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STRONGER THAN STRONG!

Great American Tall Tale Heroines

for a large cast of actors (12-40)

(small professional company cast of 8 is also available)

by Brian Guehring

draft 5. 75 Youth Production Draft

The play opens with a ballyhoo (actors running up and down the aisle to drum up excitement and anticipation for the upcoming medicine show.) The famous Doctors Wellington have arrived into this small town at the turn of last century to sell their amazing strength elixir to the population. The first story tells how Dr. Wellington (in search of ingredients to make a strength elixir) meets a young Tennessee gal who became the rip-roarin, gater wrasslin' Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett. Dr. Wellington next meets Annie Christmas, a young New Orleans girl who became a keelboating legend with the strength to beat up 1,000 men and to haul her keelboat down AND up the Mississippi River. Dr. Wellington gets the final ingredient from the wild west after meeting the catfish riding, bronco-busting legendary cowgirl Slue Foot Sue. Using ingredients from each of these three heroines, the doctors create an elixir so you too can be as strong as these tall tale legends!

Larger Than Life! Great American Tall Tale Heroes was originally produced in April 2002 on the mainstage of the Omaha Theater Company for Young People. The original production team and cast were the following:

Susan Clement Toberer as PROFESSOR POPPLE Laura Marr as SAL FINK
Vincent Alston as JOHN HENRY Diane Bulan as LUCY

Kevin Ehrhart as MIKE FINK, PAUL BUNYAN

Director: Dr. James Larson Set Design: Eric Voecks
Costume Design: Sherri Geerdes Light Design: Anne Baker
Stage Manager: Chris Wiig Dramaturgy: Michael Miller
Fight Choreographer: Kevin Barratt Original Music: Kevin Hill

Stronger Than Strong! Great American Tall Tale Heroines was re-written and produced in July 2006 as a 75 minute youth musical with different tall tales with the Papillion La-Vista Arts Network summer camp with a cast of 64 students in 1st through 8th grades.

Director: Brian Guehring Music Director: Jackie Fowler
Choreographer: Sue Booton Producer/Set Design: Dr. Debbie Kippley

Stronger Than Strong! Great American Tall Tale Heroines was re-written and produced in June 2012 as a 55 minute youth production with different tall tales with the Omaha Theater Company summer camp with a cast of 16 students in 3rd through 8th grades.

Directors: Brian Guehring, Jennifer Etinger, Dange Sanders and Megan Friend

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The DOCTORS WELLINGTON's
STRONGER THAN STRONG HEROINES OF AMERICANA SHOW
(a traveling show touring America is during the hey-day of medicine shows in the 1880s)

DOCTOR J. M. WELLINGTON inventor of a strength elixir
DOCTOR M. J. WELLINGTON co-inventor of a strength elixir
DOCTOR J. J. WELLINGTON co-inventor of a strength elixir
BARKERS 1-4 barkers, salespeople, and storytellers
SHILLS plants in the audience to help sell the elixir

Act 1: The Chronicles of SALLY ANN THUNDER ANN WHIRLWIND CROCKETT, the Tennessee Whirlwind! set in the Tennessee wilderness between 1800-1820

SALLY ANN a strong, brave heroine
BEARS hungry, attacking carnivores
ALLIGATORS thieving rascals
EAGLE soon to be bald eagle
DAVEY CROCKETT her husband-to-be
IKE FINK a braggadocio, wrestler

Act 2: The Amazing Adventurs of ANNIE CHRISTMAS, the New Orleans Sensation!
set in Louisiana and the Mississippi River between 1820-1840

ANNIE CHRISTMAS the strongest, toughest keelboater ever
DOCKWORKERS New Orleans longshoremen
MIKE FINK a chauvinistic, territorial keelboater
AUNTIE and MOTHER two worried relatives
BANDITS river pirates

Act 3: The Totatly True Tales of SLUE FOOT SUE, the Courageous Cowgirl!

