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Ann Arbor Civic Theatre

2275 Platt Road Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

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Welcome!

Another exciting season at the Ann Arbor Civic Theater is underway, and I welcome each one of you to this performance. AACT exists because of its members, subscribers, and individual ticket buvers, and it brings together an eclectic group of performers, technicians, volunteers and audiences in appreciation of the theater arts.

Christopher Potter, in the Ann Arbor News, called the 1996-1997 AACT season "the most ambitious in recent memory." If so, then we have great plans to surpass that ambition this year as we explore the world of award winning plays and musicals. Each show this season has received multiple awards: Tonys, Obies, Drama Desk Awards, Grammy Awards and other prizes.

The performers and technicians who give their valuable time and energy to bring you each performance are all unpaid volunteers here at Civic Theater. People share their strengths, their skills and their love of theater to produce exciting, challenging and entertaining works for the community. Over the years, AACT has brought you the biggest, newest Broadway fare, as well as lesserknown but highly deserving works. This season promises no less.

We celebrate the new season as we "grow into" our own home, the lovely Civic Playhouse. During the course of the year you will see some changes, additions and improvements to make your theater-going experience at our Platt Road playhouse enjoyable and more comfortable. Let us know what we can do to make it more enjoyable for you! It is the rare community theatre that owns its own space—and Ann Arbor can be truly proud of its playhouse.

I look forward to meeting many of you during the course of the season. Here's to a season of award-winning shows, at an award-winning playhouse, with an award-winning troupe of players! We cannot do any of this without our awardwinning audiences!

Sincerely.

Roxald P. Baumaxis Ronald P. Baumanis

President, AACT Board of Directors

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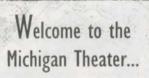
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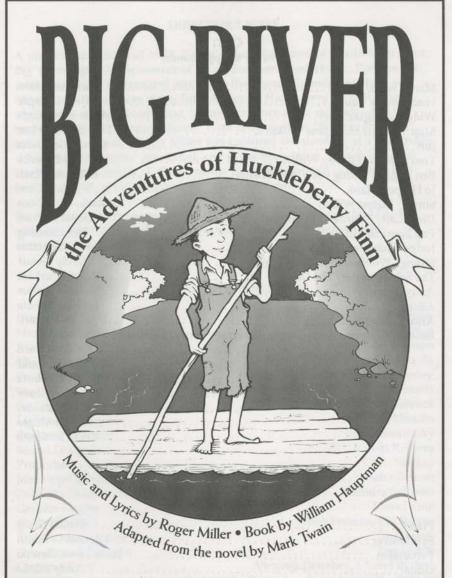
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March 5-15, 1998 - Ann Arbor Civic Theatre 2275 Platt Road, Ann Arbor

Directed by Melissa Johnson - Musical Direction by Daniel Greig

Big River is presented through special arrangement with the Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library, 229 West 28th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

CAST (in order of appearance)

Mark Twain/Doctor	
Huckleberry Finn	
Widow Douglas/Tart	
Miss Watson/Mary Jane Wilkes	
Jim	Derek Alexander
Tom Sawyer/Harvey Wilkes	Leo Babcock
Ben Rogers/Young Fool/Silas Phelps	Erik Ivar Olsen
Jo Harper/Hank	
Simon/Joanna Wilkes	
Dick/Lafe/Counselor Robinson	
Pap Finn/Sheriff Bell	
Judge Thatcher/The King	
Strange Woman/Tart/Sally Phelps	
The Schoolmaster / The Duke	David Burkam
The Schoolmaster/The Duke	
Andy/Susan Wilkes	
Alice	
Alice's daughter	
Ensemble (slaves, townspeople, mourners	
	Earl G. Ford
	Matthew Holland
	Bobby Huebner
	Andrew Humphrey
	Michael Jennings Mahoney
	Rob Moore
	Alicia M. Smith
	Alicia Wi. Sililili

MUSICIANS

Piano	Daniel Greig
Synthesizer	Michael D. Smith
Percussion	Jason Lewandowski
Guitar	Andy Filisko
Electric Bass	David Roof
Harmonica	Tommy Grant

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A musical adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Big River* captures the essence of its predecessor wonderfully. Perhaps the most beautifully represented element is the friendship between Huck and Miss Watson's runaway slave, Jim. Although *Huckleberry Finn* is often regarded as a controversial text, the musical once again reminds us of the human element in Twain's classic. With songs such as "River in the Rain" and "Worlds Apart," Roger Miller has captured the sincerity of a friendship which extends beyond age, social, and racial boundaries. It is this central storyline which unites all the elements in the famous tale -- a tale full of humor, sorrow, greed, betrayal, and enlightenment.

