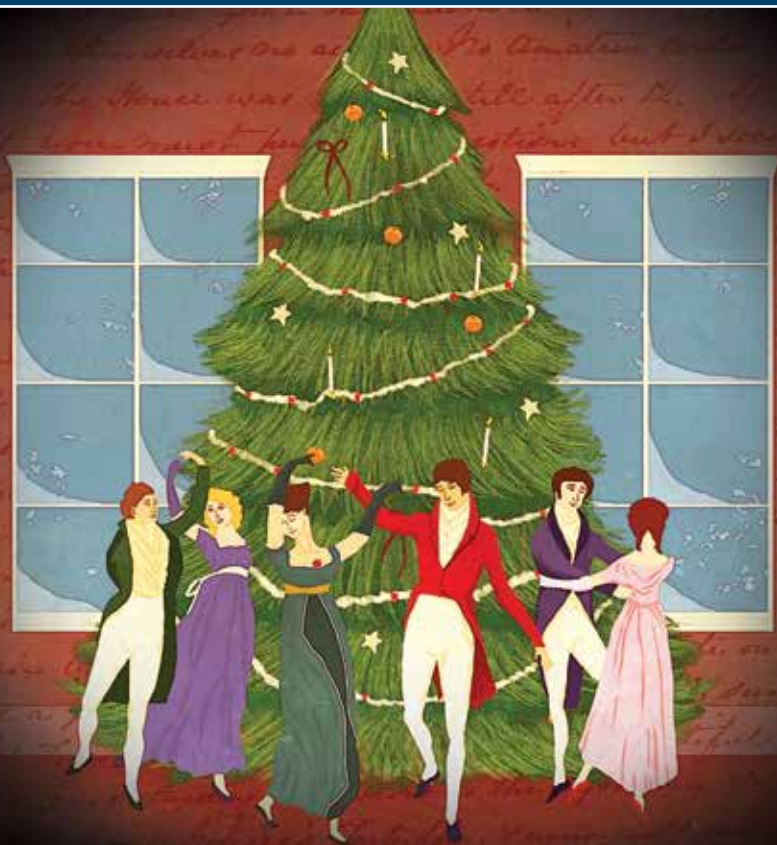




MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE



MISS BENNET:
**CHRISTMAS
AT PEMBERLEY**

BY Lauren Gunderson & Margot Melcon

DIRECTED BY Sean Daniels

NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 23, 2018



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FROM SEAN DANIELS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



I love holiday shows. I do. And I love Lauren Gunderson shows. I think that's fairly obvious.

I've worked on or programmed a holiday show every year since I've been in this business (which is approximately 4,000 years).

Plus, Lauren Gunderson married my wife and I. Literally.

So, when this came around, I was sold. Actually she sent it to us years ago to see if we would premiere it, and at the time we just couldn't afford it—so we passed, and other theatres went on to have the glory of starting a show that will play for decades to come. But that was years ago, and since then, we've added Bonnie Butkas, who professionalized our admin and development staff — and bam! Here we are, able to take on the largest show MRT has attempted in at least 15 years with a cast of eight. And what a special one to do it on. One that celebrates not only the holidays, but literature and the women inside it.

The night before we started rehearsal, Lauren asked me to read this to the cast. It was amazing to look around the room and see them listen with their "I Voted" stickers on.

"Margot and I think it's a pretty big deal to be telling a story about a woman who changes everyone around her instead of changing because of the world around her. We think it's a pretty big deal to tell the story of a brilliant determined woman who is rewarded with understanding and love of her family and a nice young man. We think it's a pretty big deal to tell a story that ends with hope and heart. We know you do too or you wouldn't be in this room at this awesome theater company! Happy first day of rehearsal!"

What a great message for right now.

Hope and heart and women at the center of the story.

The things we always love at the holidays and couldn't need more of in 2018.

Also who doesn't love a holiday story? Not me.

A handwritten signature of Sean Daniels.

FROM BONNIE J. BUTKAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This is the season of joy, generosity, and gratitude.

Thank you for you for joining us for *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*. This is your theatre, and we cannot wait to share this sparkling holiday show with you. The show combines so many of our favorite people—written by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Malcon, based on Jane Austen's characters from *Pride and Prejudice*, and featuring a delightful cast—bringing back

Alexis Bronkovic, Veronika Duerr, Vichet Chum, and Victoria Grace, and introducing you to Amanda Collins, Jesse Hinson, Katie Grindeland, and Shawn K. Jain.

As I write this, dozens of volunteers are assisting with hand-folded paper ornaments for the set of *Miss Bennet*... Our community has stepped up to bring James Fenton's gorgeous set design to fruition—young women from Girls Inc., students from Valley Collaborative, our Cohort Club, artists from Western Avenue Studios, the Friends of MRT, and our crafty staff members have all volunteered their time and talent to fold, crease, glue, and fold some more.

In the spirit of giving, we will be collecting toys for children in Lowell throughout the run of *Miss Bennet*... Our neighbors at the Church of the Immaculate Conception work with dozens of families who will benefit from your generosity. And in the spirit of giving, thank you to all our audience members who contributed to the Essex County Community Foundation to support the people impacted by the gas explosions in Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover. You donated over \$1,600 during the first show of our season!

Lastly, it has been an exciting season so far. We are grateful to be part of the Barr-Klarman Massachusetts Arts Initiative. With generous multi-year funding from the Barr and Klarman foundations, we will address our ongoing structural deficit, invest in our artistic vision, grow our efforts to be equitable, diverse and inclusive, and plan for the future.

Thank you.

We wish you a happy, healthy holiday season,

A handwritten signature of Bonnie J. Butkas.

