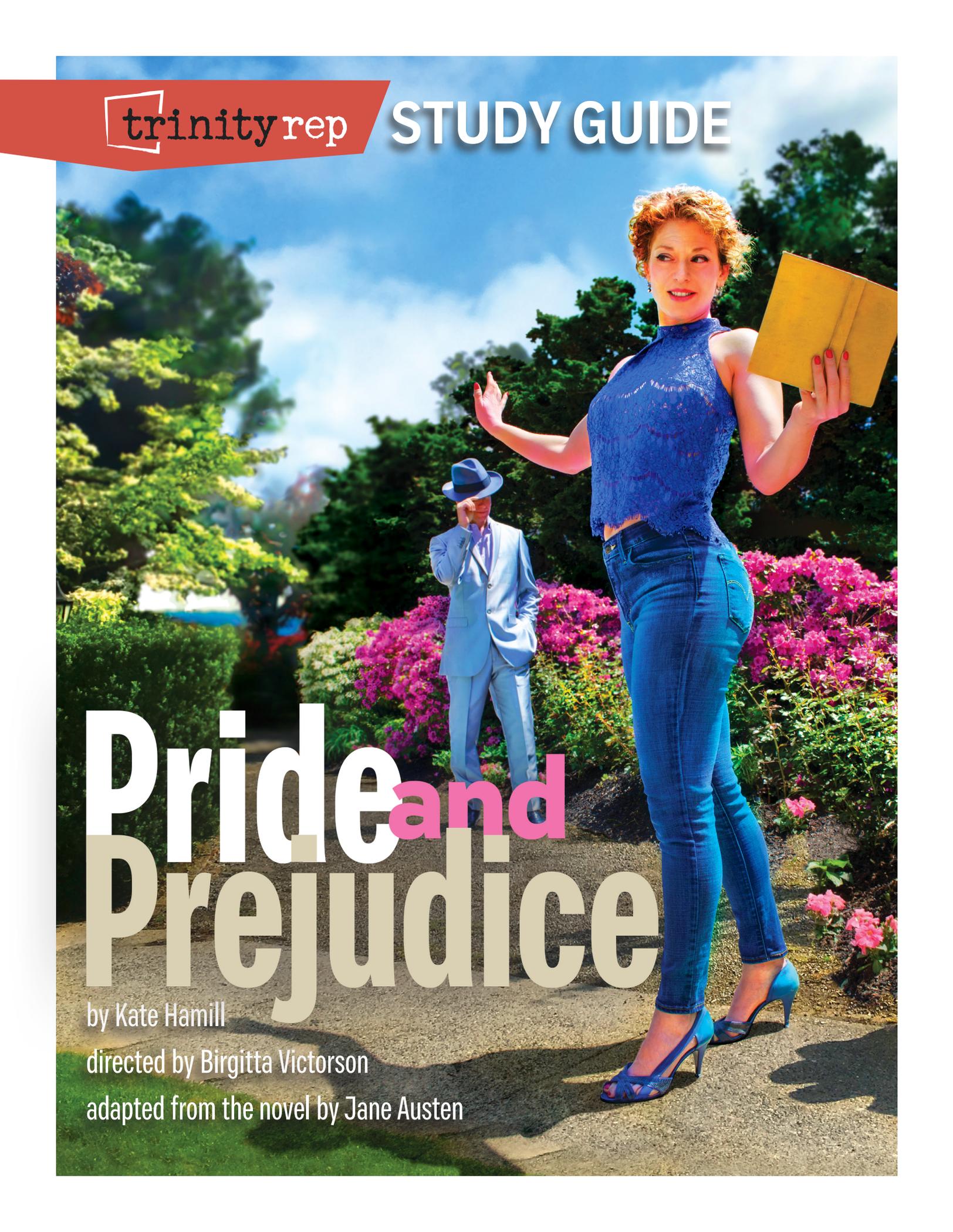


trinityrep

STUDY GUIDE

A woman in a blue lace top and jeans stands in a garden, holding a book. A man in a light blue suit and hat stands in the background. The scene is set in a lush garden with pink flowers and green trees under a blue sky.

# Pride and Prejudice

by Kate Hamill

directed by Birgitta Victorson

adapted from the novel by Jane Austen

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Navigant Credit Union is the lead sponsor of *Pride and Prejudice*.

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Prepared by Trinity Rep's Education Department and Stephanie Risch.

Production Photos by Mark Turek.

Designed by Liam St. Laurent.

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# Theater Etiquette

Please read carefully and go over with your classes before the show!

## **TEACHERS:**

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide your discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

## **ETIQUETTE:**

What is the role of an audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why can't you chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why can't you talk? What can happen at a live theater performance that can't happen in cinema? Reiterate that students may not chew gum or talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones or other devices that may create sound are off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class will not be invited back to the theater. Students are not permitted to leave the building during intermission.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP**

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two dimensional vs. Three dimensional; larger than life and on the screen vs. life size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works versus posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why?

### **Observation #1:**

When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

### **Observation #2:**

Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the "behind the scenes" elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students' eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

**Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play.** Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors.

## **SEND THESE LETTERS TO:**

Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or **email to:** education@trinityrep.com.

# Using this Guide In Your Classroom

## A Letter from School Partnerships Manager Matt Tibbs

Welcome to Trinity Rep and the 54th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide, and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- Community Building in Your Classroom
- Inspiration and Background on the Artist
- Entering and Comprehending Text
- Creating Text for Performance
- Performing in Your Class
- Reflecting on Your Performance

Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinees help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>):

- Initiate and participate effectively in a ranges of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.RL.9-10.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS.RL.9-10.4)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.I.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works (TH: Re8.1.I.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.I.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.I.)

