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SEPTEMBER 2018



JANE



EYRE



BY CHARLOTTE
BRONTË
ADAPTED &
DIRECTED BY JULIE
BECKMAN

SEPT 13 -
OCT 14

2018/19 MAINSTAGE

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JANE EYRE

SEPT 13 - OCT 14

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË
ADAPTED & DIRECTED
BY JULIE BECKMAN

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STAGES
FALL 2018

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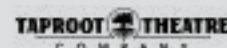
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Encore Stages is an Encore Arts Program that features stories about our local arts community alongside information about performances. Encore Arts Programs are publications of Encore Media Group. We also publish City Arts, a monthly arts & culture magazine, and specialty publications, including the Official Seattle Pride Guide and the SIFF Guide and Catalog. Learn more at encoremediagroup.com

Encore Stages features the following organizations:



The Next Generation of Arts Advocates



Young Patrons Circle Board of Directors at last season's Backstage Bash. Backstage Bash is an annual celebration that takes place backstage after a performance and includes live entertainment and dancing. *Photo: Alan Albastro Photography.*

Forget young, dumb and broke. These performing arts fans are young, smart and making sure performing arts are a financially viable entertainment option.

When you think about the board that supports your favorite performing arts organization chances are you're picturing an older sect—folks who are established in their careers, have saved for retirement and have money to spare. It's a group, when imagined this way, that's difficult to join and impossible to keep up with. But what if I were to tell you that performing arts boards come in all shapes and sizes, and that some are even actively recruiting young people into their fold? I had the pleasure of speaking with members of the BRAVO! Council at Seattle Opera, Young Patrons Circle at Pacific Northwest Ballet and New Guard at TeenTix—three organizations that are not only recruiting Millennial and Generation Z board members, they're also training the next generation of arts advocates.

In 1996, Seattle Opera founded BRAVO!, a young professionals group aimed at audience members ages 21 to 39. For an annual fee of \$79, BRAVO! members receive discounted opera tickets, invites to year-round social events and access to an exclusive intermission lounge, complete with complimentary wine and coffee. Now in its twenty-second year, BRAVO! is one of the largest organizations of its kind nationwide.

But BRAVO! would be nowhere without its council members. Nine dedicated young professionals run this leadership board with the mission to make opera an integral and rewarding part of their peers' lives.



BRAVO! Halloween Party. *Photo: Jonathan Vandervelt.*

BRAVO! Council member Evan Bennett has been an opera fan nearly half his life. The 32-year-old joined BRAVO! a year ago, after leaving a position in the opera's community engagement department.

"The first thing I did once I left my position was to join BRAVO! as a member," Bennett said. This year marks his first season as a BRAVO! Council member. "I genuinely love the art form and joining Council is a meaningful way for me to help get people my age involved in a centuries-old tradition."

It's an art form that Bennett and the rest of the BRAVO! Council are passionate about—one that still resonates with audiences today.

"You certainly don't need a music degree to be a part of this group," Bennett joked, nodding to his own background in music performance and as an employee of Seattle Opera. "Everyone on the council has come to



BRAVO! event at Tyee Yacht Club. *Photo: Genevieve Hathaway.*

opera in different ways. This diversity of experience has been an excellent catalyst for innovation around how to get people in their twenties and thirties involved in the art form."

Young professionals groups are cropping up at performing arts organizations across the country, but Seattle Opera credits the vitality of BRAVO! to its council members.

“... folks under 40 years old are not only a growing demographic in Seattle Opera audiences but also a growing donor base.”

"BRAVO! has over 800 members and almost all of them are season ticket holders," said Kristina Murti, director of marketing and communications at Seattle Opera.

Murti credits council members like Bennett and Eoin Hudson, BRAVO! Council president, for this conversion rate. "Our council is very active in programming events and bringing in their own professional and personal networks to try out opera."

The numbers don't lie. Hudson joined the leadership council in 2013 and since that time BRAVO! membership has more than doubled—it had less than 400 members when he joined.

"In that time there's been a lot of change—at the opera and in Seattle," Hudson said. The change he's most excited about is the fact that folks under 40 years old are not only a growing demographic in Seattle Opera audiences but also a growing donor base. "It's exciting to see the art form being embraced by my generation and watching the preconceptions about opera shift."

When I asked Hudson which opera he was most looking forward to this



Young Patrons Circle's Night with a Choreographer fundraising event to benefit PNB's NEXT STEP program.
Photo: Andrew Tat Photography.

season, he named Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. The ghost story will be performed in October, just in time for Halloween.

Seattle Opera patrons interested in joining BRAVO! or the BRAVO! Council can learn more at www.seattleopera.org.

Seattle Opera isn't the only arts organization prompting their young audience members to get involved in the world of non-profit board leadership. For \$60 a year, Pacific Northwest Ballet audience members ages 21 to 39 can enroll in the Young Patrons Circle, a social and educational group that offers ticket discounts, ballet after-parties and the collective sponsorship of an original piece of choreography at Pacific Northwest Ballet's annual NEXT STEP performance.

A fifteen-member board of directors serves as leadership liaisons for the Young Patrons Circle with the mission

of supporting and engaging this new generation of ballet audiences.

Meeka Charles was wrapping up her first year as board chair when we spoke. In addition to growing the Pacific Northwest Ballet audience, Charles has worked with the board to develop the ballet's marketing and social media campaigns. Ballet has been a part of her life for over twenty-five years.

"I grew up overseas and moved often," Charles said. "Attending ballet was something my mother and I did together no matter where we lived. When I moved to Seattle, buying ballet tickets was one of the first things I did. For me, attending the ballet makes a new place feel like home."

Charles added that she loves engaging her peers in ballet. It's the reason she joined the board.

Pacific Northwest Ballet is personal for Board Member Emily J. Yamada

too. The Young Patrons Circle Board of Directors enjoys a rotating leadership structure and Yamada is preparing to begin her first year as chair. But it won't be her first time in the Pacific Northwest Ballet spotlight.

"I was a ballet student and amateur dancer from early childhood into early adulthood," Yamada said, sharing that she studied at Pacific Northwest Ballet for six of those years. "I got to perform in *The Nutcracker*, which I loved. I've always admired the incredible company dancers."

In the years since her *Nutcracker* performance, Yamada has lived all over the world and has always made ballet attendance a priority.

"I can see why Pacific Northwest Ballet has such a reputation for excellence in the global dance community," Yamada shared. "It was an easy decision to become a subscriber when I moved back to Seattle."



Members of The New Guard Leadership Board at the 2017 Teeny Awards, from left to right: Isabel Schmidt, Katherine Draves, Anne Lim, Neha Gupta. *Photo: John Ulman.*

During her upcoming year as chair of the board of directors, Yamada is hoping to expand Young Patrons Circle’s relationship with not only young patrons, but also other young professionals groups across Seattle. And, of course, continue the board’s work hosting events tailored to the interests and needs of Young Patrons Circle members.

Pacific Northwest Ballet audience members interested in joining Young Patrons Circle and its corresponding board of directors can learn more at www.pnb.org.

Thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds across Seattle and Tacoma know that TeenTix is the performing arts organization to join. For the duration of their teenage years, TeenTix members are eligible for \$5 day-of tickets to arts organizations across the region. The organization is supported by a passionate staff and two boards—an advisory council and The New Guard Leadership Board, an eight-member board made up entirely of TeenTix members.

“The New Guard Leadership Board is the home of some of the most talented, inspirational and kind-hearted individuals I have ever met.”

Neha Gupta joined the New Guard because she wanted to strengthen her leadership and public speaking skills. She fell in love with TeenTix because it gave her the opportunity to see theatre and attend museums without worrying about each organization’s price point. She still loves seeing as much theatre as she can, but it’s the people that make Gupta’s work worthwhile.



Members of The New Guard cohort 2015–2016 holding signs they made for a fundraising campaign. *Photo: unknown.*

“The New Guard Leadership Board is the home of some of the most talented, inspirational and kind-hearted individuals I have ever met,” Gupta said. She identifies as reliable, but shy. “The Leadership Board, as cheesy as it sounds, forced me to break out of my shell.”

