

QUEENSLAND THEATRE CO.

Jane Austen's

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

Adapted by Wendy Mocke and Lewis Treston
Directed by Bridget Boyle and Daniel Evans

EDUCATION RESOURCE



Queensland Theatre Company acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH CREATIVE AUSTRALIA, ITS ARTS FUNDING AND ADVISORY BODY. QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY IS SUPPORTED BY THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT THROUGH ARTS QUEENSLAND.



REHEARSAL ROOMS TO CLASSROOMS

Queensland Theatre Company's learning resources promote the transformative power of live performance for young people and offer insights into selected productions through a teaching and learning lens.

We bring casts, creatives, and ideas from stages and rehearsal rooms into classrooms across Queensland to inspire students and teachers. Through live recordings, behind the scenes videos, process and production photos, and teachers' notes, we share exceptional theatre that connects to curriculums and supports learning in the arts and beyond.

For more information on the *Pride & Prejudice* Education Resources, please contact our Education and Young People dedicated team on 07 3010 7600 or education@queenslandtheatre.com.au.

CONTENTS

Rehearsal Rooms to Classrooms	03
About the Show	05
Writers' Note	07
Co-Directors' Note	09
Austen's Enduring Legacy	11
Cast and Creatives	12
The Creative Process	13
Behind the Scenes	15
Curriculum Connections	16
Historical Context: Gender and Dating	19
Stagecraft	20
Post-Show Questions	26
Drama Senior Syllabus 2025	27
Sample Assessment	28
Photography Credits	29



Maddison Burrridge, Andrew Hearle and Nerida Matthaai

ABOUT THE SHOW

Queensland Theatre Company's Matilda Award-winning reimagining of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* is back! After dazzling audiences in 2025, this sumptuous theatrical ode to the mother of romantic comedies sashays onto the Playhouse stage for one more glorious "turn about the room".

Smart, witty and fearless, Elizabeth Bennet is an independent young woman who dearly loves a laugh and is not afraid to poke fun where fun is most definitely warranted. At odds with her husband-hunting sisters and dithery mother, Elizabeth longs for the power to determine her own marital fate.

Amidst the glittering swirl of balls, gossip and the hypocrisy of Regency England, Elizabeth encounters the arrogant, aloof, but infuriatingly eligible Mr Darcy. The two are more alike than they care to admit and their tempestuous journey from "tolerable" to love triumphant is one of literature's most iconic romances.

A perfect match? Most ardently! Penned by Patrick White Award winners Wendy Mocke and Lewis Treston, directed by Bridget Boyle and Daniel

Evans and featuring an acclaimed all-star Queensland cast. It is a truth universally acknowledged that this "lavish and delightful" (Brisbane Times) celebration of the original rom-com plays for a strictly limited season and will sell out. Secure your bonnet and make haste.

10 JULY – 26 JULY 2026
PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

Jane Austen's

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

Adapted by Wendy Mocke and Lewis Treston
Directed by Bridget Boyle and Daniel Evans

Venue

Playhouse, QPAC, Russell Street, South Brisbane

Duration

2 hours 30 minutes including interval, subject to change without notice.

Content Warning

This production contains mild adult themes, theatrical smoke and haze, and strobe lighting.

Age Recommendation

Recommended for ages 12+
Suitable for students in Years 7 - 12

This Education Resource was created by Queensland Theatre Company.

WRITER'S NOTE

WENDY MOCKE



I didn't grow up with Jane Austen.

My world was Madang, a small beachside town in Papua New Guinea - a universe away from the ballrooms and rolling hills of Regency England. For a long time, Austen felt distant, like

a story wasn't meant to be part of, as a Black woman from the Pacific Islands. But life has a wicked sense of humour, and one day it handed me the wild and audacious task of co-adapting *Pride & Prejudice* for the stage.

This wasn't just a creative challenge - it was like meeting Jane Austen for the first time. Not through reverence, but through fierce debates and long nights dissecting every clever turn of phrase. It felt like a whirlwind romance: we laughed, we fought, we broke up in frustration, and then made up over tea (maybe we're both red flags; who's to say?). It turns out, Austen and I had more in common than I expected. She saw the world with razor-sharp wit, and though she might never have imagined a Black woman from the Pacific Islands messing with her work, I'd like to think she'd respect my audacity.

I kept asking: What does *Pride & Prejudice* mean in 2025? How do we take a story tethered to its time and make it breathe in the world we live in now? The answers emerged in the messiness of collaboration, particularly with my creative partner, the exceptional and outrageously brilliant Lewis Treston. By the end, I was so glad I said "I do" to this arranged creative marriage - though Austen herself would surely have critiques.

One question lingered throughout: *Have I done enough? Have I opened this story wide enough for others - especially those who don't often see themselves in Austen's world- to feel they belong here too?* If I'm honest, I don't know. But I tried. That's what I aim to do as a writer: crack open doors, let in fresh air, and create space for ALL of us to gather.