**Enjoy the show!**



Matt Tibbs, School Partnerships Manager



2018–19 Season at the Lederer Theater Center  
under the direction of

**Curt Columbus**  
The Arthur P. Solomon and  
Sally E. Lapides Artistic Director

**Tom Parrish**  
Executive Director

# Pride and Prejudice

by Kate Hamill

adapted from the novel by Jane Austen

## THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Directed and Choreographed by **Birgitta Victorson**

Set Design by **Michael McGarty**

Costume Design by **Olivera Gajic**

Lighting Design by **Dawn Chiang**

Sound Design by **Broken Chord**

Voice and Dialect Coaching by **Candice Brown\***

Production Stage Managed by **Meg Tracy Leddy\***

**October 4 – November 4, 2018**

in the Sarah and Joseph Dowling, Jr. Theater

Sponsored by 

Media Sponsor 

Trinity Rep's 55th Season is sponsored by



Trinity Rep gratefully acknowledges the past support of the B.B. Lederer Sons Foundation, the State of Rhode Island, and the City of Providence.

**Southwest** Southwest is the official airline of Trinity Rep.

**BOTTLES** Bottles is the official sommelier of Trinity Rep.

## THE CAST

Mary/Mr. Bingley **Angela Brazil\*\***

Lydia/Lady Catherine **Katie Croyle**

Mr. Bennet/Charlotte Lucas **Richard Donnelly\***

Mrs. Bennet/Servants **Janice Duclos\*\***

Jane/Miss De Bourgh **Shelley Fort\***

Lizzy **Rebecca Gibel\*\***

Mr. Darcy/Wickham **Rachael Warren\*\***

Mr. Collins/Miss Bingley **Joe Wilson, Jr. \*\***

Understudies **Jihan Haddad, Hannah Van Sciver, Jessica Smith,  
Rodney Witherspoon II**

Pride and Prejudice will be performed **with one intermission.**

Production Director **Laura E. Smith**

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors & stage managers

‡ Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless a specific announcement is made at the time of performance.

World premiere production co-produced by Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and Primary Stages:

- June 24, 2017, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival (Davis McCallum, Artistic Director; Kate Liberman, Managing Director)
- November 19, 2017, Primary Stages (Andrew Leynse, Artistic Director; Shane D. Hudson, Executive Director)

Pride and Prejudice received a presentation as part of The Other Season at Seattle Repertory Theatre 2016-17

Pride and Prejudice is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

**PLEASE TURN OFF** cell phones, beepers, pagers, and alarms during the performance. Texting and cell phone use are limited to intermission, outside the theater. Photography, video, and/or audio recording of this performance by any means are strictly prohibited.

ON COVER: REBECCA GIBEL • COSTUMES BY AMANDA DOWNING CARNEY • IMAGE BY MICHAEL GUY

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# All About Austen

Jane Austen has been a staple in literature for centuries, but she has also expanded into the realm of pop culture. Her books have inspired countless movies, TV shows, and even an action figure or two. There are devout adaptations that interpret her work word for word and looser adaptations that throw in everything from time-travel to zombies. There's so much Jane Austen all around us, you might not even realize it.

First, the basics. Jane Austen was an English novelist who lived from 1775 to 1817. Her father, George Austen, was a rector at a local Anglican parish and her mother, Cassandra Leigh, was from a prominent family. Austen had three siblings, Henry, Cassandra, and Francis. Her parents encouraged the family to be well-educated and to explore creative interests. The girls were sent to school but later had to return home when their family was unable to afford it. The rumor is that Jane and Cassandra were still tutored at home by their father, and that they may have even joined their brothers for lessons.

Austen showed a love for, and promise in writing from an early age. In what is known as her "Juvenalia" stage, she wrote many poems, notebooks, and a short novel that was meant to entertain her family and friends.

As Austen neared adulthood her family moved to Bath, England in 1801, which Austen was adamant about how much she hated, as the move took her away from the home that she loved in Steventon. She wrote much less during that period and scholars attribute this to an intense depression that overcame the author. She was in Bath for a short time, moving to Southampton in 1806 and finally to Hampshire in 1809.

Austen took ill at the beginning of 1816 and deteriorated rapidly. Though there is no certainty around the cause, it is rumored to have been Addison's Disease, as popularized by the 1964 retrospective diagnosis by Dr. Vincent Cope. Despite her illness, Austen continued to write, working on novels that she unfortunately never finished.

Austen only published four novels during her lifetime, all anonymously, as women were not allowed to sign contracts at the time, meaning she couldn't sign a publishing agreement.



Engraving of Jane Austen, derived from a portrait by her sister, Cassandra Austen, c. 1810.

*7 Continents History/ Everett Collection*

Those novels are: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1816). After her death in 1817, at the age of 41, Austen's brother Henry and her sister Cassandra had her remaining novels *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* published as a set in 1818. Austen was never credited as the author of her novels while she was alive, with her first credit as author coming in 1821 – though her brother Henry identified her as the author when the posthumous publication of *Persuasion* first came out in 1818.

Jane Austen's work has continued to grow and thrive, with adaptations upon adaptations coming out based on, or inspired by her novels. From the traditional to the bizarre, here are a few of the ways *Pride and Prejudice*, perhaps her best known work, have transcended time.

# About Pride and Prejudice

## **PRIDE AND PREJUDICE IN FILM AND TELEVISION**

The first television adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* came out in 1938 in the United Kingdom and starred Curigwen Lewis as Elizabeth and Andrew Osborn as Mr. Darcy. It was broadcast on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and played just before World War II began. A mere two years later in 1940 was the much better known (and first film adaptation) starring Greer Garson as Lizzy and the famous Laurence Olivier as that handsome Mr. Darcy. While a very well-received film, it did poorly at the box office – resulting in a loss for the studio. That wouldn't stop the film and television adaptations from coming, however. There was another television miniseries in the 1950s, as well as one in the 1960s and 1980s. None of these are nearly as well known as the 1995 television miniseries that featured Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth and Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. In this adaptation, the series won several awards, including a BAFTA for Jennifer Ehle for "Best Actress" and an Emmy for the costume design. Adaptations of Austen's work laid dormant for nearly a decade when in 2004 there was a Bollywood film named *Bride & Prejudice* that was loosely adapted from the original novel. The most recent adaptation comes from the 2005 film version of



2005 film *Pride & Prejudice*, starring Matthew Macfadyen and Keira Knightley

*Pride & Prejudice* was released starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen as Elizabeth and Darcy. It received four nominations at the 78th Academy Awards, though it did not take home any of the awards.

