



# TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y

## BETWEEN the LINES

Taproot Theatre Company's  
Subscription Newsletter  
Volume 25, Issue 4

### BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

206.781.9707

[box@taproottheatre.org](mailto:box@taproottheatre.org)

**Box Office Hours:**  
Tuesday - Saturday,  
Noon - 5 pm

*On performance days,  
the box office phone  
is answered until  
30 minutes  
prior to show time.*

**Tickets always  
available online at  
[taproottheatre.org](http://taproottheatre.org)**

***Persuasion*  
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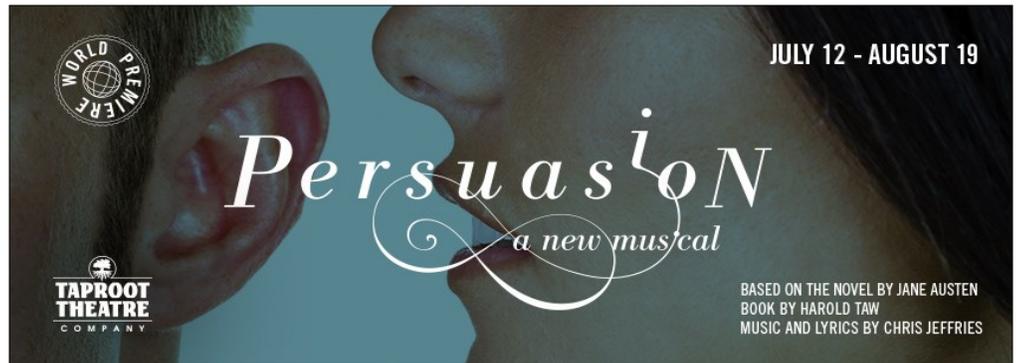
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**Taproot Theatre Company** is proud to produce the World Premiere production of Harold Taw and Chris Jeffries' musical based on Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. The beloved novel has been transformed into a breathtaking new musical which will play on Taproot's Jewell Mainstage this July 12 through August 19. Taproot's Associate Artistic Director, Karen Lund, will helm this new work and direct an all-star cast of Seattle's musical theatre giants.

*Persuasion* is a 2015 product of The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theatre's inaugural *NextFest: A Festival of New Musicals*. It has since been workshopped at the TexasMusical Theatre Workshop in 2016.

Jane Austen's final novel soars to life in this ravishing new musical about love, longing and second chances. Years ago, Anne Elliot was persuaded to abandon true love but now her past mistakes and long-lost hopes have returned. Can she summon the courage to follow her heart?

**Cayman Ilika** (ACT/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue's *Jacques Brel...*) leads the cast as Anne Elliot; accompanying her on her journey to find true love are **Matthew Posner** (5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theatre's *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*) as Captain Wentworth, **Chelsea LeValley** (Village Theatre's *A Proper Place*) as Henrietta Musgrove/Elizabeth Elliot, **Ryan Childers** (Village Theatre's *My Fair Lady*) as Charles Musgrove/Mr. Shepherd, **Caitlin Frances** (Balagan Theatre's *Jerry Springer the Opera*) as Lady Russell/Mrs. Musgrove/Mrs. Harville, **Sophia Franzella** (Village Theatre's *A Proper Place*) as Louisa Musgrove, **Randy Scholz** (Village Theatre's *A Proper Place*) as Captain Benwick/Mr. William Walter Elliot, **Kate Jaeger** (Village Theatre's *Les Misérables*) as Mary Musgrove and **Nick DeSantis** (5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theatre's *Man of La Mancha*) as Sir Walter Elliot/Captain Harville.

The production team includes **Jessica Spencer**, Assistant Director; **Michael Nutting**, Musical Director; **Michael Matlock**, Conductor / Assistant Music Director; **Katy Tabb**, Choreographer; **Sarah Burch Gordon**, Costume Design; **Andrew Duff**, Lighting Design; **Mark Lund**, Scenic & Sound Design; **Abigail Pishaw**, Stage Manager; **Matt Orme**, Fight Choreographer; **RJ Tancioco**, Music Consultant; **Andrea Spraycar**, Props Master; **Sonja Lowe**, Dramaturg; and **Ben Wippel**, Dialect Coach.

### PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

**Previews:** July 12 & 13 at 7:30pm | **Opening:** July 14 at 8:00pm

**Running:** July 12 - August 19 | **PWYC:** July 19 at 7:30pm

**Show Times:** Wed & Thur, 7:30 pm; Fri & Sat, 8:00 pm; Sat Matinee, 2:00 pm

**Running Time:** 2 hours, including one 15 minute intermission.

*Persuasion* is recommended for ages 12 and up.  
Children under 5 are never admitted.

## Actor Spotlight: an interview with Matthew Posner



**Matthew Posner**  
plays **Captain Wentworth**  
in *Persuasion*.

**The first show you were in was...** Mayor of the Munchkin City in *The Wizard of Oz*, 6th Grade. I stayed after school with the intent of hanging out with a friend and painting sets, but we were told we all *had* to audition. So I got up and did a rendition of Happy Birthday thinking "Cool, maybe I'll get to be a flying Monkey!" Later, waiting for my mom to pick me up, my friend and I were goofing around and I was playing with my voice, tightening my larynx to make munchkin type voices and the director comes over to me and says "My gosh, how do you do that?" I shrugged and replied "I just always could." Next thing I know, I'm cast as the Munchkin Mayor and so my career began.

**Favorite thing about Seattle?** My family is here, even though I didn't grow up here. The closely knit community of performers. The ability to go in any direction and find a different climate.

**What's the craziest thing you've done for a role?** Some may call it crazy. The purchase of my toupee was probably one of the greatest and craziest investments I have ever made.

**What excites you most about this production?** The opportunity to originate the role of Wentworth in a full production and really sink my teeth into something so deep and complex. Cayman Ilika is also one of my dearest friends and we've played opposite each other many times, so the joy of working with her again is such a treat.

**Before taking on the role of the dashing Captain Wentworth, how familiar were you with the work of Jane Austen?** Sadly, only passing familiarity. If you've never heard of titles like *Pride and Prejudice* and at least been familiar with the plot and period, that's just silly. I gave myself a heck of a crash course in prepping for the auditions and I've read *Persuasion* cover to cover several times since.

**Having been involved with some of the revision process, did you have any influence on changes to the script or your character?** I'm not sure if I've had any direct influence on the revisions. During the course of our table reads leading up to rehearsals, I've seen a marked increase in Wentworth's character arch, musical numbers and overall presence. I'd like to think its because I've been doing well with the character and so Harold and Chris keep giving me more to do.

**If Captain Wentworth has a contemporary hero, who would it be?** I keep trying to think of a superhero or a political figure who embodies Wentworth's complexity and choices, but my mind keeps drifting to my Dad. He wears his heart on his sleeve, loves unconditionally, detests injustice, sees the good in everything and knows when to walk away from frustration and stay close to the things you desire.

**Why did you decide to become an actor?** Back in High School, I felt like I had finally found something I was good at! At first acting was just something I enjoyed doing and I found a group of people I enjoyed being with. When I finally discovered that it wasn't just fun, that I was passionate about it, I wanted to do more, learn more, be more. And also opportunities started coming from it, I made a conscious decision "this is what I want to do with my life." I haven't looked back.

**What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given?** Move on like it never happened and be pleasantly surprised when it does.

**What inspires you?** My wife never ceases to amaze me. And cartoons. I love cartoons.

**Anything else you'd like to say?** I am grateful for what I've been given; for the people I know and have the opportunity, all the time, to work with; for our Seattle community of artists and artist supporters. Never let someone tell you can't do something or let them put you in a box with a label. We all have something we're good at, but that doesn't mean that's all you can do.

## Fancy Footwork: An interview with Choreographer Katy Tabb

**How long have you been dancing?** I have been dancing since I was 6 years old, so a very very long time....

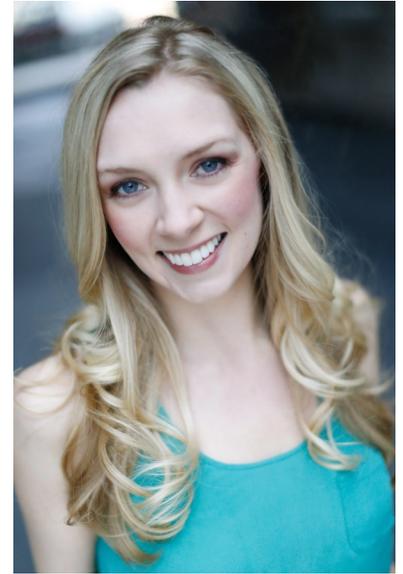
**Favorite dance step?** I suppose the “pony” because it reminds me of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* when all of the kids bust into a dance party in the middle of rehearsal. We all need more spontaneous dance parties in life, right?

