## **2018 JEWELL MAINSTAGE PLAY GUIDE**



SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE 2019 JEWELL MAINSTAGE SEASON ARE NOW AVAILABLE PROFESSIONAL THEATRE IN A NEIGHBORHOOD SETTING



# WELCOME

Merry Christmas from Mr. and Mrs. Darcy of Pemberley Estate!

In this witty sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*, bookish middle-sister Mary pounds her pianoforte alone until a curious visitor drops hints of being her intellectual match. Seizing the opportunity to be the heroine of her own story, Mary pursues her equal. This funny, smart and romantic comedy makes for a most stylish holiday outing.

The sophisticated and charming world of Jane Austen has captivated readers for 200 years. Filled with soaring romances and the most elegant of miscommunications, Austen's stories beautifully describe the highs and lows of love.

The story of the Bennet sisters, as told in Austen's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice*, is perhaps her best known and most beloved work. In creating this play, modern playwrights Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon attempt to continue the story. They imagine a Christmas with the Bennet sisters at, estate at Pemberley.

Is there a classic story you'd like to expand upon or tell in a new way? What would you create if given the chance?

#### We'd love to hear from you!

Tag us on any of the social media platforms listed below.

## EVERYONE'S A CRITIC ... starting with YOU!

#### What did you think?

Post, tweet, update, review... Let us and your friends know if you liked the show!









Search "Taproot Theatre" to find us on your favorite social media websites.

Be sure to tag us when you post about us!



Professional theatre in a neighborhood setting

TAPROOTTHEATRE.ORG

#### See behind the curtain!

See what inspires and delights us behind the scenes here at Taproot Theatre.











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A Play Guide published by Taproot Theatre Company

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Play Guides are produced by the Marketing Department at Taproot Theatre Company.

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## Lauren Gunderson



Lauren Gunderson

Lauren M. Gunderson was the most produced playwright in America of 2017, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award, the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and the Otis Guernsey New Voices Award, she is also 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 Company.

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 South Cost Rep (*Emilie*, *Silent Sky*), The Kennedy Center (*The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful And Her Dog!*), Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The O'Neill, The Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more.

She co-authored *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon, which was one of the most produced plays in America in 2017. Her work is published at Playscripts (*I and You, Exit Pursued By A Bear, The Taming* and *Toil And Trouble*), Dramatists (*The Revolutionists, The Book of Will, Silent Sky, Bauer, Miss Bennet*) and Samuel French (*Emilie*). Her picture book *Dr Wonderful: Blast Off to the Moon* was released from Two Lions / Amazon in May 2017. LaurenGunderson.com and @LalaTellsAStory

**Margot Melcon** is the Zellerbach Family Foundation Program Executive for Promoting Culture. Overseeing ZFF's arts programming, including Community Arts, Youth Development through the Arts, Major Community Institutions, and other grants.

Margot comes to ZFF from the Marin Theatre Company, where she spent seven years as an artist and administrator. As Director of New Play Development, Margot dramaturged main stage productions — including six world premieres — and administered the company's two annual new play prizes. She produced the New Play Reading Series and managed Marin Theatre Company's commissioning program, developing new plays from Steve Yockey, Carson Kreitzer, Amelia Roper, Thomas Bradshaw and Martyna Majok.

Margot has also worked with the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco and has been an active participant in developing new plays locally with the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Crowded Fire Theater, Shotgun Players and Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor; and nationally with the Kennedy Center, the New Harmony Project, and The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. She has served on peer review panels and selection committees for arts organizations across the country. Margot has served as a fellow at the National Critics Institute at the O'Neill Playwrights Festival and a freelance writer for American Theatre Magazine. Margot is a graduate of California State University, Chico.



