

GUS MENARY
Artistic Director

KAYTI BARNETT-O'BRIEN
Managing Director

FOR RELEASE
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Searing Short Story, **CHILDFINDER**, Opens Book-It Repertory Theatre Audio Season

[Seattle, Wash., October 13, 2020]—Book-It Repertory Theatre (Book-It) will begin its audio-only 31st season with the science fiction short story “**Childfinder**,” by **Octavia E. Butler**. In this tale of a woman charged with finding telepathic children and unleashing their potential, issues with institutional racism and class divide are tackled. “Childfinder” was adapted for Book-It’s audio season by **Shermona Mitchell** (she/they) and directed by **Gin Hammond** (she/her).

“In working in an audio-only medium, the most urgent puzzles to solve were twofold: first, how to elevate *Childfinder* beyond what audiences expect in a radio play or an audiobook, and second, how to get our actors to sound like they’re in the room—and story universe—if they literally can’t be due to COVID-19. Fortunately, years of experience in audio books, radio plays and video games, as well as onstage, helped reveal how to meld the best that each genre has to offer. Especially because we are keeping the famous Book-It style intact, this show will offer a unique hybrid of storytelling our audiences will recognize and love,” says Hammond of this singular process.



Finally published in 2014, “Childfinder” was first written for the Clarion Science Fiction Writers Workshop in 1970 and was Butler’s first professional sale. Though the anthology in which it was to appear was never itself published, the sale made Butler feel that she “was on [her] way as a writer.” Blending optimistic tropes used in a majority white genre with a realistic worldview gained by observing life as a Black woman, Octavia E. Butler created a work of quiet resilience and revolutionary spirit.

Book-It Artistic Director Gus Menary (he/him) notes, “In it we see all of Ms. Butler’s incredible work already on display even at the very beginning of her career—characters that are instantly relatable, a story that hooks you, a message that resonates. Plus, powerful children, telepathic combat, and a shadowy organization that seeks to control us. In just 25 pages, it takes us on an incredible journey and leaves us wanting more. I can think of no better way to start this season than with an adaptation of a master by some of the most talented artists in our city.”

The cast includes **Faith Bennett Russell** (she/her), **Ayo Tushinde** (she/her), **Maya Flory-Barnes Salas** (she/her), **Brandon JonesMooney** (he/him), **Maya Michelle Russell** (she/her), **Nicholas Japaul Bernard** (he/him) and **Jon Stutzman** (he/him). **Kyle Thompson** (he/him) was the sound designer, and this season **Leanna Keith** (she/they) was the theme composer and performer, **Ben Radin** (he/him) the technical director/sound engineer and **Michelle Chesley** (she/her) the rehearsal stage manager.

Childfinder will be released to stream or download on October 28, 2020 and is accessible until June 30, 2021. Single tickets to this show are available beginning October 14, 2020 and cost \$15.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND SINGLE TICKETS

Subscriptions for the 2020-2021 season are available from September 1, 2020-June 1, 2021 by phone and online. There is one subscription package at \$100, which gives you access to all titles in the season, plus exclusive additional content. **Single tickets** will go on sale two weeks before each show's start date. Prices are \$15 for a full-length title (*Childfinder*, *The Canterville Ghost*, *The Effluent Engine*) and \$25 for a serialized title (*Mañanaland* and *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*). Two of the titles will also be available at Pay What You Will pricing. Teachers may buy any title for their class of up to 30 students for \$30. Purchase at book-it.org or by calling the box office at 206.216.0833.

ABOUT THE SEASON

The Audio Book-It season includes *Childfinder*, the story of a woman's mission to protect children the system discards, by seminal science fiction author Octavia E. Butler; *The Canterville Ghost*, a comic ghost story with all the charm and wit you expect from Oscar Wilde; *Mañanaland*, an inspiring all-ages adventure by Newbery Honor recipient Pam Muñoz Ryan; N.K. Jemisin's *The Effluent Engine* treats us to a speculative fiction spy-thriller and *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*, by Jamyang Norbu, is an exciting Holmesian pastiche.

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.

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FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

WHAT: Book-It Repertory Theatre presents the taut short story adaptation, *Childfinder*, by MacArthur Fellow and PEN West Lifetime Achievement award winner Octavia E. Butler. In this tale of a woman charged with finding telepathic children, and her mission to unleash a young girl's potential, we tackle issues with institutional racism and class divide.

WHEN: Released Online: October 28, 2020
Available Until: June 30, 2021

WHERE: book-it.org

TICKETS: Single tickets are \$15, \$30 for teachers to use with their classroom. 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. There will be no in-person box office for the 20/21 season.

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Press Contact

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