

Audition Information for *Sense and Sensibility*

Sense and Sensibility by Kate Hamill, based on the novel by Jane Austen

Directed by Emily Olson for Playhouse 2000 (emily@playhouse2000.com)

From Concord Theatricals: “Kate Hamill's playful new adaptation of Jane Austen’s beloved novel follows the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the Dashwood sisters – sensible Elinor and hypersensitive Marianne – after their father’s sudden death leaves them financially destitute and socially vulnerable. Set in gossipy late 18th-century England with a fresh female voice, the play is full of humor, emotional depth and bold theatricality. *Sense and Sensibility* examines our reactions, both reasonable and ridiculous, to societal pressures. When reputation is everything, how do you follow your heart?”

Auditions

Monday, March 16 from 6:30 – 8:30 PM AND Tuesday, March 17 from 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Auditions will be held in the Playhouse 2000 Studio Annex (located behind the Cailloux Theater at 910 Main St.—they share a parking lot).

Auditionees are only required to attend one of the two dates, but may attend both if they wish. If you are interested in auditioning but cannot attend either of these auditions, please reach out to the director no later than Monday, March 16 to make alternative arrangements.

If needed, a callback audition will be held on Wednesday, March 18. If held, this callback will be by invitation only.

Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsals for this production will take place on weekday evenings from Monday, March 23 through Thursday, April 30. There will be one Sunday afternoon/evening rehearsal on Sunday, April 26.

Performances are on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons for three weekends from May 1st through May 17th.

Please see the rehearsal calendar with the audition form for more details.

About Our Production

We are seeking a diverse and collaborative ensemble of between 10-15 actors. The roles of Elinor and Marianne will not be double cast, but all other actors will play multiple roles.

The play is set in England during the “Regency-era” in the late 1790s. All characters will speak in a British dialect (RP). Actors should attempt the dialect at their audition.

This play is a highly theatrical literary adaptation that relies heavily on high-energy movement and physical comedy. It is a clever blend of a traditional period romantic comedy and contemporary performance techniques and theatricality. We need actors with physical comedy skills who are willing to be experimental and playful on stage. Actors who have strong skills or an affinity for, ‘period’ physicality are also desired. Musicality and movement skills are a plus, but it is not required.

In general, we are only seeking actors ages 16+, with one possible exception for the role of Margaret (young woman, age 12+). See note* in the character description below.

How to Prepare

Auditions will consist primarily of reading sides from the script. Audition sides are available here, or printed copies are available at the Playhouse 2000 office at 305 Washington Street. We do NOT require or expect the sides to be memorized.

To prepare to audition, there are full copies of the script available to check out from the Playhouse 2000 office (limit 2 days) to read prior to the audition.

If you are unfamiliar with the works of Jane Austen, the style and story can feel a bit intimidating so we recommend that you take some time to familiarize yourself with it by reading one of her novels (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, etc.) and/or watching one of the many film adaptations of her work. (The 1995 film version of *Sense and Sensibility* written by and starring Emma Thomspson is excellent, however if you prefer not to watch an adaptation of this particular story, an adaptation of one of Jane Austen’s other novels would still give you a good sense of the world of the play.)

Characters

Note: All characters are open to actors of any ethnicity. Ages and genders indicated are those of the character, not necessarily the actor portraying them.

ELINOR DASHWOOD (Female, 21-23 years old) – The eldest Dashwood sister. She is intelligent, sensible, practical, loyal, kind, and, above all, reserved and self-contained. Her head rules her heart. She is the “sense” of the title. (includes a stage kiss) Loves drawing.

MARIANNE DASHWOOD (Female, 18-21 years old) – The middle Dashwood sister. She is emotional, romantic, effusive, and sensitive. She is intelligent and attracted to all aspects of the arts and literature: she reads the Romantic poets, loves Shakespeare, and plays the piano. Her emotions rule her entire being. She is the “sensibility” of the title.

MARGARET DASHWOOD* (Female, about 13 years old) – The youngest Dashwood sister. Energetic, affectionate, honest, and curious. She is a bit like Marianne in her romantic notions, but is still finding her footing and personality. She is a very likeable girl.

MRS. DASHWOOD: (Female, late 40s or early 50s) – Mother to the Dashwood sisters. A proud but kind and motherly woman, if a little over-indulgent at times. Ultimately wants what is best for her daughters.

JOHN DASHWOOD (Male, 30s) – Half-brother to the Dashwood sisters (from their father’s side; no blood relation to Mrs. Dashwood). Well-meaning but has no backbone and is easily persuaded, especially by his wife.

EDWARD FERRARS (Male, mid-20s) – A gentleman; a bachelor. Sweet, but shy, bumbling, and a little awkward. He is loyal and honorable and strives to do what is right. (includes a stage kiss)

FANNY (FERRARS) DASHWOOD (Female, 30s) – Wife to John Dashwood and sister to Edward. Nasty. Cold, selfish, and inconsiderate.

COLONEL BRANDON (Male, about 35 years old) – An older gentleman bachelor (retired military officer) and friend/neighbor of Sir John. He is quiet, dependable, caring, and honorable. He comes off as a bit of a stoic, but has a passionate heart underneath.

JOHN WILLOUGHBY: (Male, mid to late 20s) – An unusually charming and handsome young man; a dashing Romantic hero... or is he?

SIR JOHN MIDDLETON: (Male, 40s) – A country gentleman; distant relation to Mrs. Dashwood. Loud (in both volume and personality), brash, friendly, and fun-loving; husband to Lady Middleton and son-in-law to Mrs. Jennings.

MRS. JENNINGS: (Female, 50s – 60s) – A good-natured, boisterous woman; mother in-law to Sir John and a terror to the countryside. She is a robust, cheery, and boisterous busybody who is constantly occupied with the social obligations of her class.

LADY MIDDLETON (Female, 40s) – An over-bred lady. Wife to Sir John and daughter of Mrs. Jennings.

LUCY STEELE (Female, early 20s) – A young woman of no fortune. Beneath her sweet and overly polite facade she is willful, calculating, and manipulative.

ANNE STEELE (Female, 20s) - Lucy's sister; indiscreet and unobservant. Silly and tactless.

ROBERT FERRARS (Male, early to mid-20s) – A callow and shallow young man; Edward and Fanny's youngest brother.

SERVANTS, including **THOMAS**

DOCTOR

THE GOSSIPS (#1– #5) – A group of actors who represent British high society in the world of the play (like a Regency-era Greek Chorus). They are on stage for much of the play commenting on the action, eavesdropping on scenes, moving the plot forward, changing the sets/scenery, and interacting directly with other characters at various times in the play. Each Gossip is multi-cast with other roles while still having the opportunity to develop a unique characterization and identity for their individual “Gossip.”

** We welcome interested young actors (age 12+) to audition for the role of Margaret; however, it is possible the role will be filled by an adult actor. If the role is filled by a young actor (under 16), they would likely not double with any other roles.*