Margot Melcon

### **Jane Austen**

Jane Austen (1775—1817), one of England's foremost novelists, was never publicly acknowledged as a writer during her lifetime. She was born on December 16, 1775, at Steventon Rectory in Hampshire, the seventh child of a country clergyman and his wife, George and Cassandra Austen. She was primarily educated at home, benefiting from her father's extensive library and the schoolroom atmosphere created by Mr. Austen's live-in pupils. Her closest friend was her only sister, Cassandra, almost three years her senior.

Though Austen lived a quiet life, she had unusual access to the greater world, primarily through her brothers. Francis (Frank) and Charles, officers in the Royal Navy, served on ships around the world and saw action in the Napoleonic Wars. Henry, who eventually became a clergyman like his father and her brother James, was an officer in the militia and later a banker. Austen visited Henry in London, where she attended the theater, art exhibitions, and social events and also corrected proofs of her novels. Her brother Edward was adopted by wealthy cousins, the Knights, becoming their heir and later taking their name. On extended visits to Godmersham, Edward's estate in Kent, Austen and her sister took part in the privileged life of the landed gentry, which is reflected in all her fiction.

As a child Austen began writing comic stories, now referred to as the *Juvenilia*. Her first mature work, composed when she was about 19, was a novella, *Lady Susan*, written in epistolary form (as a series of letters). This early fiction was preserved by her family but was not published until long after her death.



Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley
is based on the characters in
Jane Austen's (in portrait above)
classic novel Pride and Prejudice.

In her early twenties Austen wrote the novels that later became *Sense and Sensibility* (first called "*Elinor and Marianne*") and *Pride and Prejudice* (originally "*First Impressions*"). Her father sent a letter offering the manuscript of "*First Impressions*" to a publisher soon after it was finished in 1797, but his offer was rejected by return post. Austen continued writing, revising "*Elinor and Marianne*" and completing a novel called "*Susan*" (later to become *Northanger Abbey*). In 1803 Austen sold "*Susan*" for £10 to a publisher, who promised early publication, but the manuscript languished in his archives until it was repurchased a year before Austen's death for the price the publisher had paid her.

When Austen was 25 years old her father retired and she and Cassandra moved with their parents to Bath, residing first at 4 Sydney Place. During the five years she lived in Bath (1801-1806), Austen began one novel, *The Watsons*, which she never completed. After Mr. Austen's death, Austen's brothers contributed funds to assist their sisters and widowed mother. Mrs. Austen and her daughters set up housekeeping with their close friend Martha Lloyd. Together they moved to Southampton in 1806 and economized by sharing a house with Frank and his family.

In 1809 Edward provided the women a comfortable cottage in the village of Chawton, near his Hampshire manor house. This was the beginning of Austen's most productive period. In 1811, at the age of 35, Austen published *Sense and Sensibility*, which identified the author as "a Lady." *Pride and Prejudice* followed in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, and *Emma* in 1815. The title page of each book referred to one or two of

### Jane Austen



Shanna Allman plays Mary Bennet in Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley at Taproot Theatre. Photo by John Ulman.

Austen's earlier novels—capitalizing on her growing reputation—but did not provide her name.

Austen began writing the novel that would be called Persuasion in 1815 and finished it the following year, by which time, however, her health was beginning to fail. The probable cause of her illness was Addison's Disease.

In 1816 Henry Austen repurchased the rights to "Susan," which Austen revised and renamed "Catherine."

During a brief period of strength early in 1817, Austen began the fragment later called Sanditon, but by March she was too ill to work. On April 27 she wrote her will, naming Cassandra as her heir. In May she and Cassandra moved to 8 College Street in Winchester to be near her doctor. Austen died in the early hours of July 18, 1817, and a few days later was buried in Winchester Cathedral. She was 41 years old. Interestingly, Austen's gravestone, which is visited by hundreds of admirers each year, does not even mention that she was an author.



"IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, THAT A SINGLE MAN IN POSSESSION OF A GOOD FORTUNE MUST BE IN WANT OF A WIFE."