P.S. If you're still looking for that perfect holiday gift, MRT has gift certificates and gift subscriptions! Go to mrt.org/holidayspecials. Get a three-play package for just \$73!

Q&A: PLAYWRIGHT AND DRAMATURG MARGOT MELCON



How did you meet Lauren Gunderson?

Lauren and I first met when I was working at Marin Theatre Company as their dramaturg—she was brought out in 2009

to work on a play of hers called *Rock Hill*. She ended up moving to the Bay Area, and she and I began collaborating as playwright-dramaturg. We worked on several pieces in development at Marin Theatre, as well as on the world premiere of her play *I and You*.

How did the two of you come up with the idea of writing a sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*?

In the summer of 2014, she was working at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor on a one-woman show with banjo that was loosely based on *King Lear*. [That play became *The Heath*, which premieres here at MRT in February.] We decided to take a road trip up to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to see a production of *Lear* and on the six-hour car ride, we came up with the idea for *Miss Bennet*... The impulse came from both a practical place—all theater companies need good holiday shows to produce, and there just aren't that many to choose from—and a place of desire to see a

different kind of holiday story. Ours is rooted in the complications of being part of a family, one that is made up of very different and dynamic women, and what it means to support each other.

You are a highly regarded dramaturg. Had you written a play before?

Though I had read literally thousands of plays as a dramaturg and the director of new play development at Marin Theatre, I had never written a play. So, my only experience of writing has been as a co-writer, but it has been an incredibly gentle entry into the world of being a playwright. The process of writing can be very solitary, very much alone, even in the theater, which is ultimately a collaborative artform. The nice thing about being part of a writing team is that the collaboration starts early, from the inception of the idea, so you're never staring down at a blank page by yourself. From the beginning, neither Lauren or myself were precious with the words we wrote, or took too much ownership. It was all in service of the story.

What do you think is the enduring appeal of Jane Austen?

Jane Austen will never go out of style because of her incredible use of wit and comedy. It is never not fun to dive into

Q&A: PLAYWRIGHT AND DRAMATURG MARGOT MELCON

a world of people with problems that are maybe a little superficial, but always serve to showcase great and complex characters, especially the women. What I love especially about *Pride and Prejudice* is that each of the sisters has such a unique personality—at different times in your life, when you read the novel, you'll identify with a different one

of the sisters. If you used to be more of a Lydia, you may evolve into a Lizzy. Or maybe you've always felt like a Mary at heart, until one day you wake up, and you're relating to Jane. That's the lovely thing about complicated characters: they resonate differently because each one of us has a little bit of each of them in us.



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Amanda Collins (Mary Bennet) and Vichet Chum (Arthur de Bourgh). Photo by Meghan Moore.

WHAT IS A DRAMATURG?

A dramaturg is the most misunderstood position in the theatre because the work of a dramaturg varies widely from project to project. In a nutshell, a theatre dramaturg is a literary editor, who consults with authors and analyzes and edits texts. Further, dramaturgs assist playwrights in structuring new plays. Dramaturgs also work with various aspects of the production, including crafting educational materials, creating marketing copy, and facilitating artistic and community conversations.

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Pictured: Joe Kirsian and Martin Landy. Photo by Meghan Moore.

COMING NEXT!
JANUARY 9 – FEB 3

SLOW FOOD

by Wendy MacLeod
DIRECTED BY Sean Daniels

Irene and Peter just want to have a nice meal out on their big anniversary in Palm Springs. But their highly neurotic waiter, Stephen, will not bring them their food, and everything goes horribly, ridiculously wrong. This absurd server will have them examining everything from their menu choices to their very future together! Will their shared desperation get them their spanakopita—or end their marriage? Playwright Wendy MacLeod (Women in Jeopardy!) brings us a comedy for anyone who's ever been "hungry."

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Artwork by Chris Holden

SEAN DANIELS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



PRESENTS

BONNIE J. BUTKAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY

BY LAUREN GUNDERSON^ AND MARGOT MELCON

FEATURING

ALEXIS BRONKOVIC
VICTORIA GRACE

VICHET CHUM^
KATIE GRINDELAND

AMANDA COLLINS
JESSE HINSON

VERONIKA DUERR^
SHAWN K. JAIN

SCENIC DESIGNER
JAMES J. FENTON^

COSTUME DESIGNER
LINDA ROSS

LIGHTING DESIGNER
BRIAN J. LILIENTHAL^

SOUND DESIGNER
DAVID REMEDIOS^

PRODUCER
PETER CREWE

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
MAEGAN PASSAFUME*

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

BRIDGET KATHLEEN O'LEARY

DIRECTED BY
SEAN DANIELS

NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 23, 2018

40th Anniversary Community Voices Project recorded, edited, and mastered by David Remedios.

Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley was originally produced by Northlight Theatre, Chicago, Illinois (BJ JONES, Artistic Director, Timothy Evans, Executive Director)



Merrimack Repertory Theatre is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), Actors' Equity Association (AEA), Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), and United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.



The Cohort Club is funded in part by Mass Humanities, which receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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CAST

In alphabetical order

Elizabeth Darcy.....	Alexis Bronkovic*
Arthur de Bourgh.....	Vichet Chum*
Mary Bennet.....	Amanda Collins*
Anne de Bourgh.....	Veronika Duerr*
Jane Bingley.....	Victoria Grace*
Lydia Wickham.....	Katie Grindeland
Fitzwilliam Darcy.....	Jesse Hinson*
Charles Bingley.....	Shawn K. Jain

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Wig Designer Rachel Padula-Shufelt

TIME AND PLACE

December 1815, at the Pemberley estate.

