

The Nightmarish Fever Dream in
***THE PICTURE OF
 DORIAN GRAY***

By **Oscar Wilde**
 Adapted by **Judd Parkin**
 Directed by **Victor Pappas**
 June 6—July 1, 2018

Press Contact

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SEATTLE, Wash.—May 3, 2018—Book-It Repertory Theatre brings a fluid, minimalist production of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to Seattle in June. Directed by **Victor Pappas**, the famously dark 1890 novel by **Oscar Wilde** was adapted for the stage by **Judd Parkin**. Pappas calls this production a horror story about the danger one's soul is in among the corrupting influences of society.



When the irresistible Dorian Gray sees the magnificent portrait his friend Basil Hallward has painted of him, he laments that he will grow old while the picture will always remain young. Dorian strikes a Faustian bargain and is granted eternal youth while the portrait ages and records his sins. As his pursuit of pleasure devolves into a life of sin and corruption, Dorian's bargain brings devastating consequences.

Hi-res press photos by John Ulman will be available in mid-May at book-it.org/press-room with password bookitpress.

First published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890, Oscar Wilde's only novel scandalized Victorian England with its open examination of sex, drugs, and even murder, and its ultimate

declaration that hiding from one's true self is the real sin.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was subsequently expanded and sanitized to create the novel version that most readers are familiar with. Book-It has a proud history of presenting banned literature and will stage an adaptation of the original, uncensored edition of the novel. This version depicts the characters' excessive lifestyles, and portrays the attraction between its male characters more explicitly than the republished version. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was used as evidence during Wilde's trial for "gross indecency"—a term referring to Wilde's homosexuality—and was a part of the reason he was convicted.

Parkin, who has adapted Book-It titles including *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Uncensored* and *A Moveable Feast*, is returning for his fourth production at Book-It which he considers to be his "spiritual and artistic home." He is excited about adapting this particular novel because his mother

introduced him to the “wonderfully ghoulish painting” *The Picture of Dorian Gray* at The Art Institute of Chicago when he was a child. The painting was commissioned for the 1945 film version starring Angela Lansbury and Hurd Hatfield.

Local actor **Chip Sherman**, who appeared in Book-It’s 2017 production of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* as Bailey, will be bringing the devilishly handsome Gray to life. Sherman is overjoyed to have been cast by Victor Pappas in this production because “we as queer theatre practitioners do not get many opportunities to work on stories in the genre of gay suspense.”

The cast includes **Ian Bond** as Chorus 2/Alan Campbell, **Anastasia Higham** as Sibyl/Hetty, **Imogen Love*** as Chorus 4/Victoria, **Jon Lutyens*** as Basil Hallward, **Michael Patten*** as Chorus 1/Mr. Ashton, **Chip Sherman** as Dorian Gray, **Brandon J. Simmons** as Lord Henry Wotton, and **Jon Stutzman** as Chorus 3/Victor.

The design team includes scenic design by **Pete Rush**, costume design by **Ron Erickson**, sound design by **Johanna Melamed**, lighting design by **Andrew D. Smith**, and properties design by **Linda Kenworthy Reynolds**.

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

For information or to arrange interviews, please contact Communications Manager Val Brunetto at valb@book-it.org.

The Picture of Dorian Gray plays **June 6—July 1, 2018** (Opening/Press Night on June 9) at **The Center Theatre at the Armory** (305 Harrison Street, Seattle, WA 98109). Performance tickets start at \$26 with group rates available. \$15 tickets will be available to students during the entire run with valid school ID. Purchase at book-it.org or by calling the box office at 206.216.0833. The box office is open Tues through Fri, 12pm – 5pm (Tues – Sat during production run), located in the outer lobby of The Center Theatre at the Armory, 305 Harrison St., Seattle.

UPCOMING BEYOND-THE-BOOK EVENTS

***The Picture of Dorian Gray* Book Discussion**

Join Book-It and Queen Anne Book Company patrons for a discussion about *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Wednesday, May 16, 6 – 7pm, at Queen Anne Books, 1811 Queen Anne Avenue North. Free and open to the public.