ELIZABETH BENNET A SHARP AND SELF-POSSESSED YOUNG WOMAN



BENNET BEAUTIFUL OLDER SISTER



THEIR MOTHER, EAGER TO MARRYOFF HER DAUGHTERS TO WEALTHY MEN



HER WRY HUSBAND



BINGLEY AFFABLE ARISTOCRAT. COURTS



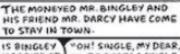
DARCY DASHING BUT ARROGANT ARISTOCRAT



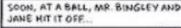
COLLINS MR. BENNET'S COUSIN AND HEIR

https://laughingsquid.com/clever-cartoon-captures-the-very-essence-of-jane-austens-classic-novel-pride-and-prejudice/

## **Pride and Prejudice**









WHILE MR. DARCY SAYS OF



JANE VISITS BINGLEY'S AND DARCY'S MANSION, AND CONVENIENT. LY MANAGES TO FALL ILL.



ELIZABETH COMES TO SEE HER SISTER, AND CONVERSES WITH DARCY WHILE THERE.



THE SISTERS RETURN HOME, AND ARE SOON PAID A VISIT BY MR. BENNET'S OBNOXIOUS COUSIN, MR. COLLINS.



HE CHOOSES ELIZABETH - A SAD IDEA.



OFFICER TELLS ELIZABETH THAT MR. DARCY CHEATED HIM OUT OF MONEY HE WAS PROMISED.



THEN, SHOCKING NEWS: BINGLEY AND DARCY HAVE RETURNED TO LONDON.



MR. COLLING PROPOSES TO ELIZA-BETH'S FRIEND CHARLOTTE. ELIZABETH CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WOULD WED SUCH A POMPOUS NITWIT.



ONE DAY, WHILE ELIZABETH IS VISITING CHARLOTTE AT HER NEW HOME, MR. DARCY SHOWS UP.



ELIZABETH DELIVERS A REFUSAL FOR THE AGES



DARCY LEAVES AND SENDS A LETTER TO ELIZABETH TRYING TO CLEAR UP HER MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HIM



PATHER SUDDENLY, ELIZABETH AND JANE'S YOUNGER SISTER LYPIA RUNS AWAY WITH THE SKEEVY OFFICER,



SOMEONE PAYS OFF THE SOLDIER TO MARRY LYDIA AND ENDTHE CRISIS. ELIZABETH LEARNS IT WAS DARCY



**ELIZABETH RECEIVES A MYSTERIOUS** VISIT FROM DARCY'S SHOOTY AUNT



EMBOLDENED, DARCY PROPOSES TO ELIZABETH AGAIN.

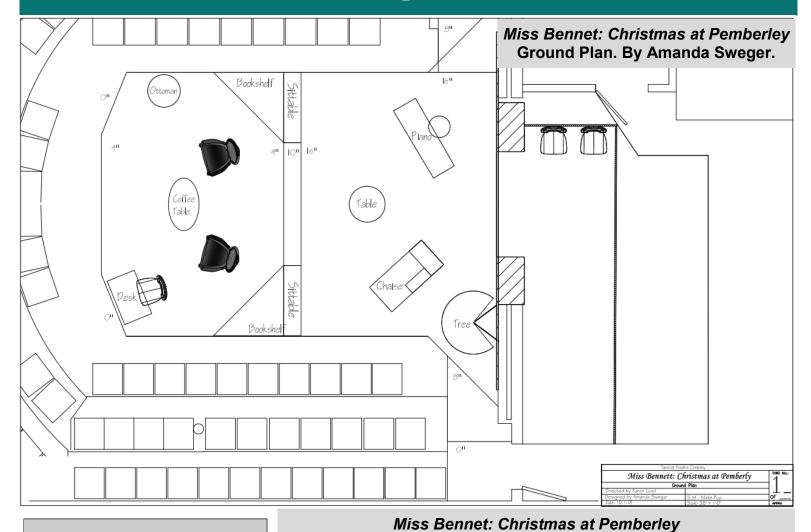


MR. BINGLEY.

