

**ROSE
THEATRE**

**JANE AUSTEN'S CLASSIC
ROM-COM REIMAGINED**

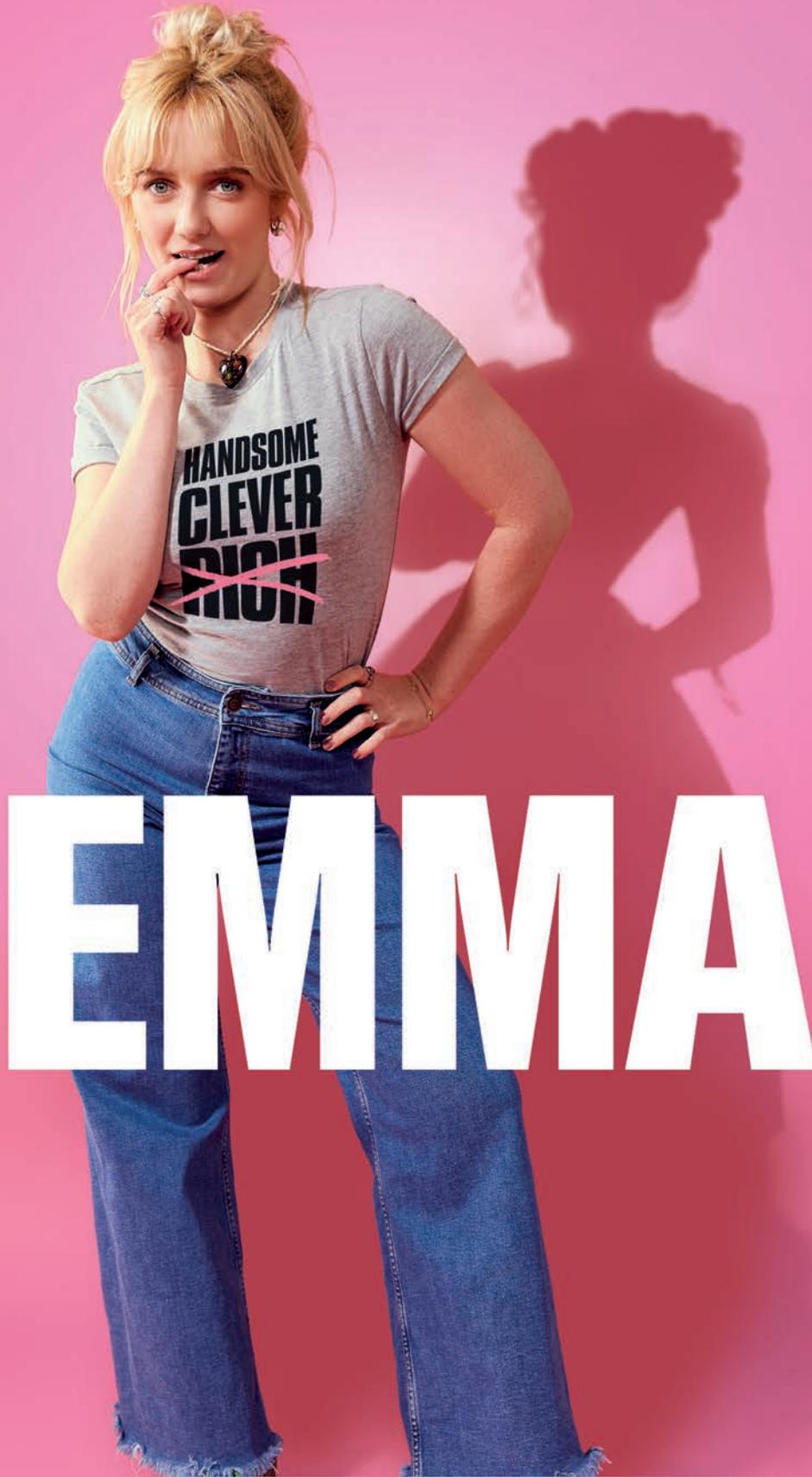


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LEARNING RESOURCE PACK

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WELCOME

Welcome to this learning resource pack for Emma, a Rose Theatre production. Rose Theatre has one of the largest participation departments in London. Through creative and curriculum based in-school and on-site opportunities, the Rose opens its doors to surrounding communities and enables participants to join in, and take part in, exciting opportunities led by world class practitioners.

If you would like to hear more about our activities please contact: participate@rosetheatre.org or visit our dedicated schools website here: <https://www.rosetheatre.org/schools-rhr7>

This pack is designed to support students and teachers studying A Level and GCSE drama in response to *Emma*.

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THE PRODUCTION

This production of *Emma* was commissioned by and first performed at Rose Theatre, Kingston upon Thames, on 20 September 2024, with the following cast,

in alphabetical order:

Emma Woodhouse	Amelia Kenworthy
Harriet Smith	Sofia Oxenham
Rob Martin	Josh Bilyard
Isabella	Jessica Brindle
Mr Woodhouse	Nigel Lindsay
Mrs Bates	Lucy Benjamin
Elton	Bobby Lockwood
George Knightly	Kit Young
John Knightly	Adrian Richards

Additional roles played by members of the company

Director	Christopher Haydon
Set & Costume Designer	Lily Arnold
Movement Director	Kloé Dean
Lighting Designer	Philip Gladwell
Sound Designer	Kieran Lucas
Casting Director	Juliet Horsley CDG
Fight & Intimacy Director	Haruka Kuroda
Voice & Dialect Coach	Claudette Williams
Assistant Director	Melissa Mowry

For Rose Theatre

Chief Executive	Robert O'Dowd
Artistic Director	Christopher Haydon
Executive Producer	David Sloan

Emma is a Rose Original Production.

SYNOPSIS

EMMA

ACT 1 - SCENE 1

We meet Emma, dressed in typical Jane Austen period costume. Slowly, it becomes clear that this is a fancy dress party at Oxford University in 2025. After an awkward chat with another student, the subject turns to her future. Emma avoids the subject and the shots start flowing.

SCENE 2

Tutor's office, the morning after. Emma is attending a tutorial and is extremely hungover. She has flunked her final year of university and, in between vomiting in the bin, tries to convince her tutor to lie about her grades. Undeterred, the tutor suggests that Emma returns home and takes a year out.

SCENE 3

The local pub in Highbury in Essex, days later. Harriet and Rob Martin are on a date and it seems to be going well. Mr. Woodhouse arrives and is shocked to find out that Emma is due back home tomorrow. Elton arrives, clearly expecting to meet Mr. Woodhouse. Mr. Woodhouse makes his excuses and leaves with Elton – he's trying to hide something. Rob and Harriet decide to finish their drinks go back to his.

SCENE 4

The Woodhouse's family home. George and John are busy building a wedding arch in the garden. Emma bursts through the front door, collides with George and knocks him out. George comes round and they bicker. It's clear they know each other well. After George leaves, Harriet and Emma catch up on the local gossip, including the newly divorced Mrs Bates. Harriet tells Emma about her date with Rob Martin, and is surprised when her friend disapproves. Harriet discovers Rob has changed his profile picture on Hinge and Emma declares it's proof that he's taken advantage of Harriet.



SYNOPSIS

George returns after finding Emma's luggage hidden in the front garden. Emma insists she's bought back unwanted clothes and books for the local charity shop, but George calls her bluff. He offers to take the items to the charity shop and, unable to admit the truth, Emma agrees. Once he's left, Emma reveals the truth to Harriet - she's failed her final year and moved back to Highbury.

Isabella turns up with her fiancé John, deeply suspicious about Emma's early arrival. They are in the final preparations for the big day and John is planning to sing as she walks down the aisle. Mr. Woodhouse arrives and, much to Emma's horror, explains he's managed to get a story in the local paper about her supposed first class degree from Oxford University.

Harriet receives a text from Rob, but Emma convinces her not to reply.

