



**For Immediate Release**  
November 12, 2018  
Contact: The American Stage  
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**American Stage presents the Tampa Bay Area Premiere of  
MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY,  
a whimsical and witty sequel to Jane Austen's PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.  
November 28 thru December 30.**

**GET IN-THE-KNOW ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

- 1. Top 10 most-produced plays of the 2018-2019 Season.** This romantic comedy is a Tampa Bay area premiere that offers the perfect holiday experience for family and friends this season. Age Recommendation: 10+
- 2. Written by two powerhouse female playwrights, Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon.** Gunderson is the most produced living playwright in America. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US. Melcon is a theater artist and writer. She spent seven years as the Director of New Play Development at Marin Theatre Company where she dramaturged over 30 productions — including six world premieres.
- 3. A whimsical and witty sequel to Jane Austen's PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.** MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY will be directed by Producing Artistic Director, Stephanie Gularte.

"This new holiday play has so much going for it. Not only is it a wonderful, witty imagining of the continuation of Jane Austen's PRIDE AND PREJUDICE world, it is also a smart and celebratory romantic Christmas play with dialogue that feels fresh and immediate. Best of all, MISS BENNET features an unlikely but inspiring 19th century female heroine who is discovering how to live a full life on her own terms."

- *Stephanie Gularte, Director*

**St. Petersburg, FL** – American Stage continues its 2018-2019 Season 'LIFE. OUT LOUD' with MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY written by Lauren Gunderson & Margot Melcon and directed by Producing Artistic Director Stephanie Gularte. This Tampa Bay Area premiere features 6 cast members making their American Stage mainstage debut, Katie Cunningham\*, Josh Odsess-Rubin\*, Lucas Calzada\* and Brooke Tylar Benson as well as Apprentice Alumni Courtney McLaren (WINNIE THE POOH - School Tour) and Sadie Lockhart (2018-2019 Emerging Arts Leader Fellow and WINNIE THE POOH - School Tour ) plus the return of Britt Michael Gordon\* (THE PITMEN PAINTERS, GOOD PEOPLE) and Jenny Lester\* (BAD JEWS).

"This play...ah, this play! Artistic director's dream of a well-written, fresh, smart and joyful new holiday play. Here it is...MISS BENNET: A CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY is for everyone."- *Stephanie Gularte, Director*

## ABOUT THE PLAY

**LOVE. OUT LOUD.** This Christmas, cozy up with your favorite PRIDE AND PREJUDICE characters at Pemberley. Told with a sweet and sassy modern wit and romantic, period style, this comedic sequel takes us to 1815 England in the grand estate of newlyweds, Mr. and Mrs. Darcy. Bookish middle daughter Mary Bennet meets a curious visitor who proves himself an intellectual match, kindred spirit and possibly more. For the first time, Mary must stand tall and become the heroine of her own story. Inspired by one of the most beloved literary romances of all time, MISS BENNET will enchant Jane Austen fans and new-comers alike.

*“...a perfectly constructed love story...fizzy comedy, sweet spirit...destined to populate future holiday seasons...”*  
– *San Francisco Chronicle*

Age Recommendation: 10+

The following includes information on the cast, production, performance dates, and ticketing information, as well as a listing of special events associated with the production.

### CAST

**Jenny Lester\*** (Mary Bennet)  
**Josh Odsess-Rubin\*** (Arthur de Bourgh)  
**Brooke Tyler Benson** (Elizabeth Darcy)  
**Britt Michael Gordon\*** (Fitzwilliam Darcy)  
**Sadie Lockhart** (Jane Bingley)  
**Lucas Calzada\*** (Charles Bingley)  
**Courtney Anne McLaren** (Lydia Wickham)  
**Katie Cunningham\*** (Anne de Bourgh)

