Back-to-school jitters? Junie B. Jones takes charge, September 27

HANOVER, NH—What’s better than a new backpack and a slew of back-to-school sales? Junie B. Jones, the spunky, opinionated heroine of the 30-book, best-selling children’s series by the late Barbara Park. She returns to the Hop with the next chapter in her quest to triumph over the adversities of childhood in *Junie B.’s Essential Survival Guide to School*, a new musical by Theatreworks USA, coming to the Hop’s Spaulding Auditorium on Sunday, Sept 27, at 3 pm.

A sequel to *Junie B. Jones*, one of Theatreworks’ most successful shows ever, this tartly observant new musical finds Junie in first grade and full of useful tips for facing challenges from backpacks to bus rides to report cards. The show is recommended for grades K-5.

After a year-and-a-half of school, Junie is ready—with a little help from her friends—to write the book on everything you need to know about surviving and thriving in style. She shares her hard-won expertise and shows us all how school is sometimes scary, sometimes super-fun, and always something to sing about.

The nation’s leading not-for-profit professional theater for young audiences, Theatreworks USA comes to the Hop each season with fresh new musicals based on popular children’s books—aimed at age groups ranging from preschool to secondary. The casts feature talented, unbelievably energetic young performers at the start of their professional lives, and the shows owe their books and music to an impressive array of American theater writers and composers.

Junie B. Jones is the creation of Park, whose stories of an outrageously funny kindergartener—and then first-grader—have kept kids (and their grownups) laughing—and reading—for more than two decades. Published by Random House Books for Young Readers, the series has sold over 60 million copies in North America alone, has been translated into multiple languages and is a beloved and time-honored staple in elementary school classrooms around the world. The series was consistently a #1 *New York Times* bestseller, spending over 180 weeks on the list, and Park and her books were profiled in such national outlets as *Time, Newsweek, USA Today, The New York Times*, and *Today*. Park died on Friday, November 15, 2013 after a long struggle with ovarian cancer.

Park originally intended to teach high school history and political science, but several years after obtaining her secondary education degree she decided to try writing for a living. After several rejections, Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers acquired her first manuscripts, which were published in 1981 and 1982. She went on
to write more than 50 books, from the picture book *Ma! There’s Nothing to Do Here!*, a love letter to her grandson, to middle grade novels such as *Skinnybones, The Kid in the Red Jacket, Mick Harte Was Here* and *The Graduation of Jake Moon*. She won more than 40 children’s book awards, including several Children’s Choice Awards.


“Within the first four sentences, I discovered I had a character who hated her middle name,” Park told the trade magazine *Publishers Weekly* in 2012. “By the second page, I knew she was a wild child, who — big surprise — had not yet mastered the Queen’s English. And when I finally finished the book, I thought maybe I could write one or two more. I was a little low with my expectations, apparently.”

Junie B. stayed in kindergarten until 2001 when Park dared to let her graduate in *Junie B., First Grader (at Last!)*

Every bit as funny and as outrageous as her best-known character, Park shared a special connection with Junie B. Jones. She once said of the series, "I've never been sure whether Junie B.'s fans love her in spite of her imperfections...or because of them. But either way, she's gone out into the world and made more friends than I ever dreamed possible."

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**CALENDAR LISTING:**

**Junie B.’s Essential Survival Guide to School by Theatreworks USA**

Junie B. Jones is back with the next chapter in her quest to triumph over the adversities of childhood. A sequel to *Junie B. Jones*, one of Theatreworks’ most successful shows ever, this tartly observant new musical finds our spunky heroine in first grade and full of useful tips for facing challenges from backpacks to bus rides to report cards. Recommended for grades K-5.

Sunday, September 27, 3 pm
Spaulding Auditorium, Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hanover NH
$18/23, Dartmouth students $10, 18 and under $13/18
Information: hop.dartmouth.edu or 603.646.2422

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Founded in 1962, the Hopkins Center for the Arts is a multi-disciplinary academic, visual and performing arts center dedicated to uncovering insights, igniting passions, and nurturing talents to help Dartmouth and the surrounding Upper Valley community engage imaginatively and contribute creatively to our world. Each year the Hop presents more than 300 live events and films by visiting artists as well as Dartmouth students and the Dartmouth community, and reaches more than 22,000 Upper Valley residents and students with outreach and arts education programs. After a celebratory 50th-anniversary season in 2012-13, the Hop enters its second half-century with renewed passion for mentoring young artists, supporting the development of new work, and providing a laboratory for participation and experimentation in the arts.