SCENE 5

The Woodhouse home, the following day. Mr. Woodhouse sneaks in with Elton, checking if his daughters are home. When Emma appears on the phone, Mr Woodhouse ushers him upstairs. Rob Martin knocks on the door, he has a parcel to deliver. Emma answers the door and Rob asks her why Harriet hasn't returned his messages. Emma tells him, in no uncertain terms, that Harriet isn't interested. He leaves, confused and embarrassed.

Mrs Bates arrives to complete Isabella and Emma's fake tans for the wedding. When Isabella and Mrs Bates leave, Elton comes back downstairs. Emma is surprised to see him and the conversation turns to Harriet and where she's living. A plan starts to hatch in Emma's mind. Mr Woodhouse enters and is flustered to find Elton talking to his daughter. He escorts him out of the house, making excuses about why he was visiting.

Emma is summoned for her tanning session, and Mrs Bates and Mr Woodhouse find themselves alone in the living room. There is chemistry between them and they kiss. Mr. Woodhouse and Mrs Bates have been in a relationship and have kept it a secret from Isabella and Emma. They are planning to sell the Woodhouse family home to start a new life together and Elton is their estate agent. It's now up to Mr. Woodhouse to tell his daughters.

SCENE 6

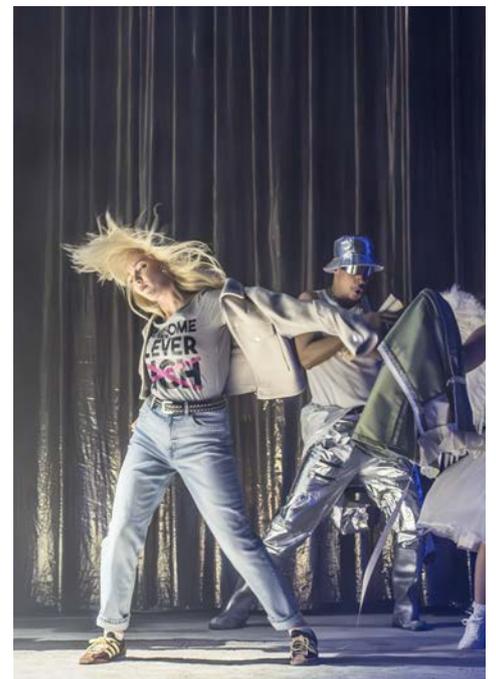
The park. Harriet is upset and explains that Rob Martin had blanked her in the Co-op. She now believes that Emma was right all along. Emma reveals her match making plans for Harriet and Elton.

SCENE 7

Changing room. Rob, John, George and Mr. Woodhouse have just finished football practice. Mr Woodhouse leaves and the men discuss Emma. John is concerned that Emma thinks he's an idiot and Rob admits his confusion about Harriet's rejection. Unable to get to the bottom of it, Rob decides to block Harriet.

SCENE 8

The Woodhouse home. Mr Woodhouse has been waiting nervously for Emma. He's preparing to tell her about his new relationship. Once the subject of Mrs Bates comes up, Emma is quick to tell him that she thinks Mrs Bates is an idiot. Disheartened, Mr Woodhouse gives up.



SCENE 9

Co-op. Harriet is on tannoy duties. Emma rushes in and Harriet immediately tells her that she's been blocked by Rob. Emma isn't interested as Elton is on his way into the shop. She constructs a scenario to get Elton and Harriet talking. After some small talk about travelling, and a couple of questions about her Nan's house, Elton agrees to send some holiday recommendations - but to Emma, not Harriet. As far as Emma is concerned, her match making plan is in motion.

SCENE 10

The Woodhouse home. Mrs Bates is practicing Isabella's bridal hair and make up, while they discuss Emma and wedding nerves. Mrs Bates' phone rings and she looks nervous. Sensing it's her new boyfriend, Emma interrogates her. Clearly uncomfortable, Mrs Bates admits that the relationship is secret as they are concerned about the reaction of her boyfriend's daughters. Unaware that Mrs Bates is referring to her, Emma advises her to give her partner an ultimatum and to stand up for herself.

SCENE 11

The Woodhouse home. Mr. Woodhouse comes home with a flower wreath spelling out L.O.V.E. It's clearly been used for a funeral and Isabella is less than pleased. Left alone with Emma, John admits he's worried about letting Isabella down. Emma takes the opportunity to offer him advice and tells him that she thinks gives in too much to her sister. She suggests that he changes their honeymoon plans to push Isabella out of her comfort zone. John leaves, resolved save his relationship by swapping the all-inclusive trip to Spain for a back-packing adventure - clearly something that Isabella would hate. George arrives and senses that Emma has interfered in something she shouldn't have. They banter and there's chemistry under the surface. The subject turns to Highbury and the tone changes. George challenges Emma disdain for the area and people and he confronts her about meddling in Harriet's and Rob's relationship. They argue, and he leaves.

SCENE 12

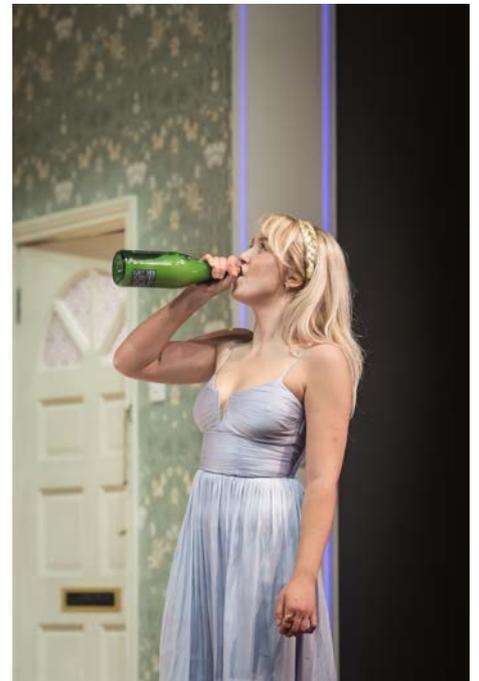
The pub. Mr. Woodhouse, Mrs Bates and Elton are meeting in the pub to discuss the house sale. Mr. Woodhouse is keen to advertise the house without a sale sign. Mrs Bates, taking on Emma's advice, confronts Mr. Woodhouse about his need for more secrecy and gives him an ultimatum - he tells his daughters, or it's over.

SCENE 13

The Woodhouse home. Elton arrives at the house with the 'for sale' sign, but Mr. Woodhouse still hasn't talked to his daughters. He pushes Elton into the kitchen as Emma and Harriet arrive, carrying old boxes. They find her mother's wedding dress, just as Isabella and John enter - mid argument. Emma convinces Isabella to try it on. Elton appears, which flusters Harriet. Emma suggests he gives Harriet a lift home and just as they are about to leave, Rob Martin arrives with another parcel. It's an awkward moment as they leave the house. Mr. Woodhouse tries one more attempt to reveal his relationship to Emma. Oblivious to the situation, Emma discusses her conversation with Mrs Bates about her mystery boyfriend. She believes the relationship is toxic and doomed to fail. Mr. Woodhouse is left fuming.

SCENE 14

The Woodhouse home. George arrives at the house to finish the wedding arch. Emma discovers that George is bringing Jane Fairfax to the wedding, a girl they were both at school with. The news clearly bothers her. John arrives and reveals he's changed the honeymoon plans. Still upset about George's wedding guest, Emma leaves. Mr. Woodhouse and Mrs Bates arrive. They've been



arguing about the for sale sign and Emma's comments the previous day. When Emma unexpectedly turns up, Mr. Woodhouse panics and shoves Mrs Bates in the downstairs cupboard.