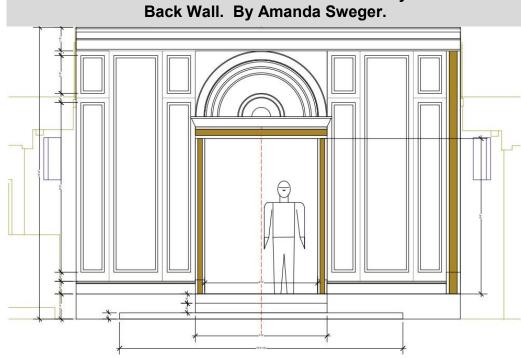




## Setting/Place



In a novel or a short story the setting is usually established by the author's description indicating time and place. At most theatrical productions the program will briefly list the setting and time period of the play, but after that it's up to the set designer to create a visual representation of the location that the story is set. A good set designer will create a set that gives the audience clues about the story even before the actors come on stage.



## Costumes



In a play, the costume designer is responsible for creating the first impression of a character. As soon as an actor walks out on stage you can guess something about their character.

What does this costume research tell you about the characters in the play?

- Are they old or young?
- Are they rich or poor?
- Are they from another time period or dressed in modern clothes?

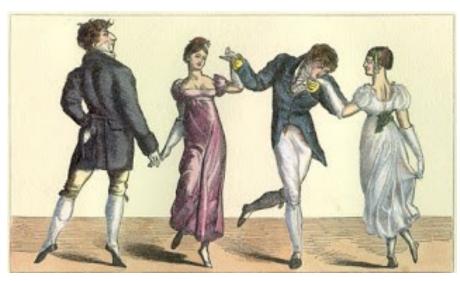


Costume Design by Pete Rush

## Regency Period

The Regency Period in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was a period when King George III was deemed unfit to rule and his son ruled as his proxy as Prince Regent. On the death of George III in 1820, the Prince Regent became George IV.

The term Regency can refer to various stretches of time; some are longer than the decade of the formal Regency which lasted from 1811–1820. The period from 1795 to 1837, which includes the latter part of the reign of George III and the reigns of his sons George IV and William IV, is sometimes regarded as the Regency era, characterized by distinctive trends in British



The First Quadrille at Almack's from
The Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow (1850)

architecture, literature, fashions, politics, and culture. It ended in 1837 when Queen Victoria succeeded William IV.

The year 1815 marks the end of years of war between the United Kingdom and France when the Duke of Wellington wins a decisive victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. Fighting in the War of 1812 between the UK and the United States also ceases, peace terms having been agreed at the end of 1814.

#### Gentlemen, Gentry and Regency Era Social Class

During the Regency era social class played a huge role in all aspects of life. The nuances of social class and what makes a gentleman a gentleman remains a perennial source of confusion for Austenesque and Regency readers.

How these men provided a livelihood for themselves and their families proves even more bewildering as some gentlemen had a profession, others did not, some were wealthy and some could find themselves in very dire straits.

Social class was a huge factor in Regency era life. Birth was a key factor in determining one's social standing. For some, especially the eldest son and heir, their standing was established with an inherited title and fortune. In the lives of others, especially younger sons, inheritance of land or fortune and occupation played a primary role.

For most women, their place in society was determined by the status of the man they married.

Titled peers in all their various forms occupied the top of the social ladder. Immediately below them were the landed gentry. Though definitely part of the upper class, they were definitely lower ranked than the peers even though their income might exceed that of peers who might be saddled with debt or other financial difficulties.

## Social Hierarchy



Dimitri Woods, Melanie Hampton and Shanna Allman in Miss Bennet Christmas at Pemberley at Taproot Theatre. Photo by John Ulman.

