

THEATREWORKS SILICON VALLEY PRESENTS MUSICAL

Sense and Sensibility

Book, music, and lyrics by Paul Gordon

Based on the novel by Jane Austen

Directed by Robert Kelley

March 9 – April 3, 2022 (opening night: March 12) – *NOTE: Dates have changed.*

LUCIE STERN THEATRE, PALO ALTO

PALO ALTO, CA (19 January 2021) — Jane Austen’s engaging story of two resilient sisters comes to musical life on stage when **TheatreWorks Silicon Valley** presents the Regional Premiere of ***Sense and Sensibility***. This sensational work features book, music, and lyrics by **Paul Gordon**, whose *Pride and Prejudice* broke box office records when it premiered at TheatreWorks in 2019, and was then streamed by more than 160,000 viewers worldwide at its virtual debut. Gordon also penned TheatreWorks favorites *Jane Austen’s EMMA* and *Daddy Long Legs*, and the Tony-nominated Broadway musical *Jane Eyre*. Based on Jane Austen’s well-loved novel, ***Sense and Sensibility*** follows sisters Elinor and Marianne Dashwood through their abrupt change in fortune after their father’s untimely death and ensuing romantic trials, events that test and affirm the bonds of sisterhood. While Elinor is prudent in matters of life and love, not revealing her heart’s true desire, Marianne is wildly impulsive, falling head-over-heels for a dashing but unscrupulous suitor. Directed by TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley**, ***Sense and Sensibility*** will be presented **March 9 – April 3, 2022** (press opening: March 12) at the Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto. For tickets (starting at \$30) more information the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org** or call **(877)-662-8978**.

Sense and Sensibility will also be offered via video streaming, allowing patrons to watch either from home or in-theatre, making these shows accessible to additional audience members, including those unable or unready to attend in-person. More information will be available soon at **TheatreWorks.org**.

COVID-19 health and safety requirements for *Sense and Sensibility* include proof of complete vaccination and masks for all staff and audience members while inside the theatre. Patrons who are legally exempted from vaccination must reach out to the TheatreWorks Box Office at least four days prior to their performance. NOTE: requirements are subject to change, for up-to-the-minute regulations for attendance, theatregoers should visit <https://theatreworks.org/safetyupdate/>.

The charming musical's World Premiere (a co-production by Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Old Globe Theatre) was called "nothing less than sublime" by *Chicago Daily Herald* and "a beguiling show that bursts with wit and heart" by *Chicago Sun-Times*. *The Wall Street Journal* called *Sense and Sensibility* "a winner...full of wit and romance" while *The San Diego Union-Tribune* deemed it "an Austen-tatious charmer."

TheatreWorks has assembled a talented cast of local and national veteran performers to bring the Austen favorite to life onstage. **Sharon Rietkerk** returns to TheatreWorks as the elder Dashwood sister Elinor, recreating the role she originated in the World Premiere productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Old Globe Theatre. She has been seen in many TheatreWorks productions, including the World Premiere musical *Pride and Prejudice*, won a San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle (SFBATCC) Award for her performance in *Triangle*, a Theatre Bay Area (TBA) award for *Marry Me a Little*, and a SFBATCC Award nomination for her performance in *The Secret Garden*. She has also been featured in TheatreWorks productions of *Cyrano*, *Little Women*, and the 2015 production of *Jane Austen's EMMA*. Other awards include a TBA Award for *Born Yesterday* at Center REPeritory Company. Rietkerk has also performed at San Jose Repertory Theatre, 42nd Street Moon, and American Conservatory Theater, in concerts with the San Francisco Symphony and Chicago Cubs, and can be seen in Streaming Musical's filmed theatrical production of *EMMA*. **Antoinette Comer** debuts at TheatreWorks as Marianne. Comer performed on Broadway in *Mamma Mia!* and has been seen in The Town Hall's star-studded concert of *Into the Woods* and Off-Broadway in *Smokey Joe's Café* and *Sistas: The Musical*. Comer has also appeared in the North American tour of *Mamma Mia!*, the national tour of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, and the international tour of *Dreamgirls*. Comer's regional theatre credits include performances at Paper Mill Playhouse, Virginia Repertory Theatre, Portland Center Stage, and The Palace Theatre.

