



ARK FLOATS INTO THEATRE 26 October 2007

When Noah built his ark, the deluge was imminent and there wasn't a minute to be lost. The team building the ark which will figure in Stoke Musical Theatre Company's production of Noah - The Musical are not under quite the same pressure, but they've still had their work cut out.

While no-one will drown if they don't finish in time, they've still been working against the clock to get the vessel ship-shape before curtain up.

The ark has been built by students at the Burslem campus of Stoke-on-Trent College.

Noah, his wife, their sons and their wives, not to mention some animals, will set sail in it next week when the show is staged at The Mitchell Memorial Theatre, Hanley.

Director Ann McArdle says: "The ark's been built by lecturer Simon Wain and performing art students at the college, who've kindly given up their half-term to work on the project.

"It had to be big, but not so big that it wouldn't fit on the stage. It has to give the impression of being 300 cubits long, 30 cubits high and 50 cubits wide, and it certainly does.

"They've done a grand job for us. It's taken £1,000 worth of timber to make, but it can be dismantled and reassembled on the stage. The next job is for us all to roll up our sleeves and start painting it." The Biblical musical features all the dramatic elements of the story of Noah and his Ark, plus songs like Sad Bad Days, about the great flood itself, and Animals Forlorn, about the creatures that perished.

It will be the first show to be presented by the company since they made a remarkable debut last year with Honk!, the winner of a raft of festival awards, including best musical.

This will be the first local production of the musical by Ian Gower and Rob Alderton, who visited the cast at a rehearsal last week, and the first to feature live music.

Graham Hope, a 20-year-old from Basford, will lead a cast of 28 as Noah, with 16-year-old Ruth Davies from Madeley playing his wife.