Run time is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes with intermission.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lowell Blueprint, Inc.
 Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell, MRT's Cohort Club, Friends of MRT,
 The Valley Collaborative, and Western Ave Studios.

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Manager in the United States.

The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

The indicated Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in this production are represented by United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.

Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.

11

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WHO'S WHO



ALEXIS BRONKOVIC (*Elizabeth Darcy*) **MRT:** *Silent Sky* (Henrietta Leavitt). **Off-Broadway/New York:** *The Big Broadcast*, *The Barrow Group Theatre*; *Tiny Geniuses*, *Fringe NYC* at the

Here Arts Center. **Regional:** *Born Yesterday* (Billie Dawn), *Guthrie*; *Chapter Two* (Jennie Malone), *Cape May Stage*; *Amadeus* (Constanze), *Maltz Jupiter Theatre*; *A Christmas Carol* (Belle), *Actors Theatre of Louisville*; *Postwave Spectacular*, *Heist*, *Humana Festival ATL*. **Web-series:** *2Some*, *Rainbow Ruthie*. **Television:** *Blacklist*, *Younger*, *The Affair*, *Royal Pains*, *Blue Bloods*. **Film:** *Oleander*, *Jimmy & Don*, *Veritaphobia*, *On Settling Down*, *Julia*. **Education:** BA Theatre Performance from Marymount Manhattan College, Actor's Theatre of Louisville Apprentice Company Alum. **Other:** Thrilled to be back at MRT. So much love and thanks to her Rats and Fire Dragon.



VICHET CHUM (*Arthur de Bourgh*) is a Cambodian-American actor, writer, director & theater maker, originally from Dallas, Texas, and now living in New York City. His show

KNYUM had its world premiere at Merrimack in the 2017-2018 season, and he's thrilled to return to this beloved theater. Regionally, he's worked at Trinity Repertory Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Guthrie Theater, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Huntington Theatre Company, Everyman Theatre, New Harmony Theatre and Weston Playhouse. In NYC, he's worked at the Cherry Lane Theater, Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, the Clurman Theatre at Theatre Row, Project Y Theatre, Woodshed Collective, Slant Theatre Project, and the Incubator Arts Project. His plays have been workshopped at Second Generation Productions, Crowded Outlet, Weston Playhouse, Cleveland Public Theatre, All For One Theater, Amios, Florida State University, and the New Harmony Project. He is the 2018

Princess Grace Awards recipient in Playwriting. He is a proud graduate of the University of Evansville (BFA) and Brown University/Trinity Repertory Company (MFA). vichetchum.com



AMANDA COLLINS (*Mary Bennet*) **MRT:** Debut. **Regional:** *Old Money* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Totalitarians*, *Out of Sterno* (IRNE

Nomination, Best Actress), *This Is Our Youth*, *9 Circles* (Gloucester Stage); *Back the Night*, *Elemeno Pea* (Boston Playwrights'); *Women Who Mapped The Stars*, *Saving Kitty* (with Jennifer Coolidge), *The Life of Galileo* (Central Square Theater); *A Behanding in Spokane*, *The Bald Soprano*, *Speech and Debate*, *Shortstack*, *Colorado*, *What Then* (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater); *The Seagull* (Harbor Stage/Modern Theater); *Fun Home*, *Men on Boats*, *My Name Is Asher Lev* (Cape Rep); *Taste of Sunrise* (Wheelock Family Theater); *When The World Was Green*, *An Ideal Husband* (American Stage, Florida); *Jester's Dead* (The Outfit in NYC). She was a founding member of Harbor Stage Company. **Television:** *Olive Kitteridge* (HBO), *Castle Rock* (Hulu), and *Boston's Finest* (ABC Pilot). **Film:** *Sea of Trees*.



VERONIKA DUERR (*Anne de Bourgh*) **MRT:** *Going to See the Kid* (Ellis Elliott), *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Home of the Brave* (Marianne), *It's A Wonderful Life* (Lana Sherwood). **Regional:**

Tall Girls (World Premiere), *Spoon Lake Blues* (World Premiere), *Alliance Theatre*; *Bob: A Life in Five Acts*, *Geva Theatre*; *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet), *As You Like It* (Rosalind), *Twelfth Night* (Viola), *Atlanta Shakespeare Company*. **Education:** BFA, Savannah College of Art and Design. **Other:** 2015 Alliance Theatre Artistic Fellow; Co-founder of The Weird Sisters Theatre Project, a collective of female artists in Atlanta.

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WHO'S WHO



VICTORIA GRACE (*Jane Bingley*) **MRT:** *Silent Sky* (Margaret). **Regional:** *The Imaginary Invalid* (Beline/Cleante), *Soap & Rope* Theatre; *Henry IV Parts 1&2* (Lady Mortimer), Shakespeare & Company; *Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike* (Nina), Asolo Rep. **Film/Television:** Cornerstone Mitsubishi (Spokesperson), Youth Min (Rachel), First Name Films, IFF Boston Audience Award and Lone Star Film Festival Audience Award. **Education:** MFA in acting from FSU, Asolo Conservatory for acting training.



KATIE GRINDEL (*Lydia Wickham*) Katie is so excited to make her MRT debut. Her previous stage credits include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Good* (New Repertory Theatre), *Stuart Little* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi*, and *An Issue of Blood* (Central Square Theatre), *La Llorona* (Fresh Ink Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Hampshire Shakespeare Company), and *Nosferatu, The Vampyr* (Milky Way Coffee Roasters). She also freelances as an educator, playwright, props artist, and scenic assistant in the Boston area with companies such as New Repertory Theatre, American Repertory Theatre, Bridge Repertory Theatre, Fresh Ink Theatre, and more. Co-founder of Milky Way Coffee Roasters. Emerson College Class of 2016. Thanks to Bridget for the opportunity, and to Michael H., Sloth, her mom, and sister for their support, love, and wine.