This season, Gupta is taking over as the New Guard Director of Partnerships, working with TeenTix’s arts partners to organize events and strengthen their bond with the teen community.

Isabel Schmidt joined the New Guard Leadership Board because she was eager to connect with arts lovers in her peer group. Schmidt became a member of TeenTix as soon as she was eligible but took advantage of TeenTix’s 2-for-\$10 days as her friends’ plus one in the years leading up to her thirteenth birthday. She’s going on her fourth year as a member of the New Guard, this time as the board’s president.

“My favorite thing I’ve done on the New Guard has been giving advice to arts organizations in the city who are interested in highlighting youth voices and want advice on how to reach this important group of audience members,” Schmidt said. “I appreciate being valued as an arts-goer. As we say at TeenTix, teens know what teens want.”

Schmidt also loves having thought-provoking conversations with her peers and TeenTix’s arts partners about what arts access really means. When she’s not serving on the New Guard—and going to high school—Schmidt enjoys playing cello. She cited Seattle Symphony’s upcoming Octave 9 space, an immersive performance and community space in the heart of downtown Seattle, as a place to watch.

“I’m looking forward to Seattle Opera’s coming season,” Schmidt said. “There are a lot of impressive shows coming up!”

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Watch out, BRAVO! Council, Isabel Schmidt might be coming for your job.

TeenTix members interested in joining The New Guard Leadership Board can learn more at www.teentix.org.

Whether you're a teen, a twenty-something or solidly in your thirties,

chances are there's a place for you on a performing arts board here in Seattle. The first step is to show up. We'll let you take it from there. ■

Danielle Mohlman is a nationally produced feminist playwright based in Seattle. Her play Nexus is among the 2015 Honorable Mentions on The Kilroys list. She is an alumnus of the inaugural class of Playwrights' Arena at Arena Stage and a member of the 2018 Umbrella Project Writers Group.



Our Favorite Ticket Deals for Folks Under 40

Not ready to join one of the boards profiled? There are still plenty of opportunities to see theatre, dance and opera at an affordable price. Here are some of our favorites.

Club 20/30

Club 20/30 is Seattle Repertory Theatre's free program for audience members in their 20s and 30s. Single tickets at Seattle Repertory Theatre start at \$17, but Club 20/30 members are eligible for seat upgrades, happy hour pricing at the theatre's bar and free ticket exchanges.

The Pointe

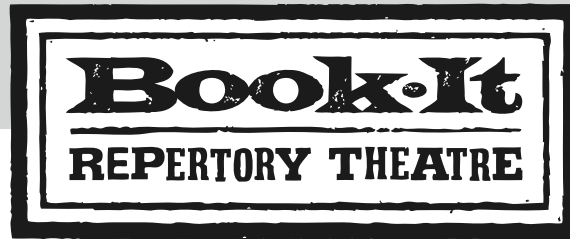
The Pointe is Pacific Northwest Ballet's email list for audience members ages 20 to 40. Throughout the year, The Pointe sends out discounts ranging from \$15 balcony seats to 50% off any seat in McCaw Hall.

TeenTix

If you're 13 to 19 years old and live in the greater Puget Sound area, you're eligible for TeenTix. Members are eligible for \$5 day-of-show tickets at partner organizations across Seattle and Tacoma—including Taproot Theatre, ACT Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre and many more.

MySymphony

MySymphony is Seattle Symphony's free program for patrons ages 21 to 39. Members are eligible for \$25 tickets to performances at Benaroya Hall.



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audience members, hiring thousands of theatre artists, the sheer accomplishment of survival is humbling and celebratory.

We are excited to be producing five stories that all share in the idea of dreaming big, surviving incredible and often debilitating adversity, and ultimately rejoicing in being alive. What it takes for humans to build a future; to persevere, discover truths and trust that self-reliance can in fact lead to laughter, joy, and to finding some sort of peace and belonging that unites us all.

We believe the art Book-It creates, and our education programming strives to make a real difference in our community,

our region, our state, and our nation. Through the art Book-It creates and the education programming we deliver, we are constantly striving to make a real difference in our community, our region, our state, and our nation. We thank you for partnering with us on this endeavor through all your years of support.

Jane Jones

Founder and Founding Co-Artistic Director

Myra Platt

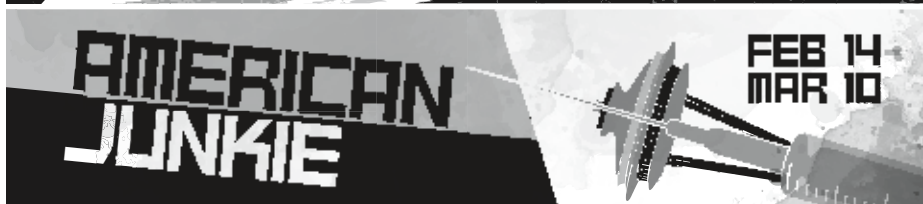
Founding Co-Artistic Director



Photo by John Ulman

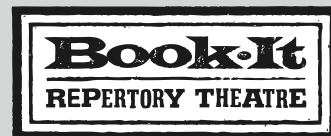
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JANE EYRE

By Charlotte Brontë
Adapted and Directed by Julie Beckman

CAST

Ian Bond	John Reed/ Pilot/Colonel Dent/St. John/Ensemble
Ross Destiche*	Edward Rochester
Keiko Green*	Miss Temple/Blanche/Bertha/Mary Rivers/Ensemble
Mi Kang	Jane Eyre
Frank Lawler	Mr. Brocklehurst/Mason/Innkeeper/Ensemble
Jacoba Lee	Georgiana/Leah/Diana Rivers/Ensemble
Marty Mukhalian	Mrs. Reed/Mrs. Fairfax/Ensemble
Zoe Papadakis and Jazzlyn Bleil-Geiselman	Adele/Ensemble
Ayo Tushinde	Bessie/Helen/Grace Poole/Ensemble
Emma Pihl	Stage Manager
Xandria Nirvana Barber	Assistant Stage Manager

PRODUCTION AND ARTISTIC TEAM

Will Abrahamse	Scenic Designer
Thorn Michaels	Lighting Designer
Jocelyne Fowler	Costume Designer
Kyle Thompson	Sound Designer
Linda Kenworthy Reynolds	Properties Designer
Eric Bradler	Music Director
Marianna de Fazio	Dialect Coach
Tom Dewey	Fight Choreographer
Jennifer Ewing	Dramaturg

PRODUCER

Ellen Maxson

PRODUCTION STAFF

Dan Schuy	Production Manager
Benjamin Radin	Technical Director
Jocelyne Fowler	Costume Shop Manager
Shawna Grajek	Assistant Production Manager
Shelby Choo	Master Carpenter
Jessica Christensen	Scenic Charge Artist and Properties Master
Blaine Taylor	Scenic Artist
Charlie Minshall	Scenic Carpenter
Toby Folkert	Scenic Carpenter
Daniel Herter/Levi Plumb	Co-Master Electricians
Levi Plumb	Board Operator
Joanna Aponte	Sound Engineer/Board Operator
Anna Bowen	Dresser

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

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Like millions of readers, I have always loved the character of Jane Eyre. Since I first encountered Charlotte Brontë's story as a teen, I was captivated by Jane's plucky courage, her ability to stand up against unjust treatment, her unwillingness to conform, her quest for independence, her frank self-assessment, and her capacity to give and receive love even though she experienced so little of it as a child. Returning to *Jane Eyre* as an adult, I found additional resonance in Brontë's portrayal of Jane as a cultural outsider. Growing up unwanted, Jane is treated as "other"; a "poor orphan child" frowned upon by the world around her. And as she grows, she finds herself in the most vulnerable position of not only being a woman, but being poor, plain, and disconnected. In spite of this (and remarkably unlike many of the other heroines of her era), her life doesn't revolve around men or the expectation of marriage. The fact that (spoiler alert) she eventually does find a loving partner who is her equal is not the purpose of her journey, but is a welcome outcome.



