News release November 23 2011 CRUSOE one

The most famous shipwrecked man of all is the focal point of this year’s Reps Theatre pantomime, Robinson Crusoe.

The well-known tale of Crusoe and his companion, Man Friday, takes on a series of fun panto storylines, making for a highly entertaining show in the build-up to Christmas. Directed by Graham Crutchley, the panto will run at Reps from December 1 to 23 and has been sponsored this year by Spar Zimbabwe with the aim of creating awareness and fundraising for Childline Zimbabwe.

Pantomime is traditionally associated with Christmas entertainment and panto stories are usually adapted from children’s fairy tales and story books. Wild and wacky adaptations and fun characteristics of pantomime, such as having a man play the leading female character, make it all the more popular with audiences of all ages.

Stars of the show include panto regulars such as Marc Thomas, Sue and Martin Bolt, Tim Harrap and Larry Greeff, while Stephane Thomas takes on his first panto lead as Robinson Crusoe, with newcomer James Mukwindidza as Man Friday. Musical direction is by Meg Mackenzie and choreography has been undertaken by Caroline Yule. A cast of more than 25 performers has been in rehearsal since September and they will soon be ready for opening night, Friday December 2.

During the run, two gala nights have been arranged: the first, on December 9, is for the B S Leon Home, while the second, on December 17, is for the Harare City Library and has been sponsored by the Spanish Embassy.

A feature of this year’s run is a special carols evening, with carols and Christmas songs being sung at the start of the performance on Friday December 16. Spar Zimbabwe is producing a songbook with the words, to enable audience members – especially the children – to sing along.

Spar Zimbabwe will use the show to promote awareness or the work done by Childline Zimbabwe and a collection box will be set up in the Reps foyer to enable people to bring along donations such as toys, clothes, books and other children’s items. Cash donations can also be made to Childline representatives on duty before each performance.

“Panto is great fun and we are pulling out all the stops to make sure Robinson Crusoe is one of the best we have done to date,” said Graham Crutchley.

“You may think Robinson Crusoe was all about two people, but the panto has a treasure of characters on hand to provide an entertaining show for all ages.”

Advance booking for Robinson Crusoe is now open at The Spotlight. Performances include evening shows at 6.30pm, with Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2.30pm.

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