I owe immense gratitude to the entire cast and creative team for bringing this to life, and to Dan Evans for not only convincing me to write on this, but for trusting me with it. At its heart, *Pride & Prejudice* is a story about love, self-discovery, and the courage to bridge divides. We've done our best to honour that while bringing it fully into 2025. And if we've done our job right - if we've truly done her justice - then maybe, just maybe, somewhere in the back row, incognito in a bonnet, Jane Austen herself might smirk, raise a glass, and think: *Alright then, I might fancy a Regency hot girl summer myself.*

- Wendy

WRITER'S NOTE

LEWIS TRESTON



It is a truth universally acknowledged that every adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*—even the lauded BBC miniseries—falls short in some way. It's not that Jane Austen's work shouldn't be adapted; it's that her genius is so singular, so elusive, that no adaptation could ever

fully live up to the original. That said, striving solely for fidelity would do her work a disservice, especially in the theatre.

For over 200 years, Austen's novels have held a rare popular appeal with everyone from sophisticated women in scarves to effete urban partygoers to working-class retailers waiting for Mr. Darcy to walk into their shop. Across all walks of life, readers find reflections of themselves in Austen's characters, especially in her masterpiece, *Pride & Prejudice*. I was fortunate to have this story imprinted on my creative DNA at a young age. My mother, making what was then a luxury purchase, brought home a VHS copy of the BBC miniseries. From that day on, sick days, rainy days, or just plain boring days became an excuse to spend six glorious hours watching Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy spar and swoon—a formative experience in every sense.

Having grown up with this story and undertaken two adaptations (of sorts) of Austen's work, I can say with hard-won experience that translating her style into theatre is uniquely challenging. Austen's characters are so irresistibly theatrical that I've twice been fooled into believing that bringing them to the stage would be simple. However, her novels—especially *Pride & Prejudice*—unfold with such understated ease and technical precision that they disguise wormholes of narrative, political, thematic, and philosophical nuance and complexity. Late in the process, I remember turning

to my brilliant, brave and inventive co-writer, Wendy Mocke, and seething, "Who'd have thought it'd be so hard to get these f*#&-ing Bennet sisters married?!"

This process has been extraordinarily collaborative. Wendy and I were supported in no small way by directors Bridget Boyle and Dan Evans and dramaturg Saffron Benner. The five of us spent countless hours in the Queensland Theatre Company boardroom wrestling, wrangling, and writhing under the weight of the novel, trying to make it dance and sparkle onstage. Then, whenever our ideas became a little too clever, the spirit of Jane Austen herself seemed to appear, giving us all a staunch dressing-down.

There are still moments when I am floored by the depths of Austen's genius. I am not being hyperbolic when I say that spending so much time contemplating her literary contributions has been one of the greatest joys of my creative life. It is my sincere hope that this production might offer an energised introduction to Austen for some audiences or serve as a timely reminder of her enduring legacy. More than 200 years after her death, Austen's career seems to be only just getting started.

- Lewis

CO-DIRECTORS' NOTE

DANIEL EVANS & BRIDGET BOYLE



Daniel Evans and Bridget Boyle.

How do you stage the mother of all romantic comedies? Adaptations and iterations of this literary icon loom so largely over the modern Western cultural landscape that references and images are hard baked into our collective consciousness: Alison Steadman's querulous call of "Mr Bennet"? The electricity that courses through Matthew Macfadyen as his hand brushes Keira Knightley's helping her into the carriage? Colin Firth in a wet shirt, anyone?

Unpacking the "universality" of Austen's "truth" for us began with our sublime co-adaptors, Wendy Mocke and Lewis Treston, who found a way into this text that honoured its place in the canon while giving a contemporary audience a new and fresh lens through which to view these characters and their problems. Specifically, the predicament for the young women in this world, whose security and social capital depended so utterly on their ability to marry successfully - that is, upwards and into money.

Most importantly, we all wanted to honour the wit and joy of Austen's razor-sharp comedy as she skewered the pretensions and pomposities she saw all around

her, and which still are in need of a take-down. Like, Elizabeth Bennet, who "dearly loves a laugh", it's the comedy that keeps us coming back to the original enemies-to-lovers romcom.

This production is framed by Lizzie's perspective and environment: the rambling autumnal gardens of Longbourn shape her worldview, the crystal chandeliers of the Netherfield ballroom reflect the pretensions she so astutely sees, and the infamous letter that explodes her worldview - "Till this moment I never knew myself" - arrives in a whirlwind of icy snow. Designer Christina Smith has created a world connected to nature, both internal and external.

Adapting a 400-page novel for a contemporary audience also requires a certain amount of, well, adaptation. Fleeting descriptions from Austen have been reimagined and enlarged. Brighton, where Lydia naively anticipates "tenderly flirting with at least six officers at once", is a heaving seaside festival with a dark underbelly. The Netherfield Ball, where "to Elizabeth it appeared that... her family had made an agreement to expose themselves as much as possible" becomes a Bacchanalian revel led by the intoxicated Mr Collins, punctuated by Mary's hilariously mistimed singing. And Lizzie's frustration at the "evils arriving... from the impropriety of her father's behaviour - who has ignored his duties as a father and husband - explodes in a speech that sings across the centuries to speak for women then and now.