**How did you get started in choreography?** I attended Chapman University as a Dance major where I was required to take two courses in choreography to complete my degree. In class we explored movement invention, improvisation and choreographic form and storytelling. My training in college was incredible, though at the time I found choreography so overwhelming that I would find myself in tears of frustration at the end of almost every class. If I were to tell my college self that one day choreography would become my career path, I would have thought I was crazy!

**Did you have any influence on changes made to the script or music during the revision process? How has choreography helped shape this adaptation?** Choreography is used to heighten the emotion and draw attention to the subtext of the scene. In this production, it serves to both physically represent the deep connection between Anne and Captain Wentworth as well as represent the ridiculous constraints of the society in which Anne finds herself. Through staging, we get a deeper sense of the Regency Era society and connections between the characters. The choreography serves to show that which cannot be said. As the first choreographer to stage *Persuasion*, Chris Jeffries, the composer, often looked to me for suggestions on how to build the appropriate dance sequence in the music. He took into account the staging I had planned and the length of music required and created entire dance sequences based on what I saw were the needs of this production. This collaboration has been such a gift and I feel like a very spoiled choreographer!

**Etiquette played a huge role in how people of the Regency Era interacted, what were some general rules?** An elegant deportment was crucial to any man or lady during this era. A person’s deportment was often an indication of his or her social class. Women were to avoid slouching and avoid any major waving of the hands and head, outbursts of laughter and major displays of emotion were strongly discouraged in public. Men were to maintain excellent posture and stand with feet turned out at the foot. A man was introduced to a woman, but never the other way around. Touch was kept to an extreme minimum between the sexes, a man may escort a lady by taking her hand in his arm. Grand balls provided men and women an opportunity to touch and talk in a way not permissible in an any other setting, therefore dancing represented the height of propriety and passion.

**What excites you most about this production?** I am thrilled to be a part of the very first time this production will ever be staged! What freedom to explore the incredible possibilities of this beautiful piece! To be working on a world premiere musical is a dream come true! I am grateful for this incredible cast, creative team and beautifully written script and score. Thank you Harold and Chris for trusting your work with us!



**Katy Tabb**  
is the choreographer for  
*Persuasion*.

## *Persuasion* Original Cast Album Available This Fall

The original cast album for Taproot Theatre's World Premiere production of  
***Persuasion***

will be available for download, streaming and CD purchase  
in the fall of 2017!

If you would like to purchase an advance copy, be informed of its release or attend  
the CD release party, email [persuasionmusical@gmail.com](mailto:persuasionmusical@gmail.com).

Visit [persuasionmusical.com](http://persuasionmusical.com) for more information.



Cayman Ilika, Nick DeSantis and Matthew  
Posner in *Persuasion* at Taproot Theatre.  
Photo by Erik Stuhaug

## Regency England and the World of Jane Austen

Jane Austen was born December 16, 1775 at Steventon Rectory in Hampshire, in the South of England, the seventh of eight children born to clergyman George Austen and his wife Cassandra. In her lifetime she completed 6 novels: *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*.

Austen’s novels give us a glimpse of the lush and elegant lifestyles of the aristocracy during the **Regency Period** (1811 – 1820) in England. A distinct era within the Georgian Period (1713 – 1830) of British history, the Regency Period is defined by the creation of George, Prince of Wales, as Prince Regent in 1811, during the long illness and convalescence of King George III. George, Prince Regent would later ascend to the throne, upon the death of death of his father in 1820. As King George IV, he would continue to rule Britain until his own death in 1837.

George III’s long reign had been marred by frequent bouts of mental illness as well as many physical ailments, which warranted the change in governance. At the time of his death, he was England’s longest serving monarch; his 59 and a half year reign has only been bested by Queen Victoria (nearly 64 years, 1837 – 1901) and Queen Elizabeth II (65 years and counting, 1952 – present).