Nick Nakashima and **Melissa Wolfklain** return to TheatreWorks as John and Fanny Dashwood, the sisters' unpleasant brother and sister-in-law. **Nick Nakashima** has performed in both of TheatreWorks' productions of *Jane Austen's EMMA* (2007 & 2015), *The Learned Ladies of Park Avenue*, and *A Little Night Music*, as well as TheatreWorks New Works Festival workshops of *Jane Austen's EMMA*, *Burnt Part Boys*, and *Unlock'd*. Nakashima has appeared in productions at 42nd Street Moon, Foothill Music Theatre, San Jose Musical Theatre, Jewel Theatre Company, and American Musical Theatre of San Jose. Recently seen as Mary in TheatreWorks' *Pride and Prejudice* and the streaming production of *Shakespeare in Vegas*, **Melissa Wolfklain's** other TheatreWorks performances include *Tinyard Hill*,

for which she was nominated for an SFBATCC Award, as well as TheatreWorks New Works Festival workshops of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Caraboo*, and *Asphalt Beach*. She won a TBA Award for *Dames at Sea* at 42nd Street Moon as well as SFBATCC Awards for her appearances in Broadway by the Bay's *Singin' in the Rain* and *Crazy for You*. Seen in the national tours of *White Christmas* and *42nd Street*, WolfKlain has also performed at regional theatres including San Francisco Playhouse, Hillbarn Theatre, and Arizona Repertory Theatre, and her film and TV credits include FOX TV's "America's Most Wanted" and Lifetime's "The Truth about Jane."

Darrell Morris Jr. debuts at TheatreWorks as Edward Ferrars, Fanny's brother and Elinor's friend. Morris appeared in the national tour of *Les Misérables*, and has performed at Radio City Music Hall and in Musicals Tonight!'s production of *The Boys from Syracuse*. Morris' regional theatre credits include performances with SpeakEasy Stage Company, Reagle Music Theatre, CIC Theater, and City Equity Theatre. **Sonya Balsara** makes her TheatreWorks debut as Lucy Steele, a social climber from Edward Ferrars' past. Balsara starred as Maria in the International Tour of *West Side Story*. Her television/ film credits include roles in Amazon Studios' "Mozart in the Jungle," CBS' "FBI," Maven Pictures' *Boarding School*, and Duo Creative JapanTV's "The World's Astonishing News." She also appeared in a reading of *The Karate Kid: a new musical*.

Noel Anthony returns to TheatreWorks as Colonel Brandon, the family friend who harbors an unrequited affection. Anthony has been seen in many TheatreWorks productions, including the World Premiere of *A Little Princess*, as well as *Rags*, *The Secret Garden*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Jane Eyre The Musical*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*, as well as several New Works Festivals. Anthony won SFBATCC and Shellie Awards for his performance in *She Loves Me* as well as Shellie Awards for his performances in *The Music Man* and *Les Misérables*. He has starred in leading roles at many local theatres including American Conservatory Theater, Broadway By the Bay, Marin Theatre Company, Center REpertory Company, Diablo Theatre Company, American Musical Theatre of San Jose, and has performed with Alameda Civic Light Opera and Symphony Silicon Valley. **Hunter Ryan Herdlicka** makes his TheatreWorks Debut as the dashing but unscrupulous Willoughby. Herdlicka starred on Broadway as Henrik in *A Little Night Music*, opposite Catherine Zeta-Jones and Angela Lansbury, followed by Bernadette Peters and Elaine Stritch. He has also been seen Off-Broadway in *Once Upon A Mattress* and *Dear World*. He has performed at regional theatres throughout America, including Dallas Theatre Center, Alliance Theatre, Barrington Stage Company, 5th Avenue Theatre, Goodspeed Opera House, St. Louis Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, and Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. Herdlicka has