## **PRIDE AND PREJUDICE IN PROFESSIONAL THEATER**

When it comes to professional theater, there have been plenty of *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations with the first being documented in 1901. *Pride and Prejudice* was also seen in 1935 from Helen Jerome as a Broadway play and the basis for the 1940 film that was previously mentioned. Broadway also saw *First Impressions* in 1959 – a musical version of Austen's novel with book by Abe Burrows and Music and Lyrics by George Weiss, Bo Goldman, and Glenn Paxton. The show played 84 performances. There was another play by Jon Jory and a *Pride and Prejudice* musical again in 1995 by Bernard J. Taylor.

The latest adaptation of Austen's work is Kate Hamill's adaptation – the show you're seeing right now! It premiered at the Hudson Valley Shakespeare festival in 2017, where Hamill played the leading role of Elizabeth Bennet. Hamill's adaptation went on to be performed by Primary Stages at the Cherry Lane Theater in New York, where it caught the attention of regional theaters, many of whom (like Trinity Rep) recognized its value to their own seasons.

## **LOOSER ADAPTATIONS OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE**

*Pride and Prejudice's* fame has inspired many different versions and some casual allusions to the plot. There are a few adaptations of the work that are looser, but still follow Austen's classic story or characters. For example, there was a four-part fantasy series from 2008 called *Lost in Austen* where a Jane Austen fan is sucked into the novel of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Austen is no stranger to sci-fi, being mentioned in the 2014 "The Caretaker" episode of the time-bending and

space-traveling television show *Doctor Who*. *Pride and Prejudice* is also a book that the character of Fry jumps into in the Matt Groening (*The Simpsons*) cartoon *Futurama* where he and another character wreak havoc on the ball where Lizzy meets Darcy. The novel was also the inspiration for *Death Comes to Pemberley*, the 2013 miniseries set six years after Darcy and Elizabeth are married – two of the characters quarrel and a murder is committed – with the Bennet crew left to solve what has happened.

In another look at what happens years after the conclusion of the *Pride and Prejudice* story, the play *Christmas at Pemberley* by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon premiered in 2016 and will be produced by our neighbors to the north, Lowell's Merrimack Repertory Theater this holiday season.

The first Emmy ever to be awarded in the category for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media – Original Interactive Program went to another Austen-inspired creation. The 2012 *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was a YouTube web series in which Elizabeth Bennet is a graduate student who starts a video blog series for her thesis and chronicles her dating adventures with the Bennet sisters through this digital format.

You also may have heard of the 2009 parody novel called *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* which was later turned into a 2016 film. The story features the Bennet sisters as zombie-fighting martial arts masters and weapon-wielding women in a world where they must fight off the zombie plague *and* find a suitable husband to marry. The film was a commercial flop, making a mere \$16 million compared to the \$28 million it took to make the film.

Zombies aside, Darcy has been widely known as an extremely handsome suitor. Once though, he was a furry four-legged bachelor in an adorable dog-sized suit. In 1995 the popular PBS children's television show *Wishbone* featured Austen's story – calling it, "Furst Impressions." The main character, Wishbone the dog, a Jack Russell terrier,

was the adorable Mr. Darcy.

Also, in a fun turn of events, there was an Austen-inspired movie that came to life following the 1995 miniseries starring Colin Firth as Darcy. It has been widely attributed to be the inspiration of the 2001 film *Bridget Jones's Diary*, where Firth played "Mark Darcy" – the main character's love interest. In addition, Andrew Davies co-wrote the *Bridget Jones* screenplay – and wrote the *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation that Firth starred in.

Two centuries after Austen passed away, she is still making her mark on the world and inspiring those who read and become involved with her work. The next time you find yourself in the middle of a love story, you might just want to check who inspired it. In all likelihood, it was Austen herself. After all, what a small Jane Austen world we live in.

*Adapted from an article  
Written by Caitlin Howle*



*Mr. Darcy (Rachael Warren) and Lizzy Bennet (Rebecca Gibel)  
Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018*

# About the Playwright

## And the Director



### THE PLAYWRIGHT – KATE HAMILL

Kate Hamill is a New York City based playwright and actress who is widely known for her adaptations of classic novels with a modern comedic approach. Kate's work largely focuses on her passion for creating new female classics and giving a different kind of energy and life to timeless tales. As a playwright, many of Kate's works center around theatricality and genuine absurdity of the original pieces she's adapting, taking comedy of manners to a different level. These adaptations will place a focus primarily on gender and social issues, as well as one's own identity when facing societal pressures. Kate has taken the stage in the premieres of many of her adaptations, *Pride and Prejudice* included. She was named 2017's **Playwright of the Year** by *Wall Street Journal*.



### THE DIRECTOR – BIRGITTA VICTORSON

Birgitta Victorson is a director, choreographer, deviser and educator. For Trinity she directed *Paris by Night* and *A Christmas Carol* (2009). She recently directed Tina Howe's *Breaking the Spell* (59E59) and choreographed *Arabian Nights* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare). Her work has been seen at the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Second City, the Hangar, Two River, EST, the Pearl, Jamal Jackson Dance and Miloco (Prague, CZ). She currently teaches at Saint Ann's in Brooklyn and the National High School Institute at Northwestern University. Graduate of Northwestern and the Brown/Trinity MFA program. Birgitta lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two sons. Proud member, SDC!

# A Conversation

with Birgitta Victorson

Education Intern **Stephanie Risch** had the chance to sit down and speak with the director of *Pride and Prejudice*, **Birgitta Victorson**, about her process and approach to bringing this hilarious adaptation to our stage.

**STEPHANIE RISCH:** First off, how excited are you to be back at Trinity Rep?

**BIRGITTA VICTORSON:** So excited to be back here, having gone to school here and previously worked with the company, and I also know other teachers who have come back to teach at the MFA program. I feel like I have a real community of artists, mentors and friends here.