ABOUT VICTOR PAPPAS

Victor Pappas was associate artistic director of Intiman Theatre for seven years, directing productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Playland*, *Betrayal*, *Smash* (world premiere), *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, *A Question of Mercy* and *Skylight*. Other directing credits include *The Price*, *Other Desert Cities*, *Old Times*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, and *Stuff Happens* (ACT Theare), *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *I Am My Own Wife* (Portland Center Stage); *An Ideal Husband* (Pioneer Theatre Company); *Othello* (Idaho Shakespeare Festival); *Ghosts* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Falsettos*, *Follies*, and *Anyone Can Whistle* (Showtunes Theatre Co.); the world premiere of Mark Jenkins’ *All Powers Necessary and Convenient*, and workshops of Jenkins’ *Red Earth*, *Gold Gate*, *Shadow Sky*. He received the L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for Jamie Baker’s *South Central Rain*, and many of his productions have been honored with Footlight Awards by *The Seattle Times*. He is a proud member of AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and SDC.

ABOUT JUDD PARKIN

Judd is a producer/writer of many television films and miniseries, including “Jesus” “Nicholas’ Gift” and “Comfort and Joy”. He was also the author of the novella “The Carpenter’s Miracle.” Judd dedicates his work on this production to his mother, Louise Parkin, 93 years old and still causing trouble.

ABOUT CHIP SHERMAN

Chip is a trained dancer, actor, singer, and Core Company Member at ACT Theatre who has enjoyed playing roles from Shakespeare and Brecht to contemporary playwright Moby Pomerance. Recent local productions include *Beatrice and Benedict* as Friar/Messenger, *A Christmas Carol* as Middle Scrooge, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings* as Bailey/Ensemble, and *Alex & Aris* as Alexander the Great. Other notable roles include MacHeath in *Threepenny Opera*, Julian in *How We Got On*, Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, and The Tin Woodsman in *The Wizard of Oz*.

ABOUT OSCAR WILDE

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Oscar Wilde studied Greek literature at Trinity College in Dublin. Once winning the Berkley Gold Medal, he attended Magdalen College, Oxford. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was Wilde’s only novel but was incredibly successful. He also wrote numerous plays which included *Salome*, *Comedies of Society*, and the popularly produced *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

PLEASE NOTE: We ask that you use Book-It’s full name “**Book-It Repertory Theatre**” or simply “**Book-It**”, in all text and listings. Thank You.

ABOUT THE 2017-2018 SEASON

In the fall of 2017, Book-It presents Maya Angelou’s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. During the holiday season, a musical adaptation of *Howl’s Moving Castle* by **Diana Wynne Jones** features music by **Justin Huertas** and stars **Sara Porkalob**. Book-It kicks off 2018 by returning to Pioneer Square for a theatrical culinary collaboration with Café Nordo with one of the most popular detective novels *The Maltese Falcon*, by Dashiell Hammett. In the spring, Book-It presents Young Audiences New York’s production of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, by **Junot Díaz** in a limited run. Book-It’s final selection is Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

ABOUT BOOK-IT REPERTORY THEATRE

Book-It Repertory Theatre, a leader in the narrative theatre movement, was founded in 1990. Book-It is a non-profit organization with a dedication to great literature and quality theatre experiences employing simple, sensitive, and imaginative production techniques, and to inspiring its audiences to read. The company is funded, in part, by generous contributions from corporations and foundations, and hundreds of individuals who share its passion for literature.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

WHAT: Book-It Repertory Theatre brings lust, beauty, and sin to the stage with an adaptation of the uncensored version of Oscar Wilde’s infamous novel. When the irresistible Dorian Gray sees the magnificent portrait his friend Basil Hallward has painted of him, he laments that he will grow old while the picture will always remain young. Dorian strikes a Faustian bargain and is

granted eternal youth while the portrait ages and records his sins. As his pursuit of pleasure devolves into a life of sin and corruption, Dorian's bargain brings devastating consequences.

WHEN: Pay-What-You-Will: Wed, June 6
Previews: Thursday, June 7 and Friday, June 8
Opening Night: Saturday, June 9
Closing: Sunday, July 1

TIMES: Wednesday-Saturday—7:30pm (Matinées on June 13, 23, 30)
Sundays – 2pm

WHERE: The Center Theatre at the Armory (305 Harrison Street, Seattle, WA 98109).

TICKETS: Tickets start at \$26 with group rates available. \$15 tickets will be available to students during the entire run with valid school ID. Purchase at book-it.org or by calling the box office at 206.216.0833. The box office is open Tues through Fri, 12pm – 5pm (Tues – Sat during production run), located in the outer lobby of The Center Theatre at the Armory.

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