JESSE HINSON (*Fitzwilliam Darcy*) Jesse is excited to be making his Merrimack Repertory Theatre debut. Speakeasy Stage Company: *Shakespeare in Love*. Actors' Shakespeare Project: *Exit the King*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King Henry VI, Part 2*, *The*

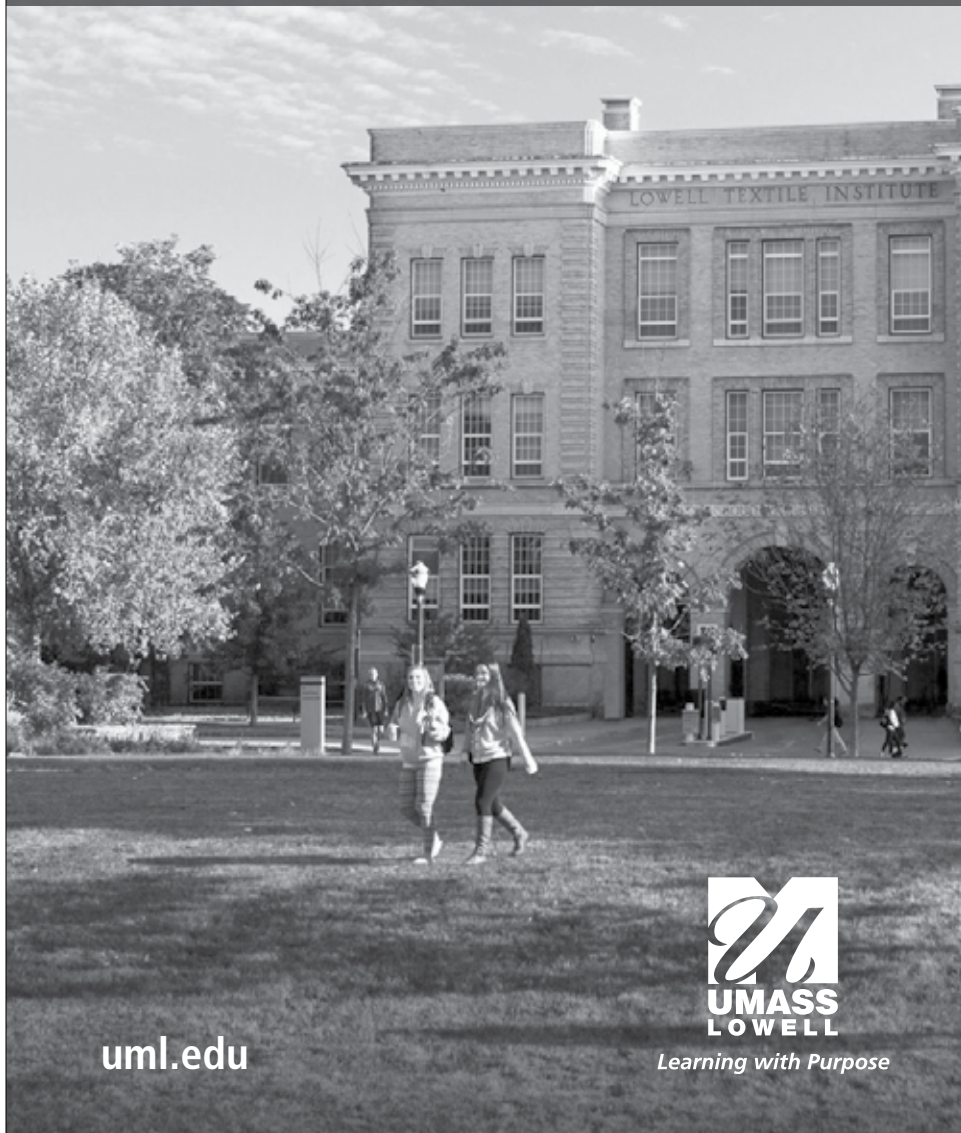
Comedy of Errors, *As You Like It*, *Pericles*, *Twelfth Night*, *Antony and Cleopatra*. New Repertory Theater: *The Whipping Man*, *Holiday Memories*. Greater Boston Stage Company: *Seminar*, *Miracle on 34th Street*. The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theater: *As You Like It*, *Arcadia*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Morality Play*. Berkshire Theatre Group: *The Puppetmaster of Lodz*, *Moonchildren*, *Macbeth*, *The Einstein Project*, *A Christmas Carol*. Georgia Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*. Jesse earned an MFA in acting at Brandeis University and a BA in theatre at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA. He is an assistant teaching professor at Northeastern University.



SHAWN K. JAIN (*Charles Bingley*) Shawn is thrilled to be making his MRT debut. **Regional:** American Repertory Theater (*Charlotte's Web*, *Assistance*, *Our Town*), New Repertory Theatre (*Heartland*, upcoming), Moscow Art Theater (*Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*), Constellation Theatre (*The Fire and The Rain*), WAM Theatre (*Honor Killing*), Prince George's County Shakespeare (*Twelfth Night*), Source Festival in Washington, D.C. **Training:** MFA in Acting from A.R.T. Institute at Harvard University/Moscow Art Theater School. **Online:** @shawnkain on Twitter and shawnkain.com.

