



The Watsons - Information Pack

Thank you for your interest in taking part in our forthcoming production of *'The Watsons'* at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre. Below we have information on the play and characters, approximate rehearsal and performance schedule, and how you can submit your interest in auditioning.

The Play

'The Watsons' is a play by Laura Wade - writer of *'Posh'* and *'Home I'm Darling'* - adapted from an unfinished novel by Jane Austen.

Emma Watson is 19 and new in town. She's been cut off by her rich aunt and dumped back in the family home. Emma and her sisters must marry - fast.

If not, they face poverty, spinsterhood, or worse: an eternity with their boorish brother and his awful wife. Luckily there are plenty of potential suitors to dance with, from flirtatious Tom Musgrave to castle-owning Lord Osborne, who's as awkward as he is rich. So far so familiar.

But there's a problem: Jane Austen didn't finish the story. Who will write Emma's happy ending now?

Based on her incomplete novel, this sparkingly witty play looks under the bonnet of Jane Austen and asks: What can characters do when their author abandons them?

Reviews for original production

“Playwright Laura Wade triumphs spinning minor Jane Austen into major theatrical gold.”
Variety

“A play already bursting with mastery” Evening Standard

“Playful and serious at the same time...Wade has seized on this tension between authorial control and imaginative freedom to create a stunning play.” Guardian

Why should you audition for this?

This is a very funny, very smart comedy that takes a setting we are very familiar with as British audiences (regency period drama), and introduces unexpected elements of modernity and chaos as the central conceit (what if the characters of Jane Austen’s unfinished novel tried to finish their stories themselves?) unfolds.

It’s got similarities to another recent Austen adaptation ‘Pride and Prejudice *(Sort Of)’ which was a hit at York Theatre Royal in the autumn. It will have a lot of gags for Austen buffs, but also has an open, inclusive humour that does not shut out those who don’t pick up on the references in the same way. At times very theatrical, it is never arch - there is energy, warmth and fun at the centre of the play, to make for a dynamic and enjoyable evening for audiences.

The play offers a range of acting opportunities for actors of all ages with various levels of experience / confidence, working with a script by one of our best contemporary playwrights. The rehearsal process will give you a great chance to work as part of an ensemble on character development and play with relationship dynamics, in a supportive environment that encourages shared ideas and participation.

At any time, this would be a brilliant show to stage, but this year, marking the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen’s birth, there is an extra sense of occasion to bringing it to a York stage for the first time.

This is a co-production between Joseph Rowntree Theatre and Black Treacle Theatre, and is being directed by Jim Paterson, whose York credits include Constellations; Iphigenia in Splott; Vanya, Sonia, Masha and Spike; and Accidental Death of an Anarchist. All proceeds will go towards the Joseph Rowntree Theatre, supporting its work.

Schedule and logistics

Auditions will be held from Monday 17th - Tuesday 18th March, and on Monday 24th March. You can indicate when applying which dates and times work for you. Casting will aim to be confirmed by Monday 31st March. Auditions will consist of working with other actors through some pre-supplied scenes and will be held at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre.

Rehearsals will begin with a read-through w/c 28th April, followed by 2-3 rehearsals a week from w/c 5th May, usually on Sundays - Wednesdays. Rehearsals will be in York at an

appropriate rehearsal room or church hall, with some rehearsals at the theatre, depending on availability. Production week begins on Sunday 6th July with get-in, followed by technical rehearsal on Monday 7th July, dress rehearsal on Tuesday 8th July and five shows running from Wednesday 9th - Saturday 12th July, with two shows on the Saturday.

Should you be cast, there is a £15 show fee for all actors.

Character breakdown

Below is a quick guide to all the characters in the play so you can get a sense of whether there is a part you might be suitable for. In terms of size, the lead roles are Emma Watson and Laura, with the remainder mainly making an ensemble of supporting characters coming in and out of the play throughout. Mr Watson and Mr and Mrs Edwards are smaller parts and would double up with other roles. Apart from Nanny, all characters are middle to upper-class English 19th century types - think classic Austen adaptations for reference.

THE WATSONS

EMMA WATSON (Playing age - early 20s) Our heroine; the youngest Watson sister. *Some kissing required on stage.*

ELIZABETH WATSON (Playing age - late 20s / early 30s) Emma's eldest sister

MARGARET WATSON (Playing age - mid-late 20s) The middle Watson sister

ROBERT WATSON (Playing age - mid-late 30s) Emma's older brother

MRS ROBERT (Playing age - mid-late 30s) Robert's wife, Mary

MR WATSON (Playing age 60+) Father of Robert, Elizabeth, Emma and Margaret.

NANNY (Playing age late 50s - 60s) The Watsons' servant

THE OSBORNES

TOM MUSGRAVE (Playing age - early-mid 30s) A gentleman

LORD OSBORNE (Playing age late 20s - early 30s) A young lord

LADY OSBORNE (Playing age mid 50s - 60s) Mother of Lord Osborne and Miss Osborne

MISS OSBORNE (Playing age early-mid 20s) Younger sister of Lord Osborne

MR HOWARD (Playing age late 20s - mid 30s) A clergyman

CHARLES HOWARD (Playing age 10-12) Mr Howard's nephew and ward; ten years old.

Please note - this is a comedy with swearing, and there is some swearing both by this character and around them when they are on stage.

OTHERS

MRS EDWARDS (Playing age 50s) Emma's chaperone

MR EDWARDS (Playing age 50s) Her husband

OFFICERS OF THE MILITIA, including BERTIE, an officer (Varying ages - opportunities for doubling up as other characters) *Please note, some kissing required from Bertie on stage.*

GUESTS at an assembly (Varying ages - opportunities for doubling up as other characters)

LAURA (Playing age mid 30s - early 40s) A writer

Interested?

To register for auditions, [please complete the audition form here](#). We can accept auditions for anyone over 16. We are also casting the role of Charles Howard who will be played by a child. Their parent / carer will need to complete the form on their behalf and they will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian at auditions, rehearsals and performances.