We are pleased to have you join us this evening, and hope you find Huck and Jim's adventures to be heart-warming, powerful, and thoroughly entertaining.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director	Melissa E. Johnson
	Daniel Greig
	Cara Johnson
	Patricia Mazzola
	Deborah J. Mahoney
	(see insert)
	Leo Babcock
	Scott Mancha
	Joan Korastinsky
	Robert R. Ferra
	Chris Starkey
	Loretta Grimes
	Sandra Sullivan
	David Zinn
	Bob Seeman, Jim Barnes
	(see insert)
	(see insert)
	Virginia Donahey, Cheryl Berteel,
	arb Wells, Renee Smallwood, and Paz Bobrow

Many Thanks to the Gabriel Richard High School Drama Club for their generous assistance with set construction, and to all the cast members who helped mend and iron the *BigRiver* costumes.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

Act One

Scene 1 Widow Douglas' Dining Room in St. Petersburg, Missouri
Scene 2
Scene 3
Scene 4
Scene 5 Jackson's Island
Scene 6
Scene 7 On the River
Scene 8 On the River; the Kentucky Shore
Act Two
Scene 1
Scene 2 Bricktown, Arkansas
Scene 3
Scene 4
Scene 5
Scene 6 The Wilkes' House; the Cemetery
Scene 7 The Arkansas Countryside
Scene 8
Scene 9 The Shed; The Doctor's Office; Spanish Island
Scene 10 The Phelps' Farmhouse; By the River
MUSICAL NUMBERS
Act One
Do Ya Wanna Go To Heaven?
The Boys Tom and the Boys
The Boys Tom and the Boys
The Boys
The Boys
The Boys
The Boys Tom and the Boys Waitin' For The Light To Shine Huck Guv'ment Pap Hand For The Hog Tom I, Huckleberry, Me Huck
The Boys Tom and the Boys Waitin' For The Light To Shine Huck Guv'ment Pap Hand For The Hog Tom I, Huckleberry, Me Huck Muddy Water Jim and Huck
The Boys
The Boys
The Boys
The Boys
The Boys Tom and the Boys Waitin' For The Light To Shine
The Boys Tom and the Boys Waitin' For The Light To Shine
The Boys Tom and the Boys Waitin' For The Light To Shine
The Boys

ABOUT THE CAST

Derek Alexander (Jim) After studying with William Warfield, Derek went on to get his degree in music education. He is also a professional pit drummer, maintains a private voice and percussion studio, and has been a featured soloist with the Toledo Symphony After nine years of teaching for the Toledo Schools, he is now actively pursuing a professional performance career, and recently auditioned for Livent's Broadway production of Ragtime.

Timo Anderson (Mark Twain, Doctor) SWM 25. Likes sports, gourmet cooking, wine and dancing. Searching for a reason to commit to long-time companion who roped him into doing this show (she batted her eyes, and actually the cast parties are fun!). If you have the answer to my question, please let me know after the show.

Leo Babcock (Tom Sawyer, Harvey Wilkes; Set Designer) Leo, a selfemployed architect, has appeared in over fifty stage productions with groups ranging from children's thea ter to professional companies. His favorite roles include Nathan in Guys & Dolls, Fagin in Oliver!, and Rooster babysitter's Christmas Pageant in Annie. Behind the scenes he has directed and designed sets, props, and costumes with love and support from Ella, Charlotte and Barbara

David Burkam (The Schoolmaster The Duke) David is thrilled to once again share the "histrionic boards" with his good college friend of nearly twenty years, Ron Baumanis. Their last co-appearance was in a college

production of The Mousetrap -where both were shameless in their attempts to "out act" the other. The contest now continues. More recently, Ron directed David's award-winning performance in Civic's musical production of My Favorite Year.

