



Louisa May Alcott's

# *Little Women:*

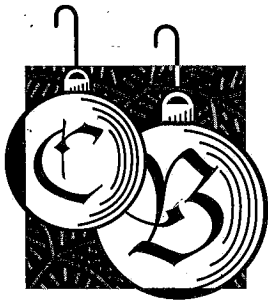
## *Part First*

A NEW STAGE ADAPTATION BY  
Alisha Watts Christiansen

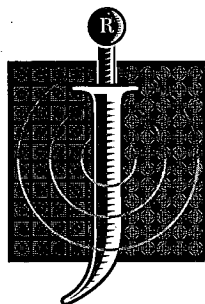
**THEATRE**

5-22 November 1997  
Margetts Theatre

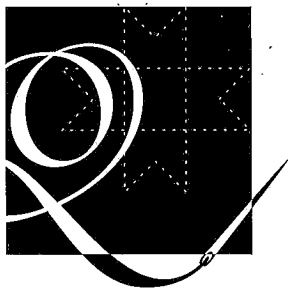
Don't miss these  
outstanding Pardoe  
Series productions!



*The Christmas Box*  
19 November–6 December 1997  
Matinée 2 p.m., 29 November



*Romeo and Juliet*  
21 January–7 February 1998  
Matinée 2 p.m., 31 January



*Quilters*  
18 March–4 April 1998  
Matinée 2 p.m., 28 March

*The Foreigner*  
27 May–13 June 1998  
Matinée 2 p.m., 6 June



Tickets are available now in the Harris  
Fine Arts Center Ticket Office.

THEATRE

THE BYU DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS  
PRESENTS



Louisa May Alcott's

*Little Women:*  
*Part First*

A NEW STAGE ADAPTATION BY  
Alisha Watts Christiansen

DIRECTOR  
Char Nelson

DRAMATURG  
Tim Slover

COSTUME DESIGNER  
Janet L. Swenson

SCENIC AND LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Mark W. Ohran

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
Sarah Wilkes

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR  
Bob Nelson

# A Pilgrim's Progress

by Char Nelson

When I read *Little Women* as a girl, I was captured by images of secret Christmas gifts, playmaking, a handsome boy next door, parties, burned curls, the terror of falling through ice, scarlet fever, music, rides in a carriage, snow people, and rough-and-tumble Jo—my “soul-mate.”

This time around, the journey is a spiritual one. The images from *Pilgrim's Progress*, so apparent in the story—of our trial-fraught journey to a glorious place above, of burdens of guilt and sin that we all carry, and of our personal repentance and spiritual growth through the power of the Atonement—each now resonates in my mind.

Now that I am experiencing *Little Women* in an age of super-consumerism, I find this powerful story has grown beyond the collective sum of the images I drank in as a child. It speaks to my soul of qualities that enrich my life here and will through eternity. I am reminded again and again that it is only in losing myself in service to another that I have any hope of truly finding myself. Working on *Little Women* has been a revelatory theatrical journey.

## SETTING

Civil War period, New England

## THE KENNEDY CENTER AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL XXX

Presented and Produced by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Supported in Part by The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund

The U.S. Department of Education

The National Committee for the Performing Arts

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KC/ACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KC/ACTF representative, and certain students are selected to participate in KC/ACTF programs involving awards, scholarships, and special grants for actors, playwrights, designers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KC/ACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KC/ACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, in the spring of 1998.

Last year more than 900 productions and 18,000 students participated in the American College Theater Festival nationwide. By entering this production, our department is sharing in the KC/ACTF goals to help college theater grow and to focus attention on the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

## Cast

in order of appearance

Meg March  
Janet Evans

Jo March  
Jen Miller

Beth March  
Katherine Redford

Amy March  
Caitlin Wise

Marmee, the girls' mother  
Mary Slover

Hannah, the cook  
Catherine Elizabeth Sorensen

Mrs. Hummel, a poor German woman  
Cameron Deaver

Laurie Laurence, the Marches' neighbor  
Javen Ronald Tanner

Aunt March, Mr. March's wealthy aunt  
Catherine Elizabeth Sorensen

Mr. Laurence, Laurie's grandfather  
Cameron Deaver

Mr. John Brooke, Laurie's tutor  
Corey Dyckman

Jenny Snow, Amy's schoolmate  
Janet Evans

Mary Kingsley, Amy's schoolmate  
Jen Miller

Mr. Davis, Amy's school teacher  
Corey Dyckman

Annie Moffat, Meg's fashionable friend  
Katherine Redford

Belle Moffat, Annie's older sister  
Catherine Elizabeth Sorensen

Esther, Aunt March's French maid  
Mary Slover

Mr. March, the girls' father  
Cameron Deaver

# Who's Who

in the company

**Alisha Watts Christiansen** (Playwright) is a theatre MA student from Boring, OR. Her credits include the role of Edna Dubois in *The Seating of Senator Smoot*. Recently she wrote a one-woman play about Minerva Teichert for an exhibit of the artist's work at the Museum of Art.

