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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Artists from Book-It Repertory Theatre, a 33-year Seattle institution that closed its doors in 2023, will present the world-premiere production of “The Story of Edgar Sawtelle” at Vashon Repertory Theatre in the 315-seat Center for the Arts on Vashon Island for ten performances October 10 – 20.

“The Story of Edgar Sawtelle,” a best-selling novel by David Wroblewski, has been adapted for the stage by Jane Jones, Founder and Founding Co-Artistic Director of Book-It for over 30 years, and Kevin McKeon, a veteran of the company. Jones will direct the production with a nine-person cast, which features several prominent Seattle actors including Jen Taylor, Chris Morson, Brian Gunter, Tracy Hyland, Jon Stutzman and Jason Marr.

“Sawtelle,” a sprawling novel with epic Shakespearean themes, is the story of a young man who lacks the ability to speak, but communicates with the dogs his family breeds on a kennel in the rural Midwest in the early 1970’s. The story explores the deep connection Edgar has with his beloved Sawtelle dogs, and weaves in a plot of sacrifice, betrayal, and ultimately murder. The adaptation is penned in the traditional “Book-It Style,” familiar to long-time Seattle theatergoers, which preserves the author’s narrative along with the dialogue to tell the story.

For director Jones, “Sawtelle” has been a long time coming. Originally slated for production in 2020 at Book-It, the Covid pandemic caused the theatre to suspend operations, and the project was abruptly shelved just before rehearsals started. With the theatre on hiatus, and Jones and Co-Artistic Director Myra Platt having stepped down from administrative responsibilities, Book-It fell under new artistic leadership, which never revived the production.

Director Jones was initially drawn to the book out of a deep love for dogs. “David Wroblewski has written a profound piece of literature,” she says. “It is full of stunning imagery, and we feel privileged to bring this story to the stage on Vashon.”

The production is a part of Vashon Rep's ambitious four-show season of theatre, curated by Producing Artistic Director Charlotte Tiencken. "Finally bringing this heart-rending story to life with Charlotte Tiencken and Vashon Rep is an opportunity to finish the process of many years of work bringing our adaptation to the stage," Jones says. "It's an opportunity to celebrate and reintroduce the Book-It Style to theatre audiences throughout the Puget Sound region."

An original music score for the show is composed by Annastasia Workman, composer and performer with the late Café Nordo. Her music will be performed live on stage by Musical Director Edd Key, a long-time Book-It favorite. Tesse Crocker is the Costume Designer, lighting is designed by Robin Nettles and McKeon designs the set.

Tickets are now available at vashonrepertorytheatre.org.

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