#### Ranks among the gentry

Like the peers, the landed gentry was divided into various ranks, positioning some firmly above others. Within the landed gentry were:

**Baronet.** A position created by King James in 1611, giving the person a hereditary title that passed to the eldest son, and the right to be addressed as "Sir" but not ranked as a peer, therefore could not sit in the House of Lords.

**Knight.** Originally a military honor, it was increasingly used as a reward for service to the Crown. An address (formal speech of respect or thanks) to the monarch was a frequent means of attaining the honor of knighthood. This was not a hereditary title.

**Esquire/squire.** Esquire was an informal title, often given to gentlemen, especially prominent landowners, who had no other title. Originally a title related to the battlefield, it included a squire or person aspiring to knighthood, an attendant on a knight. Later it was an honor that could be conferred by the Crown and included certain offices such as Justice of the Peace. A squire was often the principle landowner in a district.

**Gentlemen.** This started as a separate title with the statute of Additions of 1413. It is used generally for a man of high birth or rank, good social standing, and wealth, especially the inherited kind.

### What should I call you?

Your Majesty:

King

Queen

Prince

Princess

Sir/Lady (use only the last name of the lady)

or Mr./Mrs.
Baronet

Knight

Landed Gentry – Land Owners

Lord/Lady (use the full name of the lady) - Peers

Duke

Marquis

Earl

Viscount

Baron

Mr. or Captain etc.

Affluent businessmen Military Officers Clergy

## The History of the Christmas Tree



Christmas Tree at Windsor Castle, December 1848. Hulton Archive/Getty Images

What are some of your family's favorite holiday traditions?

Do you know the reasons why your family has those traditions? What are their origins?

Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness.

In the Northern hemisphere, the shortest day and longest night of the year falls on December 21 or December 22 and is called the winter solstice. Many ancient people believed that the sun was a god and that winter came every year because the sun god had become sick and weak. They celebrated the solstice because it meant that at last the sun god would begin to get well. Evergreen boughs reminded them of all the green plants that would grow again when the sun god was strong and summer would return. The ancient Egyptians worshipped a god called Ra, who had the head of a hawk and wore the sun as a blazing disk in his crown. At the solstice, when Ra began to recover from the illness, the Egyptians filled their homes with green palm rushes which symbolized for them the triumph of life over death.

Early Romans marked the solstice with a feast called the Saturnalia in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture. The Romans knew that the solstice meant that soon farms and orchards would be green and fruitful. To mark the occasion, they decorated their homes and temples with evergreen boughs. In Northern Europe the mysterious Druids, the priests of the ancient Celts, also decorated their temples with evergreen boughs as a symbol of everlasting life. The fierce Vikings in Scandinavia thought that evergreens were the special plant of the sun god, Balder.

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family,

## The History of the Christmas Tree

he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

Most 19th-century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by the German settlers of Pennsylvania, although trees had been a tradition in many German homes much earlier. The Pennsylvania German settlements had community trees as early as 1747. But, as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans.

BH NOBLE FIR SCOTCH PINE
VERMONT WHITE SPRUCE

In 1846, the popular royals, Queen Victoria and her German Prince, Albert, were sketched in the Illustrated

London News standing with their children around a Christmas tree. Unlike the previous royal family, Victoria was very popular with her subjects, and what was done at court immediately became fashionable—not only in Britain, but with fashion-conscious East Coast American Society. The Christmas tree had arrived.

By the 1890s Christmas ornaments were arriving from Germany and Christmas tree popularity was on the rise around the U.S. It was noted that Europeans used small trees about four feet in height, while Americans liked their Christmas trees to reach from floor to ceiling. The early 20th century saw Americans decorating their trees mainly with homemade ornaments, while the German-American sect continued to use apples, nuts, and marzipan cookies. The Norway spruce is the traditional species used to decorate homes in Britain. The Norway spruce was a native species in the British Isles before the last Ice Age, and was reintroduced here before the 1500s.

https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees



### Fir vs. Spruce

Telling the difference among conifers can be tricky. Look for the number of needles that come out of the same spot on a twig. If the twig carries its needles singly, it's a good bet you've got a fir or a spruce. Pull off a needle, and roll it between your fingers. If it feels flat and doesn't roll easily, it's a fir. If the needle has four sides and, thus, rolls easily between your fingers, it's a spruce.

https://www.finegardening.com/article/fir-vs-spruce-vs-pine-how-to-tell-them-



### **Post-show Reflection**

<u>The Question</u>: Social dynamics and traditions can shape who we are. In what ways does your own social structure effect your decision making?

