

THE MASKERS THEATRE COMPANY *presents*

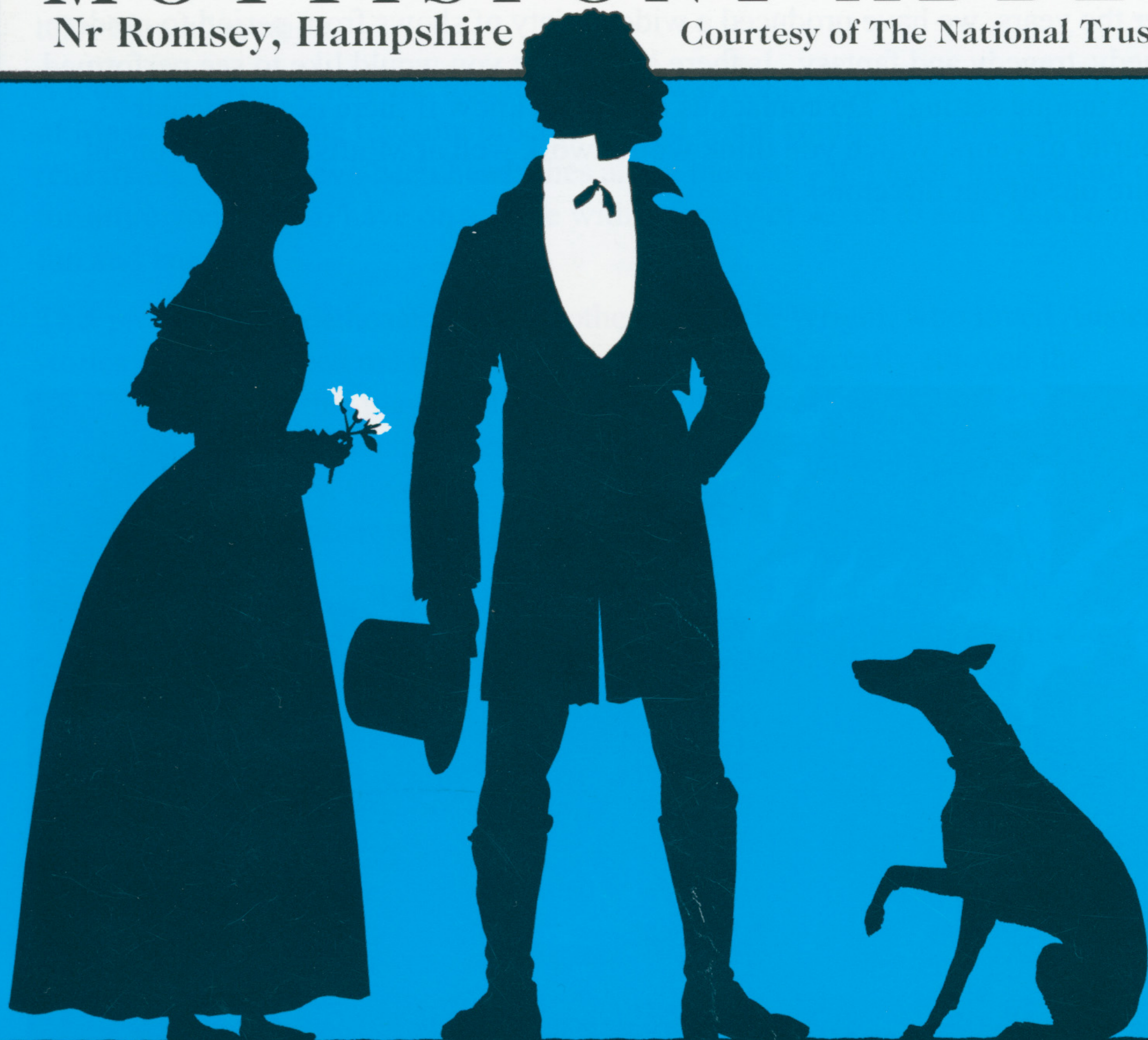
Jane Austen's
**PRIDE &
PREJUDICE**

in the open air at

MOTTISFONT ABBEY

Nr Romsey, Hampshire

Courtesy of The National Trust



Adapted & Directed by Meri Mackney

Wednesday 18 July to Saturday 28 July 2007 at 7.30

The Maskers at **MOTTISFONT ABBEY**

This is Maskers 25th anniversary at Mottisfont Abbey, our 26th production, and some of the cast and crew of the present show were babies or mere glints in their parents' eyes at that first production in 1982 (*A Man for All Seasons*).

Each year the company looks forward to returning to the beautiful grounds at Mottisfont – and so do our audience. Early productions attracted audiences of maybe 100-150 per night. Last year's show, *The Wind in the Willows*, sold out its 500 a night ticket allocation before the show opened. We hope *Pride and Prejudice* will be as successful.

Over the years, we have produced a wide variety of shows from period to modern, comedy, tragedy and fantasy. Is there a play that you would like to see performed in this unique setting? Do contact us and let us know if there is a particular favourite of yours, which you think would work well at Mottisfont - you might inspire one of our directors!



Director's **NOTES**

I was probably about 9 years old when I first fell in love with Mr Darcy. Over the years, I returned to the book again and again, reading it, teaching it, and never tiring of Austen's wit, the Bennet family dynamics and the classic love story.

Over 25 years of being involved in Maskers productions at Mottisfont, I had often thought that it would be a wonderful setting for the story. Two years ago, on the set of *The Man in the Iron Mask*, suddenly I could see it. I mentioned the idea to the productions manager and in no time I was presenting it to the productions panel. Now all I had to do was adapt the book to the space and reduce the running time to about 2 hours! How I envied Andrew Davies the luxury of 6 hours for his television adaptation.

It took a full year before the fledgling script was ready to be read by a small group of Maskers. Then the revising process started – and continued right through into rehearsals. There have been headaches along the way - not least, the amount of furniture you have to have on a stage with a family of seven to seat - but so much fun and laughter.

