

An Honest Look at Addiction in *American Junkie*

By Tom Hansen

Adapted by Jane Jones and Kevin McKeon

Directed by Jane Jones

February 14-March 10, 2019

Updated cast 11/30

Press Contact

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SEATTLE, Wash.—November 8, 2018—Book-It Repertory Theatre kicks off 2019 with an



honest look at addiction during Seattle’s grunge years with Seattle native Tom Hansen’s *American Junkie*. Adapted by Jane Jones and Kevin McKeon and directed by Jones, Hansen deftly balances a raw story about the path that leads to self-destruction with wry humor and hope. A tight, 90-minute ride through Seattle’s music scene during the grunge era, *American Junkie* looks at the man behind the addiction and takes a hard look at the power heroin and other opioids have on people’s lives.

A story of recovery and accountability, this adaptation of *American Junkie* follows Hansen as he goes from rock bottom and then rises to the path of recovery. Hansen was a pioneer in the punk rock scene in Seattle until he became hooked on heroin and started selling it. On his death bed and weighing 100 pounds, he finally got clean in 1999 after six months in the hospital and in Bailey-Boushay House, a local hospice. He returned to school in 2000 and graduated with an MFA from the University of British Columbia in 2008. He is the author of two books, the memoir *American Junkie* and the novel *This Is What We Do*.

“When I saw the Book-It adaptation of Denis Johnson’s *Jesus’ Son* I dreamed of having one of my books produced for the stage. I’m beyond honored and thrilled to see what they do with *American Junkie*,” says Hansen.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, opioid overdoses increased 30 percent from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states, making it clear that addiction is still a prevalent problem in our society.

“I first read Tom Hansen’s *American Junkie* in 2013 while directing Langford Wilson’s *Balm in Gilead*. The memoir has stuck to me like glue all these years after. The opioid crisis continues to claim lives in our country, including 50 thousand people this year alone, and the numbers keep growing. Addiction is so stigmatized, and yet it exists in the closets, if not the living rooms, of

countless American homes. Tom's memoir sheds an unapologetic treatise on how this can happen to anyone," says Jones.

The cast includes **Ian Bond** as Tom with **Jesica Avellone**, **Hazel Rose Gibson**, **Tim Gouran**, **Brian Gunter***, and **Marco Adiak Voli** as the ensemble.

The design team includes scenic design by **Catherine Cornell**, sound design by **Kyle Thompson**, costume design by **Kelly McDonald**, lighting design by **Thorn Michaels**, and properties design by **Cedric Wright**.

*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.

American Junkie plays February 14-March 10, 2019 (**Opening/Press Night on Saturday, February 16**) at **The Center Theatre at the Armory** (305 Harrison Street, Seattle, WA 98109). Performance tickets range from \$26 to \$50 with group rates available. \$20 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 the production run), located in the outer lobby of The Center Theatre at the Armory, 305 Harrison St., Seattle.

BEYOND-THE-BOOK EVENTS

Conversations that both illuminate Book-It's production and act as catalysts for deeper exploration of the book's themes.

Book-It will announce Beyond-the-Book events at a later date.

ABOUT TOM HANSEN

Tom Hansen was born in 1961 and grew up in the suburbs north of Seattle. He was a pioneer in the punk rock scene in Seattle until he became hooked on heroin and discovered he had a natural aptitude for selling it and it paid better than anything else. On his death bed and weighing 100 pounds he finally got clean in 1999 after six months in the hospital and in Bailey-Boushay House, a local hospice. He returned to school in 2000 and graduated with an MFA from the University of British Columbia in 2008. He is the author of two books, the memoir *American Junkie* and the novel *This Is What We Do*.

ABOUT JANE JONES

Jane is the founder 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. 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 in Seattle, at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (Ovation Award, best director) and in New York (Drama

Desk Nomination, best director). Jane's most recent directing credits include *Native Gardens* at Arizona Theatre Company. With Portland Center Stage she directed, *Cyrano*, *Twelfth Night* (Drammy awards, Best Direction and Production) and Book-It's adaptations of *Great Expectations* and *Pride and Prejudice*. For Book-It her credits include *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.

ABOUT KEVIN MCKEON

Kevin McKeon has adapted several literary works for Book-It, including Anne Tyler's *Breathing Lessons*, Dinaw Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* and Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (with Jane Jones). His adaptation of David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* has been performed at many theaters across the country including Hartford Stage, Centerstage Baltimore, and Portland Center Stage. His adaptation of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* was commissioned by Portland Center Stage and premiered there in 2013. It is currently playing at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. He is the author of *Strutting and Fretting*, a novel about the acting game.

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 Ántonia* by Willa Cather takes the stage during the holiday season. Kicking off 2019 is an 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 kicks off 2019 with an honest look at addiction during Seattle's grunge years with Seattle native Tom Hansen's *American Junkie*. Adapted by Jane Jones and Kevin McKeon and directed by Jones, Hansen deftly balances a raw story about the path that leads to self-destruction with wry humor and hope.

WHEN: Pay-What-You-Will Preview: Wednesday, February 13
Previews: Thursday, February 14 and Friday, February 15
Opening Night: Saturday, February 16
Closing: Sunday, March 10

TIMES: Wednesday-Saturday—7:30pm (Matinées on Feb 20, Mar 2, and 9)
Sundays—2pm

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

TICKETS: Tickets range from \$26 to \$50 with group rates available. \$20 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 the production run), located in the outer lobby of The Center Theatre at the Armory.

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