The Wild west cattle lands of Texas between 1840-1860
SLUE FOOT SUE a strong, brave cowgirl
PAPA DORFLINGER her naive father
MAMA DORFLINGER her naive mother
HOT FOOT GRANNY her energetic grandmother
IKE and MIKE FINK braggadocio swindlers
PECOS BILL a strong honorable cowboy
OHIO WOMAN a woman who likes tea
COWS cattle who just want to eat grass

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PRE-SHOW: BALLYHOO

(Center stage are a couple of old time posters with DOCTORS WELLINGTONs LARGER THAN LIFE GREAT HEROINES OF AMERICANA SHOW written in old style lettering. The play starts with some actors working the crowd down the aisle.)

BARKER #1

Come one! Come all to the town square! The show is about to begin! Hurry! Hurry!

BARKER #2

Don't miss this once in a lifetime opportunity .

BARKER #3

Come see the revolutionary Doctors J. M. Wellington, Dr. M. J. Wellington, Dr. J. J. Wellington and their troupe of amazing actors

BARKER #4

All the way from Philadelphia

BARKER #1

Guaranteed to enthrall, entertain and wow every man, woman and child in the audience!

BARKER #2

One performance only!

BARKER #3

You don't want to miss this!

BARKER #4

Not only will you be amazed with the show,

BARKER #1

You will also have the opportunity to buy their patented strength elixir.

BARKER #2

Gaurunteed to cure all that ails you and make you 10 times stronger.

BARKER #3

Or your money back.

BARKER #4

And now! Ladies and Gentlemen., Boys and Girls!

BARKER#1

Please welcome, all the way from Philly-delphia,

BARKER #2

the world-famous Doctors Wellington and their amazing troupe of actors!

(DOCTORS WELLINGTON and ACTORS perform a rousing, ridiculously over-the-top big show-stopping spectacle complete with tap-dancing, sparklers, juggling, and even dancing bears.)

ALL

God Bless America!

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Aren't these actors amazing?

ALL

Thank you, Doctor Wellington.

DR. M. J. WELLINGTON

They certainly have a lot of energy.

BARKER#3

We owe it all to your strength and endurance elixir!

DR J. J. WELLINGTON

Stop it. You're embarrassing us. Let's give another hand to these incredible actors of ours!

(DR M. J. and J. M. WELLINGTON steps forward as most of the company leaves to get ready for the first story)

BARKER #1

Dr. Wellington, you have to tell them how you discovered your strength elixir!

DR J. J. WELLINGTON

Well, let's first do our show. Then if these people want to buy my elixir after, then that's their choice.

BARKER#2

After you see how it works, you'll fight to buy these bottles.

(BARKERS exit back-stage to get ready for ACT 1. A map of America in the 1880s is placed in front on the easel)

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

When we started our medical practice, most of our patients were tired, exhausted and sore.

DR M. J. WELLINGTON

We quickly realized that if we could create an elixir to give our patients strength, we would solve a lot of problems.

DR. J. J. WELLINGTON

So we began a search all over our great country of ours to search for amazingly strong people and see if we could find out what they ate or drank to become so strong. Our searches weren't always successful.

(MIKE FINK and IKE FINK enter)

DR M. J. WELLINGTON

Greetings, young men.

MIKE & IKE FINK

Howdy!

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

Would you be willing to help us out? I am Dr. J. M. Wellington

DR. J. J. WELLINGTON

I am Dr. J. J. Wellington.

DR M. J. WELLINGTON

And I am Dr. M. J. Wellington.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

And we are developing a strength elixir that should make you 10 times stronger. Do you know of anyone who is strong?

MIKE FINK

Strong? Ha! Do you know who we are? I'm Mike Fink!

IKE FINK

I'm Ike Fink!

MIKE FINK

We're muddy water bawlers!

IKE FINK

Salt river caterwaullers!

MIKE FINK

We're reg'lar hollerers from the ol' Mississip'.

IKE FINK

We're half wild panther, and half sneaky weasel, and the rest of us is snappin turtle bite.

MIKE FINK

We can outrun, out jump, outspit, and out fight, rough 'n' tumble, no holds barred, any man from Boston to New Orleans an' back agin to San Francisco.

IKE FINK

And we're the toughest, strongest, bravest, and smartest men in America!