This production is dedicated to my mother, Marjorie Wright, who loved Austen's stories and introduced me to them at a young age. She greatly enjoyed the planning stages of this play, reading sections of the script as I completed them, and discussing with me character development and the perils of adaptation for an open air show. Sadly, she didn't live to see the actual production but I'm sure she's still supporting us wherever she is.

Our other dedication is to Alan Baker, a much loved, unsung worker on so many Mottisfont shows. We will miss him and his video camera at this production.

I have been really excited by the whole process of taking *Pride and Prejudice* from book to script to stage. I hope you enjoy the end result.

Meri Mackney

Jane Austen in **HAMPSHIRE**

Jane Austen was born on December 16th, 1775 at Steventon, near Basingstoke; she was the seventh child of the Rev. George Austen and his wife Cassandra. The Parish Register for Steventon records Jane's baptism on the day following her birth, and the Register is in the Hampshire Record Office, Winchester.

After her father's death in 1805, she moved with her sister and mother to Southampton in the autumn of 1806, staying temporarily with her brother Frank, by then a naval captain, who had rented lodgings in Southampton. They then moved to a house in Castle Square, where the Bosun's Locker public house now stands, which they rented from the Marquess of Lansdowne.

In July 1809 they moved to a cottage in the village of Chawton, on the estate owned by her brother Edward. It was here that Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life, and where she revised not only *Pride and Prejudice* but also *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*, as well as writing *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion* entirely at Chawton.

Early in 1817 Jane became ill and was referred to a doctor in Winchester. She moved into lodgings in College Street in Winchester with Cassandra for the last few weeks of her life. She died on the 18 July 1817 at the age of 41, and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. "It is a satisfaction to me to think that [she is] to lie in a Building she admired so much," her sister Cassandra Austen wrote later.