**SR:** Why this particular adaptation for this stage?

**BV:** I think one reason that Kate Hamill's adaptation is so exciting right now is that she embraces collaborative storytelling. I feel that if we're going to dive into old pieces of literature, we have to really be looking at them freshly and in a different way. Kate Hamill's writing demonstrates her love for the theater and her willingness to use a vast array of theatrical elements to bring the story to life in surprising ways on stage. She also allows us to investigate the behavior of the characters and how they wrestle with their problems through comedy – which is really needed right now.

**SR:** So off of that, do you think that Kate Hamill's suggestions of character doublings and casting as different genders have something to do with how the problems are addressed?

**BV:** Yeah! Absolutely, because Jane Austen was investigating gender structures, stereotypes and expectations in early 19th century England and I think we have not strayed that far two-hundred years later from her observations. I think that when looking at an actor playing a character with a different gender assignment, it highlights our expectations for that gender in an interesting way and allows us to ask the question of who made these rules? How does that rule apply to a masculine presence versus a feminine presence? It doesn't take away from the story in any way, it supports the fact that there were expectations for gender at that time, very specific expectations having to do with money, marriage and securing one's future. And many of these rules still exist – we're fighting them louder and pushing against them in 2018 but seeing an actor playing against identity is just an opportunity to examine the constructs that we put on gender – and in some moments, laugh at the absurdity of the rules.

**SR:** Because this is a primarily female cast, what do the actors' portrayals look like when approaching gender in this production?

**BV:** The gender assignments that Austen has designated for her characters in the book still exist within the production. It is up to the audience to decide how they see these rules apply to each character based on what clothing the actor puts on his/her/their body.

**SR:** Switching gears a little bit, you have a lot of choreography within your background, how does that come into play in this production?

**BV:** Kate Hamill has written into the play two balls the characters go to and dance at. There are also a series of games that are played between different characters. I understand stories better if I'm seeing them physically in space. And because Kate Hamill has inserted this movement into the text, it was just a great opportunity for me to use the skills I have as a choreographer and as a physical theater artist and literally make games and dance part of the staging. There are moments when we're telling the story and we're fully immersed in Regency era England and there are other moments where the emotional journeys of the characters burst through in a dance that uses movement and music from the 80s, 90s and today. These moments in no way take away from Austen's storytelling but are there to enhance the emotional journey of the characters.

**SR:** Speaking of explosions, the opening of the play is a very unique moment, what tone does it set for the entirety of the play?

**BV:** This adaptation is a new work of an old story, and this unique company of actors, six women and two men, have been charged with retelling the whole story within their eight bodies. The opening is meant to take us, along with these players, into that imaginative journey of possibilities. We're entering this space together and we're going to play a game and it's called "*Pride and Prejudice*". It's a big imaginative game and the whole room is in on it! We want the audience to dive into the excitement and possibility of exploring this text with us.

**SR:** What about this production is going to speak to a modern and young audience?

**BV:** The examination of the structures and systems that one is born into and how that machinery gives one rules and tells one how one should move through life. Some of that is gender related, but it can deal with all kinds of different things. Lizzy is a woman who said, "No I won't do it, I'm going to find my own thing – my own way." I think Lizzy is a character we keep coming back to because her story and truth are about not letting the system she was born into control her. I don't know anyone who doesn't identify with that desire on some level.



Set Design by **Michael McGarty**  
Photo by **Mark Turek** © Trinity Rep 2018

# Characters

Lizzy  
Bennet



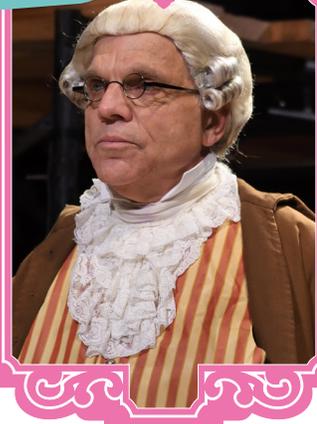
Middle Bennet sister; clever, spirited, sharp tongued which can make her klutzy. She prides herself on her good judgement. Played by **Rebecca Gibel**.

Mrs.  
Bennet



Matriarch of the Bennet family whose sole purpose it is to get her daughters married. Played by **Janice Duclos**.

Mr.  
Bennet



Patriarch of the Bennet family who finds amusement in absurdity. He's disappointed in his marriage and seeks respectable escapes from the chaos of his own family. Played by **Richard Donelly**.

Charlotte  
Lucas



Best friends with the Bennet girls, same age as Lizzy, very practical and has a good sense of humor. Played by **Richard Donelly**.

Mary  
Bennet



The third Bennet girl who is a bit of a monster. Played by **Angela Brazil**.

Mr.  
Bingley



Loves the world and the world loves him. Mr. Darcy's particular friend, almost literally a dog. Played by **Angela Brazil**.

**Mr. Collins**



A pedantic, obtuse man who is rector to Lady Catherine, and cousin to the Bennets. Played by **Joe Wilson, Jr.**

**Miss Bingley**



A very rich young woman who fancies herself to be witty. Played by **Joe Wilson, Jr.**

**Lydia Bennet**



The youngest Bennet girl who is prone to imitating others, but is very lively. Played by **Katie Croyle.**

**Lady Catherine**



Of the upper class, a real Lady, and aunt to Darcy. Played by **Katie Croyle.**

**Jane Bennet**



The oldest, most beautiful Bennet girl. She always tries to do the right thing and is kind, diffident and idealistic. Played by **Shelley Fort.**

**Miss De Bourgh**



Lady Catherine's daughter, a gremlin. Played by **Shelley Fort.**

**Mr. Darcy**



One of the richest men in England, he is too proper for his own good and awkward in most social contexts. Prides himself on self control and good judgement. Played by **Rachael Warren.**

**Mr. Wickham**



An unfairly handsome and charming man who was raised with Mr. Darcy. Played by **Rachael Warren.**

# Setting & Stage

Jane Austen's house – Chawton, England  
© Anthony Hall/ Shutterstock



## SETTING

Late Eighteenth century England. The structure of the set on stage is created primarily with scaffolding, to provide a deeper sense of play and imagination, almost like a playground. Different details included within the set will draw you into the time period, such as furniture, the walls and entrances, and racks of costumes and props.

