

Tony-winner Richardson slated for role in Otterbein's 'Big River'

By Michael Grossberg

Dispatch Theater Critic

Broadway star Ron Richardson will play Jim, Huck Finn's black friend, in *Otterbein College's* upcoming *Big River*.

The guest Equity actor won a Tony award for best supporting actor for his portrayal of Jim in Roger Miller's adaptation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which was the 1985 Tony-winner for best musical.



Richardson

John Stefano will direct the student production. Performances are April 29-May 8 in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St., Westerville. Tickets cost \$10.50-\$12. Call 898-1109.

PLAYERS 'PUMPS' UP SUMMER

Players Theatre Columbus enjoyed an unprecedented, summer-extended hit last year with *Oil City Symphony*. Players hopes to achieve similar success with *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, a similarly daffy musical comedy revue.

The just-announced non-subscription show will run June 9-July 17 in the Riffe Center's Studio One Theatre. Previews are June 2-6 during the Columbus Arts Festival.

"We're hoping that *Pump Boys*

STAGE NOTES

will be this summer's *Oil City Symphony*," said P. Susan Sharrock, Players' public relations manager.

"It's the same kind of fun, light summer musical."

The country-pop revue, set in the Double Cupp diner on Highway 57 in Grand Ole Opry country, was conceived and written by John Foley, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, Cass Morgan, John Schimmel and Jim Wann.

Hardwick and Monk are part of the creative team behind *Oil City Symphony*, which had the longest run of any show in Players' history.

New York director Jason Edwards will direct *Pump Boys* and play Jim.

Tickets cost \$15-\$20. Call 644-8425.

GRANDPARENTS GET SPRINGY

Grandparents Living Theatre will present five mini-performances of *Golden Age Rages On!* and *I Was Young ... Now I'm Wonderful* from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday at The Union's store in Kingsdale Shopping Center.

The "Celebrate Spring" fundraiser, benefiting the semiprofessional theater, is the result of a business/arts partnership between Grandparents and The Union, Boston Chicken, MCL Cafeteria, Swan Cleaners and Umberto's.

"During a time of budget constraints and funding cuts by large corporations and foundations, the exploration of this type of funding is an exciting alternative," said Jane Celehar, Grandparents' managing director.

Tickets, a \$5 donation at the door, include admission to the performances and merchant discount coupons. Call 228-7458.

BROADWAY PREVIEW?

The Broadway Series won't announce its 1993-94 season until next month, but some of the news is out.

Five Guys Named Moe, the Louis Jordan revue in its third year in London and its second on Broadway, is coming Columbus' way, according to a recent full-page ad in *The New York Times*.

A Broadway-bound revival of *My Fair Lady*, starring Richard Chamberlain, began last week in Orlando, Fla. The 19-city tour includes Columbus; the Lerner and Loewe musical comedy is to open in New York in December.

Two other road shows are listing Columbus on their 1993-94 schedules: *Crazy for You*, the 1992 Tony-winner for best musical that showcases George Gershwin's best tunes, and the national touring revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

A Broadway Series spokesman refused to confirm these shows, but said *Superstar* may be offered this summer as a non-subscription show.

Fire alarm interrupts *Big River* performance

By Jennifer Cochran

The Friday, May 7 performance of *Big River* was quite alarming.

Twice during the play, Cowan Hall's fire alarms sounded and the near-capacity audience evacuated the building. The Westerville fire department responded both times and turned the alarm system off for the evening after the second false alarm.

According to Larry Hunter, director of safety and security, the cause of the two disturbances is unknown. "Nobody pulled a firebox," Hunter said. He added that service checked out the building Saturday to see if

there was a problem with the wiring in the alarm system, but found no problems.

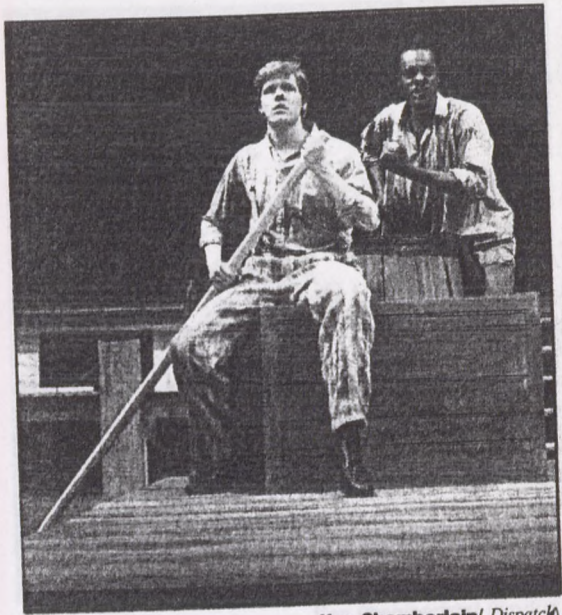
Hunter said that the fire department thought the cause of the alarms going off might have been the heat resulting from humidity combined with the amount of people in the building. But he said there had not been previous problems like this and it did not happen the next night.

One audience member, sophomore Jenny Rhude, said, "It didn't affect my feeling about the play because it was so good, but it was annoying."

Several actors took their bows at curtain call holding fire extinguishers.

Westerville Fire

- Westerville firefighters were called to Otterbein College's Cowan Hall theater twice on May 7 during a performance of "Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Fire crews were called out at 9:20 and 10:50 p.m. when the theater's smoke detectors malfunctioned, reports said. There was no fire.