Pride and Prejudice

The manuscript was first written between 1796 and 1797, and was initially called *First Impressions*, but was never published under that title. *First Impressions* was the first of Jane Austen's works to be offered to a publisher, but the publisher turned it down without even looking at the manuscript. After some revision, it was published on 28 January 1813.

Marriage is set as a theme of the novel in the first chapter, and in the famous opening line - "*It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.*"

Jane Austen in **HAMPSHIRE**

The novel portrays life in the genteel, rural society of the day and tells of the initial misunderstandings between Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy.

Her biting social commentary and acute observation, her wit and irony, made Austen one of the most influential and respected novelists of the early nineteenth century. In her novels, and in her letters, she explores what she described as the 'little matters' of women's daily lives - *'Little Matters they are to be sure, but highly important.'*

Jane Austen walking trail in Southampton

The self-guided Jane Austen trail can be followed by using the trail leaflet, which is available from the Tourist Information Centre.

The trail takes you around sites in Southampton's old medieval town associated with Jane Austen's time in Southampton between 1806 and 1809. Although some buildings no longer stand, the leaflet evokes the town as Austen would have known it. Near the Bargate, the magnificent north entrance to medieval Southampton, was All Saints Church where Jane worshipped, the story of Southampton's Spa is recounted, and the site of the house where she lived is visited.

The story of the Long Rooms and Hot Baths is recalled, as is the Theatre Royal where she saw plays. The Water Gate is associated with the boat trip to Hythe and near the Platform is Queens park, once a meadow where skating took place. The Dolphin Hotel, where Jane attended dances, still stands in the High Street.

*Southampton Tourist Information Centre
9 Civic Centre Road, Southampton
SO14 7FJ*

Tel: +44 (0)23 8083 3333

Email: tourist.information@southampton.gov.uk

Jane Austen's **PRIDE & PREJUDICE**

Cast

Mr Bennet	Ken Hann
Mrs Bennet	Hazel Burrows
Jane Bennet	Rachael Courage
Elizabeth Bennet	Susannah Lawther
Mary Bennet	Katherine Harris
Kitty Bennet	Harriet Clayton
Lydia Bennet	George Moody
Charlotte Lucas	Hannah Price
Sir William Lucas	Bruce Atkinson
Lady Lucas	Clare Minns
Mrs Phillips	Christine Baker
Charles Bingley	Matt Avery
Fitzwilliam Darcy	Steve Cosier
Caroline Bingley	Suzanne Provins
Mr Collins	Adam Taussik
Mr Wickham	Peter Burrows
Georgiana Darcy	Alex Austin
Colonel Forster	Jonathan Shepherd
Mrs Forster	Sally Scott
Denny	Justin Marsh
Mrs Gardiner	Jo Iacovou
Lady Catherine de Bourgh	Allegra Carlton
Colonel Fitzwilliam	Paul Baker
Mr Gardiner	Albie Minns
Housekeeper	Brenda Atkinson
Butler	Graham Skinner
Maid (Longbourn)	Leah Kibble
Maid (Rosings)	Hayley Cheeseworth
Maid (Vicarage)	Mary Hamilton
Ball guests	Paula Beattie, Jane Miller, Linda Webb, James Norton, Ross Holland

There will be one interval of 20 minutes

Hot drinks are available from the National Trust van at the rear of the lawn.

There will be disabled-only access to the toilets in the house.

Other toilets are located in the car park.