## FOLLOWING CHARACTERS ON STAGE

We know it, you know it, and anyone who's read the book knows *Pride and Prejudice* has its share of characters. The good news is that this clever adaptation has consolidated those characters down to 14 being played by 8 actors. There's plenty of energy and humor that set this show apart, but tracking characters, along with actors playing multiple characters, can be a challenge on its own. Before you dive into seeing the show... here are some tips to help you approach characters in *Pride and Prejudice*.

1. The Bennet's are your base – get to know them! There are four distinguishably different girls, Mr. Bennet (likely hidden behind a newspaper), and honestly it's hard to miss the Mrs.
2. Focus on the physical gender of the **character**, NOT of the actor (though that does add to the humor). Many of the characters are introduced or addressed with their titles or prefixes (Miss, Mrs., Mr.) helping to provide a name tag for us. The actors, regardless of their gender are playing these characters as they are written. And...
3. They are costumed that way too! You'll see beautiful designs inspired by the regency period – male characters are costumed as male, female as female.
4. The actors themselves do an excellent job of indicating when they have changed their character. Many of the actors play two different characters within the production, some of different genders. You will see changes in their postures, mannerisms, vocality and energies as actors – but also see them change costume pieces as a larger symbol of their change.
5. Your final hint is provided by the relationships on stage – who is family, who is unknown, who is unwanted and who is pursued. If you are familiar with the story – this makes it that much easier to track.

# Plot

Mrs. Bennet is determined to see her daughters married. This is a practical concern since women can't inherit land. When Mr. Bennet dies, the Bennet home will go to a distant cousin, leaving the girls homeless and destitute. Still, this does not make Mrs. Bennet's prodding and methods of husband-catching any less mortifying for her daughters, particularly the smart and stubborn Lizzy, who has no interest in marrying at all. Lizzy goes so far as to turn down a proposal by the distant cousin, even though it directly hurts her family. She simply can't risk being unhappy for a lifetime, as she sees her parents doing.

While her mother does everything she can to set up Lizzy's older sister Jane with the sweet (and wealthy) Bingley, Lizzy is forced to interact with Mr. Darcy, a gravely serious man that Lizzy finds to be unbearably proud. Darcy, in turn, finds Lizzy completely prejudiced against him, although he comes to appreciate her wit and intelligence. The two still clash, particularly when Lizzy meets Lt. Wickham, an old acquaintance of Darcy's that says Darcy denied him his inheritance. Lizzy can find nothing redeemable about Darcy, a position that only worsens when Bingley unexpectedly moves back to London, and Lizzy learns Darcy played a direct role in it.

While visiting her newly married friend Charlotte, Lizzy meets Darcy again and confronts him about Wickham and Jane's unhappiness when Darcy unexpectedly declares he has feelings for her. Lizzy is surprised to learn Wickham was denied his inheritance only after he'd tried to seduce Darcy's very young sister. Darcy also encouraged Bingley to leave when it seemed Jane didn't care about him. Lizzy corrects Darcy's assumptions about Jane – she likes Bingley very much, she's just shy and proper. Both humbled, they still part ways badly with Lizzy declaring she could never marry a man such as Darcy, and Darcy promising to never whisper a romantic word around her again. Lizzy remains upset with Darcy's presumptions until she talks it over with Charlotte, who helps her see she has been unfair to Darcy.

Lizzy's visit to Charlotte is cut short when word comes that her youngest sister, the boy-crazy Lydia, has run off with Wickham. Darcy is the one who tracks the pair down and pays Wickham to marry Lydia, saving her reputation. He also brings Bingley to the Bennet home, allowing Jane to finally express her feelings, and the two become engaged.

Lizzy is deeply moved by all of Darcy's actions and finally sees all the good in him, as he sees in her. Perhaps she was too quick to say she would never marry. Still she is uncertain of their future together; his aunt does not approve of her, and her family is ridiculous. Darcy encourages her to let all of that go and dance with him.

*Written by Jessica Hatem Lanman*



*The Bennet Family (from left to right): Jane (Shelley Fort), Lydia (Katie Croyle), Mr. Bennet (Richard Donnelly), and Mrs. Bennet (Janice Duclos)*

*Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018*

# Major Themes

## **LOVE & MARRIAGE**

From the start of the play, Mrs. Bennet makes known that she is on the hunt and actively working to have her four daughters married, though they may not all be on board. Love and marriage are often thought to exist hand in hand, but are there relationships that are only marriages? Relationships that are only love? Lizzy may resist marriage completely, but she inevitably can't deny her feelings for Darcy.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Is this a prominent theme in a lot of young adult content – books, film, music – where is it most seen? Does it seem like there are certain social expectations and pressures surrounding love? Marriage? Where do we see love represented most in our current culture?

## **REPUTATION**

Each character is impacted by not only their reputations, but of those whom they are close to. The Bennet family nearly falls into ruin when Lydia runs off with Wickham, but is quickly healed, along with their reputations, when they return married thanks to Darcy. Darcy himself faces extreme judgement for his reputation of being too proud. There are a range of perceived beliefs or opinions that circulate, leading often to chaos, conflict and occasional heartbreak.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

What affects how we perceive people and make judgements about them and their lives? Are we always right in making assumptions? Do first impressions tell us everything about a person? Where reputations most seen or demonstrated today?



*Mr. Darcy (Rachael Warren) and Lizzy Bennet (Rebecca Gibel) sharing a tender moment on stage.  
Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018*



*Lizzy (Rebecca Gibel) sitting with Wickham (Rachael Warren)  
Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018*

## **GENDER & SOCIETAL ROLES**

*Pride and Prejudice* takes place at the end of the eighteenth century, a different time with distinct roles that are referenced throughout. Lizzy notes that women are not allowed opportunities outside the home when Bingley comments on the *accomplishments* of women, as well as how a single man with money *must* want a wife. Expectations of the time delineated gender roles, women assuming positions within the house because there were not work or educational opportunities and men operating as breadwinners. Because of this, it was only natural that marriage was key to keep their society operating the way it did. Social status and income only further affected a distinct societal divide in class. Austen's novels primarily observe middle and higher classes, not the working class of her time, to contribute further to her comedy of manners. This not only served for humor, but to comment and narrate on the state of Jane Austen's own observations within her social class and from her perspective as a woman, offering reflection for people of her own time and generations to come.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Knowing Jane Austen's focus, specifically on gender roles, and playwright Kate Hamill's gender bent casting and character doubling, how might this play be different if all characters were played by the intended gender? Would this theme be as highlighted? As humorous?



