

October 28, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT: Shinshin Tsai, Producing Associate, (949) 346-2374 or shinshin@chancetheater.com

FOR PHOTOS OF THE CAST: www.ChanceTheater.com/press-room

**RING IN THE HOLIDAYS WITH
*JANE AUSTEN'S EMMA, THE MUSICAL!***

A CHARMING END TO AN UNFORGETTABLE SEASON AT CHANCE THEATER!

Anaheim, CA — Chance Theater, Anaheim's official resident theater company, is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated return of *Jane Austen's Emma, The Musical*, directed by Chance Theater Founding Resident Artist **Casey Long**. This enchanting adaptation by **Paul Gordon** brings Austen's timeless tale of romance and matchmaking to life on the Bette Aitken theater arts Center's Cripe Stage from November 29, 2024, through December 22, 2024.

This special production is dedicated to the memory of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar. A devoted patron, sponsor, and cherished friend, Mary Kay served as board president and was instrumental in guiding Chance Theater to its current home in 2014. She remained one of its most passionate supporters until her passing in 2017. Her legacy of love, generosity, and commitment continues to inspire.

Set in the delightful world of Emma Woodhouse, an ambitious but misguided matchmaker, this beloved story leads audiences through comic entanglements and heartwarming discoveries. With its witty dialogue, charming score, and beloved characters, *Emma, The Musical* promises an unforgettable holiday experience for theatergoers of all ages.

This year's production features an intimate, talented cast, with **Mandy Foster** (*Big Fish*) in the title role as Emma Woodhouse, **Jeff Lowe** (*Big Fish*) as George Knightley, and **Sadie Alexander** (Chance stage debut) as Harriet Smith. Rounding out the cast are **Glenn Koppel** (*Little Women*, Chance Resident Artist) as Mr. Woodhouse, **Deva Marie Gregory** (Chance stage debut) as Miss Bates, **Davide Costa** (Chance stage debut)

as Mr. Elton, **Cynthia Espinoza** (*Speak Up*, Chance Resident Artist) as Mrs. Elton, **Blake Rhiner** (Chance stage debut) as Frank Churchill, **Sierra Jimenez** (Chance stage debut) as Jane Fairfax, **Luc Clopton** (*Rent*) as Robert Martin, **Jonathon Lamer** (*Tiny Beautiful Things*) as Mr. Weston, and **Elisabeth Hunter** (Chance stage debut) as Mrs. Weston.

Director Casey Long shares his enthusiasm: “I am excited to return to the world of Jane Austen and this unforgettable romantic comedy! *Emma* stands out as one of the funniest and most romantic stories we’ve brought to the stage. There’s a reason Austen’s work continues to resonate and inspire new adaptations, most recently with Anya Taylor-Joy in 2020.”

The talented creative team includes **Lex Leigh** (*Sweeney Todd*) as Music Director, **Masako Tobaru** (*Ride the Cyclone*, Chance Resident Artist) and **James Markoski** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) as Production Designers, **Bruce Goodrich** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) as Costume Designer, with **Gwen Sloan** (*Sweeney Todd*) as Associate Costume Designer, **Jordan Jones** (*Gloria*) as Stage Manager, **Laurie Smits Staude** as Dramaturg, **Wyn Moreno** (*Ragtime*) as Dialect Coach, **James Markoski** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) as Audio Engineer, and **Carina Leland** as Assistant Stage Manager.

Community Spotlight: Gather before and after the Friday, December 13 performance for a happy hour beginning at 7:00 PM, where patrons can connect with our community partner Working Wardrobes, a nonprofit empowering people to overcome barriers and achieve success through career development. For more about their work, visit [Working Wardrobes](#).

Post-Show Discussion: Join us for post-show discussions after every performance! Come for the stories, stay for the conversations. We invite the audience to engage with the artists and one another, fostering a more connected, compassionate, and creative community. Share your thoughts, ask questions, and deepen your experience of the production in an open and welcoming environment.

Critics agree that Chance Theater's 2018 production of *Jane Austen's Emma, The Musical* is a must-see holiday treat:

“I couldn’t have loved it more.” – *StageSceneLA*

“Engrossing.” – *Orange County Register*

“Flawless *Emma* is a must-see... brims with effervescence and wit.” – *Voice of OC*

“I could not stop smiling... Sublime.” – *Broadway World: Los Angeles*

Tickets for *Jane Austen's Emma, The Musical* are now on sale and can be purchased online at www.ChanceTheater.com/emma or by calling the box office at (888) 455-4212. Early booking is recommended due to expected high demand.

Our 2024 Executive Season Producers are **Bette & Wylie Aitken**, with Associate Season Producers the **Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar**. The Executive Producer is dedicated to the memory of **Mary Kay Fyda-Mar**, with Associate Producers **Samuel & Tammy Tang**.

Reviewers and other press are encouraged to attend Opening Night on Saturday, December 7, at 8 p.m.

For press inquiries, interviews, press comps, or photos, please contact Producing Associate Shinshin Tsai at (949) 346-2374 or Shinshin@chancetheater.com.

ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, Chance Theater has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance won 31 OCTG Theatre Awards, including two for Outstanding Production of a Musical (“Next to Normal” and “Fun Home”) and one for Outstanding Production of a Play (“Cry It Out”). Previously, Chance Theater won eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: *Jane Austen's Emma, The Musical*

Jane Austen's enduring love story is brought to life as a romantic-comedy musical. The story revolves around Emma, a well-meaning, but disaster-prone matchmaker, who ignores her own romantic feelings while setting

out to find a suitor for her friend Harriet. Her efforts go awry, of course, leading to comic complications. We invite you to fall in love again with one of Jane Austen's most adored characters, featuring an intelligent and buoyant score from Tony-nominated composer Paul Gordon (*Jane Eyre*).

WHEN:

Previews: November 29 - December 6, 2024; Friday 8 p.m., Saturday at 8 p.m. Sunday 7 p.m.

Opening Night: Saturday, December 7 at 8 p.m.

Performances: November 29 - December 22, 2024

Wednesdays at 7:45 p.m., Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. & Sundays at 3 p.m.

RUNNING TIME: 2 hours, 30 minutes with intermission

TICKETS: \$44-59, with discounts for educators, veterans, seniors and students. Pay-What-You-Can preview performances are also available to ensure that live theater is accessible to everyone.

WHERE: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center on the Cripe Stage
5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken *theater arts* Center is located at 5522 E. La Palma Avenue in Anaheim Hills. Going west on La Palma from Imperial Highway, we are on the left in the front of the industrial park just past the In & Out. There is plenty of free convenient parking in front of the theater.

MORE INFO: www.ChanceTheater.com or call (888) 455-4212

###