DIRECTOR/ADAPTER
Julie Beckman

In addition to writing a strong and inspiring central character, Brontë also managed to do something else that is rare, and that is to capture those moments in life when we reflect on our circumstances and ponder how to move forward. **As we follow Jane in her journey, we hear her asking questions that continue to feel resonant more than 170 years after they were written.** And though the story is full of evocative manor houses and buildings like Gateshead, Lowood, and Thornfield Hall, ultimately those structures are limitations to her longed-for freedom. As she so eloquently proclaims: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me..." In her ongoing search, we see her turning to the natural world to find guidance: traveling the fields at twilight, climbing onto the roof to ponder the world beyond, wandering the moors, and conferring with the Moon. The natural world helps her move beyond the shadows and barriers of her increasingly complicated relationships into a deeper understanding of self.

I first adapted and directed this script for Book-It in 1999 (the first production played at The Bullitt Cabaret at ACT), and it has had a number of productions since then from Atlanta to Winnipeg. Each time I return to this story, I realize that I've never actually left it behind. I treasure each opportunity to spend time with these engaging characters and with Brontë's beautiful and poetic writing. I love the way Brontë provides a window into the inner lives of her characters and an opportunity to see the fire burning beneath their cool, Victorian exteriors. Jane is passionate, searching, and funny; she elicits these qualities in the people around her, especially the people she chooses to love like Helen Burns, Mrs. Fairfax, her cousins Diana and Mary, and Rochester himself.

For me, bringing *Jane Eyre* back to the stage also celebrates the healing power of story. Thank you for being here to share Jane's struggles and her search for a life path. May you also experience the personal strength, the love, and the deep happiness that Jane ultimately finds.



'Sincerely Yours, Charlotte Brontë.' George Richmond, Artist. James Charles Armytage, Engraver. London, 1857

WOMEN IN EARLY VICTORIAN SOCIETY

While *Jane Eyre* is widely regarded as a great work of art, the novel also reveals the progressive mind of author Charlotte Brontë amidst the societal limitations and expectations of women in the early 19th century. As a girl from a lower middle-class family, Charlotte's options in life were limited from birth. Though not a radical feminist (she did not support a woman's right to vote, for instance), her opinions and deep sense of self were, in themselves, radical for the time. Charlotte believed in marrying for love, a woman's right to an education, the right to pursue a meaningful career, and held that respect was determined by a person's work and actions, not their gender. These beliefs are inherent in Brontë's titular heroine, though the author insisted that it was not penned as a self-portrait.

🔥 ***"It would startle him to see me in my natural home character; he would think I was a wild, romantic enthusiast indeed. I could not sit all day long making a grave face before my husband. I would laugh, and satirise, and say whatever came into my head first...I had not, and could not have, that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him; and, if ever I marry, it must be in that light of adoration that I will regard my husband."*** March 12, 1839

When *Jane Eyre* was written in the mid-1840s, established conservative gender roles placed women within the home with few rights or privileges. A woman's individuality was typically undervalued and her capabilities underestimated. Women were considered physically inferior to men, yet morally superior. A man was allowed to be outspoken in his

opinions, ambitious for an education, and venturesome in his workplace. It was acceptable (though never publicly or explicitly encouraged) for a man to be sexually passionate, while women were held to the opposite. Society expected women to aspire to become good wives and mothers, to practice restraint, follow "God's path," care for and be subservient to men, and always help others before themselves. The higher the class of woman, the greater the pressure to be guided by these "feminine principles."

🔥 ***"Girls are protected as if they were something very frail and silly indeed, while boys are turned loose on the world as if they, of all beings in existence, were the wisest and the least liable to be led astray."*** January 30, 1846

A woman was meant to pursue a husband without enthusiasm, which to the Victorians suggested a worrying sexual appetite. Romantic affairs of popular novels and works of poetry were seen as just that: highly romanticized. The purpose of marriage—for women—was to have children, not to seek emotional or physical satisfaction. In fact, William Acton famously wrote in his 1857 medical text that "the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind." Those women who were passionate were labelled "mad" and frequently sent to languish in asylums or attics, locked away from civilized society.

🔥 ***"I know that if women wish to escape the stigma of husband-seeking they must act and look like marble or clay—cold, expressionless, bloodless..."*** April 2, 1845

Jane Eyre achieved near-instant success after publication, though to mixed reviews. Critics were aghast by the fantastical, impassioned nature of the novel, and the outspokenness of its heroine. The possibility that *Jane Eyre* was written by a woman caused possibly the harshest judgement. Though Charlotte upheld her male pen-name of Currer Bell years after her novels were published, rumor and speculation about the author's gender were rampant. Denouncers called it "unfeminine" if the work of a woman, and if it *were* the work of a woman, "she must be a woman unsexed" and "had long forfeited the society of her own sex." The hypocrisy of gender-based judgement at the time is evident in the review from the *Economist* of London: the male reviewer praised the book if written by a man, but deemed it "odious" if the work of a woman.

🔥 ***"As to society...If I were called upon to swap...tastes and ideas and feelings, I should prefer walking into a good Yorkshire kitchen fire, and conclude the bargain at once by an act of voluntary combustion."***
January —, 1847



'Selling a Wife' by Thomas Rowlandson, 1812-14.

Rowlandson's cartoon displays the practice of literally selling a wife; an English custom that began in the late 17th century to dissolve a marriage as divorce was almost impossible. The cartoon suggests the woman is a congenial participant in this practice, happy to soon be out of her unhappy marriage.

EDUCATION AND WORK

A diversified yet limited education for middle- and upper-class girls was common. Girls with "accomplishments" in reading, writing, art, music, foreign language, and "feminine charm and grace" were considered more attractive for a husband than those without. An education was also necessary for young, underprivileged women, such as Charlotte and her sisters, to pursue respectable work. Charlotte believed deeply in the value of education and work for all; the encouragement of her family from a young age to acquire knowledge influenced her modern point of view.

Charlotte first attended school at Cowan Bridge, the tragic inspiration for Lowood Charity School, where her two elder sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, died of tuberculosis. Following the death of her sisters, she was taught at home by her father and aunt, themselves very well-read in the humanities and mathematics. She returned to conventional school at Roe Head, where she excelled as a student and was hired to teach for two years following her graduation.

Charlotte's ambitions to get ahead in the world led her to the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels to improve her French and German, with plans to return to England to open a school in Haworth with her sisters Emily and Anne, plans that were never fully realized. While Charlotte was supported by her family, this could be a dubious course of action in the eyes Victorian society; too much education in a woman was believed to make her unfeminine and unattractive, even barren.

🔥 ***"[A]n education secured is an advantage gained. Whenever I have seen...daughters sitting waiting to be married, I have pitied them from my heart."***
July 3, 1849

Britain's class system allowed men to own their own businesses, pursue careers in a wide range of professions, and move up in society through their pursuits, but it did not allow women the same freedom. And while the industrialization of England created some new work opportunities for working class women, middle class women were restricted to situations deemed respectable—that of a teacher or governess.



'The Governess' by Emily Mary Osborne. 1860

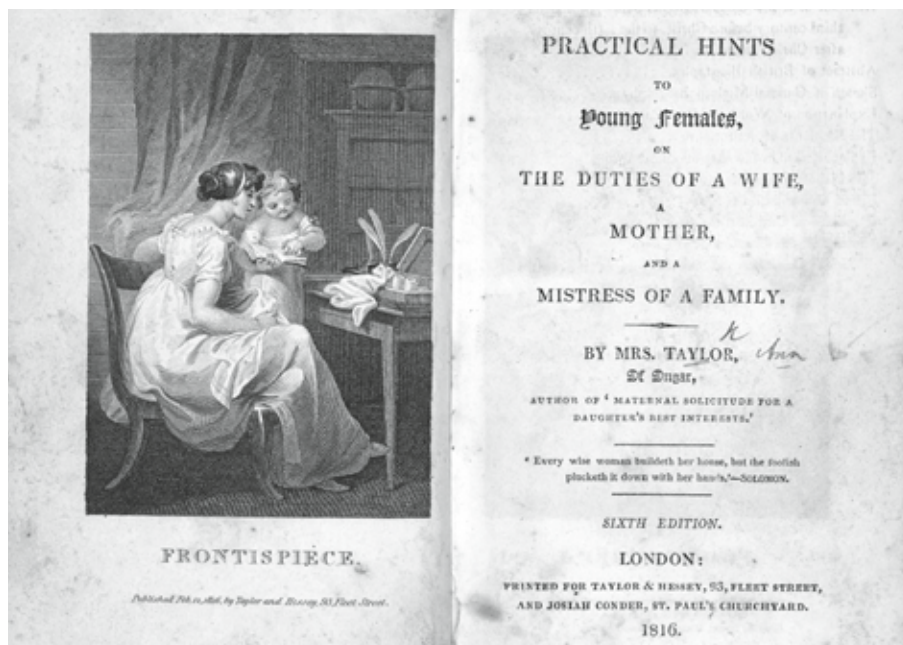
'The Governess' captures the uneasy position of women in the role of governess: to be demure and humble in the face of judgment and mistrust from the family.