Miss Bingley (**Joe Wilson, Jr.**) striking a dramatic pose.  
Photo by **Mark Turek** © Trinity Rep 2018



Angela Brazil becoming Mr. Bingley during the show's introduction.  
Photo by **Mark Turek** © Trinity Rep 2018

# Historical Context

## Regency Period



Prince Regent of England, later King George IV

The era of Jane Austen was within the Regency Period, which fell under a shift in rule in Great Britain. The Regency Period had officially begun in 1811 when the Prince of Wales, later King George IV, assumed leadership as Prince Regent when his father, King George III was seen as unfit to rule due to extreme illness. King George III is best known for ruling while the American colonies revolted against the British. Though King George III didn't create the taxation against the colonies that caused them to seek independence, British Parliament did, he eventually became unpopular once the colonies were lost.

Once the Prince Regent came to power, he was discouraged heavily from making decisions closely related to war or any official governing business. He instead focused his efforts on spending mass amounts of money, more than the Treasury could cover, indulging his idealistic vision of British life. He had many building projects, parties, and was extravagant in fashion and food, eventually becoming obese. On the positive side, he was a huge supporter of the arts and literature, and created Regent Park in London for many to enjoy. The Prince Regent officially took rule in 1820, when King George III died, making him King George IV. He only ruled 10 years more, dying in 1830. Though his rule was brief, his cultural presence was impactful because it was so indulgent, extreme, and reflected among his subjects.

# Class Rank

## Social Hierarchy & Regency Fashion

### **RANK AND CLASS IN HIGH SOCIETY**

Jane Austen's time operated on a societal hierarchy that divided people and controlled much of what they could do, say, and interact with. Within the British Empire, a person's rank or title greatly determined how set they were to live "the good life." Much of Jane Austen's writings centralized around this social hierarchy to show varying perspectives of different levels of class within higher society. Even today, these structures exist within cultures across the globe. British hierarchy and titles during the Regency Period looked along these lines:

#### **ROYALTY** (called "your Majesty" or "your Highness")

Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses

#### **NOBILITY** (called "Lord/Lady" followed by name)

Duke, Marquis, Viscount, Baron, Earl

#### **COMMONERS** (called "Sir/Lady" or "Mister/Mrs.")

Baronet, Knight, Land Owners



Above - Fashions of the Regency Era

Right - Short and natural hairstyles that became popular during the Regency Era

### **REGENCY FASHION**

This was a period of fashion transformation, largely for British women. Having much to do with a fashion rivalry with France (and France being involved in a massive revolution itself) everything was changing, including how the female form was being dressed. Clothing adopted more of a Grecian feel, flowing and draping and allowing the body to be more natural as corsets were generally out of the picture. All of fashionable Europe had adopted the Empire style gown – a reformed version of the chemise style dress that was popular in France. Hair had also taken a much more natural approach, gone was any sighting of powdered wigs! Hair was often tied up in loose fitting buns or other natural styles, as girls over the age of 13 rarely had worn their hair down. Some women had even begun to cut their hair short in the style of a *la Titus*.



As garments themselves were typically lighter than they had been in the past, jackets were essential to complete an outfit and ensure warmth out in any Austen-like countryside. And to be seen in public, one had to have a bonnet or hat and a reticule (small purse) to be fully ready and appropriate to take on society.

# Courtship & Lord of the Dance

Two Couples dancing the Quadrille

## **COURTSHIP**

Courtship, or dating, in the Regency Era was an incredibly public, and rigid affair. There were many structures set in place for proper courtship practices that would lead to the eventual goal of marriage. Every meeting and event was done within the public eye, couples could not be seen unchaperoned or it would ruin their reputations. They would first meet by being introduced by a mutual friend at a ball, dinner party, a soiree, or at the theater. These were places where they could meet people of similar social backgrounds.

If a man wanted to become acquainted with a lady, he would send flowers to her and visit her at her home where a chaperone would be present. Couples were permitted to take walks in parks or through town with a chaperone closely following, ride in open carriages or on horseback – the point being that they could be seen. Because courtship etiquette was both strict and predictable, couples would utilize the time they had to engage in witty conversation, or finding creative ways of impressing or surprising one another.

There is no set time-line for the courtship between a couple, it can be short or long. If couples are seen out together often in public, or at a ball and only dancing with each other, it is assumed that they are engaged. Once it is felt that there are mutual feelings of love, the gentleman would set up an appointment with the lady's father to ask for her hand in marriage. The gentleman's income would be scrutinized, but if the father agreed a prenuptial agreement would be made regarding the lady's dress allowance, pin money, jointure and other ways the gentleman would provide for her, along with the lady's dowry that would go to the man.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTION:**

How different is Regency Era courtship to what we know or perceive dating as being today? What are the similarities?



## **LORD OF THE DANCE**

Dance was a central point of the Regency Era and deemed as a necessary social skill for young ladies and gentlemen. It was also a vital part of any courtship process; eligible young partners could escape away to the dance floor from their chaperones. As dancing was seen as a social interaction and an accomplishment for young people, many maintained their skills by having private teachers called dancing masters, having small informal parties and even starting studios. The most prestigious and fashionable places to dance were social clubs or balls where one could show off their skills and their dance partners.

The dances themselves evolved from English country dances and required partnering. Partners would stand in a line across from each other and work their way from one end to the other, creating a series of figures while doing some light, repetitive foot work. There were other couples in this line and thus, a pattern was created. Some popular court dances such as the Gavotte and the Minuet found their way in English ballrooms and influenced the footwork and style.

The Quadrille evolved from English country dancing but only involved two couples in a rectangular formation, creating similar patterns and figures of movement. The steps were generally quicker, which allowed for a more flirtatious energy.

