



Minneapolis Musical Theatre

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Press Release

January 20, 2010

MINNEAPOLIS MUSICAL THEATRE PRESENTS BIG RIVER: THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

PLAYS APRIL 9 - 25, 2010 AT THE ILLUSION THEATER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*) Minneapolis Musical Theatre today announced the full cast and crew for its spring production, ***Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***. Minneapolis Musical Theatre (MMT) will present the Tony Award-winning musical April 9 – 25 at the Illusion Theater in downtown Minneapolis.

Directed by MMT artistic director and co-founder Steven Meerdink, ***Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*** is based on Mark Twain's classic 1884 novel about the transformative Mississippi River journey taken by the irrepressible Huck Finn and Jim, a compassionate runaway slave. Tickets are \$25 to \$28, and are on sale through the Illusion Theater box office at 612-339-4944 or online at www.aboutmmt.org.

"This is one of the hidden gems among Broadway hits," says MMT artistic director Steven Meerdink. "It is musical storytelling at its best, capturing the hardships, joys and triumphs of pre-Civil War American life. In ***Big River***, Mark Twain's heartwarming tale is told through a rousing score combining bluegrass, country and gospel music in a way only songwriting icon Roger Miller could. It is a toe-tapping, moving and jubilant journey with as many turns as the Mississippi itself, and one we think will really resonate with Twin Cities audiences."

Winner of seven Tony Awards, ***Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*** brings to life all of the book's memorable characters, including Huck, his troubled father Pap, Jim, Tom Sawyer, a rascally pair of river drifters, a grieving heiress and others. The original production of ***Big River*** ran on Broadway for more than 1,000 performances between April, 1985 and September, 1987. In addition to the coveted Tony Award for Best Musical, ***Big River*** earned the Tony Award for Best Original Score for composer-lyricist Roger Miller who was famous for his chart-topping country and honky-tonk hits such as "King of the Road" and "England Swings."

"A rousing, high spirited show that sets your hands to clapping, your feet to stomping and your heart to rise within you!" - WCBS-TV

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An enduring American story, *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was remounted on Broadway in 2003, winning the Tony Award for Excellence in Theater and earning Tony and Drama Desk nominations for Best Revival of a Musical. A successful national tour followed in 2004 – 2005.

MMT Cast and Artistic Staff

The cast of MMT's production of *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* includes: **Andrew Newman** (Huckleberry Finn), **Reginald Haney** (Jim), **Carl M. Schoenborn** (Pap/ Mark Twain), **Kevin Chick** (Tom Sawyer), **Joyce Norman** (Widow Douglas), **Suzanne Reyburn** (Miss Watson), **Max Wojtanowicz** (Duke), **Ryan Grimes** (King/ Judge), **Tara Borman** (Mary Jane), **Jodi Tripp** (Susan), **Nikki Anthony** (Alice), **Michelle Delgado** (Betsy), **Samuel VanWyk** (Young Fool), and **Rodney Fair** (Field Hand).

The artistic staff for *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* includes MMT co-founder **Steven Meerdink** (Director/ Choreographer), **Lori Maxwell** (Musical Director) and **Christine Karki** (Assistant Director). Other members of the artistic staff are: **Joshua Stevens** (Scenic Designer), **Kirsten Iverson** (Costume Designer), **Emily Hanson** (Rehearsal Accompanist), **Grant Merges** (Light Designer), **Lucas Melchior** (Sound Designer), **Jay Schueller** (Technical Director/Scenic Construction) and **Sarah Bauer** (Stage Manager).

MMT's 10th Anniversary Season

Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the second production in MMT's 10th Anniversary Season. In November, 2009, MMT presented the area premiere of the rollicking hit, *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*. The final show of MMT's 2009-2010 season will be the Jerry Herman classic *Mame* (June, 2010), played with a surprising twist as MMT co-founder Kevin Hansen assumes the title role of Mame.

MMT also will perform *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* at Theatre L'Homme Dieu in Alexandria, MN from July 27 – August 1, 2010.

About Minneapolis Musical Theatre

Minneapolis Musical Theatre (MMT) is dedicated to providing community access to high quality, affordable works of musical theatre that have never or rarely been performed in the Twin Cities. Founded in 1992 originally as a touring troupe, MMT presented its first full season of musicals in the Twin Cities in the 2000-2001 season. It has produced nearly 40 musical productions, including an impressive 19 area premieres, to significant critical and audience acclaim.

Led by artistic director Steven Meerdink, MMT moved to its new home at the Illusion Theater in downtown Minneapolis in October 2008. From 2002–2008, MMT performed downtown at Hennepin Stages (formerly Hey City Theater), and previously was the Company in Residence at the Bryant Lake Bowl Cabaret Theater. For more information about MMT and its productions, visit www.aboutmmt.org.

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Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Presented by Minneapolis Musical Theatre
 April 9 – 25, 2010

Music and Lyrics by Roger Miller
 Book by William Hauptman
 Adapted from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

Venue:
 The Illusion Theater
 8th Floor of Hennepin Center for the Arts
 528 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403 (corner of 6th and Hennepin)

Tickets:
 \$25-\$28
 Box Office: 612-339-4944
 Online: www.aboutmmt.org

BIG RIVER: THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 2010					9 7:30 p.m.	10 7:30 p.m.
11 7:30 p.m.				15 (Disc.) 7:30 p.m.	16 7:30 p.m.	17 7:30 p.m.
18 (ASL/AD) 7:30 p.m.	19 7:30 p.m.			22 10:00 a.m.* 7:30 p.m.	23 7:30 p.m.	24 7:30 p.m.
25 2:30 p.m.						

Disc. = Post-show audience discussion (all attendees are invited to stay)
 ASL/AD = American Sign Language (ASL) and Audio Described (AD) performance
 *Special Morning Matinee performance for school and youth groups.

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