

Southport Dramatic Club



# Emma



A play by Gordon Glennon  
from the novel by Jane Austen  
Directed by Margaret Mann

24th February - 3rd March 2012  
7.45pm



Box Office Tel: (01704) 530521/530460  
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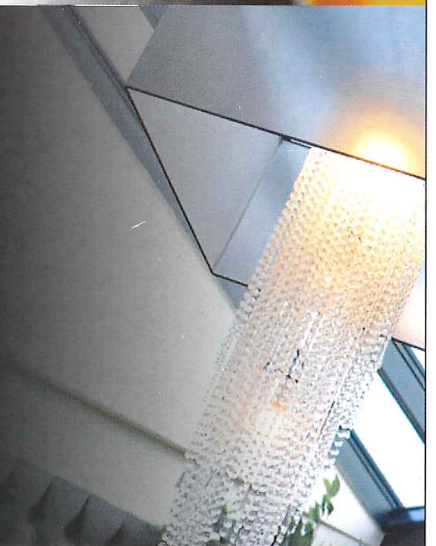
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# Director's notes

Directing any play is a challenge, but when it is one adapted from the pen of a well-known and admired novelist, one feels an even greater obligation to keep to the author's intentions as much as possible in every aspect. We have endeavoured to stay true to the style, manners, language and the whole ambience of the culture and period of Jane Austen.

In acting, dressing and staging, the talented cast, prompt, back stage crew, lighting, sound and wardrobe departments have worked co-operatively, enthusiastically and with great dedication. Thank you to the whole team for such a



Margaret Mann  
Director

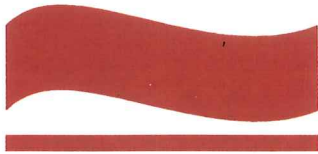
Jane Austen's books was *Mansfield Park*, which I directed in 1999. It was a very happy and worthwhile experience which some of our patrons remember with affection, as do the cast.

It only remains for me to thank you, our patrons, for your support. I hope you will enjoy being transported to the more elegant, relaxed, yet ordered, lifestyle of the early nineteenth century.

Margaret Mann  
Director

delightful production. I think the period of the play is a very interesting one, which we do not often explore. Our last adaptation from one of





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# Jane Austen

Jane Austen is considered to be one of the greatest English women novelists. She was born in 1775 in the rectory at Steventon, Hampshire and was the seventh of eight children of a Church of England clergyman, the Reverend George Austen.

In 1785 Jane and her older sister and confidante Cassandra, were sent to boarding school. However a year later the girls were back at home as the Austen family could not afford the fees. So, apart from this brief period at boarding school, Jane spent the first 25 years of her life at Steventon. Here she was carefully educated in literature, music and languages. Jane had a love of reading and this was encouraged by her father. From a young age she had read Sir Walter Scott and the poet George Crabbe. Jane spent long periods in a number of different homes throughout the Home Counties, at friends of the family, as part of her education.

If she was separated from her sister Cassandra, who she was close to, she would write to her twice a week. Her letters begin in 1796 when she was 20. At home, the popularity of



*A watercolour and pencil sketch of Jane, believed to have been drawn from life by her sister Cassandra (c. 1810)*

the Austen family ensured their attendance at balls, parties and entertainments arranged by local aristocrats and 'landed gentry.' The author did have several admirers, but never married. Although in 1802 she accepted a proposal of marriage from Harris Bigg-Wither who was heir to large family estates, but Jane changed her mind the following morning and declined the offer.

The family moved to Bath in 1801 when her father retired. When he died in 1806 they went to Southampton and in 1809 back to Hampshire (Chawton). Jane started

writing as a teenager, but she did not have any work published until *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811. In 1813, *Pride and Prejudice* followed. This is Jane Austen's most-loved novel and contains the author's favourite character, Elizabeth Bennet. A year later *Mansfield Park* was published. *Emma* was first printed in 1816. It is the author's longest book, although it took her only a year to finish. Like all Austen books, *Emma* is about finding a husband. Modern readers still enjoy Austen's descriptions of social class and customs and her look at relationships.

