

A Powerful Story About Immigration in  
***My Ántonia***

By Willa Cather

Adapted and Directed by Annie Lareau

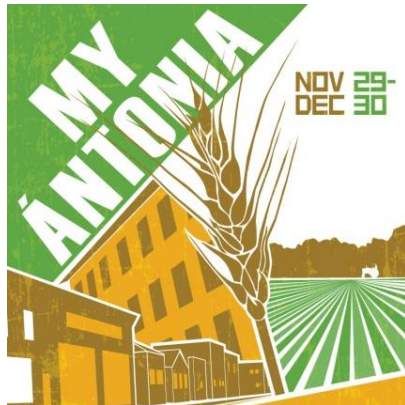
November 29-December 30, 2018

**Press Contact**

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SEATTLE, Wash.—October 25, 2018—Book-It Repertory Theatre continues its 29th season with the enchanting *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather. **Annie Lareau**, who adapted the novel and starred as Ántonia in Book-It's original 2008 production, returns to direct the 2018 production.

The childhood memories of narrator Jim Burden in Blackhawk, Nebraska are woven together with the struggles of his beloved neighbor, a newly-arrived immigrant girl from Bohemia, Ántonia Shimerda. The story of their friendship outlines the determination, hardship, and resilience of Great Plains life at the turn of the 20th century in this tribute to the human spirit.



"After adapting and playing the lead role 10 years ago, I am so excited to revisit this script and powerful story about immigration to this country. At a time in which immigrants are being cast as unwanted and deportations are increasing, this story reminds us that unless you come from a Native population we are all immigrants, and we all faced hardship and the assimilation process in our families' past. As a way of honoring and respecting those that have come before us, now is the time we need to reach out with empathy and support to our most recent immigrants, and fight for their rights," says Lareau.

"No romantic novel ever written in America, by man or woman, is one half so beautiful as *My Ántonia*." —H. L. Mencken

Following *O Pioneers!* and *The Song of the Lark*, *My Ántonia* completes the trilogy of Cather's best-known Nebraska novels and is considered her best work. First published in 1918, *My Ántonia* is currently celebrating its centennial through the Willa Cather Foundation.

The cast includes **Kiki Abba** as Mrs. Cutter/Willa Cather/Ensemble, **Nabilah S. Ahmed** as Ántonia, **Anders Bolang\*** as Otto/Peter/Mr. Cutter/Ensemble, **Nik Doner** as Pavel/Ordinsky/Ensemble, **Jerik Fernandez** as Marek/Ensemble, **Tim Gouran** as Jim Burden, **William Hall Jr.\*** as Mr. Shimerda/Mr. Harling, **Barbara Lindsay** as Grandmother/Ensemble, **Benjamin N.M. Ludiker** as Charley/Ensemble, **Helen Marion** as Yulka/Tiny/Ensemble, **Clark Sandford\*** as Grandfather/Ensemble, **Judith Shahn** as Mrs. Shimerda/Mrs. Harling, **Jasmine Jean Sim** as Lena/Ensemble, and **Tyler Trerise** as Jake/Ambrosch/Ensemble.

The design team includes scenic design by **Julia Hayes Welch**, sound design by **Erin Bednarz**, costume design by **Kelly McDonald**, lighting and projections design by **Ahren Buhmann**, and properties design by **Jessamyn Bateman-Iino**. **Laura Ferri** joins the team as the choreographer. **Judith Shahn** is the dialect coach and **Imogen Love** is the assistant dialect coach.

\*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](mailto:valb@book-it.org).

*My Antonia* plays November 29-December 30, 2018 (**Opening/Press Night on Saturday, December 1**) at **The Center Theatre at the Armory** (305 Harrison Street, Seattle, WA 98109). Performance tickets start at \$26 with group rates available. \$20 tickets will be available to students during the entire run with valid school ID. Purchase at [book-it.org](http://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.

#### ABOUT ANNIE LAREAU

Annie Lareau is a professional director, actor, adapter, teaching artist, and co-artistic director at Seattle Public Theater as well as a member of the Sandbox Artists Collective. She has received two *Seattle Times*' Footlight Awards for Acting and was nominated twice for California's Elly awards in Direction. Annie earned her BFA in Acting and Directing from Syracuse University and her M.Ed in Arts Education from Harvard University. Some past projects include directing *The Vanishing Point* and *Grand Concourse* (Seattle Public Theater), adapting and directing *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* (Book-It Repertory Theatre and Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra); directing *Chinglish* (ArtsWest and Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra), *Little Dog Laughed* (ArtsWest), *As You Like It* and *Pericles* (Seattle Shakespeare Company), *Doktor Kaboom: Live Wire* (Kennedy Center for the Arts, Washington D.C) and *Forever Plaid* (Mount Baker Theatre). She has been seen on stage performing as Antonia in *My Antonia* and Maggie Jones in *Plainsong* (Book-It Repertory Theatre), Mistress Ford in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Elizabeth in *Richard III*, Queen Isabel in *Henry V*, and Bawd in *Pericles* (Seattle Shakespeare Company).

**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 2018-2019 SEASON

In the fall of 2018, Book-It presents Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, where classism, personal agency, and feminine spirituality are explored in this Gothic mystery. The enchanting American classic *My Antonia* by Willa Cather takes the stage during the holiday season. Kicking off 2019 is a brutally honest look at addiction during Seattle's grunge years with Seattle native Tom Hansen's *American Junkie*. In the spring, *Returning the Bones* combines classic storytelling with fluid physical style and is performed by Helen Hayes Award-winner **Gin Hammond** at the Erickson Theatre. Book-It closes out its 29th season with *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue, which masterfully weaves a story of class divide, immigration, and marriage.

#### 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 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 presents the American classic *My Ántonia* for the holiday season. The childhood memories of narrator Jim Burden in Blackhawk, Nebraska are woven together with the struggles of his beloved neighbor, a newly-arrived immigrant girl from Bohemia, Ántonia Shimerda. The story of their friendship outlines the determination, hardship, and resilience of Great Plains life at the turn of the 20th century in this enchanting story that is a tribute to the human spirit.

**WHEN:** Pay-What-You-Will Preview: Wednesday, November 28  
Previews: Thursday, November 29 and Friday, November 30  
Opening Night: Saturday, December 1  
Closing: Sunday, December 30

**TIMES:** Wednesday-Saturday—7:30pm (Matinées on Dec 5, 15, 22, and 29)  
Sundays—2pm

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

**TICKETS:** Tickets start at \$26 with group rates available. \$20 tickets will be available to students during the entire run with valid school ID. Purchase at [book-it.org](http://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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