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**GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS A WORLD PREMIERE OF JANE AUSTEN'S *EMMA*,  
ADAPTED BY KATE HAMILL AND DIRECTED BY MEREDITH McDONOUGH**

**Named 2017's Playwright of the Year by *The Wall Street Journal*,  
Hamill will debut this Guthrie-commissioned work on the famed Wurtele Thrust Stage**

*(Minneapolis/St. Paul)* — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) today announced the cast and creative team for the playful world premiere of *Emma*, written by **Kate Hamill**, based on the novel by Jane Austen and directed by **Meredith McDonough**. In this Guthrie-commissioned work, Hamill's fun and creative adaptation of Austen's social commentary on British life is a fresh take on the beloved classic.

*Emma* will run April 11 – May 31, 2020, on the Wurtele Thrust Stage. Single tickets start at \$15 for preview performances (April 11–16) and regular tickets start at \$25. Tickets are on sale now through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free) or online at [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org). Post-play discussions and access services (ASL-interpreted, audio-described and open-captioned performances) are available on select dates and by request. A relaxed performance of *Emma* sponsored by Target will be offered on Saturday, May 23 at 1 p.m. For more information, visit [www.guthrietheater.org/relaxed](http://www.guthrietheater.org/relaxed).

In Hamill's adaptation, Emma Woodhouse prides herself on being a matchmaker with an impeccable record, much to the chagrin of her dear friend Mr. Knightley. But self-delusion and too much leisure get Emma into unfortunate situations of her own making. Her best-laid plans are turned upside down by unpredictable displays of affection, unexpected rivals and Emma's sudden realization that true love may have been under her nose all along. With screwball comedy and surprises aplenty, this fast-paced adaptation interprets the Austen classic in delightfully unconventional ways.

Since 2017, Hamill has been one of the most produced playwrights in the country and one of the most prolific adapters of classic literature for the American stage. Hamill's first play, an inventive and sprightly adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, debuted in 2014, and she plans to adapt all of Austen's novels in the order in which they were published. She has completed adaptations of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, and the Guthrie world premiere of *Emma* marks the completion of her fourth Austen adaptation. Additionally, Hamill has adapted other classic novels for the stage, including *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Hamill's adaptation of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* was produced at the Guthrie in 2016.

"If we're not taking these stories out to air, what are we doing? Why not just read the novel? We have to bring new perspectives to old stories, especially in the theater, or we're not advancing the forms," Hamill recently shared regarding her interest in adapting classic works. "It may be like scribbling on an altar with crayon, but perhaps some altars are better with a little joyous, irreverent crayon added." She describes her adaptation of *Emma* as a feminist-forward farce. "It's a screwball comedy about a woman with a bit too much time and a bit too little to do who figures out how to use her energies wisely in this world."

Throughout 2019, workshops and readings were held in New York City and Minneapolis as part of the development process for the commission. Hamill will be at the Guthrie during rehearsals and work closely with McDonough, whose previous work at the Guthrie includes directing *Noises Off*, the ingenious, slapstick comedy, in 2018.

The title character of Emma Woodhouse will be played by **Amelia Pedlow** (Guthrie: *Frankenstein – Playing With Fire*). Additional casting for *Emma* includes **Sun Mee Chomet** (Guthrie: *Twelfth Night, As You Like It, King Lear*) as Miss Bates/As Cast, **Ryan Colbert** (Guthrie: *A Christmas Carol, As You Like It, Frankenstein – Playing With Fire*) as Frank Churchill/Robert Martin/As Cast, **David Kelly** (Guthrie: *Harvey*) as Mr. Woodhouse/Mr. Weston/As Cast, **Carman Lacivita** (Guthrie: debut) as Mr. Knightley, **Anna Leverett** (Guthrie: debut) as Mrs. Elton/As Cast, **Louis Sallan** (Guthrie: debut) as Mr. Elton/As Cast, **Samantha Steinmetz** (Guthrie: debut) as Harriet Smith, **Christine Weber** (Guthrie: *A Christmas Carol, Cyrano de Bergerac, Pride and Prejudice*) as Jane Fairfax/As Cast and **Brenda Withers** (Guthrie: debut) as Mrs. Weston/Mrs. Bates/As Cast.

The creative team for *Emma* includes **Kate Hamill** (adapter), **Meredith McDonough** (director), **Lex Liang** (scenic and costume designer), **Paul Toben** (lighting designer), **Palmer Hefferan** (sound designer/composer), **Emily Michaels King** (movement director), **Carla Steen** (resident dramaturg), **Jill Walmsley Zager** (resident voice coach), **Aaron Preusse** (resident fight director), **Jennifer Liestman** (resident casting director), **Tree O'Halloran** (stage manager), **Nate Stanger** (assistant stage manager) and **Cara Phipps** (assistant director).

**Kate Hamill** (adapter) is an actor and playwright. She originated the role of Marianne Dashwood in her adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, which ran off-Broadway for more than 265 performances, won an Off-Broadway Alliance Award and received a Drama League Award nomination for Outstanding Revival. Other plays include *Vanity Fair*, in which she originated the role of Becky Sharp and received an Off-Broadway Alliance Award nomination; *Pride and Prejudice*; *In the Mines*, a Sundance Institute Lab semifinalist; *Little Women*; and *Little Fellow*, a Eugene O'Neill Award semifinalist. Acting credits include

*The Seagull* with Bedlam; *Internet Famous* with Ensemble Studio Theatre's Youngblood collective; *Dreams of a West Texas Marsupial Girl* with PearlDamour; *Cyrano* with Amphibian Stage Productions; and numerous independent films.

Hamill's plays have been produced off-Broadway and at the Guthrie Theater, American Repertory Theater, Seattle Rep, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Dallas Theater Center and Folger Theatre (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Production for *Sense and Sensibility* plus eight nominations), among others. Hamill is currently working on a new adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* as well as several original plays, including *Love Poem* and *Prostitute Play*. She holds a B.F.A. in Acting from Ithaca College and currently studies with Jane Guyer Fujita.

**Meredith McDonough** (director) is a freelance director and the former associate artistic director of Actors Theatre of Louisville, where she directed *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Angels in America*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* and many others. McDonough also served as the director of new works at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, California. Regionally, favorites include the U.S. premieres of *NSFW* (Round House Theatre) and *Fair Use* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Eurydice* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *The Book Club Play* (Dallas Theater Center) and the Washington, D.C., premiere of the musical *Summer of '42*. In New York City, she has developed work with Roundabout Theatre Company, Atlantic Theater Company, Keen Company and Ars Nova.

McDonough was formerly the associate artistic director of The Orchard Project and the new works director for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, and she currently serves on the board for the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. McDonough received her B.S. from Northwestern University and her M.F.A. from the University of California, San Diego.

**THE GUTHRIE THEATER** (Joseph Haj, artistic director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj's leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving more than 350,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. [guthrietheater.org](http://guthrietheater.org)

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