SEAN DANIELS (*Director*) **MRT:** *The Villains' Supper Club*, *Little Orphan Danny*, *Silent Sky*, *My 80-Year-Old Boyfriend*, *Women in Jeopardy!*, *The Making of a Great Moment*, *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Home of the Brave*, *Tinker to Evers to Chance*, *I and You*, *The Lion*. Sean has directed at Manhattan Theatre Club (*The Lion*, Drama Desk Award & Theatre World Award, nominated for Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle), Lynn Redgrave (NYC), The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), St. James (West End, London – *The Lion*, winner of Best New Musical), Actors Theatre of Louisville,

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WHO'S WHO

Arena Stage, Portland Center Stage, Geva Theatre, Old Globe, The Geffen, Playmakers Rep, A.C.T., Cleveland Play House, Milwaukee Rep, Alliance Theatre, California Shakespeare, Dad's Garage Theatre Company, Swine Palace, Neo-Futurists, Aurora Theatre, Crowded Fire and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Sean has been named "one of the top fifteen up & coming artists in the U.S., whose work will be transforming America's stages for decades to come" and "One Of 7 People Reshaping And Revitalizing The American Musical" by *American Theatre* magazine. His direction and shows have won "Best Play" and "Best Director" in the Bay Area, Portland, Rochester and Atlanta. He's previously served as the Artist-At-Large for Geva Theatre Center and spent four years at the Tony Award-winning Actors Theatre of Louisville as the theatre's Associate Artistic Director (where he directed 17 productions including five Humana Festivals). Mr. Daniels is the former Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director of the California Shakespeare Theater and before that spent a decade as the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta. He has developed new work with the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, Ars Nova, PlayPenn, Lark, PlayLabs, New York Stage and Film, Asolo Rep, Goodspeed Opera, Weston Playhouse, Bay Area Playwrights, Magic Theatre and was the first American director asked to attend the Baltic American Playwrights Conference in Hiiumaa, Estonia. He'd love to hear from you, on Twitter @seandaniels or email him at sean.daniels@mrt.org.

BRIDGET KATHLEEN O'LEARY (*Associate Director*) is a Boston-based theater artist specializing in directing and new play development. For over a decade she served as the Associate Artistic Director at New Repertory Theatre. She is the Literary Chair on the Executive Committee for the National New Play Network (NNPN), where she connects with over 100 theater companies across the United States, who are dedicated to the production, development and continued life of new plays. She serves on the selection

committees for the NNPN showcase of new works and the Kennedy Center's MFA Playwrights Workshop, where she has directed several readings. Bridget has directed over a dozen productions for New Rep, including world premieres of *Ripe Frenzy*, *Blackberry Winter* (Elliot Norton nomination for Best Play), *Scenes from an Adultery*, and *Pattern of Life* (IRNE Award for Best New Play). Also, at New Rep, *Collected Stories* and *Dollhouse*, both nominated for Best Production for Elliot Norton Awards. Other directing credits include *Grand Concourse* for Speakeasy Stage Company, *Othello* for Actors Shakespeare Project, *The Flick* for Gloucester Stage Company, and *Reconsidering Hanna(h)* for Boston Playwrights Theatre. Before moving to Boston, Bridget lived in Washington, D.C., where she co-founded Phoenix Theatre DC. For Phoenix, she directed the world premieres of *Lulu Fabulous* and *Unwrapped: An Evening of Women's Voices*, along with productions of *Parallel Lives: The Kathy and Mo Show* and *Independence*. Bridget earned her Master of Fine Arts degree in Directing from Boston University's College of Fine Arts and a Certificate in Arts Administration from Boston University.

LAUREN GUNDERSON (*Playwright*) Lauren is a playwright, screenwriter and short story author from Atlanta, GA. She received her BA in English/Creative Writing at Emory University, and her MFA in Dramatic Writing at NYU Tisch, where she was also a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. She was named the most produced playwright in America by American Theatre Magazine in 2017, was awarded the 2016 Lanford Wilson Award from the Dramatist Guild, the 2016 Otis Gurnsey Award for Emerging Writer, and was awarded the prestigious 2014 Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for her play, *I and You* (also a Susan Smith Blackburn and John Gassner Award finalist). That play was an NNPN Rolling World Premiere that started at Marin Theatre Company and has seen over 40 productions nationwide. She is also a recipient of the Mellon Foundation's Three-



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WHO'S WHO

Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She co-authored the play *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* with Margot Melcon, which received a three-way world premiere in 2016 and is now published at Dramatists Play Publishing. It is also one of the most produced plays in America for 2017-18.

MARGOT MELCON (*Playwright and Dramaturg*) Margot is a theater artist, administrator and writer. She was the Director of New Play Development at Marin Theatre Company for seven years, where she dramaturged over 30 productions—including six world premieres—and administered the company's two annual new play prizes and commissioning program. She has developed plays with TheatreWorks, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Crowded Fire Theater, Shotgun Players, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, The Kennedy Center, the New Harmony Project, and the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis. She is currently the Program Executive for Promoting Culture at the Zellerbach Family Foundation. Margot is a graduate of California State University, Chico.