SCENE 15

The pub. Harriet is telling Emma about her lift home with Elton and his interest in her Nan. Meanwhile, Emma is obsessing about George and Jane Fairfax. Rob and George arrive at the pub and sit at another table. Rob is carrying flowers and Harriet is devastated. When Harriet leaves to get a drink, Emma uses her mobile to send Elton a message about meeting up. She tells her friend what she's done, but Harriet is nervous. Emma lies and claims that Elton has told her that he likes Harriet. As they leave to meet Elton, they bump into Rob, who is confused further by Harriet's snub. George and Rob talk – it turns out the flowers are from his mum. George turns the conversation to Emma. Rob, tired of the subject, tells his friend what he clearly can't see. George is in love with Emma.

SCENE 16

Randalls nightclub. Emma and Harriet are on the dance floor, they've had a lot to drink. George and Rob arrive and spot them. When Elton leaves to get more drinks, Harriet asks Emma if she should kiss him. Encouraged by her friend, Harriet makes her move. Rob and George watch it happening and leave, but they miss Elton pushing Harriet away. Humiliated, she runs off. Elton starts to flirt with Emma. They kiss.



ACT 2 - SCENE 1

The Woodhouse home. The morning after. Mr. Woodhouse is on the phone to Mrs Bates, checking she is ok. She has an injured foot after the cupboard incident and has been in A&E. Elton has stayed the night and, as Emma tries to sneak him out of the house, George arrives. He has something to tell Emma, but stops when Elton appears. Flustered, George makes his excuses and leaves. Emma discovers that Elton is an estate agent. Not only is he selling her family home, he isn't interested in Harriet at all, he's only interested in selling her Nan's house.

SCENE 2

Co-op. Harriet is trying to work, still reeling from the embarrassment of the previous evening. Emma enters and reveals that Elton was not interested in her, just in selling her Nan's flat. She goes on confess that they kissed her after Harriet left and then spent the night together. Confused, Harriet interrogates Emma and discovers she lied about Elton liking her in the first place.

SYNOPSIS

SCENE 3

The park. Emma phones the estate agents to cancel the sale of her home.

SCENE 4

The pub. Mr. Woodhouse is attempting to placate Mrs Bates, who's been ignoring his calls. He promises to tell Emma the truth that day. While he's getting more drinks, a dejected Elton enters. He explains that the house has been taken off the market and Mrs Bates, mistakenly, believes Mr. Woodhouse has cancelled the sale. Furious, she leaves a confused Mr. Woodhouse in the pub by himself.

SCENE 5

The Woodhouse home. Isabella confronts Emma about meddling in her honeymoon plans. She is sick of Emma trying to control her life. John bursts in with news about Harriet - the co-op has been robbed.

SCENE 6

Co-op. Harriet is recounting her ordeal to Emma, Isabella and John. It turns out that George came to her rescue when the co-op was being robbed, and Harriet is full of praise for his heroics. Emma discovers that George isn't in a relationship with Jane Fairfax, he's just giving her a lift to the wedding. He asks after Elton and there's an uncomfortable moment between them.

SCENE 7

The Woodhouse home. Emma arrives late and is defensive when George asks after Harriet. When pressed about the date of her graduation, and her donation the charity shop is revealed, Emma is backed into a corner and lashes out at Mrs Bates. It is a cruel and unnecessary comment and everyone is stunned. Humiliated, but trying not to show it, Mrs Bates makes her excuses and leaves. George and Emma are left alone and he makes it clear that her behaviour was inexcusable. She is left alone feeling hurt and ashamed. John enters, unaware of what has just happened, looking for reassurance about Isabella. One final comment from Emma fuels John's insecurities even more.

SCENE 8

The Woodhouse home on the morning of the wedding. Isabella is a bundle of nerves and Mr Woodhouse and Mrs Bates are still at odds with each other. Emma apologises to Mrs Bates for her comment the day before. Harriet arrives and tells Emma she plans to ask out George. This flusters Emma, who tries to dissuade Harriet, while trying to help Isabella with her dress. She doesn't notice as Harriet leaves.

SCENE 9

The Woodhouse home. Everyone is getting ready for the wedding. Isabella enters in her mother's wedding dress. She looks beautiful. When Mr. Woodhouse sees her, he is stunned. She looks just like his wife on their wedding day. He fetches his late wife's ashes and they all hug. It's a special moment. George arrives and tells Emma that John is missing. Isabella enters and can tell something isn't right. To divert her suspicion, Emma tells Isabella she needs to redo her hair. Mrs Bates is summoned to help, but she is very drunk. Emma and George set off to find John.



SYNOPSIS

SCENE 10

The park. Harriet is sitting alone and is upset. John arrives and, noticing Harriet, joins her on the bench. They take turns to confess their worries about Rob, Elton and Isabella – and their mutual frustration at Emma’s interfering. John admits to hacking into Rob’s Hinge account and changing his photo. He also explains that the flowers Rob had at the pub were a gift from his mum. Harriet realises that Emma has been wrong about Rob all along.



SCENE 11

The Woodhouse home. Emma is waiting nervously at the house. George returns, he’s been unable to find John. When Mr. Woodhouse discovers John is missing, he is furious, thinking that Isabella has been jilted. George explains that John’s disappearance is Emma’s fault. Everyone is now present, and Emma is being interrogated about what she has said. Things get heated and Isabelle launches herself at Emma. Just then, John appears. He’s come to the realisation that he’s good enough for Isabella after all. They reconcile and the wedding is back on! Harriet arrives and confronts Emma. She wants to know what she said to Rob and questions Emma’s friendship. After Emma criticises Harriet, her friend reveals that she has failed Uni. Emma is distraught, and Mr. Woodhouse demands to speak to his youngest alone. He comforts her and they have a heart to heart. When Mrs Bates stumbles in, he finally admits the truth about his relationship and the house sale. Emma is happy for them. Mrs Bates tells Emma what she’s been missing all along– she’s in love with George.



SCENE 13

The Woodhouse home. John is warming up for his song. After he leaves, George bursts into the room and knocks Emma out. They both have something to say to each other but are struggling to find the words. Eventually, they admit their feelings for each other, and they kiss. Harriet arrives. Things are back on with Rob and they’re going to Italy!

SCENE 14

The Woodhouse home - the wedding. After the ceremony and the reception, it’s just Emma and Harriet in the garden. They have reconciled. Everything is as it should be, and the friends dance together.



CHARACTERS

The characters in this modern adaptation of Emma are based on the characters in Jane Austen's novel. Some relationships, ages and occupations will differ from the original story.

EMMA WOODHOUSE – 21 YEARS OLD, OXFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENT

Emma is clever, proud and principled, but can be self-righteous and judgemental of those around her. After failing her final year of Uni, Emma finds herself lost and without direction. She is forced to return to her hometown of Highbury in Essex, a place she has been desperate to escape as a teenager. Emma is too ashamed to tell her family that she has dropped out of university and is only able to confide in her best friend, Harriet. Determined to avoid her own problems, Emma turns her attention to the love lives of her friends and family, which creates chaos amongst those closest to her. All the while, she misses what everyone else can see, she is in love with George Knightly.

HARRIET SMITH – 21 YEARS OLD EMMA'S BEST FRIEND, WORKS IN THE LOCAL CO-OP

Harriet is kind and generous but lacks confidence in herself. She is easily influenced by others, particularly Emma. She has been Emma's best friend since childhood, but their lives have taken very different paths. Harriet is in awe of Emma and her achievements and trusts her friend has her best interests at heart. Despite her strong feelings for Rob Martin, a series of misunderstandings and Emma's scheming sets her on a mission to win the heart of Elton. After a humiliating rejection that exposes Emma's lies, Harriet finally finds her own voice and stands up for herself.

MR. WOODHOUSE – 40s/50s, LOCAL BUSINESSMAN

Mr. Woodhouse is larger than life, opportunistic, but well-meaning and protective. He is a proud father to Isabella and Emma, who he has raised as a single parent after the death of his wife. Mr. Woodhouse is the local wheeler dealer, always on the lookout for a bargain and a way to make a quick profit. He's found love again with Eileen Bates but is terrified about revealing the relationship to his daughters.

