



# OPEN TO PERSUASION

An Online Mini-Conference on Jane Austen's Last-Completed Novel  
To Benefit The Holy Theatre's *Persuasion* Workshop Fund

Saturday, August 13 and Sunday, August 14, 2022

[www.theholytheatre.org](http://www.theholytheatre.org)

<https://www.theholytheatre.betterworld.org/donate>

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON

*Saturday, August 13, 2022 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. EDT*

### **Alteration and Perhaps Improvement: Four Artists on Adapting *Persuasion***

Panel discussion featuring David Fernandez, Sarah Rose Kearns, Noreen Mughees, and Damianne Scott, moderated by Janet Saidi

**David Fernandez** is a choreographer and filmmaker whose dance film *Courage*, which tells the story of Jane Austen and her heroines through the medium of ballet, is now in pre-production and scheduled for release in 2023.

**Sarah Rose Kearns** is a playwright and performer whose stage adaptation of *Persuasion* debuted off-Broadway last year and will be produced in Warwick, NY later this month.

**Noreen Mughees** is the author of the forthcoming *Sana's Suitors*, a contemporary novel inspired by *Persuasion*, set to be published in the fall of 2023 by Alcove Press.

**Damianne Scott** is a writer, professor, and the creator of the popular Black Girl Loves Jane Facebook page; she is currently in the process of editing her *Persuasion*-inspired novel *Persuaded* for publication.

**Janet Saidi** has written and produced stories for National Public Radio, PBS, the BBC and BBC World Service, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and more; as “Plain Jane,” she is the creator of the Austen Connection newsletter and podcast.

## SATURDAY EVENING

*Saturday, August 13, 2022 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. EDT*

### **The Loveliest Medium: Character and Characterization in *Persuasion***

Scholarly talks by Jocelyn Harris and Wendy Jones, moderated by Tabrizia Jones

**Jocelyn Harris** is professor emerita of English at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and the author of many books and essays including "Captain Wentworth and the Duke of Monmouth: Brilliant, Dangerous, and Headstrong" *Persuasions On-line* 31 (2018); *Satire, Celebrity, and Politics in Jane Austen* (2017); *A Revolution Almost beyond Expression: Jane Austen's "Persuasion"* (2007); and *Jane Austen's Art of Memory* (1989).

**Wendy Jones** is a former English professor and practicing psychotherapist known for her work on the connection between literature and the mind-brain sciences. Her recent publications include *Jane on the Brain: Exploring the Science of Social Intelligence with Jane Austen*, "Jane Austen and the Social Sciences" (in *The Routledge Companion to Jane Austen*), and the ongoing blog Intersubjective for Psychology Today.

**Tabrizia Jones** is a Young Adult Librarian at the Pelham Parkway-Van Nest Branch of The New York Public Library and the co-editor of the NYPL patron-submitted literary magazine, Library Zine! Voices Across the New York Public Library. She has also served as a volunteer reader for The Highland Book Prize and as a judge for The Diverse Book Awards. She currently expresses her love for books and Jane Austen on her blog, which is titled cup of tea with that book, please.

## SUNDAY MORNING

*Sunday, August 14, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. EDT*

### **Ask Me Anything (About *Persuasion*): In the Weeds with Resident Experts**

Open discussion with David Shapard and Lena Yasutake, moderated by Lakshmi Gandhi

**David Shapard** is a frequent speaker on Austen who has edited and annotated all six of her novels for Anchor Books. He graduated with a Ph.D. in European History from the University of California at Berkeley, where he specialized in the eighteenth century. His deeply-researched and popular edition of *Persuasion* has remained in print continuously since 2010.

**Lena Ruth Yasutake** is an educator, activist, and community-builder who is currently serving as dramaturg for The Holy Theatre's workshop production of *Persuasion*. She presented a talk called Accessibility Through Adaptations of Austen at the JASNA AGM in 2021 and she serves as a member of the JASNA committee for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. She dedicated to bringing the joys of Austen's writings to new, younger, and even more diverse audiences.

**Lakshmi Gandhi** became enthralled by Jane Austen after her mother bought her a paperback copy of *Pride and Prejudice* just before a cross-country airline trip. Since then, she's taken every opportunity to write about Austen adaptations and other historical dramas through her work as a freelance journalist and has covered everything from the South Asian representation in *Bridgerton* to Freida Pinto's influences in *Mr. Malcolm's List*. Along with her close friend Asha Sundararaman, she also writes and edits The Lakshmi and Asha Show, a popular weekly newsletter that covers books, movies and South Asian identity.