### CREATIVE

**Stephanie Gularte** (Director)  
**Steven K. Mitchell#** (Set Designer)  
**Joseph P. Oshry#** (Lighting Designer)  
**Trish Kelley** (Costume Designer)  
**Benjamin T. Ismail** (Sound Designer)  
**Jerid Fox** (Properties Master)  
**Kris Danford** (Dialect Coach)  
**Jeremy D. Silverman** (Vocal/Music Coach)  
**Rachel Harrison\*** (Production Stage Manager)  
**Donovan Whitney** (Directing Apprentice)  
**Season Wong** (Assistant Stage Manager)

\* = Member of Actors' Equity Association; # = Member of the United Scenic Artists Union

For Cast Bios please visit [americanstage.org/BENNET](http://americanstage.org/BENNET)

LINK to press releases: [AmericanStage.org/media](http://AmericanStage.org/media)

LINK to promotional photos: [Flickr American Stage](#)

*\*Publicity photo credit: Joey Clay Photography. Archival photo credit: TBA. Please note that publicity photos are not typically available until 2 weeks prior to opening. Please contact [marketing@americanstage.org](mailto:marketing@americanstage.org) for immediate needs.*

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHTS

**Lauren Gunderson** is the most produced living playwright in America, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award and the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Co. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU's Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the US including the Denver Center (THE BOOK OF WILL), South Coast Rep (EMILIE, SILENT SKY), The Kennedy Center (THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF DR. WONDERFUL AND HER DOG!), the O'Neill Theatre Center, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Olney Theatre, Geva, and more. Her work is published by Dramatists Play Service (SILENT SKY, BAUER), Playscripts (I AND YOU; EXIT, PURSUED BY A BEAR; and TOIL AND TROUBLE), and Samuel French (EMILIE). She is a Playwright in Residence at The Playwrights Foundation, and a proud Dramatists Guild member. She is from Atlanta, GA, and lives in San Francisco. LaurenGunderson.com and @LalaTellsAStory. [www.laurengunderson.com](http://www.laurengunderson.com)

**Margot Melcon** is a theater artist, administrator and writer. She was the Director of New Play Development at Marin Theatre Company for seven years, where she dramaturged over 30 productions—including six world premieres—and administered the company's two annual new play prizes and commissioning program. She has developed plays with TheatreWorks, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Crowded Fire Theater, Shotgun Players, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, the Kennedy Center, the New Harmony Project, and the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. She is currently the Program Executive for Promoting Culture at the Zellerbach Family Foundation. Margot is a graduate of California State University, Chico.

## BEFORE & AFTER THE SHOW

Throughout the run of MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY, ticket holders are invited to arrive early for an exclusive **PROLOGUE** presented by select American Stage apprentice Donovan Whitney 30 minutes prior to each performance.

Also, enjoy drink specials every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night post-show. Stick around after the show for lively café conversations. You never know what special guest may arrive.

## TALKS & EVENTS – FULL DETAILS

American Stage has also programmed several audience experience opportunities surrounding the production. Visit [americanstage.org/CLOSER](http://americanstage.org/CLOSER) and click the **TALKS & EVENTS** tab for a full listing of events.

**Sunday, November 18 @ 1PM**

**Spotlight Series: BEHIND-THE-SCENES – MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY  
with a Special Costume Shop Tour**

*Featuring – Stephanie Gularte (Director/Producing Artistic Director), Steven Mitchell (Set Designer) and Trish Kelley (Costume Designer)*

The perfect primer! Take a peek behind the curtain before the opening of MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY with this informative and entertaining presentation about the play, the playwright, and the American Stage artists who bring it all to life. Professor Emerita Dedee Aleccia will provide relevant details about the history and central themes of the play, while members of the artistic team will give an insider's perspective on their process.

**Pricing: \$10 for General Public**

*Free for American Stage Subscribers and Act 1 Club Members*

**Friday, November 30 | Reception at 7PM | Performance at 8pm**

### **Opening Night**

Celebrate with the stars! Enjoy a pre-show reception sponsored by CALLALOO with hors d'oeuvres and an open bar, rub elbows with the cast & creative team, and be among the first to see one of our first-class productions. There will also be a post-show dessert reception with the cast.