Charlotte found, as many women did, choice for employment inadequate. She worked as a governess for several months before she wrote *Jane Eyre*, but loathed the work and felt creatively stifled. She suffered from depression, and dreamed of pursuing her writing, however poetry and art was considered men's work. In 1837, Charlotte was advised by the British poet laureate Robert Southey to forgo her dreams of becoming a professional poet. Though his letter was kind and friendly in nature, he wrote to her: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life: & it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment & a recreation... the day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind."

🔥 "[W]omen are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags."
Jane Eyre, chapter XII

POLITICAL AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Victorian women had few rights as English citizens. Until 1831, only women who owned property worth more than forty shillings could vote. The language of the Reform Act of 1832, however, specified enfranchising "male persons" explicitly barring all women from voting. Women would not gain equal voting rights until almost a century later. Interestingly, Charlotte had many opinions about what was happening in parliament and kept up with local and international politics, but never expressed a desire to vote, nor advocated for other women to do so.

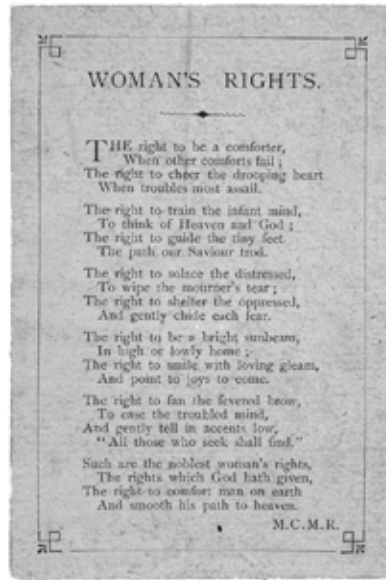


Title page of "Practical Hints to Young Females on the Duties of a Wife, a Mother, and a Mistress of a Family" by Ann Taylor. London, 1816.

Educational books for girls were incredibly popular during the Victorian Era, instructing girls in the ways of living including etiquette, married life, religion, and child-rearing.

An unmarried woman or widow could own property and possessions, however, once a woman married, all her rights effectively vanished: her money, property, and possessions accrued before marriage became her husband's. Any wages she earned after marriage were paid to her husband, and an English wife could not write a will that was legally valid. A wife could be sued for "restitution of conjugal rights," and should she leave her husband, he had a right to enter the house of any friend or family member that was harboring her and physically force her to return with him. If a wife were sued for divorce, she had no right to defend herself in her own person or with an attorney in court. She could only sue for divorce on the grounds of "cruelty that endangers life or limb," unlike men, who in addition could sue on grounds of infidelity or abandonment. Divorces were exceptionally expensive and only granted by special order of Parliament. A wife was rarely allowed to remarry, unlike her ex-husband who could. Prior to 1855 only a few divorces were granted by Parliament (two on the grounds of incest) where the woman could marry again.

“Since [a young woman] is fated to make her way in the crowd, and to depend on herself, she should say: I will try and learn the art of self-possession, not that I may display my accomplishments, but that I may have the satisfaction of feeling that I am my own mistress, and can move and speak undaunted by the fear of man.” May 12, 1848

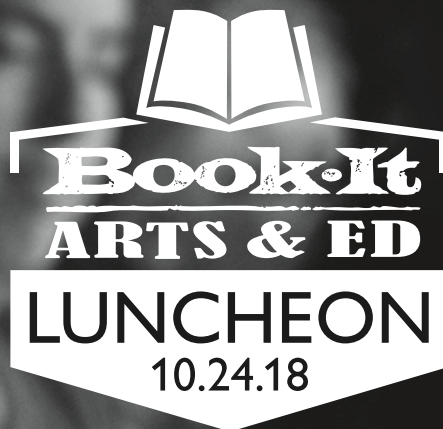


"Women's Rights" by M.C.M.R., undated 19th century. This set of verses perpetuates the ideals of what a woman was in the Victorian era.

Charlotte did not experience first-hand the consequences of losing her rights through marriage, nor the legal and social difficulties of ending an abusive or unhappy marriage. The majority of her life she spent unwed at her childhood home in Haworth, working on her novels, and caring for her aging father. She owned railway property and maintained her own finances from the proceeds of her writing, stable and independent. She eventually married her father's curate,

Arthur Bell Nichols, with whom she had a happy union, but they were only married nine months before she died in 1855 at age 38. She left a will, which her husband and father respectfully honored after her death.

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MEET THE CAST

Jazzlyn Bleil-Geiselman

Adele/Ensemble

Jazzlyn Bleil-Geiselman is so excited to be in this show! She is from a family of seven in Gig Harbor and has been dancing since she was one at her mom's studio Just for Kicks. Some of her dance experiences have been dancing onstage with Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, WNBA Seattle Storm Dance Troupe, Puget Sound Honor Flights, and Macklemore's "Dance Off." Some of her acting experiences have been at the Admiral Theatre in Bremerton, Western Washington Center for the Arts, Encore Theatre, and ACT Theatre last year as Belinda and Young Fran. Jazzlyn aspires to act, sing, and dance on Broadway someday. She would like to thank her mom for doing everything she possibly can to make her dreams come true!



Ian Bond

John Reed/Pilot/
Colonel Dent/St. John/
Ensemble

Ian Bond is delighted to return to the Book-It stage where he has been seen in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Treasure Island*, and *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus*. Recent credits include *Teh Internet is Serious Business* (Washington Ensemble Theatre), *Don't Split the Party* (Transparent Storytelling Theatre), and *Hamlet* (The Horse in Motion). Ian has performed with Seattle Public Theater (*Bad Jews*), Taproot Theatre Company (*Jeeves Intervenes*), Seattle Shakespeare Company (*Titus Andronicus*), Sound Theatre Company, Forward Flux, eSe Teatro, Mt. Baker Theatre, and Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre. Ian is a former resident ensemble member of the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company where favorite roles include Romeo, Mr. Darcy, and Hamlet. He is represented by Topo Swope Talent.



Ross Destiche*

Edward Rochester

Ross is thrilled to be working with Book-It on his first show in the Seattle area. Regional credits include *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Midsummer*



Night's Dream, *Tartuffe*, *The Metromaniacs*, and *The Tempest* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Equus* (Alan Strang, Constellation Theatre); *District Merchants* (Folger Theatre); *Gabriel*, *The Three Musketeers* (Walking Shadow Theatre); *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Forgotten Goddess); *Perilous Night* (Nimbus Theatre); and *Those Who Favor Fire* (Guthrie Theatre Studio). Film and TV credits include *All Good Things*, *Keepsake*, *Dear White People*, *The Control Group*, *Death to Prom*, and *Thin Ice*. International credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Macau Arts Festival, China) and *How I Became a Pirate* (The Egg Theatre, UK). Ross trained at University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre BFA Actor Training Program. RossDestiche.com

Keiko Green*

Miss Temple/Blanche/
Bertha/Mary Rivers/
Ensemble

Keiko Green resides in Bainbridge Island with her husband MJ. She makes her debut at Book-It with *Jane Eyre*. Selected theatre credits include *The Great Leap* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts/Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Stupid F#\$%ing Bird*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, and *A Christmas Carol* (ACT Theatre); *The Comparables* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Bring Down the House Parts 1 & 2*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Othello* (Seattle Shakespeare Company/Wooden O); *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre22); and *Caught*, *Amadeus* (Seattle Public Theater). Keiko is also a nationally recognized playwright. She is currently developing the web series MAIDS, about hotel maids. TV/Film credits include "Grimm," "Z Nation," and C.O.G. She received a BFA from New York University. www.keikogreen.com



Mi Kang

Jane Eyre

Mi is thrilled to be returning to Book-It where she was last seen in *A Tale for the Time Being*. Recent local credits include *The Great Inconvenience* (Annex Theatre), *The Journal of Ben Uchida* (Seattle Children's Theatre), *The Earth Shakes* (Heron Ensemble), and *Nadeshiko* (Sound Theatre Company). She has also performed with The 14/48 Projects, SiS Productions, Pork Filled Productions, Theater Schmeater, and Blank Stage Theater. Mi is originally from Texas and graduated from The University of Texas at Austin.



