



MASQUE
THEATRE

Little Women

by Louisa May Alcott
dramatised by John Myhill

TUE 28 MAY - SAT 1 JUNE 2024

Notes from the director

My first real encounter with this American classic was when cast as Laurie in a 1999 stage version of the play with Duston Players, and enjoyed it so much I read the book which I had (wrongly) assumed to be for children and of no interest to a 30-something male reader. I fell completely in love with the March family and Louisa May Alcott's absorbing style, and devoured the three sequels ('Good Wives', 'Little Men' and 'Jo's Boys'). I actually cried at the end of the last as there were no more to read. Since the lovely experience directing Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town' back in 2015 I'd been considering another American story and eventually settled on my own adaptation of this.

Cutting it down to performance length was traumatic but rewarding, and I'm so grateful for assistance with the final edit from my fellow pilgrim Kelly who has been a true partner in directing this warm hug of a show, taking me out of my comfort zone and sparking ideas I wouldn't otherwise have had.

You'll hear many references to John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress', and the book was clearly a favourite of Alcott's. It's not as dry or dull as you might think and not for nothing is it one of the bestselling books of all time, though less read today than it deserves. I'd also recommend Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield' as Jo's 'jolly read', but I cannot comment on Belsham's 'Essays'!

Much of the piano music used is by Anthony Phillips, who actually began as founding guitarist of Genesis. Exceptions are versions of 'To Be A Pilgrim'. The lyrics (from Bunyan's novel) were familiar to 1860s Americans, but to a different tune, as the one we know today was attached in 1906 by Ralph Vaughan Williams - but it's so familiar I decided you would forgive the anachronism.

This has been a joy to direct with a cast who have completely inhabited their characters, a true collaboration between them and the directors, and we hope you enjoy it. We are, after all, just pilgrims together on the road.

John Myhill
Director

Cast



Chris Stobart - James Laurence (Grandfather)

Chris Stobart is neither little nor a woman but didn't let that detain him from auditioning. His previous Masque credits include 'Henry V', 'The Duchess of Malfi', 'Treasure Island' and 'David Copperfield'.



Mairead Kearins - Hannah

Mairead joined Masque Theatre six years ago, recently playing Beggar Woman in 'Sweeney Todd' and Helena in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. She is thrilled to be playing this role from one of her favourite books.



Anderson North - John Brooke

Anderson is new to Masque and excited to be telling this wonderful story.



Laura Isles - Maid /Estelle

Laura has been acting from the age of three. She has produced and directed her own version of A Midsummer Night's Dream, and acted in productions from Shakespeare to contemporary.

Many thanks to Megan Lucas, Tamsyn Payne, Gemma Knight, Robert Vaughan and Philip Welsh

Thanks also to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for their continued support.

Little Women

Cast

Josephine 'Jo' March Hari Turner
Margaret 'Meg' March Helena Enright-King
Elizabeth 'Beth' March Bernadette Crisp
Amy March Amelie Dawson
Theodore 'Laurie' Laurence Jake Turner
Margaret 'Marmee' March Rachel Moore
Robert March (Father) Martin Williams
Aunt Josephine March April Pardoe
James Laurence Chris Stobart
(Grandfather)
Hannah Mairead Kearins
John Brooke Anderson North
Maid / Estelle Laura Isles



There is one interval of 20 minutes.
Refreshments available.

Creative & Production Credits

Director John Myhill
Co-Director Kelly Bradley
Stage Manager Mairead Kearins
Costume Clare Brittain and Pam Mann
Wig Stylist Rachael Pickering
Lighting & Sound Sonny Lumiere
Quilts Jo Myhill
Poster Design Rebecca Cockcroft
Programme Meryl Couper
Booking Manager Liz Allan
Box Office Sue Howes
Hospitality Manager Maggie Holland
FOH / Refreshments Masque Members



Photography credit- Rebecca Cockcroft

Directors & Cast



John Myhill - Director

John has previously directed for Masque including another American classic, Thornton Wilder's 'Our Town', and two summer Shakespeare's ('Antony & Cleopatra' and 'Richard III') as well as Webster's 'The Duchess of Malfi'. He has also directed shows and pantomimes for Duston Players (many of which he wrote) and also for White Cobra. He also acts, including his personal favourite role being as Salieri in 'Amadeus'.



Kelly Bradley - Assistant director

Kelly is a freelance theatre producer & creative. She moved to Northamptonshire in 2014 and has been involved with both local and professional creative projects in the county (and nationally) ever since. She joined Masque in 2019 for 'The Duchess of Malfi'.



Hari Turner - Josephine 'Jo' March

Hari has been in several Masque productions. Previous roles include Ichabod in 'Sleepy Hollow' and Tobias in 'Sweeney Todd'. They are very excited to play Miss Jo March.



Helena Enright-King - Margaret 'Meg' March

Helena is delighted to be playing Meg in 'Little Women'. Her recent credits include Alice and Dr Kemp in Duston Players' 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'The Invisible Man' respectively.



Bernadette Crisp - Elizabeth 'Beth' March

Bernadette is disabled and neurodivergent, she loves anything performing arts and creative. She makes the word Can't into Can and shows you true determination. She joined Masque in 2024.

Cast



Amelie Dawson - Amy March

Amelie is an actress and event planner, most recently playing Charlie in 'Wasted' (Northampton College). As a lover of classic literature, she is thrilled to be playing Amy March! 'Little Women' marks Amelie's Masque debut.



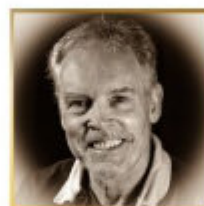
Jake Turner - Theodore 'Laurie' Lauren

Though still a relatively new member, you may recognise Jake from last year's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' as Lysander and Fogg in 'Sweeney Todd', as well as his latest performance as John Merrick in Duston Players' 'The Elephant Man'.



Rachel Moore - Margaret 'Marmee' March

Rachel moved to Northampton in 2023 and joined the Duston players where she played Prince Charming in last year's pantomime and was Mrs Kendall earlier this year in 'The Elephant Man'. Her performance in 'Little Women' is her first with Masque Theatre Company.



Martin Williams - Robert March (Father)

Martin has recently appeared in 'When We Are Married'. Other credits include 'Macbeth', 'Much Ado About Nothing', 'The Herbal Bed', 'As You Like It', 'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', 'Romeo & Juliet', 'Liaisons Dangereuses' and 'A Man for All Seasons'.



April Pardoe - Aunt Josephine March

April joined Masque in 2012 playing a range of roles including Mrs Gibbs in 'Our Town' and Hippolyta in 'Midsummer Nights' Dream'. April also works with other local groups including Duston Players.

Forthcoming Shows

The Winter's Tale

by William Shakespeare Directed by Clare Brittain

Shakespeare's The Winters Tale is a play of two halves: the first half of the play has the winter themes of jealousy, death and loss; the second half is set in the spring and has the themes of rebirth, and those 'lost' are reunited.

It's about the King Leontes who abandons his daughter because he is convinced he is not her father. Sixteen years later they are reunited.

A sad tale best for winter, Shakespeare's classic play of love betrayal and redemption.

Thursday 25 July - Saturday 3 August 2024
7.30pm

Abington Park Museum