**Cameron Deaver** (Mr. Laurence/Mr. March/Mrs. Hummel), from Raleigh, NC, is a master's student in theatre. Most recently he appeared in *Dear Stone*, *Hay Fever*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

**Corey Dyckman** (Mr. John Brooke/Mr. Davis) is a film major from Dallas, TX. A freshman at BYU, Corey has appeared in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and *The Boys Next Door*.

**Janet Evans** (Meg March/Jenny Snow), from Davis, CA, is a prospective theatre student. *Little Women* is her first play at BYU, but she has been acting since she was in the fifth grade. Her credits include *Romeo and Juliet*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Wall*.

**Kris Hall** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a senior majoring in theatre from Chicago, IL. Her stage management experience includes *Free at Last* and several other productions. She will be directing a Mask Club production of *Night, Mother* this semester.

**Jen Miller** (Jo March/Mary Kingsley), from Salinas, CA, is majoring in theatre with an acting emphasis. She has appeared in *Peter Pan*, *Crazy for You*, and *The Crucible* and is a member of The Garrens Comedy Troupe.

**David M. Mellinger** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a theatre arts education major from Layton, UT. Excited to graduate in April, David has had many unique experiences in theatre at BYU and encourages inquiries about it!

**Char Nelson** (Director), from Provo, earned her BFA from the U of U and is a graduate student at BYU. Her many achievements include grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Utah Humanities Council. *Little Women* is her BYU directorial debut.

**Mark W. Ohran** (Scenic/Lighting Designer) is a theatre major from Provo. His credits include work on *Separate Tables* and *Henry IV*. Currently he is a technical director at Timpview High School and a teaching assistant at Mountain View High School.

**Melissa A'Dreana Parker** (Makeup and Hair Designer), from Portland, OR, is majoring in costume design. She has designed costumes for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *The Shoemaker's Holiday*.

**Katherine Redford** (Beth March/Annie Moffat) is a music dance theatre major from Irvine, CA. She has appeared in *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Matchmaker*, and *You Can't Take It with You*.

**Mary Slover** (Marmee March/Esther), from Provo, earned both BA (theatre) and MS (marriage and family therapy) degrees from BYU. She returns to the BYU stage after 10 years of adventure in childrearing and gardening.

**Catherine Elizabeth Sorensen** (Hannah/Aunt March/Belle Moffat) is majoring in theatre with an acting emphasis. From Pittsford, NY, she made her BYU debut in *Free at Last*. Her latest appearances include *Henry V* and *Esther*.

**Janet L. Swenson** (Costumer Designer) has designed for Disney Cable Channel, Sundance, the Utah Shakespearean Festival, and over 100 productions at BYU. Her most recent projects include *1776* and *My Fair Lady*.

# Who's Who

continued . . .

**Javen Ronald Tanner** (Laurie Laurence), from Kanab, UT, is a theatre arts major. *Little Women* is his second mainstage play at BYU. Javen expresses his love and gratitude to his wife, Tara, and his son, River.

**Sarah Wilkes** (Production Stage Manager) is a theatre major from Topeka, KS. She has stage-managed *Hay Fever*, *King John*, and *The Arkansaw Bear*. She has also traveled to southeast Asia as part of the technical crew for the Young Ambassadors.

**Caitlin Wise** (Amy March), originally from Del Mar, CA, is an eighth-grade student at Farrer Junior High School. Caitlin has appeared in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Tom Sawyer*.

## The Ambidextrous Alcott

by Steven Christiansen

Is Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* masterful prose or just a "girls' book," written to make money? Does it extol women's courage and strength or reinforce stifling roles?

Critics have recently called Alcott a moody, scandalous spinster who wrote gothic romances such as *Little Women* only to cash in on literary fads. Metaphorically, Alcott was "ambidextrous." One hand wrote conventionally, influenced by her strict father's values. *Little Women* and its ilk paid the bills. Meanwhile, the other hand concentrated on sensuous, forbidden subjects often suppressed during the American Civil War era. Does Alcott's "ambidexterity" in subject matter undermine her more pious and popular texts?

Many also criticize *Little Women* for perpetuating stereotypical, patriarchal notions of women. Youngest sister Amy faints, and Laurie, a male, rescues her. The sisters dress up as men when they play because men hold the real power. The fact that Alcott may have rejected many of the novel's traditional ideas also may undermine the text's validity. If its author didn't embrace its moral vision, why should we believe it?