Composer Guy Webster and Lighting Designer Jason Glenwright have breathed life into Regency England by making this world thrum with a romantic energy that feels entirely now. After all, falling in love, searching a crowded dancefloor for The One, and having your heart and world split apart is both universal and timeless. We wanted to capture how Lizzie would have *felt* at a Meryton Assembly, so classical renditions of contemporary music are infused with a heavy House beat. Her delight and awe at Pemberley means her



Bridget Boyle, Nerida Matthaai and Daniel Evans.

world is drenched in a strong hue of golden light. Lizzie's heart is the brush with which we have painted our Austenian world.

This literary-theatrical remix is supported by our Movement Director Nerida Matthaai who takes cues from the dance moves of the time and 'mashes' them with nods to now. The result is a physical language that feels both formal and, at times, frenetic.

All these ideas and words and magic are caught - like lighting in a bottle - in our cast of 12 Queensland performers. All of whom are skilled, generous, and above all playful, their diverse identities and experiences both "write back" to Austen and move the needle on storytelling.

Pride & Prejudice onstage in 2025 will hopefully make you laugh and swoon in all the right places, while asking the question: how much has really changed for women? Elizabeth and the Bennett sisters - and indeed all Austen's female characters - paved the way for

complex, fallible, feisty women. Her women were on the search for what (and who they wanted, and the stories of their searching speak to us with searing relevance over 200 years after their birth.

We hope tonight we can add to your collection of classic *Pride & Prejudice* images or find new ways into your romantic consciousness - be it a beautiful stage picture, a magical moment or a zinging line from our leading lady... This is but one iteration of this text and we made it for you, Dear Reader.

With love, most ardently:

Bridget and Dan



Maddison Burridge and Bryan Proberts. Photograph by Morgan Roberts

AUSTEN'S ENDURING LEGACY

SHE COULD NOT HAVE BESTOWED HER WRITINGS ON A MORE GRATEFUL AUDIENCE

250 years ago, a woman swept onto the English scene, a woman destined to reshape the world of literature and inspire readers through her vivacious, perceptive, and unique writing. To read Austen's work is to know the woman herself, to view society through her eyes, and to appreciate culture in all its complexities, contradictions, and absurdities.

From the opening scene of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*, her "truth universally acknowledged" and the trumpeted arrival of the eligible Mr. Bingley set the tone, one which permeates the rest of the novel: witty, sarcastic, and spot-on. With the introduction of the rest of the cast—including Elizabeth Bennet, with whom Austen most closely identified, and Fitzwilliam Darcy—the momentum of the book carries its readers through assembly rooms, English countryside, and "fine houses," all of which fade into the background as Austen's colourful characters take centre stage.

The clashes between Elizabeth and Darcy send sparks flying, and each rapier-rapid battle of wits strips away another difference until only a kindled and ardent passion remains, Lizzy's "wretched blindness" undone and Darcy's redemptive character arc complete. When pride is humbled and prejudice crushed, a love story emerges to captivate a universal audience.

So, what makes Austen different? Why have her works not only survived the two and a half centuries but also formed the backbone of modern literature, film, theatre, book clubs, and writing societies? Jane Austen has captured generation after generation because she has captured human nature. Her writing holds out a mirror and laughingly reflects the real world, not as it was, but as it is. Readers fall in love with her characters because in each they recognise someone from their own life—bustling Mrs. Bennet, garrulous Mr. Collins, dynamic Lizzy, or domineering Catherine de Bourgh.

Jane Austen, revolutionary in the literary world yet anonymous in her own day, revealed the centrality of human nature and relationships, not afraid to applaud or mock as needed, recognising, "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?" Her six beloved novels, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Sense & Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*, navigate a journey of unrequited love, crushed hopes, and soaring emotions, built on a foundation destined to stand the test of time.

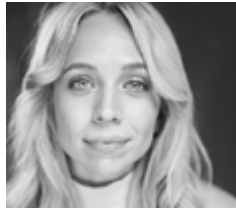
- Tanya Strydom

CAST AND CREATIVES

CAST



Gael Ballantyne
MRS BENNET / LADY CATHERINE /
HOUSEKEEPER / ENSEMBLE



Maddison Burrige
ELIZABETH BENNET



William Carseldine
MR BINGLEY / ENSEMBLE



Daphne Chen
KITTY BENNET / ENSEMBLE



Chenoa Deemall
MARY BENNET / MRS GARDINER /
MRS HIRST / ENSEMBLE



Janaki Gerard
COVER



Andrew Hearle
FITZWILLIAM DARCY ESQ



Stephen Hirst
COVER



Cameron Hurry
MR COLLINS / ENSEMBLE



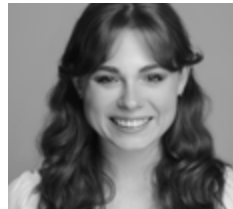
Amy Ingram
CHARLOTTE / MS BINGLEY /
ENSEMBLE