Frank Lawler

Mr. Brocklehurst/
Mason/Innkeeper/
Ensemble

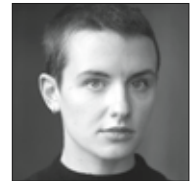
Jane Eyre marks Frank's sixth Book-It production, the most recent being *Frankenstein*. Other credits include *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *Camping with Henry and Tom* (Taproot Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Pitmen Painters* (ACT Theatre), *Indian Ink* and *The School for Lies* (Sound Theatre Company), *Arms and the Man* and *Travesties* (Seattle Public Theater), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Icicle Creek Festival and Coeur d'Alene Summer Theatre) and *The Elephant Man* (Strawberry Theatre Workshop). His latest play, *Holiday of Errors*, co-written with Daniel Flint, was recently published by StageRights. Frank is a graduate of Harvard University and trained with Shakespeare & Company. He is married to writer/educator Ann McCurdy. More at franklawler.com



Jacoba Lee

Georgiana/ Leah/Diana
Rivers/Ensemble

Jacoba Lee is making her Book-It debut. She is a recent graduate of the Original Works program at Cornish College of the Arts.



Marty Mukhalian

Mrs. Reed/Mrs. Fairfax/
Ensemble

Marty is overjoyed to return to Book-It where she previously appeared in *Hard Times*, *Dracula*: *Jonathan Harker's Journal* and *The Awakening*. Most recently she was seen in Annex Theatre's world premiere of *The Great Inconvenience*. For the past 20+ years, Marty has performed for Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, Seattle Public Theater, ArtsWest, Washington Ensemble Theatre, Theater Schmeater, and The 14/48 Projects, among others. Favorite roles include Mrs. Sparsit (*Hard Times*), Agnes (*Bug*), Hecuba (*The Trojan Women*), Nurse (*Romeo & Juliet*) and Babs (*Babs the Dodo*).



Zoe Papadakis

Adele/Ensemble

Zoe's second home is Book-It where she played her first role as Young Winifred in *The Brothers K!* Zoe went on to play Gloria in *Wait Until Dark*, Gladys in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Zuzu Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and Jojo in *Seussical Jr.* Music credits include a vocalist for *Echoes of the First Dreamer* for Highwire Games and Disney's *It's a Small World* 50th anniversary video. Zoe has taken piano and sung with Seattle Girls Choir since she was six and aspires to be a musical theatre professional. A 12-year-old from Magnolia, Zoe loves attending live theatre. If you share her passion, come see her in her upcoming role at Seattle Children's Theatre's mainstage *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*.



MEET THE ARTISTIC STAFF

Julie Beckman

Adapter/Director

Julie originally adapted and directed *Jane Eyre* for Book-It in 1999 and is overjoyed to return to this story. Her other adaptations include Edith Wharton's *The Bunner Sisters*, Dickens' *Hard Times*, and Jonathan Raban's *Waxwings*. With Theatre22, Julie directed the premiere of *Downstairs* by Theresa Rebeck, *Annapurna*, and *Fifth of July* as well as *Water by the Spoonful* and *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, both by Pulitzer Prize-winner Quiara Alegria Hudes. Other directing work includes *The Bells*, *The Elephant Man*, and *Fellow Passengers* (Strawberry Theatre Workshop), *26 Miles* (Latino Theatre Project), *A Small Fire* (Sound Theatre Company), *4 Dogs and a Bone* (Theater Schmeater), as well as numerous productions for other theatre in Seattle and around the country. She has an MFA in Directing from Northwestern University.

Will Abrahamse

Scenic Designer

Will is thrilled to work with Book-It again. Previous productions include *Little Bee* and *I Am of Ireland: A Celebration in Story, Song, and Dance*. Over a span of nearly two decades, his work as a scenic designer and scenic artist has been seen on the stages of Tacoma Musical Playhouse, ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery, and 14/48: The World's Quickest Theater Festival, among others. Will received BroadwayWorld Seattle's award for Best Scenic Design (Local) in 2013 for his work on *Ragtime* with Tacoma Musical Playhouse. He studied Architecture and Technical Theatre at Washington State University and The University of Idaho and now serves as technical director and auditorium manager for Enumclaw High School to educate a new generation of theatre artists and patrons.

Thorn Michaels

Lighting Designer

Thorn Michaels is a Seattle-based lighting designer for theatre, dance, and opera. Her recent designs include: *O+E*, *The Tender Land*, and *Robin Hood* (Seattle Opera); *Hand to God*, *Ironbound*, and *Grounded* (Seattle Public Theater); *Brooklyn Bridge* (Seattle Children's Theatre); *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Book-It); *Strictly Seattle* and *Next Fest Northwest* (Velocity Dance Center); and *The Two-Character Play* (Civic Rep; Gregory Award nominee for Outstanding Lighting Design). As the 2016-2017 Hemsley intern, Thorn served as assistant lighting designer and assistant lighting supervisor for New York City Ballet, Lincoln Center Festival, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and San Francisco Opera. She holds an MFA in Lighting Design from University of Washington (2016). For more about her work, please visit www.thornmichaels.com.

Kyle Thompson

Sound Designer

Kyle is very excited to be working with Book-It again, where his designs were previously heard in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* and *Treasure Island*. Since 2010, he has designed over 45 productions in the Seattle area, including *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Love's Labour's Lost* (Wooden O/Seattle Shakespeare Company); *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, *Annapurna*, *Water By The Spoonful* (Theatre22); *Mothers and Sons*, *4,000 Miles* (ArtsWest); *The Wedding Gift* (Forward Flux Productions); *Oedipus el Rey* (eSe Teatro/ACTLab); and *Undo*, *The Underneath*, *Kittens in a Cage* (Annex Theatre). Kyle holds a BA in Drama from the University of Washington, and he is about to begin his third season working as a lead sound engineer at Seattle Children's Theatre.

Jocelyne Fowler

Costume Designer

Jocelyne Fowler has designed for Book-It (*Treasure Island*, *Emma*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Frankenstein*, *Anna Karenina*, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*), Seattle Shakespeare Company (*Timon of Athens*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard II*), Taproot Theatre (*Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Civil War Christmas*), Wooden O, Harlequin Productions, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Seattle Musical Theatre, Vashon Opera,

Ayo Tushinde

Bessie/Helen/Grace Poole/Ensemble

Ayo graduated from Savannah College of Art & Design before moving to Seattle in 2011. She has enjoyed working with a number of local theatres including Seattle Shakespeare Company, Live Girls! Theater, Theater Schmeater, Book-It, Café Nordo, Sound Theatre Company, Washington Ensemble Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, and The Seagull Project.



SPECIAL THANKS

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- Adrienne Reynolds
- Artichoke Quilts
- Edmonds Presbyterian Church
- Jolene Obertin
- Kyna Shilling
- Pete Olds
- Seattle Opera
- Seattle Repertory Theatre

AFFILIATIONS



Actors Equity Association

This theater operates under an agreement within AEA, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States. Actors Equity Association (AEA) founded in 1913, represents more than 49,000 actors and stage managers in the United States.