MRS. EILEEN BATES/PROFESSOR TAYLOR – 40s/50s, BEAUTY THERAPIST

Eileen Bates is organising Isabella's wedding hair and makeup. She is bubbly and outgoing, but capable of standing her ground. After her divorce, she has found happiness with Mr Woodhouse, and they are planning a new life together. Mr Woodhouse has been worried about his daughter's reaction to their relationship, and Eileen has been sympathetic to his concerns. Eventually, she loses patience with Mr Woodhouse's stalling and gives him an ultimatum.



Amelia Kenworthy, Emma Woodhouse



Sofia Oxenham, Harriet Smith



Nigel Lindsay, Mr. Woodhouse



Lucy Benjamin, Professor Taylor/Mrs. Bates

CHARACTERS

GEORGE KNIGHTLEY – 20s, PAINTER AND DECORATER AND CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF EMMA AND HARRIET

George is honest and principled but can be defensive and stubborn – especially with Emma. George has harboured feelings for Emma since their time at school, and these are reignited upon her return to Highbury. George has a clear moral compass and is quick to step in when he sees an injustice taking place. He finds Emma’s criticism of Highbury and its residents infuriating and, when he challenges her, it affects Emma more than she expects it to. Despite all her flaws, George comes to realise he is in love with Emma.

ROB MARTIN – 20s, AMAZON DELIVERY DRIVER

Rob was at school with George and John and they’ve remained friends. He’s been on a date with Harriet, which seemed to go well. Although Harriet feels the same, Emma convinces her that she can do better and persuades her not to reply to Rob’s messages. Rob is left confused and humiliated when Emma tells him that he’s behaved inappropriately on the date and Harriet is no longer interested.

ISABELLA – 20s, EMMA’S OLDER SISTER

Emma’s older sister, engaged to John Knightly and in the final preparations for her wedding. Isabella is confident and forthright. She is the driving force in her relationship with John, who is anxious that he is not worthy of his bride to be. The sisters couldn’t be more different to each, and they bicker constantly. Despite this, there is a clear bond between them both and their father. Isabella is suspicious of her Emma’s early return to Highbury and senses that something isn’t right. She is increasingly frustrated by Emma’s interfering, which threatens to ruin her big day.

JOHN KNIGHTLEY – 20s, GEORGE KNIGHTLEY’S COUSIN

John is Isabella’s fiancée and George’s cousin. John is romantic, well-meaning, but unsure of his own worth. He is desperate to please his fiancée and gain the approval of her father and sister. Concerned that he is not good enough for Isabella, he seeks advice from Emma, who sets him on a course that almost wrecks his wedding.

ELTON – 22, GRADUATE AND ESTATE AGENT

Elton is a local estate agent, who is working with Mr Woodhouse and Eileen to sell the Woodhouse family home. He is self-assured, ambitious and keen to get ahead in his career. Elton senses a business opportunity, if he can persuade Harriet to sell her Nan’s flat. Emma misinterprets his interest in Harriet and resolves to set him up with her best friend. Elton’s true affections are for Emma, which complicates the situation further.



Kit Young, George Knightley



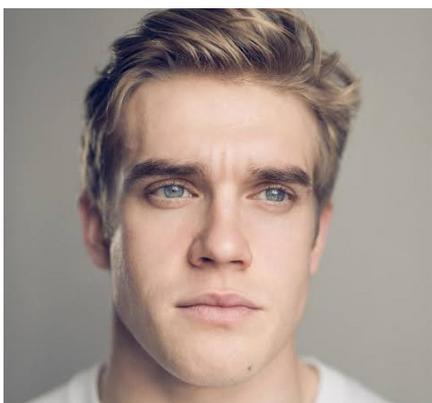
Josh Bilyard, Rob Martin



Jessica Brindle, Isabella



Adrian Richards, John Knightley



Bobby Lockwood, Elton/Posh Boy/Vicar



JANE AUSTEN

TIMELINE

16TH DECEMBER 1775

Born in Steventon, Hampshire

1775-1783

The American War of Independence

1783

At the age of 8, Jane and her sister Cassandra are sent to a boarding school in Oxford to complete their formal education. There is an outbreak of Typhoid fever at the school and Jane becomes very ill. Cassandra cares for her sister through her illness.

1792

A Vindication of the Rights of Women by Mary Wollstoncroft is published. The book calls for equal rights for women in education, marriage and politics.

1789

French Revolution begins

1785

Jane and Cassandra attend a boarding school in Reading to finish their formal education.

1794

Jane's recently widowed cousin, Eliza, stays with the family. She has fled France, following her husband's execution in the French Revolution. She is glamorous, has financial security and introduces Jane to books promoting women's rights. Eliza inspires Jane's short novel, Lady Susan.

1795

Tom Lefroy visits Steventon and he and Jane fall in love. The match is deemed unsuitable by Lefroy's family and they part ways. Jane will not see Tom Lefroy again.

1800

Jane's family moves to Bath. Her brother inherits the family home, but her beloved library of books are sold to finance the move and her father's retirement. Jane is thrust into the busy social scene of Bath.

1801

Jane visits Sidmouth in Devon. She meets a man, whom she falls in love with. Jane returns to Bath and receives news that her love has died.

1802

Jane receives a proposal of marriage. She accepts the proposal, but withdraws it the following morning.

1803

Jane's brother, Henry, helps to secure a deal with the publisher, Crosby and Co. They buy the rights to Northanger Abbey, but do not publish the book. Jane's father becomes ill and she returns to Bath to care for him.

1805

After the death of Jane's father, Jane and Cassandra – left without dowries – are reliant on their brothers for financial support.

1807

Abolition of Slavery Act

1805

Death of Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar

1806

Jane and Cassandra lodge with their brother Frank in Southampton. Jane suffers from writer's block during this difficult and vulnerable time.

1811

With support from Henry and Eliza, *Sense and Sensibility* is published. At 35 Jane has finally realised her goal of being a published author! The book is well received, largely helped with an endorsement by the Prince Regent.

1813

Jane's next novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, is published and sells even better than *Sense and Sensibility*. Eliza, one of Jane's biggest supporters, falls ill and is nursed by Jane. She dies of cancer in April.

1814

Jane publishes her most political book, *Mansfield Park*. The book is ignored by critics, although it sells well.

1816

Henry Austen's bank collapses, which affects the fortunes of the whole family. The brothers can no longer afford to support Jane and Cassandra. Poor sales of *Mansfield Park* affect the profits of Jane's publishing deal with John Murray. She has no choice but to continue to write and starts work on *Persuasion*.

1816

Jane Austen negotiates a publishing deal for *Emma* with John Murray.

1815

Following a period of peace, fighting resumes with France. Napoleon is eventually defeated at the Battle of Waterloo. An expensive war campaign results in a recession in Britain. Soldiers are now looking for work and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution results in many workers being replaced by machinery. Poverty is rife and the divide between the working and upper classes widens.

1817

Jane starts to fall ill towards the end of writing *Persuasion*. Despite this, she finishes the book and starts work on her final novel, *Sanditon*, but is too unwell to finish the novel.

1817 - 18TH JULY

Jane dies in Winchester, Hampshire, aged 41. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral. *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* are published together after Jane's death.

1871

1871 Jane's short novel, *Lady Susan*, is published



BIOGRAPHY JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen is one of Britain's most prominent and well-loved authors and 2025 marks the 250th anniversary of her birth. Her novels remain popular and relevant today, but Jane's own story is not so well-known. Austen was an avid letter writer and much of what we know about her life can be found in letters to her beloved sister, Cassandra. Beyond her literary achievements, here are some reasons why Jane Austen was a true trailblazer.

I DO, OR I DON'T?