# Funny Girls:

## Partnership featuring Wage House

Jane Austen was a modern, comedic author for her time. She wasn't attempting to write an epic, romantic tale, but rather paint her own version (and sometimes mockery) of what her contemporary life was. The norm of Regency Era writings was a novel that followed more of a sentimental approach with a rigid structure to depict romances. Jane Austen was writing a comedy of manners and a social satire from what she observed from her life in the Georgian Period and Regency era. Some of Austen's writing was seen as almost breaking into male territory for her time, because her comedy was so bold comparatively to both male and female authors. Her ironic wit, parallels and juxtapositions between characters and social structures, rounded out by how Austen interprets the game (of love, in this case) allowed for her writings to stand out and to become so cherished.

This is exactly what caught the attention of playwright Kate Hamill, and in turn, what created the partnership for this production with two brilliant, local female comedians, Kate Teichman and Casey Calderiso. They are the owners of Wage House, a two year old comedy venue in Pawtucket. Trinity Rep's Artistic Associate for Community, Rebecca Noon recently sat down with Kate and Casey to talk all things comedy, and how applicable Jane Austen's humor is today.

**REBECCA NOON:** How did you feel about Jane Austen prior to this relationship with Trinity Rep?

**CASEY CALDERISO:** I don't think I knew enough of her work to form an opinion prior to this. If anything, I think I assumed her writing was too layered for me to feel like I could really wrap my head around it.

**KATE TEICHMAN:** I felt the work was fun and funny but dated and a lot about women being in love and trying to get married.

**RN:** How do you feel about Jane Austen now?

**CC:** I've realized the error of my ways! Big mistake! Huge! Her work transcends genres and P&P isn't "just" a period piece. I'm excited to get to know her and her writing more and draw inspiration from her!

**KT:** I'm really excited Kate Hamill decided to dust off and trust that Jane Austen's work had lots to say to today's audience and give a voice to a bunch of funny gals. I'm excited to jump back into her work re-imagined.

**RN:** If you could erase one assumption about comedy what would it be?

**KT:** That you have to be funny to be a part of it. If you are a person you can be funny.

**RN:** Why does comedy matter?

**CC:** Comedy matters because it encourages vulnerability. Improv comedy especially thrives on connection, collaboration and saying "I don't have this all figured out and that's okay!"

**KT:** It's about connection. When we bring comedy to the stage, or watch in the audience, we are sharing what it is to be a person in the place we all live. The things that make us laugh the hardest are often the things that feel true. You gotta laugh.

*Excerpts from  
Saying Yes to Jane Austen  
By Rebecca Noon, Artistic Associate for Community*

# Entering the Text

## EXERCISE 1: IF JANE AUSTEN CHARACTERS HAD DATING APPS

In your classroom, discuss what *Pride and Prejudice* characters would be doing in a modern day context in their quests for love or companionship in the form of online dating. Feel free to discuss out loud as a group or have students write/draw out dating profiles for a character.

- Have students select a character to create a dating profile for
- Write a bio for the character – what do they want to say about themselves that they think would catch someone else’s eye?
- What are the characters interests and hobbies?
- Are they throwing any emojis or hashtags into their profile?

Some things to think about:

Who would or wouldn’t be using dating apps? If they are, what would be in their profiles? How would they describe themselves? Who else would they have pictures or connections with? Would there be any catfishes out there (i.e. any fake profiles)? Who would message who first?

## EXERCISE 2: TRANSLATE UR TXT 2 TEXT

Think about a recent (but appropriate) texting conversation that you had with a parent, friend or significant other. This can be any everyday conversation – like “how are you doing”, “what are you doing later”, etc. or something more specific – like an event, the sharing of big news or even something completely made up.

Have the students write down their text conversation (up to teacher discretion if allowed to use phones or just pull from memory) as dialogue, but as close to how they typically would

text it. They only need a few lines. Next, have the students translate their text into dialogue that would be between two Jane Austen characters. Place an emphasis on the language, the formality, and the vocabulary of the time. For an added element, consider the location and the influence of British society on how the conversation would sound.

Have students read their translations aloud with a partner to hear how it sounds!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How difficult was it to think of language that was equivalent to what we use today?

Is our language as formal? Are there settings where our language style changes? How has technology impacted our language? How do we communicate? Did the meaning change with the language?

**\*BONUS:** Have students translate lines of Jane Austen into “text speak” and read aloud! You can use the text from the play seen below in **Exercise 6** (group texts ahead!)

## EXERCISE 3: STRIDE AND PREJUDICE

In your classroom, discuss differences between masculine and feminine physicalities as well as how varying social classes would present themselves.

Have your students walk around the room, first exploring gender by choosing a masculine or feminine way of walking (their choice). Ask your students where their energy is and what parts of their bodies they feel are engaged in physically representing femininity or masculinity. What specific ways are they carrying



Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018

themselves? Can they give any adjectives to describe their own movement? Let them walk around the room for a few minutes, trying different things.

Next have your students select another gender and begin to walk around the room as either masculine or feminine. Ask them to feel any shifts in energy and how they physically carry themselves. Ask them to exaggerate how they are representing this and see if it really enhances a specific body part, or just makes them more comfortable because of humor! Ask them for adjectives to describe this round, as well as how walking as both masculine and feminine compares.

Finally, to explore social class, have students count off 1 through 3. 3's will represent the highest, 2's the middle class, and 1's will represent the lower or working class. Have students walk representing these social classes. Ask them about what they think they're wearing? How do they greet or acknowledge others? Do they have pride? A reputation? Let them walk for a few minutes and explore. Afterwards, ask about the experiences of exploring both how gender and social class physically represented in something as simple as walking.

**EXERCISE 4: YOUR OWN ADAPTATION**

Choose a novel, whether classic or contemporary that you think would make an excellent adaptation for the stage. Decide:

- Which characters are necessary to tell the story
- What the main conflict of the story is (with minor conflicts as well) and where you would place the act break
- What style you would present it in – comedy, drama, a musical

- What setting would it be in? The time period as intended in the novel? Different?

Discuss choices with classmates to see what ideas are going around the room and if any collaborations are possible.