Theatre Puget Sound



Theatre Communications Group

Youth Theatre Northwest, SecondStory Repertory, ReAct Theatre, Live Girls! Theater, Pork Filled Productions, Bellevue College, Overlake School, and others. She is the recipient for the 2016 Gregory Award in Outstanding Costume Design.

Linda Kenworthy Reynolds

Properties Designer

Linda is happy to be returning to Book-It for her second show as part of the creative team for *Jane Eyre*. Linda has been active in the Seattle theatre scene for many years. Her work has been seen on the stages of Seattle Opera, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, ACT Theatre, Bathhouse Theater, and the Empty Space. Before landing in Seattle, Linda worked at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival and The Portland Production Company. Linda has a BA in Drama and specialized in Technical Theater from California State University Stanislaus.

Eric Bradler

Music Director

Eric Bradler is excited to make *Jane Eyre* his first production with Book-It. Eric can frequently be seen at Seattle Children's Theatre where he recently music directed productions of *Seussical Jr.*, *The Little Prince*, *Into The West*, and *Mario and the Comet*. Eric is a faculty member at Seattle University and also serves as a K-8 music teacher in Magnolia. He has been studying music since age eight, starting with everyone's favorite—the accordion. Current and previous ensemble credits include Orchestra Seattle, Blessed Sacrament Baroque Orchestra and choir, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Playground Ensemble, Opera Colorado, Affinity Chamber Players, The Priests, Denver Opera, and the Da Vinci String Quartet.

Emma Pihl

Stage Manager

Emma is happy to return to Book-It after stage managing *Howl's Moving Castle* last winter. Emma's other credits with Book-It include *A Moveable Feast*, *Treasure Island*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *I Am Of Ireland*, *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier & Clay*, and *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, among others. Emma has also recently worked with Seattle Shakespeare Company (both mainstage and Wooden O), Village Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT Theatre, The 5th Avenue Theatre, and New Century Theatre Company.

Xandria Nirvana Barber

Assistant Stage Manager

Xandria is elated to return to Book-It's backstage. They were last with Book-It for *Little Bee*. You may also have spotted them backstage with Wooden O's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* this summer. Other credits include Seattle Shakespeare Company's *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and Wooden O's *As You Like It* and *Julius Caesar*. They have also worked with ACT Theatre, Seattle Public Theater, Annex Theatre, ArtsWest, and other independent projects in the region. They are a member of the leadership team of Albatross Theatre Lab. Their next adventure is the wedding of Alina and Xandria this Christmas.

Marianna de Fazio

Dialect Coach

Marianna coaches dialect for individuals and productions all over Seattle, as well as public speaking and accent modification. Previous shows at Book-It include *The Brothers K* and *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier & Clay*. She also appeared as Ben Gunn in *Treasure Island*. You can catch Marianna onstage now in Strawberry Theatre Workshop's production of *Reckless*, and you can hear more of her dialect work in *Miss Bennet* at Taproot Theatre Company this Christmas. www.mariannadefazio.com

Tom Dewey

Fight Choreographer

An actor and a fight choreographer, Tom's work has been seen throughout the Puget Sound region, including *The Maltese Falcon*. Favorite roles include Abraham Gray in Book-It's *Treasure Island* for which he also choreographed the fights, The Douglass in Seattle Shakespeare Company's Wooden O production of *Henry IV Part I*, and various roles with Seattle Shakespeare Company's Spring Education Tour. Tom is a proud graduate of the Theatre Arts and History Departments at the University of Puget Sound.

Jennifer Ewing

Dramaturg

Classically trained in theatre in New York City, Jennifer has blended her passion for history, literature, and anthropology with storytelling into a specialization of classical and period works. *Jane Eyre* adds dramaturgy to her theatrical and artistic hat collection. Other hats include actor (recent: Wooden O, SecondStory Repertory, Island Shakespeare Festival), scenic artist (Sound Theatre Company, Theatre22, Shoreline Community College), assistant director

(Theatre22/ACTLab), dialect coach (Tacoma Opera, Island Shakespeare Festival), associate producer for Theatre22, and professional fine artist. This is her first collaboration with Book-It, and third with director Julie Beckman. She is thrilled to be on the team. She is a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York. www.jenniferewing.org

Jane Jones

Founder, Founding Co-Artistic Director

Jane is the founder of Book-It and founding co-artistic director of Book-It Repertory Theatre, with Myra Platt. In her 30 years of staging literature, she has performed, adapted, and directed works by such literary giants as Charles Dickens, Eudora Welty, Edith Wharton, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Pam Houston, Raymond Carver, Frank O'Connor, Jim Lynch, Ernest Hemingway, Colette, Amy Bloom, John Irving, John Steinbeck, Daphne du Maurier, and Jane Austen. A veteran actress of 35 years, she has played leading roles in many of America's most prominent regional theatres. Film and TV credits include "Twin Peaks" and *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, *Singles*, and *Homeward Bound*. She co-directed with Tom Hulce at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Peter Parnell's adaptation of John Irving's *The Cider House Rules*, *Parts I and II*, which enjoyed successful runs here in Seattle, at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (Ovation Award, best director) and in New York (Drama Desk Nomination, best director). Recently Jane directed Book-It's *Great Expectations* at Portland Center Stage, where her credits also include *Pride and Prejudice*, *Cyrano* and *Twelfth Night* (2008 Drammy award for Best Direction and Production). For Book-It, she has directed *The Maltese Falcon*, *A Moveable Feast*, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, *The Dog of the South*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Uncensored*, *Truth Like the Sun*, *The House of Mirth*, *The Highest Tide*, *Travels with Charley*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Howard's End*, *In a Shallow Grave*, *The Awakening*, *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *The Cider House Rules*, *Parts I and II*, winner of the 2010 and 2011 Gregory Awards for Outstanding Production. In 2008 she, Myra Platt, and Book-It were honored to be named by *The Seattle Times* among seven Unsung Heroes and Uncommon Genius for their 20-year contribution to life in the Puget Sound region. She is a recipient of the 2009 Women's University Club of Seattle Brava Award, a 2010 Women of Influence award from *Puget Sound Business Journal*, and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation's 20th Anniversary Founders Grant, and

was a finalist for the American Union for Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation's 2012 Zelda Fichandler Award.

Myra Platt

Founding Co-Artistic Director

As an original founding member of Book-It, Myra has helped produce over 130 world-premiere mainstage productions and over 30 education touring productions. Most recently she directed and adapted the new musical *Howl's Moving Castle*. Previously, she adapted and directed *The Brothers K* and directed *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* (2014 Gregory Award for Outstanding Production, *The Seattle Times* Footlight Award). She was nominated for Outstanding Director 2012 (*Financial Lives of the Poets*) and 2014 (*Kavalier & Clay*). Directing credits include *Little Bee*, *The Financial Lives of the Poets*, *The River Why*, *Persuasion*, *Night Flight: An Operetta*, *Red Ranger Came Calling*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Plainsong*, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, *Sweet Thursday*, *Giant*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, *Roman Fever*, and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Adapting credits include *Little Bee*, *The Financial Lives of the Poets*, *The River Why*, *Night Flight: An Operetta*, *Red Ranger Came Calling*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Giant*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, *Roman Fever*, *A Child's*

Christmas in Wales, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, and co-adapted *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant* with Jane Jones. Composing credits include *Prairie Nocturne*, *Night Flight: An Operetta* (with Joshua Kohl), *Red Ranger Came Calling: A Musical* (with Edd Key), *The Awakening*, *Ethan Frome*, *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and *I Am of Ireland*. Acting credits include Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, New City Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, *Prairie Nocturne*, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, *The Awakening* (West Los Angeles Garland Award), and *Howards End*. She originated the role of Candy Kendall in *The Cider House Rules*, *Parts I and II* directed by Jane Jones and Tom Hulce. Myra is the recipient, with Jane Jones, of a Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Anniversary grant, the 2008 Women of Influence from Puget Sound Business Journal, and was named by *The Seattle Times* a 2010 Unsung Hero and Uncommon Genius for their 20-year contribution to life in the Puget Sound region.