Ken Chamberlain/Dispatch 199

Huck Finn (Corey Moore), left, and Jim (Ron Richardson) navigate the Mississippi in *Big River*.

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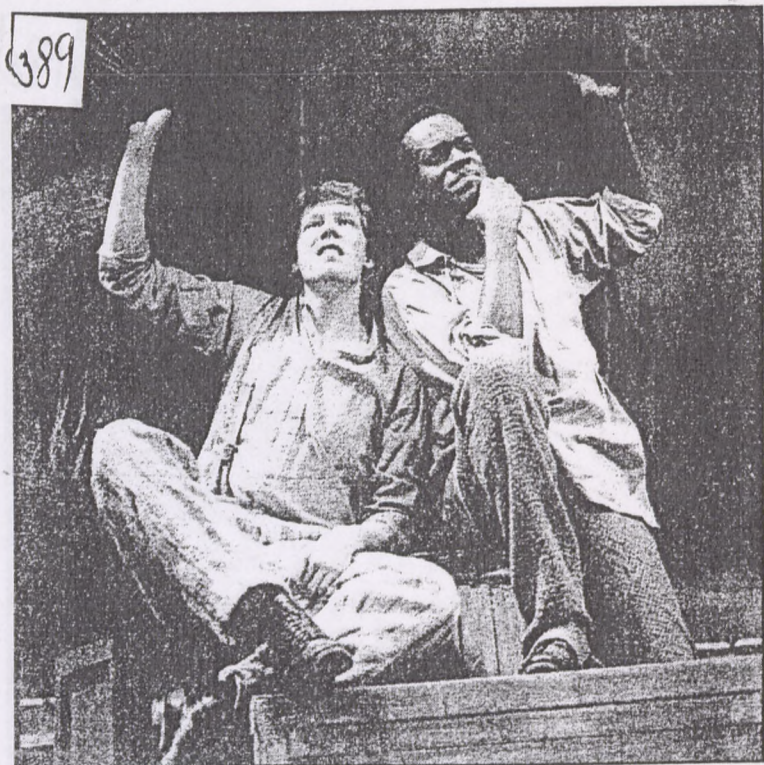
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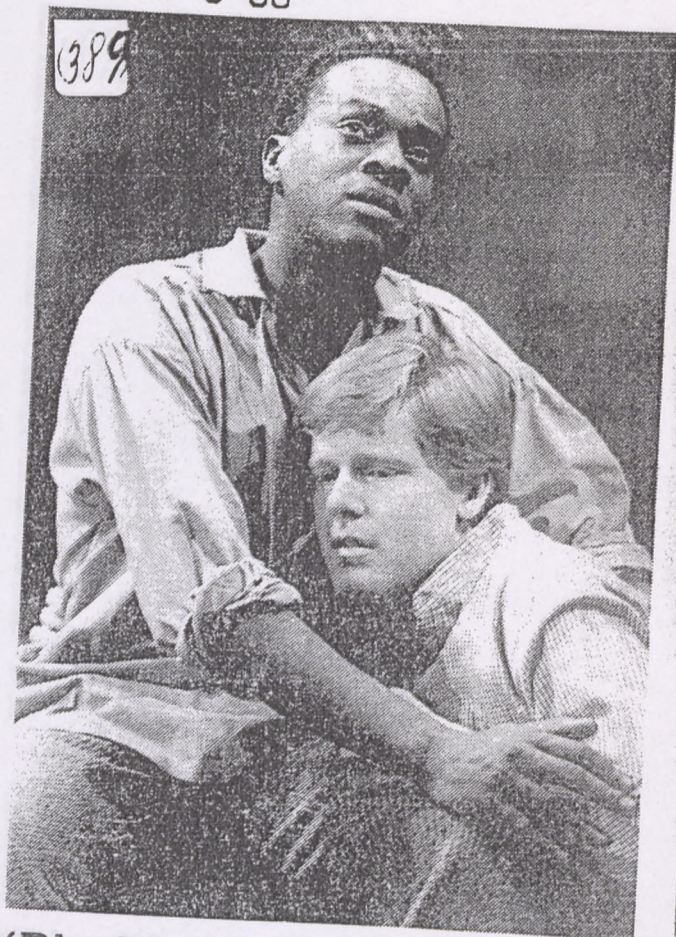
Tim Revell/Dispatch

Corey Moore, left, and Ron Richardson star in Otterbein College's production of *Big River*, a musical adaptation of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

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'Big River' performance

Broadway actor Ron Richardson (left) reprises his Tony Award-winning portrayal of Jim in the musical *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, playing through Saturday at Otterbein College's Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St. Showtime is 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. Otterbein senior Corey Moore plays Huck Finn. For tickets call 898-1109 between 1 and 4:30 p.m.

Otterbein College Theatre
and the Department of Music present...

Tony Award-Winner
RON RICHARDSON starring as Jim in



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Music and Lyrics
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Book by **WILLIAM HAUPTMAN**
Adapted from the novel by Mark Twain

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May 6-8

"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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Box Office open 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm

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Columbus Dispatch Weekender - May 6, 1993 (Thurs)

■ SUNDAY

Tony-winning star

Ron Richardson, who won a Tony award as Jim in the original Broadway production of *Big River*, is the guest Equity star in Otterbein College's revival. Performances are at 7:30 tonight, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St., Westerville. Tickets: \$10.50 to \$12. Call 898-1109.