participated in readings for Chicago Shakespeare Theater's *Sense and Sensibility* (as Willoughby), Alliance Theatre's *Ever After*, Second Stage Theatre's *The Lypsinka Project*, *Big Fish* (directed by Susan Stroman), *Sleepy Hollow* (directed by Hunter Foster/ Scott Schwartz), *ALIVE! The Zombie Musical* (directed by Lorin Latarro), *It's a Bird, It's a Plane...It's Superman!* (directed by Kevin Moriarty), and *Bubble Boy: The Musical* (directed by Scott Schwartz). His film and TV credits include the documentary *Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me*, Oxygen Network's "Next Big Thing," and ABC's "One Life to Live."

Lucinda Hitchcock Cone and **Colin Thomson** return to TheatreWorks as Mrs. Jennings and Lord John Middleton, sympathetic relatives of the Dashwood sisters. Recently seen as Lady Catherine de Bourgh in TheatreWorks' *Pride and Prejudice*, **Lucinda Hitchcock Cone** has also appeared in TheatreWorks' productions of *Tuck Everlasting*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Ragtime*, and *Cabaret*. Cone performed in the National Tour of *Big River* and has been seen regionally at American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Hartford Stage, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Portland Stage Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and others. Cone has won SFBATCC Awards for performances in *River's End* and *Lips Together Teeth Apart* at Marin Theatre Company, *Night of Hunter* at Willows Theatre, and *Mad World*. Seen in TheatreWorks's *Tuck Everlasting*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *All My Sons*, **Colin Thomson** has also performed at American Conservatory Theater, Portland Center Stage, San Jose Stage Company, 42nd Street Moon and in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's Ground Floor. Thomson can be seen in Sony Pictures' *Blue Jasmine* (directed by Woody Allen) and in NBC Universal's *Trauma* (directed by Jeffrey Reiner).

Sense and Sensibility features music direction by **William Liberatore**, scenic design by **Joe Ragey**, costume design by **Fumiko Bielefeldt**, lighting design by **Steven B. Mannshardt**, and sound design by **Jeff Mockus**. **Randall Lum** serves as stage manager, with **Emily Anderson Wolf** and **Amy Smith Goodman** as assistant stage managers.

Paul Gordon (Book, Music & Lyrics) received a Tony Award nomination for composing the music and lyrics for the acclaimed Broadway musical *Jane Eyre*, seen at TheatreWorks in 2003. Gordon penned the music, lyrics, and book for *Pride and Prejudice* (World Premiere at TheatreWorks 2019) and *Jane Austen's EMMA* (TheatreWorks 2007 & 2015), the music and lyrics to the TheatreWorks holiday favorite *Daddy Long Legs* (TheatreWorks 2010 & 2016), and the book and lyrics (plus music with Jay Gruska) for *Being Earnest* (TheatreWorks 2013). Gordon co-founded Streaming Musicals, which offers

on-demand streaming for his works *Pride and Prejudice* and *EMMA*, as well as *Estella Scrooge*, *Being Earnest*, and *No One Called Ahead*. His other shows include *Sense and Sensibility*, *Knight's Tale*, *Analog and Vinyl*, *Stellar Atmospheres*, *The Front*, *Juliet and Romeo*, *Rabbit*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *The Circle* and *The Sportswriter*. Gordon has written for, and collaborated with, numerous recording artists, including Bette Midler, Quincy Jones, Alanis Morissette, Smokey Robinson, and Dionne Warwick, has several hit songs to his credit, and is the recipient of nine ASCAP awards for songwriting.