JAMES J. FENTON (*Scenic Designer*) **MRT:** *Silent Sky* (IRNE Nomination), *Abigail/1702*, *The Outgoing Tide*, *The Devil's Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith*, *Mrs. Mannerly*. **Off-Broadway/New York:** *Southern Comfort*, *The Musical*, Public Theatre; *Switzerland* (NY Premier), *Fall to Earth* (New York Premiere), *Small World*, 59E59; *Promising* (World Premiere), Third Rail Projects; *Drop Dead Perfect* (World Premiere), *When we Met* (World Premiere), *Academia Nuts* (NYMF2014 Best Musical), InProximity Theatre Co. **Regional:** *Beckett in Brief* (Norton Award-Outstanding Production) Commonwealth Shakespeare, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Arkansas Rep; *The Devil's Music*, RMTC; *Dancing Lesson* (World Premiere), *Constellations*, *Kunstler* (world premiere), Hudson Stage; *Clever Little Lies*, *The How and The Why*, *Baskervilles*, Penguin Rep; *Around the World in 80 Days*, Theatre Squared. **Film/Television:** *Wizard*

of Lies, (HBO); *Blindspot* (NBC); *God Friended Me*, *The Code* (CBS), *Dickinson* (Apple TV). www.jamesjfenton.com

LINDA ROSS (*Costume Designer*) is delighted to be designing costumes for the first time at MRT. Locally, she has designed costumes for Gloucester Stage, Salem Theatre Company, and Marblehead's Mugford Street Players, including favorite productions, *A Picasso*, *The Rainmaker*, *The Crucible*, and *The Normal Heart*. She has been a member of the Tufts University department of theatre, dance, and performance studies faculty since 2007, where she designs costumes for the department productions and currently serves as the director of undergraduate studies. Linda's costume designs have been seen on New York stages and at regional theatres around the country, including Second Stage, the Alley Theatre, and Hartford Stage. While primarily focusing on costume design for theater, her work includes theatrical lighting design and costumes for dance, film, television, and other media. Her work can be seen at www.lindarossdesign.com.

BRIAN J. LILIENTHAL (*Lighting Designer*) **MRT:** 25 productions including: *Women in Jeopardy!*, *The Making of a Great Moment*, *The Realness: a breakbeat play*, *45 Plays for 45 Presidents*, *Going to See the Kid*. **Regional:** Over 250 productions at: Huntington Theatre; Arizona Theatre Co; Milwaukee Rep; Cleveland Playhouse; Pasadena Playhouse; South Coast Rep; Actors Theatre of Louisville (60 productions; 20 world premieres); GEVA Theatre Center; The Kennedy Center; Gloucester Stage; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Arden Theatre; Trinity Rep (over 25 productions); Playmakers Rep. **Opera:** Long Beach Opera; Bard Summerscape; and Portland Opera Repertory Theatre. **Awards:** Los Angeles Ovation Award for lighting design; MRT's Artistic Achievement Award, 2016; nominated multiple times for Boston's IRNE Award. **Education:** MFA: California Institute of the Arts. **Other:** Teaches lighting design at Tufts University; member of Patriots Program at MRT; Resident Lighting Designer,

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WHO'S WHO

National Playwrights Conference, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center 2007-2015. Mr. Lilienthal lives in Somerville with wife, Emily, daughter Eliza, and dog Babe. He plays drums in a rockabilly/jump blues band that plays throughout the Boston metro area. www.BrianJLilienthal.com.

DAVID REMEDIOS (*Sound Designer*)

MRT: *Murder for Two, The Villains' Supper Club, KNYUM, The Royale, Women in Jeopardy!* (Onstage Theatre Award); *The Making of a Great Moment; Abigail/1702; Home of the Brave; I and You; Out of the City; Oceanside; The Best Brothers; Year Zero* (original music and sound); *Two Jews Walk into a War; The Blonde, the Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead*. **Recent:** *Berta, Berta; A Late Morning (in America) with Ronald Reagan*, Contemporary American Theater Festival; *Old Money*, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (IRNE Award), SpeakEasy Stage Company. **Regional:** American Repertory Theatre; Huntington Theatre Company; Portland Stage; Trinity Rep; Geva Theatre Center; The Studio Theatre; 59E59; Theatre for a New Audience; La Jolla Playhouse; Berkeley Rep; Center Stage Baltimore; Cincinnati Playhouse. **International:** Prominent arts festivals in Bogotá, Paris, Hong Kong and Edinburgh. **Awards:** IRNE, Connecticut Critics Circle, Elliot Norton. David is Program Head of Sound Design at Boston University, a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local USA 829, and is a founding member of MRT's Artistic Patriot Program. www.remudiosound.com

MAEGAN ALYSE PASSAFUME (*Production Stage Manager*) Maegan is thrilled to be returning to MRT for *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley!* Selected previous credits include stage manager on *Native Gardens, The Royale*, and *Chill* (Merrimack Repertory Theatre); *Guards at the Taj* (Central Square Theater); *The Effect* and *A Measure of Normalcy* (Gloucester Stage Company); *Creditors* and *Ugly Lies the Bone* (Shakespeare & Company); *The Legend of Georgia*

McBride (Greater Boston Stage Company); assistant stage manager on *She Loves Me, Mame, Lucky Stiff, Sweet Charity, Funny...Forum*, and *How to Succeed...Trying* (Greater Boston Stage Company). Maegan received her BFA in Stage Management from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. She and her husband live with their dog in Lowell, MA.

PETER CREWE (*Producer*) **MRT:** Producer: *Murder for Two, Native Gardens, The Villains' Supper Club, Little Orphan Danny, Lost Laughs: The Slapstick Tragedy of Fatty Arbuckle, KNYUM, A Christmas Carol, The Royale, Going to See the Kid, Abigail/1702, 45 Plays for 45 Presidents, Home of the Brave, Tinker to Evers to Chance, It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. Stage Manager: *The Outgoing Tide*. Assistant Stage Manager: *Out of the City, Oceanside, The Best Brothers, 13 Things About Ed Carpolotti, Dusk Rings a Bell, Equally Divided, The Devil's Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith, Stella and Lou, Proof, Red, Half'n Half, Mrs. Whitney, The Voice of the Turtle, Two Jews Walk Into a War..., The Exceptionals, Tryst, Four Places, The Last Days of Mickey & Jean, Black Pearl Sings!, Fabuloso, The Seafarer, Bad Dates, Tranced, The Fantasticks, A View of the Harbor* (workshop), Stage Management Intern (2004). **Regional:** Company Manager, Studio Arena Theatre; Production Assistant, Studio Arena Theatre; Assistant Stage Manager, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, Seaside Music Theatre; Assistant Stage Manager, *Lucie de Lammermoor*, Boston Lyric Opera; Stage Management Intern, Trinity Repertory Company. Education: BFA, Salem State College in 2004.