1. If you could start a new holiday tradition in your family, what would it be?

2. Mary often uses music or books to help herself feel better. Do you have a creative way that you like to express yourself? What is it?

3. Do you have your own personal rules of etiquette? Take some time to define what they are. Why do you feel this things are important?

## **Post-Show Reflection**

After the show, write a short review of the performance using the space below. Include what you liked and didn't like while identifying the main conflicts of the play and its plot structure.

## TAPROOT THEATRE COMPANY

### MISSON STATEMENT

Taproot Theatre Company creates theatre experiences to brighten the spirit, engage the mind and deepen the understanding of the world around us while inspiring imagination, conversation and hope.

### **ABOUT US**

Taproot Theatre Company was founded in 1976 by six friends, five of them graduates from Seattle Pacific University. From its humble beginnings as a touring group, the company is now Seattle's largest mid-size theatre company. Today Taproot Theatre serves over 150,000 people annually throughout the Pacific Northwest with its Jewell Mainstage season, Isaac Studio Theatre season, Touring programs and Acting Studio.

### **STAFF CONTACTS**

#### In-School Residencies, Workshops & Tours

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**Taproot Theatre Company** 

P.O. Box 30946

### **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

#### **In-School Residencies & Workshops**

- From drama games to acting classes to putting on a production, Taproot Theatre's residencies can range from several weeks to months, or an entire school year. Whether during the school day or after school as an enrichment program, let Taproot's trained teaching artists introduce a whole new world to your students.
- Our theatre arts professional will visit your classroom for a workshop that will inspire and excite your students. They will develop basic acting skills and explore non-theatre curriculum using theater as a medium.

### **Touring Productions**

- The Road Company performing plays for elementary and secondary schools focusing on issues such as bullying prevention, substance abuse, and friendship skills.
- Family oriented productions and improv comedy for churches, clubs, office parties and other groups.

#### **Camps & Classes**

• Taproot Theatre Company's Acting Studio is a year-round instructional program for theatre artists of all ages and experience levels. We are devoted to the wholeness of the artist with the goal of creating a nurturing environment to help each student develop his or her unique gifts.



## NEXT ON THE JEWELL MAINSTAGE:

The Brewsters are an eccentric bunch: Mortimer's a theatre critic, his brother thinks he's Teddy Roosevelt and Aunts Abby and Martha are the most gracious killers. When Mortimer casually proposes to the pastor's daughter he unwittingly opens the lid on buried family secrets. As strangers and cops keep calling, the Brewsters will go to hilarious lengths to protect the skeletons in the cellar.

**Intergenerational Matinee:** 

Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 10:30 AM

#### CONTACT GROUP SALES FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO RESERVE TICKETS

Call: 206.781.9708 | Email: groups@taproottheatre.org | Visit taproottheatre.org/midweek-matinees

### **TICKETS GO ON SALE FOR JANUARY 2, 2019**



### **Coming Soon!**

The true story of an ordinary young woman during extraordinary times.

Tewnty-one-year-old Sophie Scholl is a college student, anti-Nazi activist and, along with her brother, a member of The White Rose resistance. Charged with treason and held in a German prison, Sophie is forced to play a psychological game of cat and mouse as she fights for her life and soul with a Nazi interrogator. This emotionally charged story testifies to the courage required to live out your values.

**Intergenerational Matinee:** 

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 10:30 AM