DR M. J. WELLINGTON

Wonderful. I would love to interview you and examine your routine to find out what makes you so strong.

MIKE FINK

Nothin made us strong.

IKE FINK

We was born this great.

(MIKE & IKE FINK pose)

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

Possibly, but our hypothesis is you are intaking some food or liquid that has helped you gain strength.

DR. J. J. WELLINGTON

When we are done, we will create a strength elixir that could make you even stronger.

MIKE FINK

We don't need to be any stronger.

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

Taking part in this research would help so many others.

IKE FINK

The Finks only help the Finks.

IKE AND MIKE FINK

Cock a doodle do!

BARKER#1

Luckily for all of us, the Doctors Wellington were able to find people willing to try their elixir.

BARKER#2

Dr. J. M. Wellington wandered up to a small Tennessee home and met a young teen named Sally Ann Feeble.

BARKER#3

Who, of course, later became world famous.

BARKER#4

Known far and wide as Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett.

BARKER #1

So on with the show: Now presenting Act 1: The Chronicles of Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett, the Tennessee Tornado!

(A new sign comes on: THE CHRONICLES OF SALLY ANN THUNDER ANN WHIRLWIND CROCKETT, THE TENNESSEE TORNADO. DR J. M. WELLINGTON enters SALLY ANN, a blonde tomboy, carrying all of her possessions at the end of a stick, chewing some ginsing)

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

Howdy, young lady.

SALLY ANN

Who are you?

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Dr. J. M. Wellington.

SALLY ANN

Well my mama ain't home. Nor is my daddy. Nor are my 14 brothers. So you'll have to come back later.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Actually, I'd like to talk to you.

SALLY ANN

To me? Nobody wants to talk to me.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Well, I'm researching regional ingredients to incorporate in a patented strength elixir.

SALLY ANN

Yer what?

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

I'm inventing a potion that makes people stronger. Do you know anyone strong?

SALLY ANN

Nobody I know.

DR J. M. WELLINGTON

What's your name?

SALLY ANN

Sally Ann. Sally Ann Feeble.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Feeble?

I'm thinkin of changin my name.
SALLY ANN
(Suddenly, GRIZZLY BEARS come out of the woods and move closer to SALLY ANN)

Look out, Sally Ann.
DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Bears.
SALLY ANN

Grizzly Bears.
BEAR #1
(BEARS start circling her)

We're done hibernatin.
BEAR #2

We're hungry.
BEAR #3
(BEARS get up on their two hind legs. SALLY ANN smiles. The light flashes and the BEARS are blinded)

What just happened?
DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

I smiled.
SALLY ANN

You were surrounded by bears who wanted to kill you and you smiled?
DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Excitement makes me happy.
SALLY ANN

Your smile is so bright, it blinded the bears.
DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Like lightnin.
BEAR #1
(BEARS start moving toward her)

Now we're MAD
BEAR #2

AND HUNGRY.
BEAR #3

SALLY ANN

Yer not eatin me. (SALLY ANN screams) NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!
(BEARS all are scared out of their bear skins
and run off nekid. SALLY ANN laughs)

SALLY ANN

I just scared those bears right out of their skin.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Your voice is as loud as thunder.

SALLY ANN

Yeah, my mamma is always telling me that.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

They should call you Sally Ann Thunder Ann.

SALLY ANN

I like that.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Looks like you got some good bear skins to make some warm clothes.

SALLY ANN

I sure do.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

What are you chewing?

SALLY ANN

Just some ginseng. I chew it all the time. My papa grows it.

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Interesting. Do you mind if I stay in these mountains for a bit and take down notes
about your adventures?

SALLY ANN

Suit yourself, doc. But I doubt if anything interesting would happen.
(SALLY ANN takes her bear skins and wanders
off in one direction and DR. J. M. WELLINGTON
addresses the audience)

DR. J. M. WELLINGTON

Sally Ann Thunder Ann is an amazing young woman. She was so strong she could climb
up the side of the mountain quicker than a bobcat. She was so tough she used a hornet's
nest for a bonnet. And she used her thunder voice to scare any critter that got in her
way.