Perry Mooney
JANE BENNET / ENSEMBLE



Bryan Probets
MR BENNET / SIR WILLIAM LUCAS /
ENSEMBLE



Zoë Schramm
LYDIA BENNET / ENSEMBLE



Jeremiah Wray
WICKHAM / COLONEL FITZWILLIAM /
MR GARDINER / ENSEMBLE

CREATIVES & STAGE MANAGEMENT



Wendy Mocke
CO-ADAPTOR



Lewis Treston
CO-ADAPTOR



Bridget Boyle
CO-DIRECTOR



Daniel Evans
CO-DIRECTOR



Christina Smith
DESIGNER



Guy Webster
COMPOSER AND SOUND DESIGNER



Jason Glenwright
LIGHTING DESIGNER



Nerida Matthaei
INTIMACY COORDINATOR,
CHOREOGRAPHER & MOVEMENT DIRECTOR



Saffron Benner
DRAMATURG



Gabrielle Rogers
VOCAL COACH



Maddison Penglis
STAGE MANAGER



Tia-Hanee Cleary
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

ONE TEAM ONE DREAM: A PHOTOGRAPHIC FEATURE ON 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Meet the Cast and Creatives of Queensland Theatre Company's *Pride & Prejudice* in rehearsal, demonstrating 21st Century skills inherent in the creative process of theatre making and embedded in curriculum: creative thinking, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, critical thinking, and communication.



The cast and creative of *Pride & Prejudice*.



Co-Director Bridget Boyle



Co-Director Daniel Evans



Elizabeth Bennet Maddison Burrige



Fitzwilliam Darcy Esq,
Andrew Hearle



Lydia Bennet / Ensemble Courtney Cavallaro (2025)



*Charlotte / Ms Bingley / Ensemble Amy Ingram, Fitzwilliam
Darcy Esq Andrew Hearle, Mary Bennet / Mrs Gardiner /
Mrs Hirst / Ensemble Chenoa Deemal*



*Mr Collins / Ensemble Cameron Hurry and
Kitty Bennet / Ensemble Daphne Chen*



*Wickham / Colonel Fitzwilliam / Mr Gardiner /
Ensemble Jeremiah Wray, Mr Collins / Ensemble Cameron Hurry
and Jane Bennet / Ensemble Perry Mooney*



*Intimacy Coordinator, Choreographer and Movement Director Nerida
Mattheai and Mr Bennet / Sir William Lucas / Ensemble Bryan Probets*



*Composer and Sound Designer Guy Webster,
Co-Director Daniel Evans and Stage Manager Maddison Penglis*



*Jane Bennet / Ensemble Perry Mooney and Mr Bingley /
Ensemble William Carseldine with Co-Director Bridget Boyle*



*Jane Bennet / Ensemble Perry Mooney and Mrs Bennet / Lady
Catherine / Housekeeper / Ensemble Gael Ballantyne*

BEHIND THE SCENES

Get a glimpse of what to expect from this Bridgerton-esque reimaging of literature's original love story. Join the Cast and Creatives of *Pride & Prejudice* in the below sneak peek into the rehearsal room as they delve into the creative process behind this iconic romantic comedy.

Creative Process | *Pride & Prejudice*



Lydia Bennet / Ensemble Courtney Cavallaro (2025)



The Bennet Sisters



Elizabeth Bennet Maddison Burridge



Co-Director Bridget Boyle / Intimacy Coordinator, Choreographer and Movement Director Nerida Matthaei / Co-Director Daniel Evans

“This is the world of Austen, meeting the world of ‘25. What you are seeing across this whole show is a mash up. Choreography is really important to this work. The movement has got beautiful nods to classic Regency moments, but a real contemporary sparkle.”

Bridget Boyle and Daniel Evans, Co-Directors, *Pride & Prejudice*

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Purpose	Context	Text
Challenge and Provoke Educate and Inform Empathise Empower Entertain	Historical Sociological Cultural Political	Live performance Playscript Stimulus text: Jane Austen's Novel

THEMES, IDEAS & CONCEPTS
Pride and Prejudice (surprise!) Feminism, gender roles, and self-determination, agency and independence for women The societal construct of marriage Mutual love and respect in relationships Family expectations The deception of appearances Flaws and the human condition Persisting patriarchal and heteronormative influences on coupling, property, class, and societal standing Womanhood, and the transition from girlhood Heroines and heroes Desire and Compromise

