

AQUILA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS: *Pride and Prejudice*



Saturday, November 5th | 7:30 p.m.

**Stephen B. Humphrey Theater,
Saint John's University**

Pride and Prejudice was first published anonymously in 1813 and quickly became a classic of English literature. Written by Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* centers on the Bennets, an aristocratic family of modest means with five daughters and no male heir. The Bennet family faces the challenge of not being able to pass down the family estate to a female heiress. A story of marriages, the play examines the hypocrisies and absurdities of the class system and puts the thoughts and feelings of the female characters front and center.

CONNECT

ACADEMIC AREAS AND LEARNING GOALS THIS PERFORMANCE ENGAGES WITH:

- Theater
- History
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Psychology & Anthropology
- English Literature
- Live Courageously
- Think Deeply

ONLINE RESOURCES

<https://www.aquilatheatre.com/>

<https://www.csbsju.edu/fine-arts/performances/aquila-theatre-company>

<https://vimeo.com/750405337>

ENGAGE

Aquila Theatre's mission is to create innovative interpretations of the classics for today's audiences. By diversifying the classics and expanding the canon, Aquila seeks to enhance the plurality of our perspectives.

- Have you ever read or watched *Pride and Prejudice*?
- If so, in what ways was this performance different from what you would have expected?
- If not, were there things about the performance that stood out to you as innovative or unconventional?

Director Desiree Sanchez notes that at the time *Pride and Prejudice* was written "it's easy to feel like people of color didn't exist when of course they did. They were very prevalent in art and literature but were erased or the pieces involving them didn't get passed down." Aquila cast multiracial actors for this production – did this decision differ from your expectations or change your experience of the production?

- The novel was written during a period of great historical, social and economic transition – how do you see those changes reflected in the script?

Aquila Theatre's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* uses 'devised theatre,' which simply put is collaborative theatre. In devised theatre, you start with the cast members and other artists involved in the performance, and together they build the script.

- How do you think this changes the way the play is shaped?
- How were the relationships between the Bennet siblings portrayed?
- How were the roles of the female actors changed compared to other renditions of *Pride and Prejudice* you have seen or other plays/film and TV adaptions you have seen?

Pride and Prejudice was written when the first inklings of feminist philosophy were emerging in Europe. The Women's Petition to the National Assembly was written during the French Revolution and presented to the French National Assembly in November 1789, proposing equal rights for French women. Mary Wollstonecraft published her proto-feminist text "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects" in 1792.

- In what ways can *Pride and Prejudice* be considered a feminist text?
- How does Austen use the theme of marriage to explore the choices available to women? How many marriages does the work examine?
- Who are female role models that you look up to today?