During the Regency Period, England was entangled in the Napoleonic Wars and experiencing major domestic changes due to the Industrial Revolution.

Despite the turbulent times, the selfish and flamboyant, George, Prince Regent showed little true interest in the affairs of state, deferring many responsibilities to his ministers and to Parliament. Instead, the Prince Regent, a man of fine tastes, lavished attention on the arts, creating a mini-renaissance period in British art, fashion and architecture that is quite distinct from the early Georgian periods. It was a period in which the upper classes of English society flourished, regaled with elegant parties, sophisticated dress and high manners.



**George, Prince Regent, ruled Britain in place of his father, King George III, from 1811-1820.**

Portrait retrieved from [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_IV_of_the_United_Kingdom)



**Jane Austen (1775—1817).**

Portrait retrieved from [Jane Austen Society of North America](http://JaneAustenSocietyofNorthAmerica.org)

Austen had begun writing in her youth, completing her first novella, *Lady Susan*, at age 19. Though she was able to sell the story to a publisher in 1803, it was never published during her lifetime. She repurchased the manuscript from the publisher the year before she died but it was not published until well after her death.

Her first novel to be published was *Sense and Sensibility*, in 1811. It was not credited to Austen by name, instead authorship for the book was credited as “By a Lady.” *Pride and Prejudice*, her second publication, was credited as “By the author of *Sense and Sensibility*.” It wasn’t until after her death, when *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were published together, posthumously, that Austen was finally given credit for her work, in a biographical note written by her brother Henry.

Jane Austen died July 17, 1817, aged 41, from a disease that was unknown at the time and today is believed to have been Addison’s disease. She was buried at Winchester Cathedral in Hampshire; her gravestone does not mention that she was a writer. Today she is recognized as one of the most beloved authors of her time.

### QUICK FACTS ABOUT AUSTEN

- Although she never married, Jane Austen once accepted a marriage proposal from the brother of a close friend – for one night. She turned him down the following day after coming to terms with the fact that she didn’t love him.
- She was the first writer to use the phrase “dinner party” and was also the first English writer to use the word “baseball.”
- It is estimated that at any one time around the world there are more than 600 Jane Austen adaptations being produced.

**2018 Jewell Mainstage Season Clues! Join us for the Subscriber Sneak Peek - July 24.**

	<p>This show will remain a mystery even after it's announced; a classic comic-thriller that will have you howling.</p>	
<p><b>SUBSCRIBER SNEAK PEEK JULY 24, 2017</b></p>	<p>High praise, heritage and haberdashery. Our hats are off to this lively gospel musical!</p>	
<p>Be the first to hear about Taproot's next season at the Subscriber Sneak Peek!</p>	<p>Eine musikalische Romanze im Herzland. (A musical romance in the heart land.)</p>	
<p>Listen to the director's exciting plans for the upcoming plays and hear scenes read by your favorite actors.</p>	<p>We're just Wilde about this show. Big fans!</p>	
<p>Watch for an official invitation!</p>	<p>Roughing it with two giants of the 20th Century... and the century's most forgotten president.</p>	

**Looking for a bite to eat near the theatre? Check out these Subscriber Rewards Partners!**



**Chaco Canyon Organic Cafe**

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We are a vegan and restaurant and cafe in Greenwood! Over 90% of our ingredients are sourced organic, we partner with many small local farms and we strive to be as sustainable a business as possible. Come in to try our numerous gluten free options and more.



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[nakedcitybrewing.com](http://nakedcitybrewing.com) | 206.838.6299

**Discount: Naked City offers a 10% discount to all Taproot Theatre patrons! Show your playbill or ticket to your server or bartender to receive the discount on the night of the show.**

Naked City strives to carry on the rich tradition of the American public house with a small craft brewery influenced by Northwest beer culture and the great beer traditions of the world, and a scratch kitchen specializing in American Comfort Food with fresh, seasonal, and local ingredients. Naked City also hosts monthly cultural events, including film nights, Think & Drink with KUOW, baroque music nights, burlesque nights, and comedy shows. Come one, come all, to Greenwood's town hall.



**The Olive and Grape**

8516 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103  
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Traditional Italian and Turkish Grill.