Ronald P. Baumanis (Judge Thatcher, The King) Ron is AACT Board President and has directed our awardwinning productions of Bye Bye Birdie, My Favorite Year, and Jeffrey. He will be directing AACT's Jesus Christ Superstar in May. In over 100 stage roles, this is his first attempt at "evil bad guy" . . . and he loves it!!

Iyobosa Ekhato (Alice) Iyobosa is quite happy to be part of Civic's latest production, as it has given her the chance to see some great acting. She has also done plays with Huron Players, most recently Brigadoon.

Earl G. Ford (Ensemble) Earl is currently working towards his Ph.D. in Philosophy. He enjoys the arts and decided to participate, for the first time ever, in a play. He is very excited about being a part of AACT's BigRiver

Rachel Francisco (Simon, Joanna Wilkes) Big River marks Rachel's return to the stage, her last performance being the Littlest Angel in her when she was five. She has played in pit orchestras for over ten years, and finally decided that "if they can do it, so can I." She is also delighted that she was able to con her long-time companion into joining the show with her.

T. Adam Goos (Jo Harper, Hank) This is Adam's first appearance with AACT. A recent graduate of Wayne State College in Nebraska, Adam holds a B.S. in theater and music performance. Some of his favorite roles include Joseph in Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Xanthias in Frogs, and Leslie in Sylvia.

Tim Henning (Pap Finn, Sheriff Bell) Tim has performed previously with AACT as The Doctor in The Enchanted, Warbucks in Annie, and Tito in Lend Me A Tenor. He will be playing Adam/Victor in the world premiere of Refused, by Ari Roth, opening at the Performance Network on March 26th.

Matthew Holland (Ensemble)
Matthew is a seventh grader at
Saline Middle School. He is a
member of several area choirs,
including the Baptist Church (Ann
Arbor) Children's Choir, and played
the clarinet. Matthew debuted on
stage with Saline High School, as
one of the town children in The
Music Man.

BobbyHuebner (Ensemble) Bobby is a seventh grade student at St. Paul's Lutheran School. He has most recently sung the title role in Amahl and The Night Visitors. Bobby was part of the choir in Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with Donny Osmond. He has been in various musicals but this is his first AACT production.

Andrew Humphrey (Ensemble)
Andrew is a sixth grade student at
Heritage School, and has appeared
in Saline Area Players' Oliver! as
the Artful Dodger. He also sings in
Saline's Varsity Blues. Big River
marks his debut on the AACT stage.

Jennifer Anne Lee (Miss Watson, Mary Jane Wilkes) Jennifer last appeared at AACT as Tess in The Sisters Rosenweig, following earlier performances in Bye Bye Birdie and The Secret Garden. Most recently, she appeared in Henry V at the U of M. Other credits at U of M include Jesus Christ Superstar, Assassins, and Pamela. She will soon hold a B.F.A. in Theatre Performance.

Michael Jennings Mahoney (Ensemble) Michael appeared as Colin in AACT's The Secret Garden, for which he received the John Rae Cameo Award, and also as Randolph in Bye Bye Birdie. With YPT, he performed in Livent's Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Other favorite roles with YPT include Peter Pan, Elwood P. Dowd, and the Tinman; with U of M, Bennie (Music Man); and with MorrisCo. Art Theater, John (Summer and Smoke).

Michelle Marquardt (Widow Douglas Tart) Michelle has enjoyed singing in a variety of productions, including the U of M's 1994 opera production of Cosifan Tutte, Dexter's 1993 Jesus Christ Superstar, and Jackson's 1991 Rose-Queen Pageant, where she won the prize for Best Talent singing "Seguidilla" from Carmen. She is excited to be part of AACT for the first time in BigRiver.