Kayti Barnett-O'Brien

Managing Director

Kayti previously served as Book-It's general manager and will continue overseeing daily operations as well as working with the staff and board in Book-It's efforts to raise funds and increase audiences. She looks forward to ushering Book-It into its next chapter

through new strategic planning and equity initiatives. She has been with Book-It since 2015 and was previously the managing director at New Century Theatre Company and a former board member for Theatre Puget Sound. Kayti is a member of the Leadership for Social Change cohort with artEquity and graduated with an MFA in Arts Leadership from Seattle University.

Josh Aaseng

Associate Artistic Director

Josh joined Book-It in 2010 as the education associate then served as literary manager for five years. Book-It credits include directing and co-adapting (with Daemond Arrindell) *Welcome to Braggsville*; directing and adapting *Slaughterhouse-Five*; and directing *Jesus' Son* and *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. As a consulting director on Frank Boyd's *The Holler Sessions*, he has worked at On the Boards and ACT in Seattle, the Noorderzon Performing Arts Festival in the Netherlands, PS 122 COIL Festival in New York, and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. Josh's work has been recognized with two Seattle Footlight Awards as well as Seattle Theater Writers Critics' Circle awards for excellence in playwriting and direction. Josh is a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

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Casting an Actor with Albinism: The Importance of Authenticity on Stage



The *Chisel* team at the talkback: director Nathan Singh, playwright Julie Taiwo Oni, Jordan White, Cherie Carter, and Joshua Michael Moore. *Courtesy of Julie Taiwo Oni.*

Playwright Julie Taiwo Oni explores the difficult, yet necessary task of casting actors who authentically represent characters written and the effect this representation has on marginalized identities.

How do you cast authentically when there is not a single actor of a certain identity to be found within your community? If my mission as a playwright is to share stories of the underrepresented, then how can I cast an actor who lacks the marginalized identity my script requires? This obstacle is an important element of the current fight for fairness in casting, and I encountered it full-force on my own journey to find a Black teenage male actor with albinism.

As a Nigerian-American and a storyteller, I am in constant conflict between heightened awareness of

widespread misconceptions of non-Western cultures (my global side) and sheer shock and horror at the encountering of some ritual practices (the good ole American in me). When I first heard about the persecution of PWAs (person with albinism) in Africa from my father a few years back, I thought it must be an ancient myth; I was mistaken. In fact, even today, Tanzania has one of the highest global rates of people with albinism, and they are frequently attacked and killed for the sale of their bodies to witch doctors for good luck potions.

To dramatize this unfortunate story, I wrote *Chisel*, a two-character play about a Black American teen with albinism and



Jordan White and Cherie Carter in rehearsal. Courtesy of Julie Taiwo Oni.

his interaction with a biracial Tanzanian art student. Sal, my teen protagonist, is in conflict with his albinism because he doesn't feel that he's accepted as a Black Lives Matter activist due to his lacking pigmentation. He therefore engages in an aggressive activity that lands him in a juvenile detention center. Alice—his counter—struggles with being mixed race in a culture that often resents non-native citizens. I finished a draft of the play and placed it aside a few years ago, mainly because I had no idea who would perform either role, especially that of Sal.

The representation struggle has become all too familiar these days, from the rampant cultural appropriation of hip-hop, to Katy Perry's kimonos and dreadlocks, to the whitewashing and gender identity-crossing of Hollywood via the likes of Scarlett Johansson. Yet

an important part of the conversation is the challenge of representing marginalized identities when privileged bodies are so much more accessible on casting couches. Constant rejection and appropriation discourages under-represented actors, making it even more difficult to get them into the room. The unfortunate result is that more privileged actors get more opportunities to hone their skills in all levels of theatre.

Sometime into my own representation journey, my friend Bri, who was set to perform the role of *Chisel's* Alice for a reading, sat down to help me brainstorm possible actors to play the PWA male character Sal. We were at a loss. Would an audience be able to gather the full weight of the story—centered on the identity of a young man with albinism—if the actor playing the role did not have this condition? It felt so important to see him. We decided that the absolute minimum at that moment was to find somebody who would understand Sal's journey intellectually and be willing to engage in conversation about the PWA plight. We decided to cast Tom, a TV actor and friend. The reading went well, but the question of course came up: was this play castable?

Is it worth the ongoing and discouraging search for an actor of a marginalized identity when there are so many of privilege willing to play the role?

I believe it is.

So, I persisted. Everywhere I went, to anyone I met, I mentioned *Chisel* and my struggle to find an actor. I spoke of the PWA attacks in my classes on culture. I emailed modeling and casting agencies. I asked my acting students for recommendations. The result was a sharing and tagging anytime a friend or colleague saw a story on albinism and a collection of books and magazine articles sent by friends, yet still no Sal.



Joshua Michael Moore, Cherie Carter and Jordan White. Courtesy of Julie Taiwo Oni.

Perhaps six months after the reading, I got a message from Tom: "I see the Tanzanian albino girls we talked about in rehearsals." The girls were Tindi and Bibiana Mashamba, sisters who were in Los Angeles on refuge after Bibiana had been attacked and lost a leg and fingers. They were at his local lunch spot. My heart jumped with joy. "Well talk to them!" I waited impatiently. Hours later, he told me he'd lacked the nerve to speak to them: "I didn't know what to say. Sorry."

And here we encountered the next obstacle on our mission: the hypocrisy of drawing attention to albinism when the heart of *Chisel's* story is about a desire for acceptance instead of social isolation. If I were to pass a Black male with albinism that looked like a possible Sal, what would I say to him, "You're a PWA, I need you"? Fortunately, Tom saw them again a few months later and asked if they would be interested in meeting up with the *Chisel* team. They were overjoyed (probably because they recognized him from TV, but I'll take it). Their host and co-founder of African Millennium Foundation, Malena Ruth, arranged for us to all have tea. During our meeting, they told the story of Bibiana's attack, and we were all horrified by their trauma yet inspired by these two warriors.

If only these girls had been actors.

Despite these frequent roadblocks, I firmly believe that the theatre community can work together to hold each other up in the mission toward authentic casting. I think most of us *want* representation; the challenge is the grit that it requires.

A year or two after the initial *Chisel* reading, with a second reading under our belt but still no PWA actor for Sal, a new theatre colleague sent me contact information for a Black

actress with albinism she'd heard about in Chicago. I emailed her a long, detailed, impassioned letter about my journey and how excited I was to be connected with her. I didn't expect a reply. Ten minutes later, I got one. She was as excited as I was to be in touch.

I sent her *Chisel* and thought that perhaps I could find a way to cast her

in the male role or adjust the script's gender dynamics. She gave me the most heart-felt and thorough script feedback I had received, noting the ringing-true to her experience and sharing questions that came up. Casting her proved an impossibility because of the story's essential commentary on Black male experience, but I promised to keep in touch and update her on the process. We made plans to collaborate



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in the future, and I asked if she knew any male PWA actors.

She did!

This is it, I said to myself, crafting another heartfelt email, this time, at long last, to a Black male actor with albinism. I got no reply. I was back to square one, even with some strong and inspiring ladies in my court.

A few weeks later, I was scrolling through my Instagram when I saw a post from @albinism_beautiful, a group I'd been following for years. It hit me that the members of this particular community might be worth approaching. The second I passed the profile of Jordan White, an eighteen-year-old young man from Atlanta, I knew I'd found my Sal. He was a Black teenage male with albinism with the description "Actor/Model." I didn't wait this time. I messaged him immediately and heard back within an hour or so. We began an ongoing dialogue about my play.

It turned out one of Jordan's most prominent performances was tied to another PWA actor's casting in a TV series shot in his city. Marginalized groups do have this profound ability to hold each other up, but we need to see that others respect our stories as well by pushing forth characters that are multidimensional—not archetypal. And we need the space to bring them to life ourselves. This is the key to representation.

On June 14, 2018, Jordan flew to LA for the first time to perform in a reading of *Chisel* at Pepperdine University, where I work. The Department of Humanities and Teacher Education generously hosted him for Albinism Awareness Day. After months of talking through the script and planning, we finally met in person.

