

## Students See “Raisin In the Sun” at Two River Theater

By Emily Knepple, Arts and Entertainment Editor

About a dozen students, along with three faculty members, took advantage of the opportunity to see a play they have studied or will study as a junior in AP English Language and Composition by going to Two River Theater’s highly-anticipated production of Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* on Oct. 2.

Katie Venezia and Kelly Cusick, both members of the junior class, attended the show. “I wanted to see the show so I could completely immerse myself in that time period and understand it from a larger perspective,” Venezia said. The play follows an African-American family, the Youngers, living in Chicago in the 1950s after the death of the family patriarch, which results in the family receiving a \$10,000 life insurance check.



Brenda Pressley stars as Lena “Mama” Younger and Owen Tabaka as her grandson Travis Younger in Two River Theater’s production of *A Raisin in the Sun*, which was staged from Sept. 9 through Oct. 8. (Photo courtesy of Two River Theater)

Cusick had similar reasons for attending. “I wanted to take advantage of the trip, so when it comes [time] to read the play in class, it’s easier to comprehend,” Cusick said.

Not only did the students get to see the play, but the entire audience participated in a pre-show discussion led by York Walker, the actor who portrayed George Murchison, Beneatha Younger's rich, egotistical suitor. In the 15-minute dialogue, show-goers learned about the playwright, Lorraine Hansberry, and the history in which the play represents.

"After reading the play last year, it was interesting to hear about the writer and her background," senior Courtney Vadon said. "It added on a whole new layer to the play and made me anticipate the show even more."

For the younger students, the play was an experience to get together with their classmates and enjoy the show. "I love the theater and seeing shows," sophomore Shea Campanella said. "Trinity Hall offers a lot of opportunities to see plays, and I was also interested because it was in Red Bank, a closer city than the trips we have done to New York."

The faculty members who attended the show were Theology teacher Melissa Whelan, English teacher Alyssa Morreale, who teaches the play in the junior-level English class, and drama teacher Ellen Phillips. "We offered the students this opportunity because we felt that it was a great way for them to see what they were going to or had already read," Phillips said. "The show was fabulous,...the acting was phenomenal and it was overall an outstanding production with a set that really brought the play to life."