

18th Century British Author Finds New Fans

Why The Rise of Jane Austen's Popularity in Today's World

LAPORTE, INDIANA, UNITED STATES, January 24, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Love is in the air in February. And when it comes to [Jane Austen](#), who created some of the most romantic characters in literature, her popularity is soaring on the air, on stage, and on-line.

Hallmark is honoring the 18th-century British author with a month of four original [movie](#) premiers inspired by her work.

They're calling it "Loveuary with Jane Austen," and it promises to satisfy the legion of Austen fans who can't seem to get enough of her. Filming is also underway for one of the greatest literary mysteries surrounding Austen. MASTERPIECE is shooting an all-star production of the popular novel *Miss Austen*, by Gill Hornby

(Flatiron Books 2020). It revolves around Jane's sister Cassandra, who burned Jane's letters shortly after the author died. Is it sisterly love that drives her – or something more sinister?

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Deborah Yaffe

The appetite for this type of fare seems bottomless. In her *Jane Austen: A Brief Life* (Yale University Press, 2017), author Fina Stafford wrote “Austen's stature has assumed extraordinary proportions and shows no sign of shrinking.” Expect plenty of hoopla in 2025 which will mark the 250th birthday of the author.

Janeites, a phrase coined in the early 20th century for the legion of devoted Austen admirers, are sure to be out in full force. Deborah Yaffe, a journalist and a Janeite, explores the transformation of Austen from a classic novelist to a person with fan clubs all over the world. Among the



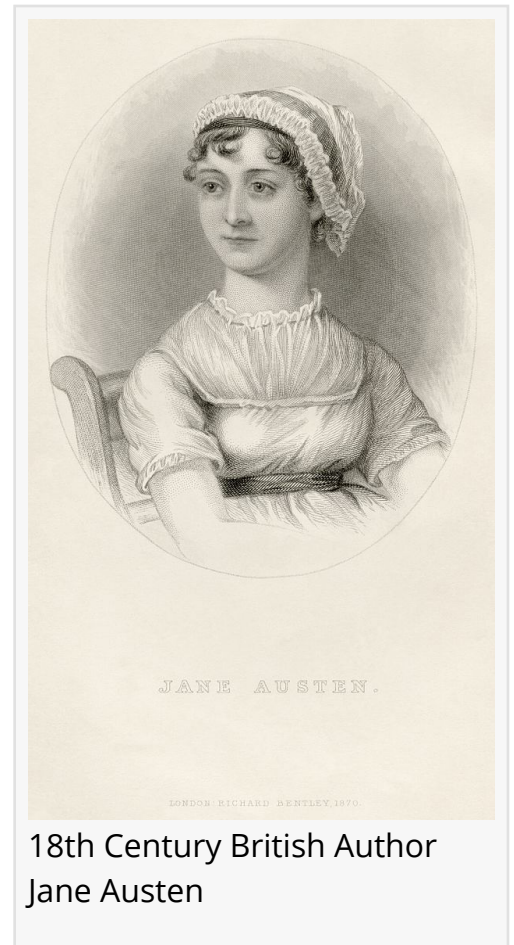
The Bergen County Players Cast of *Pride & Prejudice*

Janeites: A Journey Through the World of Jane Austen Fandom.

"There is no typical Janeite," she says. "Some are drawn to her romantic tales, others to her social satire and feminism. The demographic used to be middle-aged white women, but that is changing too, as online space expands."

Merchandising Austen is also big business. The woman who could barely make a living through the sale of her books is a multi-million-dollar industry: her image or quotes can be found on everything from dolls, mugs, and t-shirts to jigsaw puzzles, soaps, and rubber ducks.

There is also a profound respect for her story-telling ability – even what some call her genius. JASNA – the Jane Austen Society of North America --has more than 5,000 members in its 81 chapters, making it the largest literary society devoted to Austen. All the groups are dedicated to get more people to appreciate and understand Austen's work, with regular live events as well as online forums and chat options.



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Jane Austen

There are also publishers and a new generation of writers to thank for fueling Austen's popularity with the recent proliferation of books and plays that are exciting younger audiences. A theatrical adaptation of Austen's most famous book, *Pride and Prejudice*, by playwright Kate Hamill heads is billed as "not your grandmother's Jane Austen. It heads to the stage in February at Bergen County Players in Oradell, NJ. The play is funny throughout, and contemporary with discos and characters in high tops who play multiple gender roles. "The play stays true to the source material and its intent while playing up the sexuality and silliness," says Carol Fisher, director. "But it is amazingly relevant."

Jane Austen, who was born in 1775, never seems to grow old. She would probably be surprised by the cachet she's earned so many years after she wrote her novels.

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