

Thursday, February 26, 2009

# TIMES UNION

## 'CSI: Live!' brings forensics to kids

By JENNIFER GISH, Staff writer

After "CSI: Live!" producers got past the primary challenge — how to make a crime show story line appropriate for kids — everything else fell into place, like the end of any good mystery.

"It was a chore for us to create the coolness factor of what 'CSI' is without actually killing anybody," says Leonard Lipes, managing director for Mad Science Productions and producer of the "CSI: Live" show.

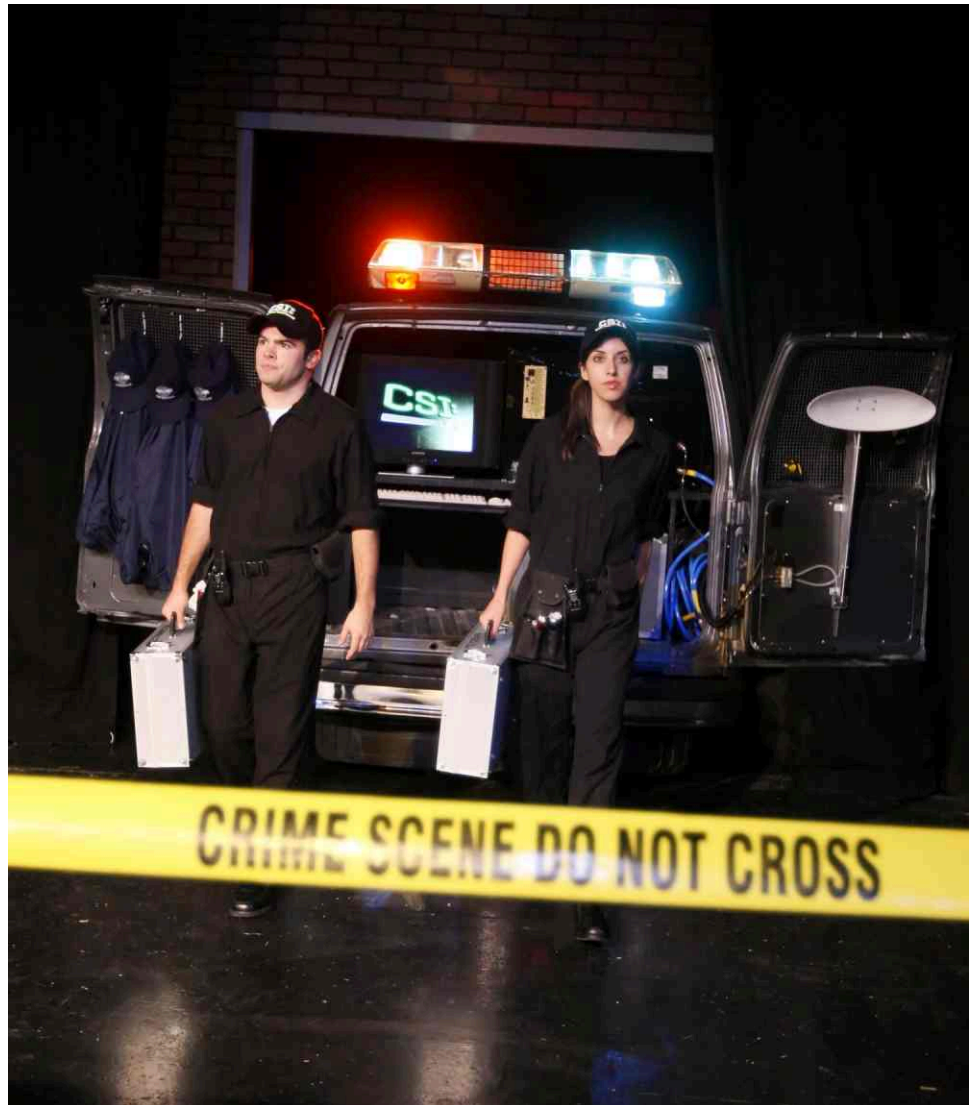
Instead, when "CSI: Live!" comes to Proctors in Schenectady on Wednesday, March 4, kids will try to figure out how a magician's assistant ended up unconscious on the stage. In line with the G-rated plot (the show's recommended for ages 8 and older), she's sent to the hospital but makes a full recovery.

Mad Science, a Montreal-based company that produces stage shows and has franchisees who entertain and educate at birthday parties and schools, worked with the producers of the CBS drama "CSI" to bring a kid-friendly version to the stage.

"CSI: Live!" is set at the Las Vegas premiere of the Max Spade Magic Show, where a mysterious flying projectile leaves Spade's assistant unconscious on the floor. It's then up to two CSI investigators — and the audience — to track down the cause using forensic investigative techniques.

"CSI" television character Gil Grissom provides encouragement along the way via video. The video screens are also used to quiz kids on their knowledge of forensic science, investigations and DNA as they enter "the crime scene."

The show, like all Mad Science



"CSI: Live!" features an appearance, via video, of popular series character Gil Grissom.

programming, seeks to bring principles of science to kids in an active, fun and memorable way. Volunteers get called to the stage to launch projectiles at a target or fire a laser beam all in the name of solving the crime.

"Kids by nature are extremely, extremely curious, and if you spark

their imagination and just light a fire, they're sponges," Lipes says. "It's all about new and cool ways of packing it up and serving it. That's our formula. Make it cool. Make it fun. Make it slick. And when they walk out of there, they need to be smarter than when they walked in."