

# Cheer from Chawton

Rebecca from the Jane Austen Centre on seeing her name in the programme as Fanny.

Karen in action as a variety of Jane Austen characters.



The other drama production that really grabbed the imagination of the audience – it really was difficult to see when the applause was going to end, - was the exciting and exuberant new one-woman show *Cheer from Chawton* by Karen Eterovich, in Bath for its UK premiere.

The anticipation started when Karen asked if we could provide one or two minor characters to act with her. Knowing that there had been open rehearsals in New York, our young staff at the Jane Austen Centre couldn't wait to join in and both Karen and her producer, David, were a delight to work with in the setting up of the production.

The play's premise is an ingenious one. In the tradition of amateur theatricals held during her childhood at Steventon Rectory, we are to believe that Jane Austen has prepared an entertainment for her family, in which her siblings are to take part as fellow performers. But Jane's family have played a trick on her, leaving her to tackle



the audacious task of an unrehearsed solo performance. They have provided her with a box of props and a list of topics, quizzing her on her life, publication history and the inspiration behind her work. These serve as the springboard for the most enjoyable evening, filled with Jane's pointed observations on her family, friends, suitors and society as well as her hilarious early efforts as an author.

Karen is a very lively, versatile and knowledgeable performer and had the audience in the palm of her hand. They enjoyed their opportunity for some very light-hearted audience participation and no one wanted the evening to end. Certainly my number one event for a repeat performance!

Karen Eterovich and her producer David.

