDAY** – a supporting character and the puppeteer for the animal puppets. A native inhabitant of surrounding islands, who befriends Crusoe and teaches him many useful skills for surviving alone on the island.

## VOCABULARY

**Port**- can mean one of two things. One it can refer to the left hand side of a vessel, when facing forward. Or it can mean a place where vessels can tie onto while loading and unloading.

**Starboard** – refers to the right hand side of a vessel when facing forward. \

**Batten** - a long, flat strip of squared wood or metal used to hold something in place or as a fastening against a wall.

**Foundered** - (of a ship) fill with water and sink. "six drowned when the yacht foundered off the Florida coast"

**Castaway** - a person who has been shipwrecked and stranded in an isolated place.

**Chrysanthemum** - a popular plant of the daisy family, having brightly colored ornamental flowers and existing in many cultivated varieties.



**Custom** - a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time

**Provisions** - supply with food, drink, or equipment, especially for a journey.

**Foredeck** - the deck at the forward part of a ship.

**Devastating** - highly destructive or damaging. Causing severe shock, distress, or grief.

**Listing** - The extent of leaning to one side of a ship that is damaged or loaded improperly.

**Mock** - tease or laugh at in a scornful or contemptuous manner.

**Musket** - an infantryman's light gun with a long barrel, typically smooth-bored, muzzle loading, and fired from the shoulder.

**Mutineer** - a person, especially a soldier or sailor, who rebels or refuses to obey the orders of a person in authority.

**Tethered** - tie (an animal) with a rope or chain so as to restrict its movement

**Topmast** - a sail set on a ship's topmast.



## PANTOMIME

vulture

butterfly

spider

tiger

rat

snake

boar

scorpion

mouse

lion

monkey

parrot

goat

shark



## Story Development

### Scenes

Intro: 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.

- i) 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.
- ii) 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.
- iii) 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.
- iv) 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.
- v) Crusoe succumbs to the inclement weather and becomes quite ill. He experiences a hallucination in which his father appears and taunts him.
- vi) 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.

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



## 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!