



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TOWN HALL THEATRE CLOSSES SEASON WITH  
KATE HAMILL'S EXUBERANT *SENSE & SENSIBILITY***

APRIL 12, 2018 – Town Hall Theatre “Generations” Season 2017-2018 closes with Kate Hamill’s rollicking new adaptation of ***SENSE & SENSIBILITY***, based on the classic novel by Jane Austen. ***SENSE & SENSIBILITY*** will have 12 performances, including two previews, May 31 through June 23, 2018, at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA. Tickets are \$18 - \$30, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

THT will host three Special Events for ***SENSE & SENSIBILITY***: *Opening Night* gala with a Regency Ball theme, on Saturday, June 2, 2018; *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a literary salon, on Wednesday, June 13, 2018; and Theatre Club, our post-show talk-backs with complimentary wine, on Friday, June 8, and Friday, June 22, 2018. We welcome audiences to enjoy THT’s full bar and entertainment in our lobby one hour before performances.

THT’s production of ***SENSE & SENSIBILITY*** is directed by THT’s Artistic Director Susan E. Evans. In an extra twist of casting, ***SENSE & SENSIBILITY*** features Heather Buck and Alisha Ehrlich alternating each week of the run in the roles of the two sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, and a talented ensemble of Bay Area performers playing the bevy of other characters in Hamill’s high energy version

of Austen's saga: Megan Briggs, Alan Coyne, Michael Craigen, Nathan Emley, Heather Kellogg, Dennis Markam, Sarah Ruby, and Ginny Wehrmeister.

Called "perhaps the greatest stage adaptation of this novel in history" and "an unconditional delight" by the critics, Hamill's adaptation is full of humor and inventive theatricality, while staying remarkably faithful to the beloved classic. The play follows the adventures (and misadventures) of the Dashwood sisters – sensible Elinor and hypersensitive Marianne – in gossipy late 18<sup>th</sup> century Regency England. As the play opens, their father's unexpected demise leaves the family in dire financial straits; and both sisters must learn to navigate the rising societal pressures, preserve reputations and somehow find happiness and true love.

"The classic Austen preoccupations with real estate, income, class, reputation and equilibrium in life are all rendered brightly and legibly here." – *The New York Times*

Frustrated by the paucity of good classical roles for women, playwright Kate Hamill decided she would need to write her own. Not only did she adapt Austen's book for the stage, she also originated the role of Marianne Dashwood, the "sensitivity" sister of the title. Although initially worried about offending Austen fans and scholars – and the devoted admirers called Janeites – with her irreverent take on the beloved novel, she was encouraged by her director to make it her own. Hamill says that the play is about 40% Austen and 60% Hamill, a true "collaboration" between her and the novelist. In this adaptation, actors play multiple parts, including dogs and horses and a few inanimate objects, and the action is non-stop.

The idea to switch off actors in the roles of the two sisters came to director Evans during auditions. "I saw from my notes that I liked both actors in both roles; and it

seemed in character with the playfulness of Hamill's version to double-cast, and also a fun commentary on the two-sided natures of the sisters. No doubt it will keep all the actors on their toes!"

### **Performance History**

The world premiere of **SENSE & SENSIBILITY** was produced by Bedlam at the Sheen Center in New York City in November 2014, and the play was such a critical and popular success the company remounted the production in 2016 for a long run of over 265 performances off-Broadway. The play has also appeared at Dallas Theater Center, Washington D.C.'s Folger Theatre, and the Guthrie. Among its awards and honors are: winner of "Best Unique Theatrical Experience" (Off-Broadway Alliance); nominee for Best Revival of a Play by Drama League Revival and for eight Helen Hayes Awards; and being picked as one of the "Top 10 Plays of 2014" by the *NY Times* and by the *Huffington Post*. *American Theatre Magazine* named **SENSE & SENSIBILITY** one of the Top 10 Most-Produced Plays of 2017-18.

### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT**

**Kate Hamill** is a NYC-based actor/playwright focused on creating "new female classics." Her plays include *Sense and Sensibility*, *Vanity Fair* (in which she originated the role of Becky Sharp; Nominee, Off-Broadway Alliance Award; *WSJ* Critic's Pick); *Pride and Prejudice* (in which she originated the role of Lizzy Bennet; "Best Theater of 2017", *Huffington Post*; *WSJ* Critic's Pick), *In the Mines*, *Little Women*, *Em*, and *Little Fellow*. She is currently working on new adaptations of *20K Leagues Under the Sea* and *The Odyssey*, as well as several new original plays, including *Love Poem* and *Prostitute Play*. Her plays have been produced off-Broadway, at the Guthrie Theatre, Seattle Rep, PlayMaker's Rep, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Folger Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (where *Sense &*

*Sensibility* is currently running), *A.R.T.*, & more. Ms. Hamill was recently named Playwright of the Year (2017) by the *Wall Street Journal*, and *American Theatre Magazine/TCG* named her one of the Top 20 Most-Produced Playwrights of 2017-18.

## **ABOUT THE DIRECTOR**

**Susan E. Evans** currently serves as the Artistic Director of Town Hall Theatre, which she joined in December 2016. Previously, she served as the Artistic Director of the Douglas Morrison Theatre, where she directed *Private Lives*, *Dividing the Estate*, *All My Sons*, *Eurydice*, *An Ideal Husband* (Scott Munson adaptation), *The Skin of Our Teeth* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Before DMT, Susan served for 11 years as the Artistic Director of Eastenders Repertory Company where her directing work included *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay* (Dario Fo), *Frozen* (Bryony Lavery), *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (Brecht) co-directed with Founder Charles E. Polly, and the World Premieres of Parts II and III of Mr. Polly's acclaimed *Twyla Trilogy*, among many others. She received post-grad actor training at the Drama Studio London @ Berkeley. Evans has twice collaborated with solo artist Carolyn Doyle on productions at the Marsh and the SF Fringe Festival, also directed locally with CCCT (Lisa Kron's *Well*), and Actors Reading Writers in Berkeley. She is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. [www.susaneevansdirector.com](http://www.susaneevansdirector.com).

## **ABOUT TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY**

Established in 1944 as the Dramateurs, Town Hall Theatre turned 74 this year, making it the oldest continuously active theatre in Contra Costa County. Town Hall Theatre was awarded Best Theatre Troupe 2016 in *Diablo Magazines*, *Best of The East Bay*, and is the past recipient of numerous Shellie Awards, and four regional 2016 Theatre Bay Area Awards. THT is also home to an extensive children's educational program, twice voted the "Best Children's Theatre

Company" by *Bay Area Parent Magazine*. THT's 102-year old historical building is managed by the Lafayette Association (LIA).

Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette, CA 94549. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday, 4:00 to 6:00PM and Saturday 2:00-4:00 pm and can be reached at 925.283.1557. Information is also available at [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

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### **CALENDAR Information on *SENSE & SENSIBILITY***

**WHO: TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY presents**

**WHAT:** *SENSE & SENSIBILITY* by Kate Hamill, based on the novel by Jane Austen, directed by Susan E. Evans.

**CAST:** Megan Briggs, Heather Buck, Alan Coyne, Michael Craigen, Alisha Ehrlich, Nathan Emley, Heather Kellogg, Dennis Markam, Sarah Ruby, Ginny Wehrmeister.

**DATES:** Thursday, May 31, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Friday, June 1, 2018, Preview @ 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 2, 2018: OPENING RECEPTION  
THROUGH June 23, 2018

**SHOWTIMES:** May 31 – June 23, 2018

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays @ 8:00pm

Sundays, June 10 and June 17 @ 2:00 PM

**CLOSES: June 23**

**WHERE: Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette, CA 94549**

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

June 2, 2018: *Opening Night Regency Ball*

June 13, 2018: *LIT UP at Town Hall*, a Literary Salon, 7:30-9:00pm

June 8 & 22, 2018: **Theatre Club** 8:00pm Post-Show Talk-Backs

**TICKETS:**     \$18 Previews  
                  \$27-30 Thurs. eve., Fri. eve., Sat. eve  
                  \$25-27 Sun. matinee

Discounts available for Seniors and youth

**BOX OFFICE:** (925) 283-1557; [www.townhalltheatre.com](http://www.townhalltheatre.com)

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