

# SVCT's 'Little Women' will surprise and delight local audiences

**Musical play follows the lives of four sisters as they in adulthood**

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*By Staff Report*



Alexandra Hannon as "Amy March" reads her sister Jo's story during a scene of the South Valley Civic Theater's show "Little Women." *Photo by Marty Cheek*

The South Valley Civic Theater opened its holiday theater show Nov. 21 by taking audience members to Civil War-era America where they meet several colorful young ladies in the musical "Little Women."

Based on Louisa May Alcott's classic 1868 semi-autobiographical novel, the musical play tells the story of the four sisters of the March family. Jo March (played by Christy Wright) is a brassy tomboy who aspires to be a writer. Meg (played by Jessie Henry) is a romantic. Amy (played by Alexandra Hannon) is pretentious. And Beth (played by Danielle Moore) is kind-hearted. The musical originally opened on Broadway in 2005. The book is by Allan Knee, lyrics are by Mindi Dickstein, and music is by Jason Howland. The show runs two hours and 20 minutes including the intermission.

"It's just a classic American story. It does have some Christmas themes which is great for this season. But all in all it's a play about family and real people," said SVCT director Andrew Cummings.

Although the play takes place in a time period about 150 years ago, through the interaction between the March sisters, modern audience members will see the ever-present human issues that people of all generations face, he said.

"It's about growing up so they're dealing with a lot of things like boys and strife between sisters but also some larger issues," he said. "For example, their father is gone serving as an army chaplain in the Civil War and they're in a family that used to have some wealth but at this time they don't and so they're dealing with some poverty. And so there are larger themes in the show that they have to deal with, some more dramatic issues."

Wright considers the play's story primarily focusing on women and their relationship with each other. Playing the central character of the story, she sees Jo March as a woman ahead of her time.

"I think Jo is amazing," she said. "She's sort of like a feminist, which is crazy for a show set in the 1800s. She has her own ideal and creates this world for herself. She's kind of different from me because I'm kind of like this girlie-girl in real life and she's very much not that. She's very tomboyish."



Christy Wright as "Jo March" sings about her aspirations to be a writer as Mark Blattel as "Professor Bhaer" listens. *Photo by Marty Cheek*



Hannon swoons upon hearing distressing news. *Photo by Marty Cheek*

The show is a good way to introduce children to musical theater, she added.

“It’s very family friendly and great for kids. I think that the only sort of bad word I say is ‘hell’ maybe once,” Wright said. “The costumes are beautiful and the songs are just so gorgeous. There’s a couple of tearjerker songs and there are really powerful numbers for everyone involved, and we have an amazing cast. They’re so good in performing.”

Wright has appeared in other SVCT performances including the “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” and said she’s a fan of the “Little Women” story.

“I’m just really excited about being in this production,” she said. “This is one of my dream shows and I’m so glad SVCT did it and I get to be a part of it.”

Cummings said he saw the show the first time when it was on a Broadway national tour and performed in San Jose. He was surprised that he liked it because he expected it to be a syrupy show. He discovered it had a lot more depth in emotions in the characters than he originally thought and “gorgeous” music, he said.

“I remember the first time I saw it, I said, ‘Oh, “Little Women,” whatever. I don’t really need to see this show,’” he said. “And I almost gave my tickets away actually. But when I left the theater I was just astounded. It’s a show of pretty huge scale that is really an astounding show.”

The SVCT version has 10 actors which he considers a relatively small cast. Many of the actors play multiple parts. Although girls will naturally enjoy it because it’s a story that relates to growing up, boys will also enjoy the sword fights and swashbuckling scenes that will surprise the audience, he said.

“It’s definitely appropriate for kids, we’re trying to encourage families to bring the whole group from 6 to 96,” he said. “We follow these sisters from a younger age up to marriage, so it spans several generations in the family unit as well and so it has a little something for everybody. It’s something to do over Thanksgiving weekend and as Christmas approaches.”

# Little Women: Visit With an Old Friend

**Gilroy Dispatch,**

Lora Schraft/Chief Photographer

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by Camille Bounds

South Valley Civic Theatre presents Little Women opening Friday Nov. 21 and running through Sunday Dec. 14.

Showtimes: Fridays and Saturdays Nov. 21, 22, 28, 29, and Dec. 5, 6, 12, and 13 at 8 p.m. Sundays Nov. 30 and Dec. 7 and 14 at 2:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$15 for students, \$18 for seniors and \$22 for adults.



From left, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, Suzanne Guzzetta, playing the role of Marmee March, and Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.

Louisa Mae Alcott's "Little Women" has never been out of print since it was first published in 1868. It was translated into a least a dozen foreign languages during Alcott's life and can now be found in 50 different languages including Bengali, Chinese, Indonesian and Urdu.

Three major motion pictures have been made from the book, as well as countless stage adaptations, operettas, ballets and several made-for-television movies. This production is delightful and plays with deep sentimentality with Andrew Cummings' adept direction. Jason Howland's music and Mindi Dickstein's score are pleasant.

Just about everyone knows the delightful story of the March sisters and Marmee. Allen Knee's adaptation centers around the feisty Jo, whose character in this rendition reminds me of "Molly Brown" with extra chutzpa that says she will become a dedicated successful writer at any cost.



From left, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, and Suzanne Guzzetta, playing the role of Marmee March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.

The lively cast is made up of pleasant voices and endearing portrayals.

Christy Wright gives us an energetic Jo. Her delivery of “The Fire Within Me” and “Astonishing” gives the music and lyrics the sensitivity needed.

Jessie Henry shows us a mature Meg, Alexandra Hannon produces a sassy, self-centered Amy and Danielle Moore arrives with a gentle, sweet Beth. They all have their moments and stand up to all the fates have in store. Suzanne Guzzetta brings Marmee in handling it all with understanding and patience. Gerardo Leon's Laurie is charming with Mark Blattel as Professor Bhaer, Bob Brown as Mr. Laurence and Ariane Borgia as Aunt March all add well-tuned talent. The entire cast is vibrant and energetic.

Generously produced by Peter Mandel, and Carol Harris—as usual—lends her fine conducting and vocal direction talent to a difficult score.

Andrew Cummings' creative sets, Nathan Cummings' lighting, Nichole Murphy's sound and interesting colorful costumes by Patricia Hannon add to making this an enjoyable well done production.

This is a kid friendly production.



From left, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, Gerardo Leon, playing the role of Laurie Laurence, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, and Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



From left, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, and Bob Brown, playing the role of Mr. Laurence, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, and Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



From left, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Gerardo Leon, playing the role of Laurie Laurence, and Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



Gerardo Leon, playing the role of Laurie Laurence, performs with the cast of Little Women during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production Nov. 18.



From left, Danielle Moore, playing the role of Beth March, Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, Gerardo Leon, playing the role of Laurie Laurence, Jessie Henry, playing the role of Meg March, and Alexandra Hannon, playing the role of Amy March, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.



Christy Wright, playing the role of Jo March, and Mark Blattel, playing the role of Professor Bhaer, perform during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theatre production of Little Women.