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Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

By Roger Miller

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Last weekend at Scott Concert Hall in the Porter Center for the Performing Arts, the Fine Arts Division presented the musical production of *Big River* which is the adventure story of Huckleberry Finn set to music. This timeless tale is the first production of its kind to come to the Porter Center. The performance made use of the combined talents of the school's music department and theater department.

The cast for the show is made up of BC students, faculty, Brevard Little Theater players and members of the local community. The play was first produced in Massachusetts in 1984, and then played in several other places before finally going to Broadway in 1985.

It won seven Tony Awards that year, and since then it has opened one more time at a special production for the Theater for the Deaf. In this case, the entire play was done in sign language.

Kyle Biery, assistant professor of stagecraft, chose this performance from his past experiences with it. He felt it would be a great play to put on at Brevard College. In total the play involves 57 people, cast and crew, with the show. This is a third of how many people will fit into the black box theater audience! Twenty-three of those people are cast members, and the rest are all doing behind-the-scenes work to get this performance under way.

The two main leads in the play are senior music major Daniel Nelson who has the role of Huckleberry Finn. His counter part, the slave Jim, is played by Lamar Gordon a BC graduate music major. Lamar is now the Bethel Baptist Church choir director, many members of which have roles in the play.

Most of the preparation for the musical took place before Christmas break, and when they came back Kyle Biery's stagecraft class started working at the beginning of the semester, and little by little they started rehearsing. Now the group rehearses every night, sometimes for nine hours at a time. "Students hang out and do homework, while they wait their turn on the stage," says Theater Department Chair, Bob White. White is very appreciative of Biery's directing abilities.