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## **Arizona Theatre Company Kickstarts the Holiday Season with Second Austen Adaptation**

*The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley is a Delightful Continuation of Pride and Prejudice for the Whole Family*

**PHOENIX** – [Arizona Theatre Company](http://www.arizonatheatrecompany.com) will kick off the holiday season with *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* Nov. 5 through Dec. 2 in Tucson and Dec. 8 through Dec. 23 in Phoenix. The show is Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon’s latest story with the characters from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, and it follows the events that took place on stage in last season’s *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, but from a different perspective. Gunderson is America’s most-produced playwright and Melcon is a playwright/dramaturg extraordinaire in the theatre and performing arts industry. During the show’s run in both cities, ATC will be collecting new or gently used books for children up to 18 years of age as part of [Make Way for Books’](http://www.makewayforbooks.org) Blue Book House Project. Storybooks and children’s literature can be dropped off in the lobby of each venue during any performance of the production.

In this family-friendly holiday play, the servants play as much a role in the festivities as the Bennet girls themselves. However, instead of confining themselves to the kitchen and the gardens, head housekeeper Mrs. Reynolds, footman Brian and new housemaid Cassie all get tangled up in the madness that is Lydia Wickham’s marriage.

“As with the other iterations, Gunderson and Melcon reshape our notions of the beloved characters that we think we know so well,” said Director Veronika Duerr. “In doing so, they help remind us of all that the holidays have to offer: a lot of family, food, and, of course, a touch of drama.”

It is in this collision of upstairs and downstairs, when love, the holidays and pre-conceived notions of who everyone is, that Gunderson and Melcon truly shine. In taking the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* outside of Austen’s pages, they afford characters such as Mrs. Reynolds, Brian and Cassie to move from their status as “minor” Austen characters to the stars of their own show.

Through the Blue Book House Project, Make Way for Books distributes free books through nearly 50 social services organizations. The aim of the project is to enable families to build their home libraries, giving their children access to books that will help them develop a lifelong love of reading and prepare them for success in school. The project is also intended to help develop a greater culture of literacy in the Tucson community. Last year, the Blue Book House distributed nearly 12,000 books to children and families.

Performances will be held at the Temple of Music and Art (330 S. Scott Ave.) in Tucson and at the Herberger Theater Center (222 E. Monroe St.) in Phoenix.

Tickets are on sale now, and prices begin at \$25. Tickets can be purchased at [atc.org](http://atc.org) or 1-833-ATC-SEAT.

### **About Arizona Theatre Company**

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Arizona Theatre Company's (ATC) performances bring people together to experience essential stories, from reimagined classics to contemporary plays, original works, and innovative musicals fostering continued conversation beyond the theatre walls. Founded in 1966 and celebrating its 55th season, ATC is led by Kasser Family Artistic Director Sean Daniels and Managing Director Geri Wright. ATC operates in two major cities and is the preeminent professional theatre in Arizona, recognized as the official State theatre.

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