Robert Kelley (Director) is TheatreWorks' Founder. In 2020, Kelley retired from his post as Founding Artistic Director, where he served as artistic head of the company since its inception in 1970. During his 50 seasons at the helm of the Tony-winning regional theatre, he directed more than 175 TheatreWorks productions, including many world and regional premieres. In 2003 Kelley was honored with the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle (SFBATCC) Paine Knickerbocker Award for Lifetime Achievement, in 2016 was awarded the Jerry Friedman Lifetime Achievement Award from the SFBATCC, and in 2019 he received a TBA Legacy Award. Kelley received a TBA Award for his direction of *Daddy Long Legs* and SFBATCC Awards for Outstanding Direction for his productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *Into the Woods*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Rags*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Another Midsummer Night*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Caroline, or Change*. This season, Kelley will also direct TheatreWorks' production of *Ragtime*, scheduled to perform June 1-26, 2022.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley was founded in 1970 by **Robert Kelley** and has grown from an original Silicon Valley start-up to become one of the region's leading professional nonprofit theatre companies. TheatreWorks was honored as the recipient of the 2019 Regional Theatre Tony Award, the highest honor bestowed on a non-Broadway theatre. Now in its 51st season and led by Artistic Director **Tim Bond** and Executive Director **Phil Santora**, TheatreWorks presents a wide variety of contemporary plays and musicals, revitalizes great works of the past, and serves more than 100,000 patrons per year. TheatreWorks also champions new work, offering artists support and a creative home as they develop new stories for the American theatre. Offstage, TheatreWorks' arts education programs in local schools and arts engagement programs in Silicon Valley neighborhoods uplift its audiences and strengthen community bonds. Whether onstage or off, TheatreWorks seeks to celebrate the human spirit and the diversity of the Silicon Valley community.

Media sponsor for TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 2021/2022 season is The San Francisco Chronicle.

For Calendar Editors:

- WHAT:** TheatreWorks Silicon Valley will present the Regional Premiere of the musical *Sense and Sensibility*. This sensational work features book, music, and lyrics by **Paul Gordon**, whose musicals include *Pride and Prejudice*, whose 2019 World Premiere at TheatreWorks broke box office records, was immediately streamed by more than 160,000 viewers worldwide at its virtual debut, and is now available to watch on Amazon Prime Video. Based on the Jane Austen novel, *Sense and Sensibility* follows sisters Elinor and Marianne Dashwood through their abrupt change in fortune following their father's untimely death, and ensuing romantic trials, events that test and affirm the bonds of sisterhood. While Elinor is prudent in matters of life and love, not revealing her heart's true desire, Marianne is wildly impulsive, falling head-over-heels for a dashing but unscrupulous suitor. The charming musical's World Premiere at Chicago Shakespeare Theater was called "nothing less than sublime" by *Chicago Daily Herald* and "a beguiling show that bursts with wit and heart" by *Chicago Sun-Times*. TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** returns to helm *Sense and Sensibility*.
- WHEN:** Previews: Wednesday, March 9 – Friday, March 11, 2022
Opening: Saturday, March 12, 2022
Closes: Sunday, April 3, 2022
- SHOWS:** Previews: 8:00pm
Tuesdays: 7:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:00pm, 7:30pm
Thursdays & Fridays: 8:00pm
Saturdays: 2:00pm, 8:00pm
Sundays: 2:00pm, 7:00pm
- WHERE:** Live performances at **Lucie Stern Theatre**, 1305 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto
- TICKETS:** Ticket prices start at \$30; savings available for educators, seniors, and patrons 35 and under. Pricing subject to change.
- SAFETY:** Patrons must present a vaccination card, **or** a photo of the card, or a digital vaccine record (myvaccinerecord.cdph.ca.gov) with matching ID. Patrons who are legally exempted from being vaccinated must reach out to the TheatreWorks Box Office at least four days prior to their performance. All attendees must remain masked while indoors. For more information and specifications for vaccination and mask requirements the public may visit **TheatreWorks.org**.
- INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit **theatreworks.org** or call **(877)-662-8978**

-30-

- PRESS:** Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
lauren@cb-pr.com

PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here: <http://cbpr.co/press/senseandsensibility>