BONNIE J. BUTKAS (*Executive Director*) Bonnie most recently served as the Senior Director of Foundation Relations at Rochester Institute of Technology, where she led the university's strategic efforts to secure funding from private and family foundations. During her tenure, RIT secured its first significant gifts from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Henry Luce

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Foundation. Prior to RIT, she was the Director of Development at Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, NY overseeing five years of unprecedented growth in the company's contributed income and playing a key role in a successful \$10 million capital campaign to renovate the building and grow the theatre's endowment. In New York City, she served as the Director of External Relations at the York Theatre Company, the Director of Development and Communications at TADA! Youth Theatre, Directing Assistant on The Lion King on Broadway, and the co-founder of Lexington Dance Collective. Prior to moving to NYC, she was the Managing Director of Bristol Valley Theater in Naples, NY. Butkas was raised in the Finger Lakes region of Western New York and holds degrees in Journalism and Dance from the University at Buffalo. She volunteered with the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Genesee Valley, Girl Scouts of Western New York, and the YWCA of Rochester & Monroe

County. In Fall 2016, she co-founded Action Together Rochester. She serves on the MCC's Academic Arts Center Advisory Board, and lives in Westford, MA with her family.

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE (MRT) celebrates 40 years this season as the Merrimack Valley's professional theatre. With a steadfast commitment to contemporary voices and new plays, MRT produces seven works, including several world premieres, each season. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Executive Director Bonnie J. Butkas, MRT strives to fulfill its mission "to share theatrical stories of human understanding that reflect and engage our community." The company guarantees that shows are accessible to audiences of all incomes; partners with businesses and non-profit groups to fully engage the community; and contributes to the economic vitality of Lowell by attracting diverse audiences from throughout the region.



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(top) *Sanders Family Christmas*, 2002-03; (center left) *Beasley's Christmas Party*, 2010-11; (center right) Robin Chadwick as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, 1991-92, photo by Kevin Harkins; (bottom left) Reduced Shakespeare Company's *The Ultimate Christmas Show*, 2011-12; and (bottom right) *Going to See the Kid*, 2016-17, photo by Meghan Moore.

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The proceeds benefit the programs and productions of Merrimack Repertory Theatre, a not-for-profit arts and education organization and the Merrimack Valley's only professional theatre. The winning tickets will be selected on December 23. Purchase raffle tickets in the lobby or by calling the Box Office at 978-654-4678. (Winners need not be present to win.)

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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE LION!

Broadway HD, which allows you to stream theatre shows and musicals from your home or on a digital device, expects to premiere the live recording of *The Lion* in December (recorded at Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles). Singer-songwriter Benjamin Scheuer's award-winning musical memoir, directed by MRT Artistic Director Sean Daniels, launched its national tour here in August of 2015, following critically acclaimed runs in New York and London. www.broadwayhd.com



MRT'S PROCLAMATION

Lowell Mayor William Samaras presented an official proclamation in honor of Merrimack Repertory Theatre's 40th Anniversary to (l-r) Artistic Director Sean Daniels (with daughter Vivien), Board Chair and Co-Founder Nancy L. Donahue, and Executive Director Bonnie J. Butkas. Photo: Jennifer Vivier



LOWELL WALK

With the generous support of Mass Humanities, UMass Lowell Professor Robert Forrant (center) hosted a walking tour of downtown locations connected to the legacy of Jack Kerouac for MRT's Cohort Club, board members, and donors. MRT will present the world premiere of Kerouac's *The Haunted Life*, adapted by Sean Daniels, in March 2019.



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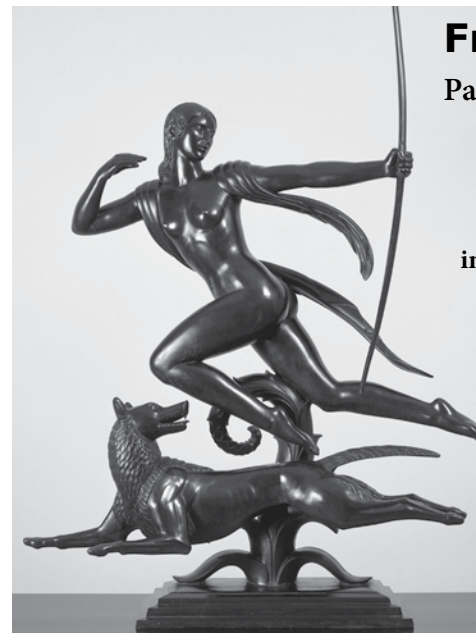
Gloria Leahy (left) with husband, Dan Leahy (middle) at Janet Lambert Moore's (right) 65th birthday. Moore, a good friend of Leahy, is also a longtime volunteer and supporter of MRT.

housed actors in her home, and raised funds for the theatre as a board member. During the 30th Anniversary gala, she was awarded the first-ever Friends of MRT service award, an honor later renamed the Gloria Leahy Service Award.

Co-Founder Nancy L. Donohue said, "Gloria was a volunteer even before the first board was formed! She was one of the volunteers who rode the trains to Boston selling tickets and manned a ticket booth on Merrimack Street. She housed and fed the visiting actors and did everything she was ever asked to do for years and years, and always did so with a smile in her happy nature. We will always miss her dearly."