Although her novels were published anonymously, Jane was known to be the author. She was officially requested to dedicate *Emma* to the Prince Regent – much against her wishes. The Prince Regent had a set of her books in his residences.

Jane did not live to see all of her books published and recognition of her work was slow. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were both published posthumously in 1818. In 1817, Jane Austen died in Winchester of Addison's disease at the age of 42. She was buried in the cathedral.

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## Gordon Glennon

Gordon Glennon adapted Jane Austen's novel *Emma* for the stage in 1944. It had a Pre-West End Tour the same year and visited Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre. The play was produced by Robert Donat and starred stage and film actress Anna Neagle. Gordon Glennon's *Emma* debuted in London's West End at the St James theatre in 1945 on February 7, Neagle again appeared in the production.



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# Memories

The last adaptation of a Jane Austen novel performed by the Southport Dramatic Club was *Mansfield Park* in 1999, which was also directed by Margaret Mann. Some of the cast who appeared in that production also appear in *Emma*. They are: Simon Armstrong, Ceri Watkins, Ray Mann and Trudi Hirsch. Margaret's husband, Ray, is the only person in *Emma* who was in the original SDC production in 1969 and also in *Mansfield Park* in 1999. Below some of the cast of *Mansfield Park* recall their memories from the 1999 production.

We had twenty-eight people in the cast, whereas in *Emma* we have only twelve. However twelve is still a large cast for a current play. Rehearsals were fun and hard work and the friendships formed in *Mansfield* are still ongoing in *Emma*. Well-known names such as Unsworth, Hirsch, Watkins, Forshaw, Gorse, Mann and Beardsell are still appearing in SDC programmes and it is fitting that these long standing members are an important part of the SDC in this, its 75th year. **Margaret M. Mann**

A lasting memory we have is of the *Mansfield Park* 'Love Triangle.' Austen's relationships are often complicated and this was no exception. I was playing Tom Bertram, brother to Maria (played by Belinda, before we were married) who was to marry Mr Rushworth (played by Matthew Woodhams, Belinda's brother)!

Possibly our favourite memory is of the fabulous ballroom scene. Rehearsals were fun and despite Margaret's outstanding directorship it did take a while for some of us (no names) to master the steps.

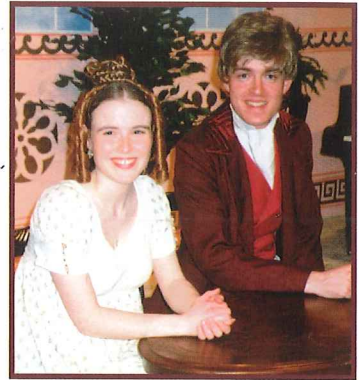
What is unbelievable about our time rehearsing and performing with such a great group of actors and crew is that it was 13 years ago. (I do hope that those breeches are still going to fit.) **Simon and Belinda Armstrong**

I was delighted to be given the part of Fanny Price (my first leading role) in *Mansfield Park* by 'Aunty' Margaret.

Then, as now in *Emma*, so much time and effort was put into making sure every detail was 'just so' from the beautifully dressed set to the costumes, the music and the dancing. I still laugh over my wig though. At the time, my hair was very short, so there was no way I could get away with my modern style for Fanny. I was given a two piece construction, which had to be expertly pinned in place every night and then



*Belinda and Simon Armstrong*



*Ceri Watkins and Peter Forshaw*

sprayed to within an inch of its life. I always describe it thus: "A pork pie on the top of my head with three sausages either side." The things I do for my art! **Ceri Watkins**

An all abiding memory of playing the demanding and self-indulgent Lady Bertram in Margaret's production of *Mansfield Park* is lying prostrate on a Chaise longue for the majority of the play with my daughter, Trudi, playing my maid, having to do my every bidding!

During one performance, when I had imperiously ordered her to, "plump up my cushion," she smilingly whispered under her breath to me from behind the Chaise longue... "just don't get too used to this, mother!" with an over-zealous wallop of the cushion in question! Needless to say, I haven't!