Jane would not marry or have children, but she did find love in her life. The first was Tom Lefroy. Despite their feelings for each other, the match was deemed unsuitable by Lefroy's family due to Jane's lack of wealth and low social standing. This would become a common theme in her novels. Six years later, Jane falls in love with a clergyman during a visit to Sidmouth in Devon, although very little is known about him. The fragments we do know can be found in her letters to Cassandra. After returning to Bath, Jane receives news that her love has died. Cassandra describes him as the love of Jane's life.

Although Jane would not love again, she does receive a proposal of marriage from Mr Bigg-Wither. Despite the fact that she does not love him, she accepts his proposal. Jane is 26, which is considered old for an unmarried woman in Georgian society. The match would provide security and financial freedom. After an evening pondering her decision, Jane withdraws her acceptance the following day. This is a defining moment for Jane. Instead of conforming to the life expected of her, she chooses independence and resolves to pursue her dream as a writer. To choose this path is a defiant stand, but if she fails, she risks a life of poverty.

POLITICAL ACTIVIST

Throughout all of her books, Jane Austen makes keen observations about the inequalities of the times. Much of this stems from her own personal experience, or her observations of those around her. Recurring themes include love and marriage, but also the injustices faced by her female characters, who find themselves financially dependent on the men of the family

After the commercial success of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane writes her most political book to date; *Mansfield Park*. Not only does she comment on the class divide, she offers an opinion on the wealth accrued by the upper classes from slavery. In 1807, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed, which made it illegal to buy and sell slaves. However, this did nothing to free those who were already enslaved. It would appear that Jane was greatly influenced by the political discussions taking place during this period of time. *Mansfield Park* sells well, but the book is completely ignored by critics. Jane is furious at the snub, but the lack of acknowledgement has clearly touched a nerve with those in power.

INDEPENDENT WOMAN

In 1803 Jane's brother Henry negotiates a deal on Jane's behalf with the publisher, Crosby and Co. The publisher buys the rights to *Northanger Abbey*, but they do not publish it. After a six year wait, Jane writes a letter to challenge the publishers about the delay. Jane famously signs the letter "I am Gentlemen & c & c MAD" using the pseudonym Mrs Ashton Dennis. Crosby and Co. reply within days to confirm that, although they have bought the rights, they have no obligation to publish the book. Without the means to buy back the rights, Jane is forced to accept defeat. Despite successfully publishing *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane is determined to get a financially better deal for her new novel, *Emma*. Again, she uses her brother Henry to negotiate a deal with the most renowned publisher of the time, John Murray. Henry falls ill and, in a highly unusual move for the time, Jane acts on her own behalf and agrees a deal with the formidable publisher, who she describes as a "rogue". Determined not to be undermined again, Jane manages to retain the copyright of her work. She also has another trick up her sleeve. By dedicating *Emma* to her most famous fan, the Prince Regent, John Murray has no option but to publish the book straightaway, ensuring Jane an early payday!



AVA'S WRITER'S NOTE

SMUDGING THE EDGES OF EMMA

Jane Austen described Emma as a “heroine whom no one but myself will much like,” and from that moment, she had me. As a mate, she’s a nightmare for sure, but as a character, Emma is a gift — well intentioned, crucially lacking in self awareness, blindly confident in her own ability, brilliant, vain, defensive, impulsive — the list goes on.

I’d seen all the wonderful versions of *Emma* before but I was desperate to see her with those edges a bit smudged, that perfection a little less bright — after all, you can be brilliant and also a nightmare. You can have incredible potential but still fail university. So, to keep Emma as brilliant and confident as ever but put her in a moment of real crisis felt like a thoroughly modern, relatable and thrilling prospect.

For me, the most important line in the book is, “You must be the judge of your own happiness.” I think that’s what all of these characters end up learning, including Emma herself. All of them — all at different points in their lives — slowly come to choose what they want, declare what they need, and that, in itself, is a story worth telling whether in a bonnet or holding a bin of vomit. I’ve had so much fun writing an *Emma* that, hopefully, we’ve not seen before but one we recognise. It’s been a privilege to do something so bold with this wonderfully romantic story, and I really hope you enjoy it — and her — just don’t take anything she says too personally.





DIRECTOR INSIGHT WITH DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER HAYDON

Christopher Haydon is artistic director of Rose Theatre, Kingston. Prior to that, he was artistic director of the Gate Theatre and associate director at the Bush Theatre. He was a 2017 fellow of the Clore Leadership Programme.

Introduction to Emma

Here are some things that definitely did not exist when Jane Austen wrote Emma in 1816: mobile phones, cars, exercise bikes, Alexa, five-a-side football, loafers, charity shops, strawberry cheesecake, internet dating, Hinge, Jägerbombs, Love Island, and the band Wet Wet Wet.

And yet, somehow, all of these things have ended up in Ava Pickett's joyful, remarkable, adaptation of this classic novel. So what on earth is going on? When Ava and I first met to discuss the idea of putting this book on stage, she said she would probably set her adaptation in the original period. Yet when she delivered her first draft, the genteel world of early nineteenth century Surrey had been supplanted by the much louder world of Ava's own home - Essex in 2025. A place of fake tans, scarlet lipstick and shellac nails.

But for all of this, the play is definitely still telling the story that we all know and love, of Emma Woodhouse. Austen once wrote that with Emma, she wanted to create "a heroine whom no one but myself will much like". And Ava has taken this 'handsome, clever, rich' girl and thrust her into the modern day - still handsome, still (very) clever, but just maybe not quite as rich. In this new version, we delve into the question of why this well-intentioned but often wildly misguided young woman is so intent on 'fixing' the lives of those around her. When you are young and apparently have the world at your feet, it can be almost impossible to admit that, actually, life can be pretty terrifying.

So, Ava's version of Emma uses the original story to reflect on the predicament of so many of today's next generation.

It is also very funny. The play is both a rom-com and a love letter to all rom-coms: from *Much Ado About Nothing* to Richard Curtis and *Bridget Jones*. Romantic love, of course, lies at the centre - as George and Emma find it ever harder to deny their smouldering yearning for one another. But this is not just a tale of lust and romance. Love is all around in this play - whether it is the love that a father has for his daughters, that sisters have for each other, or that a friend will have for her bestie.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth. By coincidence, it is also the 30th anniversary of the release of the film *Clueless* - surely the greatest ever cinematic adaptation of Emma. So I am delighted that we can celebrate this timeless classic in such a timely new way. And it has been a joy bringing this show together with a cast that has all the sparkle of a really good bottle of Co-op Cava. I hope you enjoy Ava's work as much as I do!

Q&A with Christopher Haydon

How have you collaborated with Ava Pickett on this adaptation?

Ava delivered a first draft in October last year and since then we have engaged in a really close-knit process of reading each draft and noting it in detail. This means that I write down all my thoughts on the play as I read: what works, what doesn't feel clear enough, what could be pushed further - and then we discuss each of those thoughts moment by moment.



Sometimes these notes sessions can take several hours but it means that we have developed a really in depth understand of the material and of each other's working process. Ava is incredibly open and collaborative, which is great. Sometimes I will identify a moment that doesn't feel right and I will suggest a solution. However, she is a far better writer than me and so she will often be able to come up with a much better fix than anything I could have thought of. Ava has also been involved in the design process for the show. We have shown her the set model as it has evolved and she has been able to incorporate that in to the script, building more physical comedy and farcical elements in to the play

Can you describe the rehearsal process for this production?

The first week is spent around the table - we break the play down into units of action and we discuss each moment in detail - listing all the facts that we can find and also all the questions that we have about the characters and the action. At the end of that week we do an 'active read-through' - in which the actors read through the entire play but do it on their feet, moving about. They are always a bit apprehensive about this as it feels like a performance, but usually they end up getting into it! We then begin the process of blocking the whole show methodically. This means we make initial choices about where the actors should enter/exit/move in each scene. It is a way of finding an overall shape for the show. Once we have completed that process, we go back to the beginning and work through the whole play again - finding more and more detail and specificity. We will do this whole process 3-4 times. At the end of the rehearsal process we do 2-3 rehearsal room run throughs where we put the whole play together in one go. This leaves us in a really good position for the technical rehearsal.



