Press Release

George Mason University’s School of Theater and School of Music present

BIG RIVER: THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Thursday, October 25–Saturday, October 27 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, October 27 at 2 p.m.
Sunday, October 28 at 4 p.m.
In the Center for the Arts

(FAIRFAX)—George Mason University’s School of Theater and School of Music collaborate to present Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, an adaptation of Mark Twain’s classic. The production runs from Thursday, October 25–Sunday, October 28, 2018 in the Center for the Arts’ Concert Hall located on the Fairfax campus. Tickets are on sale at cfa.gmu.edu.

With a book by William Hauptman, Big River is a musical theater version of Twain’s colorful novel, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The music and lyrics are by Roger Miller, who incorporated American styles such as bluegrass and country in keeping with the setting of the novel. Set along the Mississippi River, the plot follows our irrepressible hero, Huckleberry Finn, a wild child who helps his friend Jim, a runaway slave, escape to freedom. Through a series of hilarious encounters and elaborate hoaxes, Huck and Jim share heartwarming adventures in their search for liberty. Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn premiered on Broadway in 1985 and it is regarded as one of the few successful American musicals of the mid-1980s.

Mason’s production of Big River is directed by Thomas W. Jones II, who is a seasoned director, writer, and performer with more than 150 plays in his portfolio. Jones is co-founder of Atlanta’s Jomandi Productions, which became the third largest African-American theater company in the United States, and the creator of VIA International Artists, Inc. His work as a director, writer, and actor has been celebrated with 12 Helen Hayes Awards, a Dramalogue
Award, a San Diego Critics Award, and the NAACP Phoenix Award, among other accolades.

Jones is the School of Theater’s Professional Artist in Residence (PART) for fall 2018. Launched in 2012, the PART program brings professional artists of all theatrical disciplines to teach, mentor, and work with Mason students through master classes, workshops, courses, and more.

Jones shares about the production, “our approach is to see—through a 21st century lens—a story of friendship and courage that flew in the face of social political convention, and to see humanity and possibility in a world of nullification and denial. Big dreams underscore the power of our humanity that inextricably binds us—that is the journey of Big River.”

In addition to director Thomas W. Jones II, the creative team for Big River features musical direction by Joe Walsh (Faculty, Schools of Theater and Music) and choreography by Stefan Sittig (Adjunct Professor, School of Theater). Professionals and students come together to deliver outstanding work in other areas—scenic design is by Phil Male (Adjunct Professor, School of Theater) and Michael Cherry (Theater Major), and lights and projections are by Sherrice Mojgani (Assistant Professor, School of Theater) and Joe Miller (Theater Major). The following Theater Majors enhance the creative team: costumes designer Alex Wiemeyer, props designer Alex Wade, dramaturg Jacob Horowitz, and stage manager Manon Nicole Cook.

Tickets to Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn are $30 for adults and $15 for students and seniors. These are available in person at the Center for the Arts’ Ticket Office (open Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.), by phone at 703-993-2787, or online at cfa.gmu.edu.

About the School of Theater
Mason’s School of Theater provides a rigorous, creative, and nurturing environment where we encourage conceptual and cultural diversity. Students establish a professional work ethic, collaborate with others, and take responsibility for individual as well as group efforts as they prepare for a life and career beyond graduation. We challenge our students to think critically, write clearly and persuasively, and express themselves through a course of study combining a liberal arts education with practical training and production experience. Theater is a universal expression of the human spirit. Our department embraces and ensures this expression through the study of historical, contemporary, and cultural traditions, training in the craft, and the presentation of plays.

About the College of Visual and Performing Arts
The College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) provides an academic environment in which the arts are explored as individual disciplines and interdisciplinary forms that strengthen one
another. The college prepares students for careers as creators, performers, teachers, scholars, arts leaders and arts entrepreneurs. Understanding that an education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists, the Center for the Arts, the professional presentation and production arm of the college, welcomes a variety of professional and world-renowned artists, musicians and actors to its stage. Students have the opportunity to perform, create and exhibit their work in a wide variety of public venues including a 2,000-seat Concert Hall. CVPA is home to the Schools of Music, Dance, Art and Theater, as well as the Computer Game Design, Arts Management, and Film and Video Studies programs.

About George Mason University
George Mason University is Virginia’s largest public research university. Located near Washington, D.C., Mason enrolls 35,000 students from 130 countries and all 50 states. Mason has grown rapidly over the past half-century and is recognized for its innovation and entrepreneurship, remarkable diversity and commitment to accessibility.

For more information, please visit:
Mason’s School of Theater
Mason’s College of Visual and Performing Arts
Mason’s Center for the Arts

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