DRAMATIC LANGUAGES	
STYLES	
AUSTENIAN - of or relating to Jane Austen noted for realism and biting social commentary during the Regency era (c. 1795-1837). It can also refer to the characteristics of Austen's work – comic wit, irony, realism, social behaviour minutely observed and the emotional and moral development of a thoughtful heroine. COMEDY OF MANNERS - social satire exploring upper-class society and marriage dynamics, characterised by sharp wit, clever dialogue and stock characters. ROMANTIC COMEDY - classic tropes of romance, enemies to lovers, classic meet-cutes. CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE - hybrid work that integrates text, intertextuality, hyper textuality, physical theatre / dance, visual theatre, non-linear form (use of letters, phantasms and hallucinations), objects, music, costumes, lighting, image, sound, sets, and vocal expression into complex interactive systems.	
FORMS	KEY CONVENTIONS
Linear Narrative Structure	Breaking out of realist action Intertextuality Movement sequence Stylised movement Use of song Poetic image

SYLLABUSES

Queensland Theatre Company's sumptuous theatrical adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice* is perfect for Drama, Dance, English and Music students.

In the drama classroom, students can analyse the production's purpose, context, text, forms, and styles, and investigate how the elements of drama, skills of drama, and dramatic conventions have been manipulated to communicate meaning to the audience. It is a great case study for drama students looking at adapting texts for contemporary audiences. The work can also offer inspiration to students as artists, to devise or direct their own dramatic concepts.

Pride & Prejudice specifically connects to:

- Drama General senior syllabus 2025 - Unit 3: CHALLENGE – Theatre of Social Comment
- Drama in Practice – Unit Option A: Collaboration; Unit Option C: Contemporary; Unit Option D: Commentary.
- ACiQ V.9 The Arts Years 7-8 and 9-10 Band (Drama) - Exploring and responding, Developing practices and skills.

English General senior syllabus and English as an Additional Language General senior syllabus. The novel *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen remains on the prescribed text list in 2025 and 2026 as an External Assessment text.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: GENDER AND DATING

Women did not have substantial rights in the Regency period – which *Pride & Prejudice* depicts. At the same time, *Pride & Prejudice* showcases women acting independently despite the societal norms for women. Elizabeth Bennet rejecting Mr Collins’ proposal to her is one of the greatest examples in the novel of a woman defying her prescribed standards.

A FEMALE POV: THE GIRL SQUAD

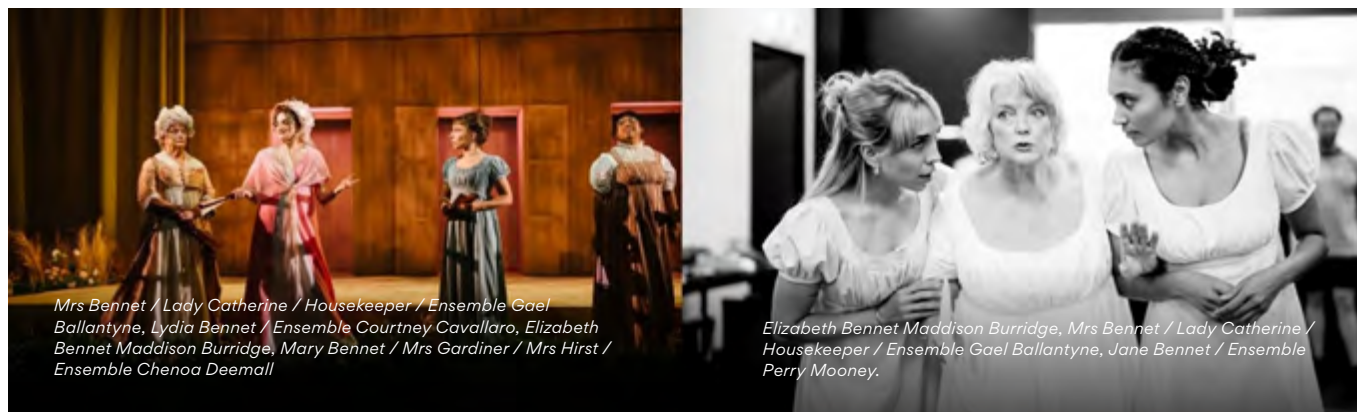
Queensland Theatre Company’s adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice* reimagines Austen’s original novel with a strengthened women’s point-of-view. Leading The Girl Squad is Elizabeth Bennet, *Pride & Prejudice*’s protagonist, hero and key social commentator.



Discussion Questions:

1. How has the *Pride & Prejudice* creative team sharpened the women’s point-of-view and in doing so, honed the audiences’ awareness of persisting historic inequalities in this new theatrical offering?
2. Queensland Theatre Company’s *Pride & Prejudice* features interracial romance and desire. How have attitudes towards this changed since the Regency era? Why is diverse representation on stage and in creative teams important today?

The Role of Women in Regency Society: Gender Expectations in “*Pride & Prejudice*”



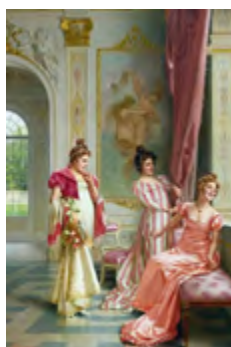
THE REGENCY RITUAL OF COURTING

From the dizzying excitement that comes with the social season's inaugural ball, to anticipating visits from a bevy of suitors, to the power of a well-written love letter, *Pride & Prejudice* depicts the of courting in the Regency era (c. 1795-1837).