How have you worked with Lily Arnold to realise the visual world of the play?

Lily and I have collaborated many times before so we have a good shorthand. She was very clear that the family home that Emma returns to had to be the key element of the set. She came up with something that had a kind of dolls house effect, which worked well as symbol for how Emma is trapped by and trying to escape from her younger self. We then explored different ways of creating the other locations for the show - the co-op, the locker room etc. It has been really fun to find ways that set pieces can pop out from unexpected places! The play also has quite a farcical element, with characters popping in and out of doors at various different moments and trying to hide from each other. That has been important for us, in terms of how we have shaped the physical environment to allow for maximum comic impact.



Why is the story of Emma still relevant to a modern audience?

I always worry a little about the word 'relevance'. It makes it sound like a story is only justified if it says something very specific and important about the world we live in today. In some sense, Emma is relevant simply because people are still reading the book. I guess they are doing this because it says something timeless about what it is to be young and what it means to be in love. So, it will likely always be relevant to any audience, modern or not! But I think what Ava has done is make the story feel very pertinent to a world where young people often have a great deal of anxiety about the future and are placing themselves under undue pressure to fix all of the world's ills. This version of the play takes a very affectionate look at one such young person and it manages to present her own trials and challenges in a way that encourages us to laugh along with her as she gradually learns how to laugh at herself. We watch Emma grow up as the play progresses. And seeing her learn



INTERVIEW

LILY ARNOLD

SET & COSTUME DESIGN

Lily Arnold is an award-winning set and costume designer. Previous designs at the Rose Theatre include: *Leopards* (2021), *The Boy at the Back of the Class* (2024) and *Marie and Rosetta* (2025)

Can you tell us how you came to be involved in this production?

I have worked with Chris Haydon on quite a few other shows before, though not since 2021. He asked if I would like to do it and sent me the script. The script was hilarious and I was really interested in the idea of a new version of *Emma* set in a contemporary period, so I said yes!

How have you approached a modern retelling of such a well-known novel?

Well, the writing has done a lot of that work for us, as it is already completely transposed to a modern setting in the fictional town of Highgate in Essex. Ava's writing incorporates a lot of the plot points and key themes in Jane Austen's original novel, so it was really easy to immediately visualise a world for the story. I had to refresh my memory of the novel, so I reread it and then cross referenced with everything that Ava had included in her version of the story. This is so I knew which events and relationships to focus on in the visual world of the play.

Can you describe your process, from initial concept through to the opening night.

First thing is to read the script. I like to read it for the first time without any distractions. If I'm tempted to build a really clear picture in my head, find references online, or if it reminds me of something I have in a book etc. I will stop myself. This is because it's important to feel how I connect with the play and to understand the rhythm of it. The next thing I do is start to gather images that relate to the play for me, visually. I create a digital document with lots of images on different pages and ideas of colour palettes and materials. Sometimes, I start to sketch with pen and paper or use photoshop to create digital sketches.

Then, I start to make a white card model. I draw everything in basic form on AutoCAD, which I then print to scale and use to make the physical model. I develop the model to its final stage to include colour and texture and all the details I will want to see realised on stage (all bearing in mind keeping to the budget for the show). I'll be thinking about the costume alongside this process and I often use Pinterest to gather ideas.



INTERVIEW

LILY ARNOLD

SET & COSTUME DESIGN

What have been the key working relationships for you on this project?

With Chris Haydon, the director, creatively. I have worked really closely with our production manager, Charlotte Ranson, to make decisions about the set, once Chris and I had decided what we wanted it to look like. I'm also working very closely with Cristiano Casimiro, who is our costume supervisor. Cristiano has been sourcing fabrics, appointing costume makers, managing the costume budget and making creative decisions about the designs too. Another key relationship is with our set builder. We have had detailed discussions about all of the set elements and details before he starts to build anything. We are in communication throughout the build process too.

Have the actors influenced any changes to your costume design?

Yes! It's very often the way with productions set in a contemporary period in a real context. Many of the actors are from Essex and have a much better understanding of the people and fashion styles from this area than I could ever have, no matter how much research I might have done. Their input is invaluable.

What have been the key working relationships for you on this project?

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What advice would you give to any young people interested in pursuing a career as a theatre designer?

Communicate with the team of people you are working with, everyone has their own area of expertise that they can bring to the table. The more shows I do, the more I see that the really successful ones (both in terms of box office sales and my own creative fulfilment) are the ones where we have all worked together really well as a team and collaborated.



REHEARSAL DIARY

BY MELISSA MOWRY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EMMA.

Melissa Mowry studied directing at The Actors Studio Drama School at Pace University in New York. Melissa is a freelance director and works for Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk, Virginia. Melissa has worked on shows across the US and India.



Melissa Mowry, Assistant Director of *Emma*.

WEEK 1

DAY 1- The first day of rehearsal always feels a little bit like the first day of school. Everyone is a little nervous and excited to get started. We start the day off with a quick introduction to everyone's role on the show and then quickly dive into a short introduction to the set. This helps the actors to understand where they are coming and going as they read through the script, giving them context for what they are doing and saying. After that, we jump right into breaking down the script.

DAY 2-3- These days are completely dedicated to table work. During table work the team breaks down the script into units and analyses them. This is a very important part of the rehearsal process, because it gives the actors and the directors a chance to make sure they understand what is happening, find connections, and fill out the characters.

DAY 4- We are ahead of schedule! The actors beginning to get on their feet, as we start to work on blocking. Chris, the director, likes to start with bigger shapes, thinking about how the characters move through the space, and then go back and start to fill in the details.

DAY 5- The larger meet and greet is at the end of the week, so the creative team, cast, and company members all come together and are introduced. This is also when concepts and designs for the show are shared. The actors also get to read through the play for the first time in an "active read through". This is a chance for the actors to get up and read and move however feels right to them.

WEEK 2

DAY 6-10- We continue to block the show from the beginning. We have an incredible movement director, Kloe Dean, who helps to shape several of the moments of more stylised movement in the play, as well as several of the transitions!

At the end of the week, I asked the cast what their favourite parts are so far:

Kit (playing George): **"Now that I know what the world of the play is, I can start to colour it in."**

Amelia (playing Emma): **"The run though at the end of the first week. It was terrifying, but it allowed me to experience Emma's arc and understand what she's going through and why she makes the choices she makes."**

Josh (playing Rob): **"I have just come out of drama school, so working with people who have worked in the industry before. I have had the chance to learn a lot in 2 weeks. Also, my first professional project reflects a bit of where I grew up."**

Sophia (playing Harriet): **"Collaborating. It is my first time doing a play where I am part of the whole process, the whole story, not just my part. It feels like we are creating together."**

Jess (playing Isabella): **"The active read through demystified everything and I got to see the scope of the characters journey from scene to scene. It allowed me to physically get it into my body, which is helpful for me."**

Lucy (playing Mrs. Bates): **"Getting through the first week and getting to know each other a bit more. And going back to the beginning of the script after the active read through, gives the freedom to play and create."**

KEY STAGE 4

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 4 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

ACTING

Think about the performances in the play. Some actors play the same character at different ages and some actors play more than one character. Consider how the following acting techniques have been used:

Vocal

Volume, tone, pitch, pace, rhythm, accent, pause, intonation, inflection, resonance.

Physical

Posture, facial expression, eye contact, tension, pace, gesture, space, mannerisms.

Character	Vocal Performance	Physical performance	How do the actors make it clear they are different ages or characters?