Jane Austen's **PRIDE & PREJUDICE**

Production Team

Director	Meri Mackney
Production manager	Chris Baker
Assistant Director	Hazel Burrows
Stage manager	Nick Lawther
Backstage Manager	David Fancett
Costume design	Serena Brown,
Wardrobe	Serena Brown, Allegra Carlton, Paula Beattie
Set design	Peter Liddiard
Set construction	David Jupp, Peter Liddiard and team
Set Dressing	John Carrington
Lighting design	Tony Lawther
Recorded Sound	Jamie McCarthy
Live Sound	Tony Lawther
Technical team	David Ilsley, Emma Golby-Kirk, Nathan Weeks, Craig Mintram
Properties	Ella Lockett, Gill Buchanan, Alison McCarthy & Liz Hill
Front of house managers	Geoff and Pam Cook, Julia Jupp
Publicity Design	John Hamon
Programme	Sandy White
Marketing	Angela Stansbridge, Luciana Lattanzi, Sarah Russell
Stewards/box office	Maskers Theatre Company
Photography	Clive Weeks
Flower Arrangements	Jane Ford

Horses and Carriages - Kevin and Samantha Madgwick
Of Absolutely Fabulous - www.abfabulous.co.uk

Music used in this production by kind permission of:

Martin Souter and The Jane Austen Centre, Bath.

The Beau Nash Ensemble and Minerva Records, Bath.

Mary playing - recorded by Chris Bluemel on a period piano,
courtesy of David Owen Norris.

Acknowledgements

PRESTECH for staging and lighting
Nuffield Theatre for loan of the sofa
Chawton House Library
The Jane Austen Society
The Jane Austen Centre, Bath
Jane Warren, Marc Beattie, Emma Robinson,
Jacky Cleaver, Terry Jewer, Julie Lightyear
The Rep College, Reading
St. Edward's School, Sherfield English
SKY for sponsoring The National Trust Events brochure
Bristol Costume Service
Sick and Wicked Productions

In

REHEARSAL



Forthcoming
PRODUCTIONS

The Falling Sky

By Brendan Murray

22nd - 27th October 2007

Maskers Studio Theatre

Box Office 023 8055 1489

An Ideal Husband

By Oscar Wilde

22nd - 26th January 2007

Nuffield Theatre, Southampton

Box Office 023 8067 1771

A Comedy of Errors

By William Shakespeare

July 2008

Mottisfont Abbey

If you are interested in joining the Maskers as a full member or as a Friend, please contact our Membership Officer, Julia Jupp, on 023 8044 6600, or see our website for details

www.maskers.org.uk

The Maskers Theatre is a Registered Charity - no 900067

Further INFORMATION

JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE AND MUSEUM, CHAWTON, HAMPSHIRE

www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk

The house at Chawton is where Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life, and revised the manuscript of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Opening times:

January and February weekends only 10.30 am - 4.30 pm

March - May; September - 1st January daily 10:30am-4:30pm,
except 25th & 26th December

June, July & August daily 10.00 am - 5.00 pm

For information about events at the house, please telephone: 01420-83262.

CHAWTON HOUSE LIBRARY, CHAWTON, HAMPSHIRE

www.chawtonhouse.org

Chawton House Library is a charity with a unique collection of books focusing on women's writing in English from 1600 to 1830. This specialist collection is set in the home and working estate of Jane Austen's brother.

Chawton House Library is open for tours throughout the year, and you can book in advance to visit on any weekday. The standard tour lasts approximately one-and-a-half hours and gives a comprehensive history of the house, its restoration and the significance of the collection. You will see all the public rooms and be able to read some of the books on display in the Reading Rooms. Afterwards you are welcome to take time to explore the gardens on your own. To book a tour, please contact the Library on 01420 541010 or email: info@chawton.net

There are also weekly tours on Thursdays at 2.30pm if you would rather just turn up on the day.

Thursday, 9 August - Chawton House Open day - the house, gardens and estate are open to the public from 10.30 - 5.00. Admission: adults £6.00, children free.



If you would like to receive details of Maskers productions you can leave your details on our website: www.maskers.org.uk or fill in the slip below and hand it to any of our Front of House stewards, or post to: **Maskers Theatre, Unit 1, Emsworth Industrial Units, Emsworth Road, Shirley, Southampton SO15 3LX.**

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Email



We look forward to hearing from you