**Robin Hirsch**

**Guy Unsworth, Peter Forshaw, Laura Gorse and Charles Preston** also have fond recollections of the roles they played.

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# *Synopsis of Scenes*

The action takes place in  
the drawing room at Hartfield,  
the Woodhouse residence,  
in Highbury, a village near London.

The time - early nineteenth century

## *Act 1*

- Scene 1     An afternoon in late January  
Scene 2     A morning in Spring

## *Act 2*

- Scene 1     Early Summer, the evening of  
              the ball  
Scene 2     The morning after the ball  
Scene 3     Early afternoon in Summer

There will be an interval of 20 minutes  
between the two Acts.

We recommend that you beat the rush  
and pre-order your drinks in the bar prior  
to the performance.



**Emma Woodhouse**  
*Catherine Leight*



**Mr. Woodhouse**  
(Emma's Father)  
*David Davies*



**Mr. Knightley**  
*Simon Armstrong*



**Harriet Smith**  
(Emma's companion)  
*Ceri Watkins*

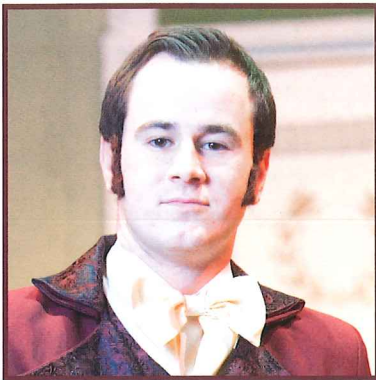


**Mrs. Weston** (Emma's former  
governess and friend)  
*Helen Pickavance*



**Mr. Weston**  
*Ray Mann*

*Cast*



**Frank Churchill** (Mr. Weston's adult son by an earlier marriage, adopted by his aunt whose name he has assumed)  
*Philip Hunter*



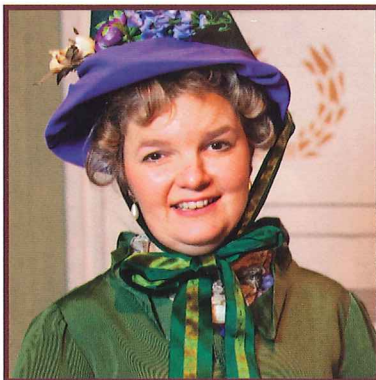
**Jane Fairfax**  
*Kate Hargreaves*



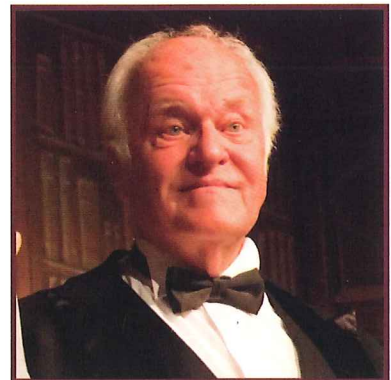
**Miss Bates**  
(Jane's aunt)  
*Tracey Batchelor*



**Mr. Elton**  
(the new Vicar at Highbury)  
*Leslie Cheesman*



**Mrs. Elton**  
*Trudi Hirsch*



**Serle**  
(Butler and old family retainer)  
*David Charters*



# Staging

Stage Manager .....	Christian Barisio
Assistant Stage Manager (Prompt) .....	Sherel Coley
Properties .....	Julie Whelan & Gay Stowell
Wardrobe .....	Excell Costumes & SDC Wardrobe
Lighting Design .....	Syd Coley & Adrian Roberts
Sound Design .....	Brian Hodge
Set Construction .....	SDC Construction Team
Scenic Artist .....	Bob Jessamine
Photographs .....	Fletcherhill Photography
Programme Editor .....	Jacquie Bolshaw
Programme Content & Research .....	Henry James & Margaret Mann
Programme Layout and Design .....	Mitchell & Wright (Printers) Ltd

## Acknowledgements

The Director - **Margaret Mann**, would like to thank:

Josephine Yates for supplying and creating the beautiful flower arrangements which decorate the stage throughout the play; Brian Hodge for designing and making the piano, modelled on the one in the drawing-room of the Jane Austen Museum, Chawton. The original was made by Muzio Clementi in 1810; David Ballinger and David Charters, for their painting of the furniture; Tracey Batchelor for her generous support and advice for the Dance in Act 2.