What, then, accounts for *Little Women*'s longevity as "an American classic?" According to Elaine Showalter, a renowned feminist critic, *Little Women* "is both convincing and inspiring" in its empowerment of women. For example, Meg and Jo provide for the family—Jo even sells her long, dark hair, "her one beauty," breaking social norms to contribute to her absent and ailing father's care. The March women are involved in a relational rather than a hierarchical structure. They share, learn, and grow together. *Little Women*, Showalter says, does not stifle women's autonomy and desires but presents inspiring characters who ennoble and empower both women and men. The playwright, Alisha Christiansen, also finds *Little Women* convincing and inspiring.

The interaction between performance and viewer is always personal. Perhaps this performance will irritate you if what you see is simplistic moralizing. Perhaps you will feel uncomfortable with outdated attitudes toward women. Or perhaps you will leave feeling edified and inspired. We all must decide for ourselves what the text and performance say to us. We hope the show stimulates illuminating thought and contributes to fruitful discussion.

# "Specially Adapted"

by Alisha Watts Christiansen, Playwright

My favorite book as a young girl was a "specially adapted" version of *Little Women*, full of wonderful black-and-white pencil pictures I've never forgotten. I read it many times, proud to be such an advanced reader who could successfully tackle this grown-up book. Some years later my parents gave me the complete *Little Women*. It had fewer pictures and lots more words, so reading it once was plenty for my nine-year-old mind.

I had given *Little Women* scant thought until just a few years ago, when I saw the new movie version. I loved it! But the film had missed a few important parts of the book. So I reread Alcott's novel, and I discovered many thoughts and attitudes that are part of who I am. Her vivid imagery seemed to bring her words to life. Because I love the theatre and find it even more effective than film for communicating human relationships, I began to visualize this story on stage.

A few months later I found myself in the library, researching a number of inadequate stage adaptations of *Little Women*. Nearly all drastically changed Alcott's fine language and much of her story, adding both characters (in one version, Thoreau joins the Marches for dinner) and content (in another, Meg tells Marmee that she wants to divorce John). I resolved that I would do my best to put Alcott's original work on stage. I would try to keep every part of the multifaceted story and not change the rich language at all. I wanted to create a beautiful stage version that shared with audiences the joy and purity of Alcott's uplifting themes.

About three months ago, as Steven and I were shopping, he pointed out a section of children's books, "specially adapted" versions of the classics. Excitedly I searched until I found it—a copy of my old book, my favorite version of *Little Women*! I bought it, of course, and felt that I had found an old friend as I reread the simple words and poured over those pencil illustrations. It reminded me what a wonderful, character-shaping story this is. I hope that you find our production a similar experience for you.

## Emergency Exits

## Late Patrons

## Recording Prohibited

## Electronic Devices

## Restrooms

# Plan to attend these Margetts Series shows.

*The Shoemaker's Holiday*, by Thomas Dekker  
28 January–7 February 1998

Nobly born Rowland Lacy loves the daughter of the Lord Mayor of London. Lacy's uncle, the proud Earl of Lincoln, actively opposes the match and hopes to ship his nephew off to the French Wars to separate the pair. But Lacy has his own cunning plan to disguise and become an apprentice to the shoemaker who serves the Lord Mayor, and so, just maybe, have a chance to wed his sweetheart.

Meanwhile, the shoemaker's other assistant has been pressed into the soldier's life and somehow has to make it home before his bride is given to someone else! It's lusty Elizabethan merriment from the golden age of English comedy.

*Joyful Noise*, by Tim Slover  
4–14 March 1998

In 1740 George Frederic Handel stood at the edge of failure and despair. Soprano Susanna Cibber fought to recover from a scandal that had rocked 18th-century London. There seemed to be no future for either one. And then Charles Jennens opened his Bible. . . .

*Joyful Noise*, a new award-winning play by Tim Slover traces the remarkable events surrounding the creation and London premiere of *The Messiah*, the oratorio that almost wasn't.

*Erasmus Montanus*, by Holberg/Argetsinger  
13–23 May 1998

A Danish peasant family sends their son to Copenhagen to gain a useful education and is appalled when he comes home a scholarly but insufferable prig without the sense to wear a cloak in the rain. Can anything bring him back to reality—and in time for him to win his girl? This is a little-known but charming 18th-century Danish comedy of humors, modeled after Molière's style and set in a time when the world was quite reassuringly flat.

## Special thanks to

Colleen Bauman  
Murray Bowen  
Eric Gilssteyer

Join us for the  
staged reading of  
*Little Women: Part Second*

Tuesday, 9 December 1997  
7:00 p.m.  
Nelke Theatre