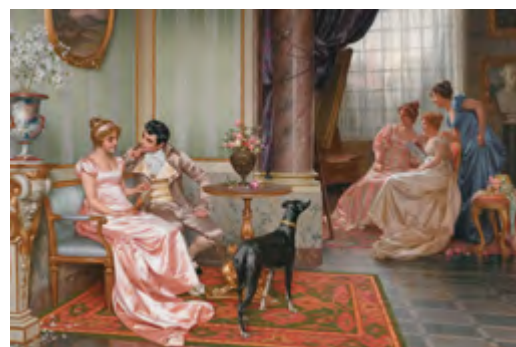
In Regency times, it was often in what was implied rather than what was said that spoke volumes, in addition to non-verbal communication and social codes of behaviour. This was a delicate dance defined by clear phases and time-honoured protocols that once governed the pursuit of love (and an advantageous match). See these expressed on canvas by a suite of Regency era artists:



PHASE I: MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE?
UNE SOIREE ELEGANTE



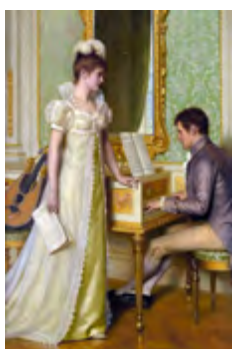
PHASE II: AWAITING SUITORS
AWAITING A VISIT



PHASE III: UN TETE-A-TETE
ADMIRATION



PHASE IV: CONFESSING PRIVATE FEELINGS
THE LOVE LETTER



PHASE V: A PUBLIC ATTACHMENT
PRELUDE



PHASE VI: THE BIG QUESTION
YES OR NO?



PHASE VII: ALONE AT LAST
FLIRTATION

ACTIVITY:

Reflect on the rules and rituals of Regency courtship as depicted in this series of artworks: how were these communicated through the dramatic languages in *Pride & Prejudice*? Consider the use of non-verbal communication during the Regency era such as gesture, body language, dance and movement, distance and proxemics, as well as facial expression.

STAGECRAFT

In senior drama, students are encouraged to develop and refine skills of devising by manipulating stagecraft – including design and production elements - “to communicate stylistic characteristics of selected styles with the purpose to make social commentary” (Unit 3) and to “adapt and shape dramatic action and transform meaning” (Unit 4).

QUESTION:

How were design elements manipulated in *Pride & Prejudice* to make social commentary?

SET DESIGN

INTERVIEW: IN CONVERSATION WITH DESIGNER, CHRISTINA SMITH

Can you please discuss your pathway/journey into the industry – how did you get here?

I had always loved art, textiles and reading, but it was a school excursion that sealed my fate. I recall sitting in wonder as the legendary actor John Bell conjured a storm as Prospero in *The Tempest* with a bucket of water and a staff. The power of that simple gesture and the way it activated the audience’s imagination was the moment I knew I wanted to make theatre.

How would you describe your individual creative process?

There is little about the design process – save for perhaps the long, lonely hours of drawing up a design of this scale – that is individual. Design for live theatre is a collaborative artform, and all the creativity is born from the conversations I have with the rest of my team. This is primarily with the directors and other designers of the show, but also extends to creative conversations I have daily with the artisans who make the sets, props and costumes.

What does collaboration look like for a set and costume designer? What has been the distinctive collaborative approach on *Pride & Prejudice* ie. the script and design developing at the same time?

One of the joys of this job is that my process changes with every production I am involved in. Different people and circumstances create different ways of working, whether through serendipity or necessity. In

this process, the design and script developed at the same time which is not that common in theatre of this scale. Usually I would have a script – or at least a draft of it - that instigates and informs the design process, but in this instance we began at the same time. It was quite liberating, as the design spoke to larger ideas rather than specific needs. It also drove the design into a solution that was as malleable and responsive to changes in the text as possible. For example, the premise for the costumes is that every actor has a base costume, with changes being added simply over the top with one or two elements rather than complete costume changes.

Please discuss the design process in *Pride & Prejudice* and the key ideas that you are working with i.e. nature and the seasons; Elizabeth’s world and perspective? How will these be represented onstage in the set and costume design? i.e. broader and more elemental representation, texture and materiality, use of scale, map

It was important that the design be through Elizabeth’s eyes, and the base materials reflect her love of nature – the simple wooden stage surrounded by rambling greenery. As Lizzie’s world and possibilities expand, the set opens up to reveal a world beyond which is more psychological and impressionistic than literal.