## Music in this production

*Sheep may safely graze* - Bach

*Robin Adair (vocal)* - Traditional

*The Four Seasons - Spring, 1st movement* - Vivaldi

*Piano concerto in D minor, 2nd movement* - Mozart

*La Sauteuse (dance)* - Traditional

*The Water Music (hornpipe)* - Handel

## The Little Theatre - Home of the Southport Dramatic Club.

The SDC wishes to ensure that all our patrons enjoy a comfortable, enjoyable and safe visit to our theatre. We should be grateful for your co-operation in helping us to achieve this. Please note the following:

- Should you arrive after the performance has started, you will be guided to your seats when a suitable opportunity occurs.
- At the end of the performance, exits will be open at both the front and back of the auditorium.
- First Aid assistance is regularly provided by volunteers from the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Should you require help, please advise our stewards on duty in the Foyer.
- Patrons with hearing impairments should note that the auditorium has an Induction Loop System for your assistance. Hearing wands are also available from our stewards.

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# Cathy Milner

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The poster features the text 'Opera Viva presents Verdi's La Traviata' in a white, elegant script font. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with a blurred image of what appears to be a stage or a building. On the left side, there are decorative elements including stylized flowers in shades of orange, red, and yellow, and a green circular motif.

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Friday, 27th April - Westbourne Hall, Wirral

all at 7.30pm

Saturday, 28th April - The Opera Supper, St. Mary's College, Crosby  
at 7.00pm

For tickets or further information ring 0151 920 5386

# Social climate in Austen's time

Jane Austen wrote her novels during the reign of George III, who was the King of England from 1760 to 1820. This was the time of the start of the Industrial Revolution and the beginning of the British Empire.

Therefore through Austen's work, which looks at a number of issues such as marriage, the social hierarchies of the time, the working of the clergy and gender roles, the reader gains an insight into what it might have been like to live during that period. She looks at England from the perspective of a woman from the level of the English gentry, a woman who comes from a family who are reasonably well-off, socially-connected and educated. Austen lived during

a time when society was planned by men for men. A woman would find it difficult to become financially independent through her work. She would normally only gain this through marriage. Marriage would also bring social status. These issues are explored throughout Jane Austen's work.

Austen, who was unmarried, was attempting to have her own living through her work. Most of the women characters in her books are in similar situations to Jane. The majority are involved in domestic activities, and some are teachers or governesses. Jane Fairfax in *Emma* is an example of this point. She is intelligent and well-educated; her future

prospects could see her land the post of governess. In her books the author often looks at single women who are insecure socially. An example of this is Miss Bates in *Emma*, who is unattractive, poor, of middle-age and faces a future as a spinster. In the book *Mr Knightley* talks of her and says: "She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to, and if she lives to old age, must probably sink more."

Patrons may pick up and reflect on these issues tonight, and more besides, while watching the Southport Dramatic Club's adaptation of *Emma*.

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## Brain Teaser

1. How many brothers and sisters did Jane Austen have?
2. How many of her brothers studied at Oxford?
3. How many of her brothers served in the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars?
4. In what year did Jane Austen die and how old was she then?
5. In what year was *Emma* published?

answers on page 18









Stephen Hughes-Alty  
Director

**NOW IN REHEARSAL**

# Our Day Out

20th - 24th March 2012

By Willy Russell

Willy Russell's riotous play looks at what happens when mild-mannered teacher, Mrs Kay, takes her challenging class of Liverpuddlian pupils on a day trip to Wales. Joined by the dictatorial Mr Briggs, feathers literally fly when the children run amok in the zoo. Although highly comical, this is Russell at his best, and is also a biting social commentary about the future of our most deprived young people. Although written in the 1970s, much of what he wrote is still, sadly, relevant today.