I was shocked by this young man. He reminded me of the importance of life experience and observation to breathe humanity into a story. Jordan was an articulate, enthusiastic, hilarious and confident guy. When he entered the theatre, fresh off a long flight (and the first of his life), he greeted us all with handshakes and hugs, pumped and ready. I had anticipated—after all these years of studying the oppression of PWA—to encounter a shy and self-conscious young man who would need time to warm up to us; he was just the opposite.

"I like to be seen," he said as we drove down Pacific Coast Highway after that first rehearsal. "I used to be mad all the time and hate the stares, but now I just smile."

In a world of rampant cultural and identity appropriation, we have a responsibility as practitioners of live performance to allow the audience to experience another's story truthfully. The joy of encountering an underrepresented actor onstage playing a character of his or her actual identity is too powerful to forego. The more marginalized actors see themselves represented authentically, the more they will start to fill our casting couches. The maze will dwindle. ■

Julie Taiwo Oni is a Nigerian-American playwright with an interest in exploring the African diaspora through narrative. Recent plays include nat&EM, Bunk, Denim, Black-Proof, and Chisel—a story that displays the oppression of people with albinism in Tanzania. Oni is Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Pepperdine University. www.julietaiwooni.com

This piece, "Casting an Actor with Albinism: The Importance of Authenticity on Stage" by Julie Taiwo Oni was originally published on HowlRound (<http://howlround.com/casting-an-albino-actor-the-maze-of-representation-and-the-joy-thereafter>), on August 2, 2018.

Dialogue

Encore Stages in conversation



Seattle Modern Orchestra. Photo: unknown.

Seattle Modern Orchestra (SMO) is the only large ensemble in the Pacific Northwest solely dedicated to the performance of contemporary classical music. The professional new music ensemble, conducted by Julia Tai, has 18 musicians performing in many different configurations, adding to Seattle's artistic landscape and cultural dialogue.

Jérémy Jolley, SMO's co-artistic director (along with Tai), is eager for SMO's distinct voice to be heard. He recently sat down with Encore Stages to discuss the meaning of modern music, the challenges in performing it and *Echoes of Tinder*.

Tell me a bit about yourself.

I was born in Lyon, France and grew up in the French Alps. I moved to Seattle in 1997, pursued composition studies and received my Bachelor of Arts and Master of Music degrees in Composition from the University of Washington. I'm the co-artistic director of SMO, also the artistic collaborations manager at the Seattle Symphony.

What is Seattle Modern Orchestra? How is it different than other orchestras in the area?

Seattle Modern Orchestra focuses on music that relates to the present or

recent past. It is a modern orchestra that explores what music can be.

How did you get involved with SMO? Why was it important to you?

In June 2010, Julia Tai organized a concert featuring Steve Reich's *Tehillim* under the name Seattle Modern Orchestra. In August of that year, after returning from a new music festival in Germany, I was looking forward to creating a way to consistently present contemporary music in Seattle. Julia and I had met during our studies at the University of Washington, where she had conducted one of my works,



Jérémy Jolley, SMO's co-artistic director. Photo: Amy Vandergon.

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photo: Steve Korn



so I contacted to see if I could join her effort with SMO and we launched SMO's first season in 2010-2011. Seattle area audiences must have access to all of the different types of music being created today. Experiencing different types of thought and expression is key to living in today's society.

People have a perception of what classical music is. What does SMO do to change those perceptions?

Today's performing groups, including SMO, are taking a critical look at whose music has been performed and whose has not. SMO's mission to perform the music of today gives us the chance to challenge all these preconceived notions associated with 'classical' music. We are always experimenting with the concert format and asking our audience for their input. Overall, there is an attitude of welcoming people to a concert as if they were being welcomed into our homes.

Who are some of your favorite modern composers?

Ah! There are too many to list here, but if you insist; some composers that I return to regularly and recommend exploring are Giacinto Scelsi, Luigi Nono and Gérard Grisey. Their unbound love for sound and its expressive potential is very compelling to me.

What are some of your favorite SMO memories?

All of my favorite memories of SMO are a variation on the same experience, that is, at a concert, while listening to the works being played; or after the performance, looking at the facial expressions of the audience. The faces of wonder, excitement, bewilderment. I typically sit on the side of the auditorium, and to see the humble and thankful looks that audiences and performers give one another is magical.

What are you looking forward to in the coming season?

This season is very exciting for me because I've only heard one of the pieces of our season performed live! I'm looking forward to discovering them deeply as we prepare them for our three concerts. This coming season we will get to play with Yigit Kolat and his *Echoes of Tinder* for ensemble and electronics. We will also have a concert celebrating flutist/composer/conductor Robert Aitken. Aitken is from Toronto, Canada and will play with and conduct the ensemble music by Toru Takemitsu, Brian Cherney, Iannis Xenakis and his own. Our last concert of the season will feature the American composer and vocalist Erin Gee who will perform a few of her *Mouthpieces* with the ensemble. These are works in which she explores the nature of vocal sounds and their relation to instrumental sounds. It is a uniquely beautiful experience. ■

Jonathan Shipley is a freelance writer living in West Seattle. He's been published in the Los Angeles Times, Fine Books & Collections Magazine, and Seattle Magazine, among others.

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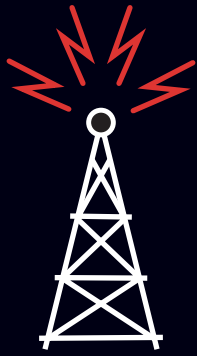
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Intermission Brain Transmission

Are you waiting for the curtain to rise? Or, perhaps, you've just returned to your seat before the second act and have a few minutes to spare? Treat your brain to this scintillating trivia quiz!

Email us the answer to the last question and have a chance to win tickets to a show!

- 1) At ACT Theatre, *Skylight* will run from September 7–30. This play was written by British playwright David Hare. For which screenplay did he win the Seattle Film Critics Award for Best Screenplay, Adapted in 2002?
 - a) *The Hours*
 - b) *Far from Heaven*
 - c) *A Beautiful Mind*
 - d) *Gosford Park*
- 2) September 12–October 20, Taproot Theatre Company will produce Ken Ludwig's *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*. John Baskerville designed the popular serif typeface Baskerville in the 1750s. To what classification of typeface does Baskerville traditionally belong?
 - a) Old-Style
 - b) Modern
 - c) Transitional
 - d) Tuscan
- 3) One of Shakespeare's histories, *Richard III*, will run September 12–October 7 at Seattle Shakespeare Company. Richard III assumed the throne after King Edward IV, his brother, died and Edward's heirs were declared illegitimate. Richard was killed two years later and his remains were lost. Where in England were they eventually found?
 - a) Mislabeled, in the archives of the British Museum in 1989.
 - b) Under a parking lot in Leicester in 2012.
 - c) Preserved in a boggy tributary of the River Soar in 1930.
 - d) On display in a curiosity museum in Liverpool in 2004.



Charlotte Brontë.
University of Texas

- 4) *Jane Eyre*, adapted from the novel by Charlotte Brontë, will run at Book-It Repertory Theatre September 13–October 14. Which popular cartoonist is known for creating "Dude Watchin' With the Brontës", a comic strip first published on the internet?
 - a) Kate Beaton, *Hark! A Vagrant*
 - b) John Allison, *Scary Go Round*
 - c) Gabrielle Bell, *Lucky*
 - d) Allie Brosh, *Hyperbole and a Half*

Bonus Question

What was the last arts performance you attended that you liked best and why?

Email your response to production@encoremediagroup.com with "Trivia Quiz" in the subject line.

ANSWERS: 1) a. *The Hours*. Hare was nominated but did not win the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *The Hours*. 2) c. Transitional. Commonly used in the mid-to late-18th century, these typefaces feature thick and thin lines that are more pronounced than those of old-style faces such as Garamond but not as much as modern styles that came later like Bodoni. 3) b. In Leicester. The car park, as they are called in England, was built over the grounds of the Greyfriars Church, which was dissolved as an institution in the 1530s and later demolished. 4) a. Kate Beaton. Her historical and literary humor webcomic, *Hark! A Vagrant*, was updated from 2006–2016. She has written and illustrated two children's books and is working on a graphic novel.



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