Elizabeth Bennet Maddison Burridge, Fitzwilliam Darcy Esq Andrew Hearle

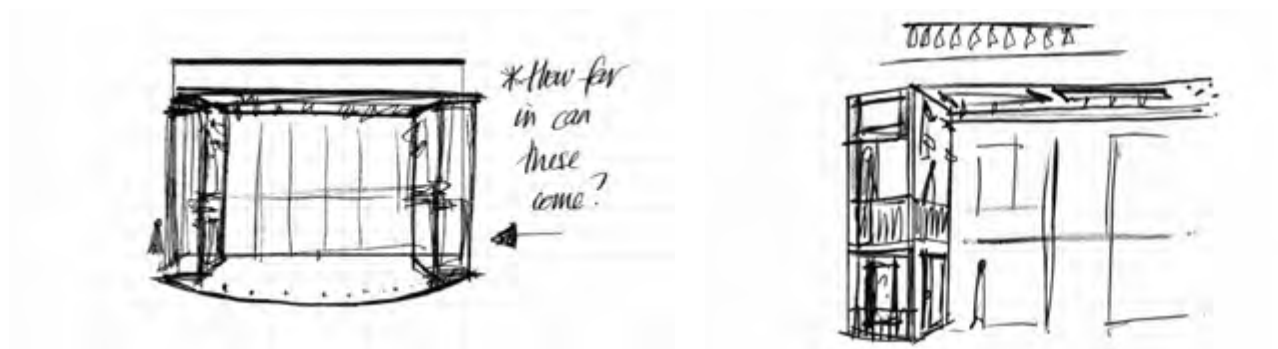
What advice would you give to a budding set and costume designer, and why do you think it's important for young people to design for theatre?

I would recommend seeing as much theatre as possible – big theatre, small theatre and everything in between. You must love it as it can be hard work and challenging to break into the industry. This being said, it can also be completely joyous. More than once during this process I walked through the costume workroom or the scenery workshop and thought how absolutely blessed I am to be able to do this kind of work.

It is so important for young people to design for theatre because the artform is always contemporary. The act of theatre that occurs between the performer and the audience happens in the moment, in the NOW. It needs to be energetic and urgent which is what our youth bring!

SET DESIGN PROCESS:

INSIGHTS AND IMAGERY BY DESIGNER, CHRISTINA SMITH



1. Early Days

I usually head into the model box fairly early in my process, but I often do some early scribbling to work through ideas. We didn't end up going down this path, but you can see the seed of what the design ended up as...



2. Sketch / White Model

At the preliminary design stage I submit a 'white' model, which takes its name from the unpainted tin card that is normally used - though they do not need to be white!

This model isn't finished, but is accurate to scale so the design proposal can be costed.

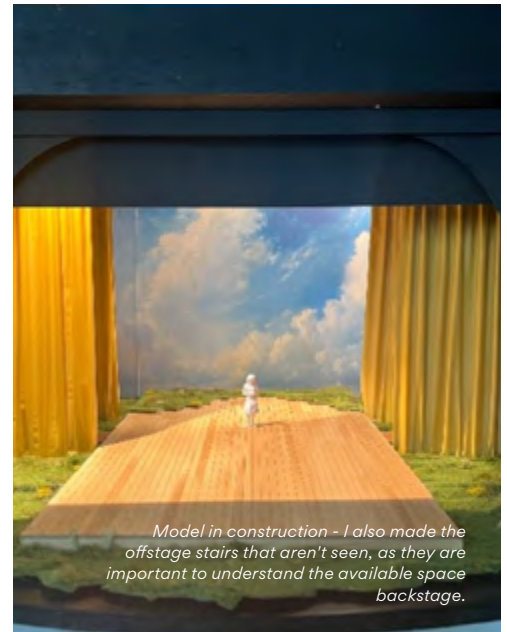
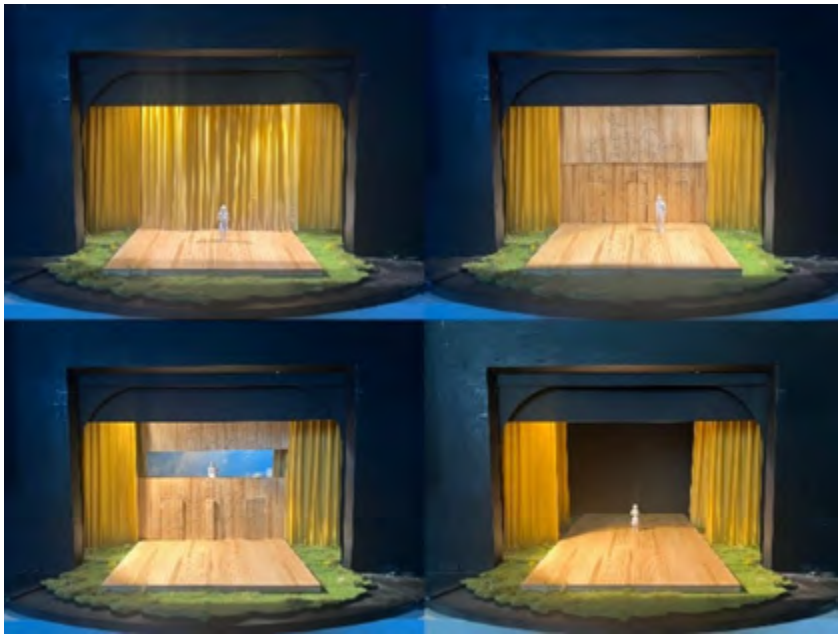


3. Set Renderings

These renderings were done at the preliminary design stage to convey the intentions of the design including colour and texture.