Director, Stephen Hughes-Alty, has once again gathered a talented and enthusiastic bunch of young actors who are enjoying getting to grips with the humorous script, cutting political message and outrageous characters. Join them on their 'day out' but be ready for the trip of your life!



Hilary Thomson  
Director

**NOW IN REHEARSAL**

# Proscenophobia (Stage Fright)

A Thriller by Bettine Manktelow

Directed by Hilary Thomson

This clever 'who-dunnit' is now in rehearsal.

The action takes place in the dressing room of a provincial theatre, during the performance of a thriller. What takes place involves everyone becoming a potential suspect, as tension builds a final revelation is unveiled. Although a mystery thriller this play is not without its witty and extremely funny moments.

Performances are from April 13<sup>th</sup> to April 21<sup>st</sup> 2012.

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<p><b>Too Friendly Theatre Company Production</b></p> <p>8th - 10th March 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Absurd Person Singular</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">By Alan Ayckbourn</p> <p>Box Office Opens: 1st March 2012</p> <p>Advance bookings 01704 227245</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><small>SDC Studio Production</small></p> <p>5th - 9th June 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SDC's Bar/Studio Production</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TWO</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A multifaceted drama By Jim Cartwright Directed by Robin Hirsch</p>  <p>Box Office Opens: 28th May 2012 at 11.00am</p>
<p><small>SDC Youth Theatre Production</small></p> <p>20th - 24th March 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Our Day Out</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A play by Willy Russell Directed by Stephen Hughes-Alty</p>  <p>Box Office Opens: 12th March 2012 at 11.00am</p>	<p><b>Maghull Musical Theatre Company Production</b></p> <p>13th - 16th June 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Jekyll &amp; Hyde</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse Music by Frank Wildhorn By arrangement with Josef Weinburger Ltd</p> <p>Box Office Opens: 6th June 2012</p> <p>Advance bookings 01695 632372</p>
<p><small>SDC Production</small></p> <p>13th - 21st April 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Proscenophobia (Stage Fright)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A "who-dunnit" thriller by Bettine Manktelow Directed by Hilary Thomson Sponsored by Master Lock &amp; Safe</p>  <p>Box Office Opens: 6th April 2012 at 11.00am</p>	<p><b>Old Hall Brass Production</b></p> <p>17th June 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>An Evening of Music with Old Hall Brass</b></p> <p>Advanced bookings 01942 715684</p>
<p><small>SDC Production</small></p> <p>4th - 12th May 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Dangers of Tobacco</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A comedy written and directed by Alistair Hewitt Sponsored by Mitchell &amp; Wright Printers Ltd</p>  <p>Box Office Opens: 27th April 2012 at 11.00am</p>	<p><b>Loreto Bamber Dance Academy Production</b></p> <p>22nd - 23rd June 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dance Summer Show</b></p> <p>Box Office Opens: 21st June 2012</p> <p>Advance bookings 01704 538351</p>
<p><b>Birkdale Orpheus Society Production</b></p> <p>26th May - 2 June 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Sound of Music</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Music by Richard Rodgers Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II By arrangement with Josef Weinburger Ltd</p> <p>Box Office Opens: 19th May 2012</p> <p>Advance bookings 01704 564042</p>	<p><b>Southport Spotlight Musical Theatre Society Production (Formerly S.A.O.S.)</b></p> <p>30th June - 7th July 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Producers</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan Music and Lyrics by Mel Brooks by arrangement with Josef Weinburger Ltd</p> <p>Box Office Opens: 25th June 2012</p> <p>Advance bookings 01704 228936</p>



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# Southport Dramatic Club



Youth Theatre Production

Willy Russell's

# OUR DAY OUT



directed by  
Stephen Hughes-Alty

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Southport Dramatic Club



# Proscenophobia (Stage Fright)

A backstage who-dunnit thriller

by Bettine Manktelow  
directed by Hilary Thomson

**13th - 21st April 2012**  
**7.45pm**



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