Rob Moore (Ensemble) Rob is an Eastern Michigan student seeking further experiences in theater, as he is currently working on his degree in broadcasting and theater. He also plays arena football, and is currently training for the Goodwill Games in the decathlon.

Erik Ivar Olsen (Ben Rogers, Young Fool, Silas Phelps) Erik ("The Gene Hackman of AACT") continues to resist typecasting, having last appeared as Ed, the typographically-obsessed, xylophone-playing son-in-law in You Can't Take It With You. By day he's a tag jockey for the University of Michigan.

David J. Rowe (Dick, Lafe, Counselor Robinson) After a 17 year hiatus, David has returned to the stage primarily due to the influence of his cousin Chris Persil, an actor from New York City. David previously performed for the Chicago Park District in shows such as A Christmas Carol and The Wizard of Oz. He also played General II in a short film, The Attack of the Really Gross Thing from Outer Space.

Wendy Sielaff (Strange Woman, Tart, Sally Phelps) This is
Wendy's first AACT production, although she has performed at other venues in shows such as The Secret Garden, Oklahoma!, Isn't it Romantic, and You Can't Take It With You. She has also directed and produced several shows. Wendy gives special thanks to the Girls Night Out group, and Mike, for their understanding of her schedule.

Alicia M. Smith (Ensemble) Big River is Alicia's second AACT show, her first being Bye Bye Birdie. She has also performed with Young Peoples' Theatre, as Ruth in The Pirates of Penzance, and in various other productions including Anne of Green Gables and Peter Pan. She loves theater and painting with watercolors. Jeffery J. Steger (Huck) A junior in Theatre Performance at the University of Michigan, Jeff is appearing in his third Civic show. He was previously seen in Bye Bye Birdie and The Secret Garden. Jeff wants to thank the cast for their patience, and his standins for all their great work!

Melanie Waters (Andy, SusanWilkes) Melanie is enjoying the challenges of cross-dressing in her first AACT production. A Cleveland native, she is a 1997 Notre Dame graduate who has has endured a long, painful football season while working in Ann Arbor. She was last seen as Laurey in Oklahoma!, but is happy to be returning to the stage without laryngitis.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Jim Barnes (Co-Set Designer) Jim has worked backstage for many AACT productions, as well as devoted much time to organizing the AACT scene shop. He says he is really a ticket-buyer gone wrong. He thanks his wife Marjorie for being patient with him while he makes equal parts scenery and sawdust for AACT.

Robert R. Farra (Sound Designer)
Bob debuted onstage at AACT earlier
this season in *The Baltimore Waltz*,
and recently assumed the role of Paul
Sycamore in *You Can't Take It With*You. For Big River, he has ventured
behind the scenes. Together with his
wonderful wife Cheryl, Bob serves on
the AACT Board of Directors.

Daniel Greig (Musical Director)
This is Dan's first endeavor as
musical director with AACT.
Currently he is studying vocal
music at Wayne State University
and teaching voice lessons; upon

graduation, he plans to teach in the public school system. He has acted and sung in various productions, including *The Wizard of Oz, Oliver!* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. Remember, "Think Vienna Boys Choir!"

Loretta Grimes (Make-up Coordinator) Loretta was last seen onstage as Penny Sycamore in AACT's You Can't Take It With You. Earlier this season she was Make-up Coordinator for Lost in Yonkers. Loretta attended The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. In her non-acting hours, she is a local preschool teacher.

Cara Johnson (Assistant Director)
This is Cara's first show at AACT.
When not at rehearsal, Cara is
busy as a political science/women's
studies major at the U of M. She
would like to thank the great cast
and crew for making her first show
a memorable one. Girl Power!

Melissa E. Johnson (Director) This is Melissa's second time directing for AACT. She directed I Hate Hamlet last season. In addition to her 18 directing credits, Melissa has a considerable amount of performance experience. Her favorite roles include Caitlin in Dylan, Adela in The House of Bernarda Alba, and The Messenger in Medea. She is thrilled to be working with such a talented group of people! VIIIIIIIXXX!