KEY STAGE 4

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

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SET

Think about the different locations in the play and how they have been designed. Consider how the following elements have been used by the set designer and the effect on the audience:

Colour, levels, texture, space, shape, position, scale, transitions (scene changes).

Projections, entrances and exits, set dressing (furniture), time period.

Location	Describe the set elements	Why do you think the designer has made these decisions?	What is the effect on the audience?

KEY STAGE 4

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 4 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

COSTUME

Think about the costume design and what this tells us about each character. Consider how the following elements have been used by the costume designer and the effect on the audience:

Colour, texture, fabric, style, accessories, shape, fit, condition, time period.

How does the costume design change when we see the characters at different points in their lives?

Character	Describe the costume elements	Why do you think the designer has made these decisions?	What does the costume tell the audience about the character?

KEY STAGE 4

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 4 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

LIGHTING

Think about the different locations in the play and how the lighting has been used. Consider how the following elements have been used by the lighting designer and the effect on the audience:

Colour, direction of the light (is the set/character lit from behind/front or the side).

Focus - are the edges of light soft or sharp?

Use of shadow, intensity of light (bright/dim), patterns, shape.

Transition – do the lights crossfade between scenes, is there a black out, or is the change quick and sharp?

Location	Describe the set elements	Why do you think the designer has made these decisions?	What is the effect on the audience?

KEY STAGE 5

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 5 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

PRODUCTION CONCEPT

How were the main themes of the play conveyed to the audience?

Tip: Think about decisions the director and designers have made to achieve an effect.

Describe the dramatic conventions and techniques that were used during one scene in the play and how this made you feel as an audience member.

Tip: Think about the following: how the space was used, sub-text, pacing, spatial relationships on stage, character interactions, vocal and physical performances, use of set, lighting, sound, props.

How were the key dramatic moments in the play staged?

Tip: Think about stage positioning, spatial relationship between different characters, use of levels, pace, transitions between the scenes, dramatic climax, use of set, lighting, sound, props.

KEY STAGE 5

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 5 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

PERFORMANCE SKILLS

Which performance skills were used by the actors who played different age groups. Also consider how the performers portrayed their character's decline in health.

Tip: Vocal performance: Volume, tone, pitch, pace, rhythm, accent, pause, intonation, inflection, resonance.
Physical performance: Posture, facial expression, eye contact, tension, pace, gesture, space, mannerisms

Which performance skills were used by the actors with multiple roles?

Tip: How did their physical and vocal performances change?

Can you describe the different ways that character's motivations were communicated to the audience?

Tip: Think about how subtext is used and the character's objectives and actions

KEY STAGE 5

LIVE THEATRE PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

For Key Stage 5 students coming to see *Emma*, use the sheet below to analyse the production. You can use these notes to write about your experience in more depth.

DESIGN CONCEPT

How was the production design used to communicate different settings and the passing of time?

Tip: Think about the use of set, lights, sound and costume. What choices have the designers made and why?

How did the design reflect the social, historical and cultural context of the play?

Tip: Think about the use of set, lights, sound and costume. What choices have the designers made and why?

How was the production design used during the key dramatic moments of the play?

Tip: Think about decisions the director and designers have made to achieve an effect.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Classroom Activities

The exercises below are designed to be used in the classroom to explore the characters in Ava Pickett's adaptation of Emma.

We have provided two versions of a script extract for you to use with your students. The first is the original text and the second is an amended version with the strong language removed. Please use the version that you feel is most suitable for your student's age group.

EXERCISE 1: FAMILY PORTRAITS

PART ONE

Separate the class into groups of four or five. You will be creating freeze frame family portraits for the Woodhouse family at different points in their lives. Think about the following:

Who is present in the photos – you can include family members that are not in the play.

How old are Isabella and Emma in each photo?

Who is no longer present?

How does this affect the mood of each photo

Portrait one: Primary school photos for Emma and Isabella

Portrait two: Family holiday

Portrait three: Christmas

Portrait four: Mr. Woodhouse 40th birthday

Portrait five: Isabella's wedding

PART TWO

Ask the groups to show their family portraits back to the class, in chronological order – starting with the earliest picture. Ask some of the students to describe how their character is feeling at this point in their lives.

EXERCISE 2: CHARACTER DIARIES AND OBJECTIVES

Objective: A character's goal in a scene

The script gives us clues about significant moments in the character's lives, but we are missing some of the detail. As actors, it's a useful exercise to fill in any gaps in a character's backstory. This helps to develop a more rounded character and play some scenes with a greater degree of truth. It can also affect a character's objective in scene.

Choose any of the characters below and write a short diary entry at this key moment in their lives:

Emma before leaving for University

Mr. Woodhouse after his wife's funeral

John before he proposes to Isabella

George after Emma leaves for University

Ask the students to read their entries to the group. Consider the following:

Did this exercise change your opinion of any of the characters?

Does it give you a better idea of why your character makes particular choices?

Does it change any of your character's objectives?

EXERCISE 3: TEMPO

Tempo: the speed of movement or dialogue

PART ONE:

Ask your students to move around the room, making use of all the space available and avoiding walking in laps. Students should be relaxed and focus on removing tension from their bodies. Once they are focused, explain that they will be moving at a different tempos, with one being the slowest and ten being the fastest. As they move around the space, call out numbers between one to ten and ask the students to move at the corresponding speed.

PART TWO:

Continue the exercise, but this time introduce voice. For each new number, students should move in the space at that speed and greet it other, whether that be a long "hellooo" or a short sharp "hi!".

PART THREE:

Arrange the students in groups of 7-9 and allocate a character from the play to each member of the group. Repeat the exercise above, this time experimenting with the tempo that fits the character. Once your actors have settled on the tempo for their character, ask them to mime the following tasks:

Reading a book

Sending text message

Making a cup of tea

Waiting in a doctor's surgery - they must stay seated

Ask the students to reflect on the following:

How did your character's tempo affect your movements?

From an audience's perspective, what does this tell you about the character?

How did you maintain your character's tempo, in a situation that requires stillness?

Part Four:

Set your space up, to replicate a church aisle, with seats either side. This is the day of the wedding and the guests are arriving at the church. Ask the students to enter the space in character, one at a time, focussing on the tempo. Leave some time between the entrance of each new character, so they can establish themselves in the scene.

After this exercise, reflect on the following:

How did your character's tempo affect your actions?

How did the environment affect your characters tempo?

EXERCISE 4: STATUS

PART ONE:

Status: The amount of influence or power that a character has in a scene.

There are different level of status between some characters in the play, which can be seen in the relationship between Emma and Harriet. Throughout the play, the dynamic between these characters alters and this exercise explores how status can be used when rehearsing a scene.

You will need ten cards, numbered from one to ten. Hand your students a single card and explain that number one is the lowest status and number ten in the highest. Place a single chair in your performance space. Ask the students to enter the space one at a time and introduce themselves to the audience. It is helpful to do this in order, so start with the student who has number one, followed by the student who has number two. After the exercise, ask the students to reflect on how they changed their status. Consider:

Physicality

Use of voice

Tempo

Volume

Eye contact

Levels

PART TWO:

Split your group of students into pairs and ask them to read the extracts on the opposite page aloud. Once they have read the script, each pair should consider which number status to give Harriet and Emma in each scene. Ask the groups to rehearse the scenes with these status numbers. Afterwards, reflect on the following:

How did the status this change the scene?

Is the status different in each scene. If so, why?

What choices did you make as an actor to maintain your status?

Ask the pairs to experiment with a different status for each character– even if they feel completely wrong. They can try this multiple times. It's worth emphasising that 'play' is key in rehearsing a scene. Even if the status seems wrong for a character, trying different approaches can lead to an interesting perspective or choice. Consider the following:

What worked and what didn't?

How does the status change throughout the scene?

SCRIPT EXTRACTS

ACT 1

Scene 4 - Version one (original text)

Harriet: And I went on a date last night.!