**EXERCISE 5: A NETHERFIELD OF A BALL**

*\*Please only do this exercise if you have enough space*

In your classroom or an open area, have students envision a ballroom. Every student is a guest at the ball and has certain relationships and goals with people there. Every individual student should select (at random), without telling anyone:

- **An Enemy** – the person they want to stay furthest away from
- **A Best Friend** – the person they want to keep between themselves and their enemy
- **Their Interest** – the person they want to be closest to

On your cue, have the students begin to walk around the room maintaining a medium pace. Students should not talk during this, but focus on nonverbal communication. Let them do this for a couple minutes, chaos and comedy will ensue and it will become apparent who has what objectives. As the scene eventually builds, watch for either someone who is too close and is caught by their enemy or catches their interest (or if you're lucky, both!)

Discuss how the exercise felt and if the students felt a build and urgency together as things progressed. Was there any comedy involved (relationship overlaps – enemies and interests)? Play the game again if time allows so students have these factors in mind, and try playing some 19th century ballroom music on top of it!

## Exercise Six —

# Production Scenes & Monologues

Any gender person can read for any gender part — think, especially in the case of this adaptation, how gender can create humor within the scene. Feel free to try using accents as well!

### SCENE: LYDIA, LIZZY, & JANE — ACT 1, SCENE 2

#### LYDIA

Why should you pretend that love and marriage and all that is a joke? It all seems very serious to me.

#### LIZZY

That's because you are far away from it. When you're closer to the prospect, it becomes much too frightening, and you must laugh so you don't cry. Playing games keeps one sane, when the stakes involved threaten to drive one MAD.

#### JANE

Stop filling her head with foolishness. It's not a game, Lydia.

#### LIZZY

Isn't it? There are rules, strategies, wins, losses — and it is, theoretically, done for pleasure.

#### LYDIA

How do you know if you've found the right match?

#### LIZZY

Well I shouldn't tell you but —

#### LYDIA

Yes?

#### LIZZY

You know you've met the right one when —

#### LYDIA

Yes?

#### LIZZY

A lightning bolt shoots down from the sky and fries you like an egg! You'll probably decide if he's your Perfect Match just after your Mamma has finished counting his rich, sickly relatives and your Pappa has called on his bankers. These things are all arranged above one's head, Lydia.

#### JANE

It's complicated, dear. But I imagine you know when you have met the right person — well, at first, there is a liking. And then you behave appropriately, of course. But, eventually — there is a perfect understanding between souls. Wordless, and faultless.

#### LYDIA

Ooooooh.

#### LIZZY

NOW who's filling her head with nonsense? What novels have you been reading?

#### JANE

Well, what do YOU *really* think it is, Elizabeth?

#### LIZZY

I have no desire to find out! One of you will have to marry to save the family from ruin, for I'll have none of it!

#### JANE

Oh, you don't mean that.

#### LIZZY

I know myself Jane. I shall never marry. For the state is fundamentally flawed, as far as I can see. It is all just... too much.

## **MONOLOGUE: DARCY – ACT 2**

Bells. They will never ring if they are made imperfectly, you know. Weak metal, careless manufacture, and they shall never sound as they should. But if they are cast of stronger stuff, of quality – you ring them once and you can't control the vibration, can you? They just go and go however they will once they are struck, and nothing can stop them! And whether they sound for alarm or benediction, they CANNOT BE UNRUNG! They ring and ring until the energy is spent or they CRACK! They ring to demand! Attention must be paid!!! Something is happening! Something beyond our control, something arranged over our heads has CHANGED! IN VAIN I HAVE STRUGGLED! MY FEELINGS WILL NOT BE REPRESSED! YOU MUST ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU HOW ARDENTLY I ADMIRE AND LOVE YOU!



*Mr. Darcy (Rachael Warren) and Lizzy Bennet (Rebecca Gibel)*

*Photo by Mark Turek © Trinity Rep 2018*



Photo by **Mark Turek** © Trinity Rep 2018

## **SCENE: BINGLEY, DARCY, LIZZY & MISS BINGLEY – ACT 1, SCENE 5**

### **BINGLEY**

Do you play Miss Bennet?

### **LIZZY**

A lit-

### **MISS BINGLEY**

Does your *SISTER* still play, Darcy? Her touch on the pianoforte is so graceful, so delicate, so faultless. But then she is so well-bred.

### **BINGLEY**

It is amazing how all ladies are like that – so accomplished!

### **MISS BINGLEY**

“All ladies accomplished!” Charles, whatever can you mean?

### **BINGLEY**

All of you play instruments – and embroider purses, and do a whole host of fiddly little arts that would leave me bewildered.

### **LIZZY**

Those are, of course, almost the only occupations allowed to us.

### **DARCY**

If that is what you call “accomplished”, Bingley, I am not surprised you think all ladies so. I don’t know more than one or two women that truly fit the description.

### **LIZZY**

I wager you set your expectations high, Mr. Darcy. What is your ideal?

### **MISS BINGLEY**

NO woman can be called “accomplished” who doesn’t possess a mastery of music, needlework, and the languages-

### **LIZZY**

- All of the languages?

### **MISS BINGLEY**

- And *EVEN THAT* is nothing, if she does not know when to speak and when to speak... and when to hold her peace! The Accomplished Woman is – irreproachable. An elegant ornament in any room, a sparkling delight to any eye, a flawless vessel into which the confidences of the greatest men may be safely poured!

### **DARCY**

- And to this facade she must add something more serious, by the continual improvement of her character.

### **LIZZY**

I am no longer surprised at your knowing of only a few accomplished women. I rather wonder at your knowing any. I never saw such a lady: uniting capacity, taste, and elegance – with, I almost forgot – moral invincibility.

# Continued Readings

## **JANE AUSTEN**

*Sense and Sensibility*

*Emma*

*Persuasion*

*Northanger Abbey*

*Mansfield Park*

## **KATE HAMILL**

*Sense and Sensibility*

*Vanity Fair*

*Mansfield Park*

*In the Mines*

*Little Women*

*The Odyssey*



The cast of *Pride and Prejudice* on the stage

Photo by **Mark Turek** © Trinity Rep 2018

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