One of Merrimack Repertory Theatre's most cherished supporters, Gloria J. Leahy, passed away in October. Leahy was one of the fledgling company's first volunteers and subscribers, and she remained a steadfast supporter over the next 40 years. She cooked meals for the company,

Leahy, a mother of six and the widow of Daniel P. Leahy, also served on the board of the Lowell Association for the Blind and as the president of the Lowell Lawyers Wives Association.



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For more information, please contact:

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Ramona Lisa Alexander and Thomas Silcott in *The Royale*, 2017-18 Season.
Photo by Meghan Moore.

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Vichet Chum in *KNYUM*,
2017-18 Season. Photo by
Meghan Moore.

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Polly Lee, Victoria Grace, Alexis Bronkovic, and Julia Brothers in *Silent Sky*, 2017-18 Season.
Photo by Meghan Moore.

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For more information, please contact:

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

If you have any problems during a performance, please ask one of our volunteer ushers to locate the House Manager.

ACCESSIBILITY

Open Captioning

Thanks in part to a grant and guidance from Theatre Development Fund (TDF), we will offer an open captioning performance during a Sunday matinee for all shows. Open captioning uses a text screen on the side of the stage to display simultaneous translation of dialogue and lyrics during a live performance. When booking your seats, mention your interest in open captioning in order to secure the most advantageous view. Visit www.mrt.org for dates.

Listening Devices

Please reserve our free listening devices through the box office when you make your reservation.

Wheelchair Seating

Wheelchair space is available by notifying the Box Office when purchasing tickets. A ramp is located to the left of MRT's main entrance.

RESTROOMS/LATECOMER POLICIES

Restrooms are located in Lowell Memorial Auditorium (LMA). Follow the signs down the hallway on the left side of the theatre. Please do not go past any barriers in the LMA hallways or an alarm will sound. If at any time you leave your seat during the performance, the House Manager will seat you in the rear balcony when you return.

No one will be admitted once the performance begins. The House Manager will seat you in the rear balcony until intermission, at which time you may take your ticketed seat.

EMERGENCY CALLS

If you expect an emergency call during a performance, please leave your name and seat location with the House Manager. MRT's emergency phone number is 978-654-4678, press 9.

FIRE REGULATION

Please take a moment to locate the nearest emergency exit. If the fire alarm sounds, please remain in your seat until the House Manager directs you to the nearest exit. Do not run. Exit the theatre in a calm and orderly manner.

BAD WEATHER POLICY

MRT does not cancel performances due to bad weather except in the event of highway closure by the State

Police. If you are concerned about driving in poor weather, contact the Enterprise Bank Box Office.

COURTESY/CONCESSIONS

Please silence your cell phones, beeping watches and electronic devices when entering the theatre. Please do not text during the performance.

Refreshments are available before performances and during intermission. Food is not allowed in the theatre. Intermission beverages may be pre-purchased at the concession stand. If you bring a beverage into the theatre, please carry out the trash when you leave. Please refrain from unwrapping cellophane wrappers during the performance. For the comfort of all patrons, please avoid wearing strong perfumes, colognes, and hairsprays.

RECORDING/PHOTOGRAPH REGULATIONS

The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited during the performance. EXCEPTION: You may take photos of the set before the show. If you post photos on social media, please acknowledge the designers.

PARKING

• Davidson Lot: 1-199 Davidson St. Lowell

Free parking for Subscribers and Producers Circle members only.

• Church Lot: 144 East Merrimack St. Lowell

The Immaculate Conception Church generously offers parking for free to MRT patrons when not in use by Lowell Memorial Auditorium (LMA). When in use by LMA, you must pay a fee to park. Visit lowellauditorium.com for LMA's schedule.

• Garage Parking

Garage parking is available for \$5 with validation provided at MRT Concession Stand at:

- Lower Locks Parking Garage: 90 Warren St. Lowell
- John St. Parking Garage: 75 John St. Lowell

• Street Parking

Street parking for evening and weekend performances is available first-come, first-served. MRT is not responsible for parking tickets or tows.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

GROUPS & DISCOUNT

Discounts may not be used in combination.

• Students: \$15 any performance.

• **Groups:** Discounts are available for groups of six or more. For more information, call 978-654-7561.

• **Lowell Night:** Second Thursday night performance of each run for Lowell residents. Purchase in person, \$10 each (cash only), at the Box Office day of show. Must show ID. Limit two per person.

• **Military:** MRT is a proud member of the Blue Star Theatre program and offers all active duty, veteran, or retired military personnel \$10 off on up to four tickets per production. Use the code MIL when ordering online or call 978-654-4678. MRT also offers 50% tickets for military personnel for our special Military Day performance of each show – 4 pm of the second Saturday performance.

• **Educators:** Take 50% off up to four tickets for Educators Day – the 4 pm performance of the second Saturday of each show.

• **\$5 First Preview Night:** Wednesday evening preview. Restricted seating. Purchase in person (cash only) at the Box Office three hours prior to curtain. Limit two per person.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Enterprise Bank Box Office/ Nancy L. Donahue Theatre

50 East Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852-1205
Phone: 978-654-4678, press 1
Fax: 978-654-7575 Email: box_office@mrt.org

Enterprise Bank Box Office Hours

Tuesday – Saturday: 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Open through curtain on performance nights.
Sunday: 12:00 pm through curtain on performance nights.
Closed on non-performance nights.

Order online: mrt.org

Subscriber ticket exchange by email:
box_office@mrt.org

Administrative Offices/Mailing Address

132 Warren Street
Lowell, MA 01852-2208
Phone: 978-654-7550
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