Emma: WHAT!? Harriet!! Why didn't you lead with this!!

Harriet: I don't know! Oh my god Emma! He's amazing! It's Rob Martin from school, d'you remember?

Emma: Rob Martin?

Harriet: Yep! He's so funny! Like not in an obvious way, but in a cool way! I really like him.

Emma: Rob Martin, the boy who set the bins on fire in Year Eight?

Harriet: Well, he didn't set all the bins on fire.

Emma: Harriet. No.

Harriet: No come on, everyone does mad things in Year Eight!

Emma: Yeah not Arson! And he said a load of shit about Liz Bennet's sister. Harriet he's a dickhead and we agreed that you weren't gonna date fuck-boys from Highbury anymore after Mr. Woodhouse Crawford.

Harriet: No! He's not a boy he's a DJ! He's really nice, he paid for all our drinks!

Emma: Well it's 2025 you shouldn't let someone pay for all your drinks.

Harriet: No I just m/ean

Emma: What doesn't he believe in girls paying for their drinks? What else doesn't he believe in? I hate that it's such entrenched sexist bullshit /from here

Emma goes to watch George in the garden. Harriet scrolls on her phone.

Emma: He's so annoying. I bet he does vote.

Emma turns and notices Harriet staring at her phone.

Emma: What's wrong?

Harriet: He, he changed his profile photo. Rob. When I left this morning the photo was of him in BlueWater holding a large popcorn with his mates - cos y'know you always said don't trust a profile that doesn't have any photos with their mates in case they're a - sociopath

Emma: (joining in) - a sociopath, yeah.

Harriet: But now it's him dressed as a Smurf.

Emma grabs the phone and stares at it, walks away, like a detective.

Emma: Interesting. Very interesting.

Harriet: Do you think he's talking to other girls?

Emma: Yes. Obviously. Why would he be updating his Hinge if he wasn't on the app talking to other girls. The mental thing is he updated it immediately after you left his. I mean what you've had sex and by the time you're out the front garden he's switched his profile. How did you leave it? This morning when you left him?

Harriet: I said my cat died when I was seven. Beat

Emma: What?

Harriet: No cos I was leaving and he has a cat that died and so I said I had a cat that died too!

Emma: Harriet! You've never had a cat!

Harriet: I just wanted him to like me!

Emma: Harriet! We've been over this so many fucking times! You've got to be yourself!!

Harriet: Okay well maybe I should message him! Maybe he sat on his phone?

Emma: Harriet! No! 'Cos he'll just say I'm sorry we never had the chat and then you'll say oh okay it's fine even though it's not fine and then it's six months of you crying and not eating and looking in to conspiracy theories on the titanic again! No! It's done! Time of death, call it!

Harriet strops and flops down on the sofa.

Harriet: It's not fair! I don't understand how you can have your whole life together and I can't even get Bin Fire Rob Martin to like me for a day! Urgh! Why are you always right?

Emma: I know, it's a curse

ACT 1 Scene 4 - Version two (amended text)

Harriet: And I went on a date last night.!

Emma: WHAT!?! Harriet!! Why didn't you lead with this!!

Harriet: I don't know! Oh my god Emma! He's amazing! It's Rob Martin from school, d'you remember?

Emma: Rob Martin?

Harriet: Yep! He's so funny! Like not in an obvious way, but in a cool way! I really like him.

Emma: Rob Martin, the boy who set the bins on fire in Year Eight?

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Harriet: No come on, everyone does mad things in Year Eight!

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Harriet: No I just m/ean

Emma: What doesn't he believe in girls paying for their drinks? What else doesn't he believe in? I hate that it's such entrenched sexist stupidity / from here

Harriet: Emma, please I really like him- and he hasn't set a bin on fire since 2022.

Emma stares at Harriet and then relents, flops down on the sofa, and grins, makes a song and dance of it.

Emma: FINE! But don't come crawling to me when he's been an idiot! GO ON THEN show me a photo of him!

Harriet grabs her phone. George Knightly walks through and Emma sticks up her middle finger at him.

Harriet: Okay! but it's just the photo on his Hinge! And it's a bad photo! He's much better in real life!

Emma goes to watch George in the garden. Harriet scrolls on her phone.

Emma: He's so annoying. I bet he does vote.

Emma turns and notices Harriet staring at her phone.

Emma: What's wrong?

Harriet: He, he changed his profile photo. Rob. When I left this morning the photo was of him in BlueWater holding a large popcorn with his mates - cos y'know you always said don't trust a profile that doesn't have any photos with their mates in case they're a - sociopath

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Emma grabs the phone and stares at it, walks away, like a detective.

Emma: Interesting. Very interesting.

Harriet: Do you think he's talking to other girls?

Emma: Yes. Obviously. Why would he be updating his Hinge if he wasn't on the app talking to other girls. The mental thing is he updated it immediately after you left his. I mean what you've had sex and by the time you're out the front garden he's switched his profile. How did you leave it? This morning when you left him?

Harriet: I said my cat died when I was seven. Beat

Emma: What?

Harriet: No cos I was leaving and he has a cat that died and so I said I had a cat that died too!

Emma: Harriet! You've never had a cat!

Harriet: I just wanted him to like me!

Emma: Harriet! We've been over this so many times! You've got to be yourself!!

Harriet: Okay well maybe I should message him! Maybe he sat on his phone?

Emma: Harriet! No! 'Cos he'll just say I'm sorry we never had the chat and then you'll say oh okay it's fine even though it's not fine and then it's six months of you crying and not eating and looking in to conspiracy theories on the titanic again! No! It's done! Time of death, call it!

Harriet strops and flops down on the sofa.

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Harriet: It's not fair! I don't understand how you can have your whole life together and I can't even get Bin Fire Rob Martin to like me for a day! Urgh! Why are you always right?

Emma: I know, it's a curse

ACT 2 Scene 8 – (Suitable for all age groups)

Harriet: Okay so I've been thinking.

Emma: What about? Isabella: EMMA!?

Harriet: George.

Emma: George? What about George?

Harriet: I just thought, well like, a week ago I had a horoscope and it said "open your eyes to what's been in front of you all along right" well after the other night at the co-op I suddenly thought, what if he's the thing that's been in front of me??

Emma: But, but that could be anything, you know, you might have an under active thyroid you don't know about.

Harriet: Could you talk to him? Maybe see if - if he might be interested?

Isabella: EMMA!

Emma: IN A MINUTE! Talk to him? About you?

Harriet: Yeah! Emma: Is that a good idea?

Harriet: Oh what you think I should talk to him?

Emma: No –

Harriet: No that's better isn't it, cos you're always saying I should be more up front!

Emma: No, I just mean I don't know if you and George are right for each other. You know you just, don't have the same sense of humour.

Harriet: Well who is right for me then?

Emma: Well, maybe no one in Highbury! This is what I'm saying!

Harriet: Emma it was you that wanted to set me up with someone in the first place.

Emma: Yeah but maybe - maybe we should just, you know maybe part of the problem is that you're focusing on it too much! We should travel, we should go to Thailand or something!

Harriet: Why are you obsessed with Thailand!

Emma: I'm not obsessed with Thailand Harriet I just don't know why you have to be with George!

Emma: Interesting. Very interesting.

Harriet: Do you think he's talking to other girls?

Emma: Yes. Obviously. Why would he be updating his Hinge if he wasn't on the app talking to other girls. The mental thing is he updated it immediately after you left his. I mean what you've had sex and by the time you're out the front garden he's switched his profile. How did you leave it? This morning when you left him?

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Below are some links to videos which complement the content in this pack.
You may wish to use these as visual aids when studying this production.

Emma Teaser Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=280fBLzdSe0>

In Conversation on Ava Pickett's Emma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzVT1gOMKrU>

Cast Announcement for Emma

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=yg9QLu6fKYM>



CREDITS

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