**Thursday December 6, Sundays December 9 & 16**

### **Spotlight Series: CHATBACKS – MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY**

Stick around immediately following select performances to talk with the cast and other audience members while the experience of the play is fresh! Ask questions about the play, the characters, and the process, plus respond to the story and ideas aroused by the production.

**Free for ticket holders to the performance.**

## **AT A GLANCE**

**WHAT:** American Stage presents MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY by Lauren Gunderson & Margot Melcon

**WHERE:** Raymond James Theatre  
163 3rd Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

**WHEN:** November 28 through December 30, 2018

Preview Wednesday, November 28, 7pm, "Pay What You Can"

Preview Thursday, November 29, 7pm, \$30 tickets

Opening Night: Friday, November 30, 8pm, \$70 tickets (includes opening night reception at 7pm, and a dessert reception with the cast following the performance.)

Continues: Wednesdays-Sundays through December 30, 2018

Arrive 30 minutes early to get the inside scoop on the play.

### **TIMES & PRICES**

Wednesdays 7pm, \$44 tickets

Thursdays 7pm, \$44 tickets **NEW TIME**

Fridays 8pm, \$50 tickets

Saturdays 8pm, \$54 tickets

Saturdays & Sundays 2pm, \$44 tickets **NEW TIME**

**Under 30 years of age (UNDER 30 PASS):** Our 'Netflix-style' subscription, offering 'unlimited theatre' for only \$15 per month.

**Under 20 years of age (UNDER 20 PASSPORT - suggested 12-19):** FREE tickets to American Stage's mainstage season. A bold experiment in 2018.

**Contact the box office about our UNDER 30 PASS & UNDER 20 PASSPORT. Visit [americanstage.org/ya](http://americanstage.org/ya) for details.**

**Age Recommendation: 10+**

### **SERVICE & FACILITIES**

**Physical Accessibility:** The theatre features accessible parking, entrances, restrooms, and seating.

Displaying a valid disabled parking permit will allow you to park at City metered spaces for FREE, for as long as your event requires, including those posted with time limit signs (green signs). ***This does not apply to loading zones or otherwise restricted parking signage (red signs).***

**Large Print Program:** Theatergoers may peruse large print programs for each Mainstage production. Request from House Manager on duty. A digital version will be available at [americanstage.org/PROGRAM](http://americanstage.org/PROGRAM).

**Listening System:** Theatergoers may enjoy the free infrared listening system from any seat. Request from Concessions.



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## AMERICAN STAGE

American Stage Theatre operates as a 501-(C)3, and has been providing live theatrical performances as a professional regional equity theatre in the heart of St. Petersburg, Florida, since 1977. American Stage's mission is to reinforce the power of live theatre with high quality productions that excite and challenge a diverse audience. Our year-round programming seeks to realize this through our Mainstage season, Spotlight Series, 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival, American Stage in the Park and Improv. American Stage Education's offerings include award-winning Teaching Artist Outreach focused on bringing theatrical arts experiences to underserved populations, helping them to excel onstage & beyond.

We believe that through the telling of dynamic stories, live theatre has the power to unite us in our shared experiences and to deepen our connection to one another through the illumination of diverse perspectives. American Stage artists and stakeholders are responsible for helping a small theatre touring company blossom into a thriving world-class professional theatre providing nearly 70,000 Tampa Bay residents and tourists with accessible, relevant art and arts education annually.

**Powerful Stories. Boldly Told.**

## SOCIAL MEDIA



@americanstage

## BOX OFFICE INFORMATION:

**Phone:** (727) 823-PLAY (7529)

**Email:** [BoxOffice@americanstage.org](mailto:BoxOffice@americanstage.org)

**Location:** 163 3<sup>rd</sup> St. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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