

JANE JONES

Founder, Founding Co-Artistic Director

MYRA PLATT

Founding Co-Artistic Director

KAYTI BARNETT-O'BRIEN

Managing Director

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Book-It Repertory Theatre Announces New Artistic Director



[Seattle, Wash., December 19, 2019] — Book-It

Repertory Theatre is pleased to announce **Gus Menary** as its Incoming Artistic Director. Menary comes to Book-It from Chicago where he was Artistic Director of Jackalope Theatre. Over the next eight months, he will work closely

with Co-Founding Artistic Directors **Jane Jones** and **Myra Platt**. As Jones remains the artistic leader of the company until August 2020, she will be able to introduce Menary to Book-It and the Seattle community. He will succeed Jones and Platt in the 2020-2021 season.

“I am very excited for Gus to be joining us at Book-It,” says Book-It Managing Director **Kayti Barnett-O'Brien**. “I am deeply thankful to the incredible legacy Jane and Myra have built over the last 30 years and the amazing community of artists and friends they nurtured. Gus is deeply committed to honoring that history while leading us into an equally bright and impactful second chapter.”

“In Gus, Book-It has found an exceptional leader and artist with an authentic passion for theatre, literature and education,” says Book-It Board President and Hiring Committee

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Chairman **Stuart Frank** regarding the 4-month national search. “He has proven experience in building and running a theatre company dedicated to new work development. The rigorous curiosity required to undertake and nurture this work will be an incredible asset to the community, and his infectious enthusiasm will be a guiding light for Book-It’s journey into the future.”

Under Menary’s leadership, Jackalope Theatre produced 15 professional shows, 75 individual events and hosted over 200 guest companies. Menary expanded artistic programming by initiating new play development programs dedicated to nurturing emerging playwrights, exploring works in progress and amplifying diverse stories. He was part of a team that helped develop the Chicago Theatre Standards, an initiative working to shift the paradigm that too often allows for sexual harassment, discrimination, violence, intimidation and bullying in theatrical spaces. He was named one of the Fifty People Who Really Perform for Chicago by *Newcity Magazine* in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

He is a founding member of multidisciplinary arts company The Inconvenience, where he served as Director of Theatre Programming. He has worked with many Chicago theatre companies including Steppenwolf, American Theatre Company, and Strawdog Theatre Company; and as a director has helmed numerous world-premieres including *Exit Strategy*, *Life On Paper* and *Detective Partner Hero Villain*. In addition to producing many world premieres, Gus facilitated the development of over 40 new plays through Jackalope's various new work programs.

“I am in awe of this incredible company and the body of work that they’ve produced over 30 years of building and dreaming and art-making. Book-It’s focus on adaptation is, in some ways, brand new to me, but as someone who reads voraciously, it’s a facet of theatremaking that has always greatly interested me. I’m committed to new work and new voices, to new ways of bringing authors’ voices to life, to expanding how we define and think about great works of literature. In a very real way, this opportunity feels like

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fate. It's my hope that I'm able to continue Book-It's streak of artistic excellence and captivating, diverse work that includes and uplifts the voices and stories of many people. I'm extremely excited, and I'm extremely honored that they would place their trust in me."

This May, he will be directing the world-premiere of Justice Hehir's *Night Creatures*, his last show as Jackalope's Artistic Director. Menary will start full-time at Book-It on January 2, as the company prepares to present the remaining shows of its landmark 30th season, *The Turn of the Screw* (February – March 2020) and *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* (June 2020). He will participate in season planning for Book-It's 2020-2021 season and familiarize himself with the staff, board and Book-It Style.

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 dedicated to transforming great literature into great theatre through simple and sensitive production, and to inspiring its audiences to read.

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