Joan Korastinsky (Costume Designer)
Joan wanted a rest, but tears and sobs
worked. Her last project with AACT
was A Little Night Music,, and was
most rewarding. She thanks her
costume crew, who also came on board
at the last minute and worked

tirelessly. Her new puppy Taz was a rehearsal hit--a new star!!

Deborah J. Mahoney (Production Coordinator) Debbie served as Production Coordinator for Lost in Yonkers, has appeared onstage in Medea, and provided off-stage voices for Farnsdale Christmas Carol. She is currently President-elect of YPT.

Scott Mancha (Lighting Designer) Scott is Civic's "Resident Lighting Designer." He has lit more shows than he cares to remember. AACT appreciates his time and expertise.

Patricia Mazzola (Choreographer)
Patty has choreographed for various local theater groups, and you may hav seen her onstage at AACT as Gloria Rasputin in Bye Bye Birdie and Liat in South Pacific. She has choreographed and performed professionally in the U.S. and Asia. Although she has never seen the Mississippi, she can spell it with one "eye"!

Bob Seeman (Co-Set Builder) Bob was last heard from as Co-Set Designer for You Can't Take It With You, and apparently has not yet left the scene shop. He appreciates the opportunity to work with Leo Babcock, for whom he built the last set that Leo designed for AACT (South Pacific).

Chris Starkey (Properties) Chris has appeared onstage with AACT in various roles, most recently as Donald in You Can't Take It With You. He is also active with the Ypsilanti Players and PTD Productions.

Sandra Sullivan (Publicity Director, Program) Sandy (English Ph.D. dancer-turned-publicist) enjoyed her brief time with AACT -- good luck!!



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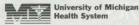
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During events at Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, the box office in the Michigan League is open Thursday through Saturday from 12:00 noon to 8:15 pm, and on Sunday from 12:00 noon to 2:15 pm.

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THE 1997-1998 SEASON

Lost in Yonkers

WRITTEN BY NEIL SIMON • DIRECTED BY JOY BAKER DENNIS September 18-21, 1997, Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre

The Baltimore Waltz

WRITTEN BY PAULA VOGEL • DIRECTED BY AMY KULLENBERG October 16-26, 1997, Civic Theatre Playhouse

A Little Night Music

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY STEPHEN SONDHEIM • BOOK BY HUGH WHEELER DIRECTED BY GLENN BUGALA

November 13-23, 1997, with Saturday matinees, Civic Theatre Playhouse

Junior Theatre-Stuart Little

WRITTEN BY E. B. WHITE • DRAMATIZED BY JOSEPH ROBINETTE December 4-7, 1997, Civic Theatre Playhouse

The Farnsdale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Society's Production of A Christmas Carol

WRITTEN BY DAVID MCGILLIVRAY AND WALTER ZERLIN JR. DIRECTED BY JAN KOENGETER December 18-21, 1997, Civic Theatre Playhouse

You Can't Take It With You

WRITTEN BY MOSS HART & GEORGE S. KAUFMAN • DIRECTED BY THOM JOHNSON January 22-February 1, 1998, Civic Theatre Playhouse

An Evening of Cabaret

February 13 & 14, 1998, Civic Theatre Playhouse

Big River

BOOK BY WILLIAM HAUPTMAN • MUSIC AND LYRICS BY ROGER MILLER DIRECTED BY MELISSA RYAN March 5-15, 1998, with Saturday matinees, Civic Theatre Playhouse

Junior Theatre-Heidi

WRITTEN BY JOHANNA SPYRI • DRAMATIZED BY JUNE WALKER ROGERS March 26-29, 1998, Civic Theatre Playhouse

The Merchant of Venice

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE • DIRECTED BY NATALIE HOLBROOK April 16-26, 1998, Civic Theatre Playhouse

Jesus Christ Superstar

LYRICS BY TIM RICE • MUSIC BY ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
DIRECTION, CHOREOGRAPHY AND CONCERT STAGING BY RONALD P. BAUMANIS
May 14-17, 1998, with Saturday matinee, Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre

Dancing at Lughnasa

WRITTEN BY BRIAN FRIEL • DIRECTED BY JOY BAKER DENNIS June 11-21, 1998, Civic Theatre Playhouse



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