SET DESIGN PROCESS (CONT.):

4. Final Model



HIGH STAKES FASHION: REGENCY DRESS CODE

How do you dress like a Jane Austen character you ask? To answer all your Regency fashion questions look no further than to the sumptuous splendour of the *Pride & Prejudice* costumes created by Designer, Christina Smith.



Get a glimpse into Queensland Theatre Company's Wardrobe Department and the creation process for the *Pride & Prejudice* costumes.



Photography by Morgan Roberts

QUESTIONS:

What does Regency fashion reveal about the societal construct of the roles of women and men in this historic era?

What do you note about use of colour, texture and detailing in the costumes and how does this contribute to the storytelling in *Pride & Prejudice*?

Read More: [How to dress like a Jane Austen character](#)

POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

- Amidst the glittering swirl of regency balls, gossip and the hypocrisy of 19th century England, what do you believe is the key message of Queensland Theatre Company's theatrical adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*?
- What does the production communicate to us as an audience about the role, status, and opportunities for women in Regency England?
- How does this adaptation reimagine Jane Austen's social commentary through the lenses of gender, diversity, inequality, and class to challenge a contemporary audience?
- It is a truth universally acknowledged that *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen is one of the greatest romance stories ever written. In this production, identify how dramatic elements such as tension, time, place, language, movement and others are manipulated by the actors in their performances to develop relationships and heighten iconic romantic moments in the story such as The Proposal.
- How are the conventions of Satire and Comedy of Manners manipulated in the production to make social comment and present a political viewpoint? How does the production comment on Victorian society's obsession with manners, social status, and appearances? How does the production satirise the behaviour of the upper classes to reveal hypocrisy and shallowness?
- How do Regency era and contemporary language choices in the production assist a contemporary audience to connect to this story?
- How is dance used in this theatrical adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*? What is the impact of fusing historic (Regency) and contemporary styles of dance in the production? How does it play a part in creating meaning?
- Elizabeth Bennet is the production's protagonist and the hero of the story. Identify how Elizabeth's worldview is foregrounded in the production through the scenic design and the disruption of hyper-realism. Consider nature and the seasons, texture and materiality, and the use of scale.
- Consider how music selection and sound design in the production helps to position Elizabeth as a contemporary hero. Reflect on how music and sound has been composed/ designed to create mood/atmosphere as well as time and place.
- Identify key items of Regency period attire that are represented through costume or props in the production. How do these design choices enhance the communication of the key message/s within this theatrical adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*?
- How does the lighting design enhance mood, atmosphere, and focus in the production?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

DRAMA SENIOR SYLLABUS 2025

UNIT 3: CHALLENGE – THEATRE OF SOCIAL COMMENT

EXCERPT FROM THE SYLLABUS

In Unit 3, students explore how drama can be used to challenge our understanding of humanity over time. Students investigate dramatic styles that are united by social commentary, and that question their world and advocate change. Students explore how dramatic form can be used to express philosophical and political viewpoints in action in society.

In this unit, students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to make and respond to dramatic works that aspire to voice the difficult questions of human conscience and challenge our understanding of humanity in a complex and ever-changing world.

Inquiry questions:

1. How can the provocation presented in Queensland Theatre Company's theatrical adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice* educate and challenge a contemporary audience to question society at this time: 'How much has changed between then and now?' in relation to persisting inequalities. How can this production empower us to advocate for change?
2. How can we shape the dramatic languages to communicate and challenge an understanding of humanity at this time? How have the *Pride & Prejudice* creative team elevated women's voices even further in this theatrical adaptation? Consider the voice and agency of Elizabeth Bennet's, her sisters, as well as their friend, Charlotte.
3. How can we make and respond to dramatic works to explore challenges and demands of the human experience? How has a cast of diverse actors expanded a celebrated 'universal' fiction that has historically been reserved for predominantly White actors?



Ensemble of *Pride & Prejudice*

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT 2: DRAMATIC CONCEPT

Working as a deviser, create an original dramatic concept of a theatrical work that expresses a social comment in response to Queensland Theatre Company's production of *Pride & Prejudice*, adapted by Wendy Mocke and Lewis Treston and co-directed by Bridget Boyle and Daniel Evans.

This task has been adapted from QCAA Drama 2025 v.1.3 General Senior Syllabus. See p. 37 of the Syllabus for assessment objectives, specifications, conditions, response requirements, mark allocation, and instrument-specific marking guide.



Photography Credits:

Hero Photography: Sam Scoufos for Compadre Picture Co.

Rehearsal Photography: Morgan Roberts

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