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Right Pocket:

Welcome Letter

Amy Weinstein, President and Founder, StudentsLIVE

Welcome Letter

Producers

LITTLE WOMEN Press Packet

StudentsLIVE Press Packet

National Standards

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE NOTE

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Plot Background

Louisa May Alcott's story *Little Women* is timeless – and timely. The story written in 1868 relates a fictionalized account of its author's young life with her sisters. While certain aspects of the story have been altered in this musical adaptation, the heart of the tale remains untouched.

Four sisters of the March family: Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy come of age during the U.S. Civil War, while their father is away with the Union Army. Their mother, whom they affectionately call "Marmee," nurtures and encourages these four strong-spirited young women to achieve their dreams. While this approach to raising children may be "conventional," there is little "conventional" about her daughters. Jo, a tom-boyish writer, disregards social standards of how women should behave. Her spirit and drive are the main focus of both Alcott's original novel and Allan Knee's book for the musical.

Throughout the musical, you'll notice certain themes. One of the major understated themes is that of revision: From the initial curtain covering the stage, you'll notice many handwritten letters from Jo – many of these pages contain revisions. The pages are seemingly blowing across a great expanse, suggesting the immense life force and vision our main character embodies. While Jo has no specific agenda to change minds or alter social expectations, she lives her life as she sees it – free-spirited, intelligent, caring, and not at all like the "ideal" Victorian woman of the late 1800s. She revises others' ideas of how a young woman should behave and dream with such grace and verve the viewer forgets she is from a poor family living in the midst of one of the bloodiest wars in history.

Throughout the story, Jo's enthusiasm and imaginative creativity invigorate the action: in the beginning of the tale, the four sisters eagerly accept and expand Jo's unique approach to having no Christmas presents as they dream of fantastic tales on the high seas. While living together in Concord, MA, the sisters grow from co-existence with a cranky neighbor, Mr. Laurence to developing solid friendships with him and his grandson, Theodore "Teddy" Laurence (Laurie). They experience first crushes and love – and balance the ideals of Victorian companionate marriage with that of candid enjoyment of sharing another's life. They rally together to support each other: Jo sells her hair to facilitate Marmee's trip to be with her ill husband, Jo chooses her sisters over a potential suitor only to learn to accept Meg's engagement to Laurie's tutor John Brooke, the sisters all accept Amy's eccentricities, Jo moves to New York City to begin a life as a writer (where she meets Professor Fritz Bhaer who becomes her mentor and dear friend), and even through the death of their sister Beth, the family's unwavering friendship and loyalty allow each other to fulfill their dreams and achieve great happiness.

Plot Summary

(Note: This is the story as it is presented on the *Little Women* website, at <http://littlewomenonbroadway.com/story.html>)

Act One

As *LITTLE WOMEN* opens, we see JO MARCH enacting her *OPERATIC TRAGEDY* for PROFESSOR BHAER, her neighbor in Mrs. Kirk's New York boarding house. Her "blood and guts" saga is clearly not to his taste. He suggests she is capable of more refined writing. After he leaves, Jo ponders whether her writing was BETTER years before, back home in Concord, Massachusetts.

Reminiscing on those days, we venture back to the March family attic of two years previous. Jo is rehearsing her siblings in her new Christmas play. Each sister is trying to find something to be happy about that Christmas; it is difficult with their father away at war, and no money for gifts or a Christmas tree. Jo promises they will no longer want for anything once she is a successful writer, and they will all realize OUR FINEST DREAMS. As Jo runs off to fulfill one of those dreams, MARMEE comes home with a letter from their father. Marmee reflects on her life with her girls and without her husband in *HERE ALONE*.

To help support the family, Jo has taken up helping AUNT MARCH. Aunt March worries that Jo is not the lady she needs to be to take her place in proper society. Jo wants to tell Aunt March what she thinks of society, but Aunt March offers to bring Jo with her to Europe...if she can change her ways. "*COULD YOU?*", she asks.

"I could change if I wanted to," replies Jo.

Time passes, and older sister MEG has one of her dreams realized: she and Jo are invited to a Valentine's Ball! While younger sister BETH is happy for them, the youngest, AMY, is jealous. Meg worries what to say to potential suitors. "*I'LL BE DELIGHTED*" is what Marmee suggests. When the glamorous evening arrives, Amy tries to go in Jo's place, as she feels she's more entitled. When Marmee won't allow her, Amy pouts and acts out to show her unhappiness.

At the ball, Jo is startled by the appearance of her neighbor LAURIE, who is accompanied by his tutor, MR. BROOKE. Meg is soon smitten by Mr. Brooke, and they leave to dance. Laurie professes his need for friends, and soon he asks Jo to *TAKE A CHANCE ON ME*. His good nature wins over Jo, and she agrees to take that chance!

Back home, after the ball, Amy and Jo have a little confrontation: It seems Amy's jealousy has gotten the best of her. Marmee tries to intervene, scolds Amy for her actions and explains to Jo that Amy is still very much a child.

Jo is still getting over the sting of her tiff with Amy as she starts to express her feelings through her writing. Time passes, and we find Laurie inviting Jo to a skating race. Beth offers her skates to Amy, as Amy has outgrown her pair.

Intent on staying inside, Beth sits at the piano, out of tune as it is. Mr. Laurence, looking for his grandson, comes upon her musical attempts. She soon softens his hard heart, and they find themselves playing a duet *OFF TO MASSACHUSETTS*. He leaves, but not before inviting Beth to come play his (in-tune) grand piano next door.

Coming in from skating, we see Amy has fallen through the ice, and rescued by Laurie. Having faced this life or death situation, Jo and Amy resolve their differences, and Jo swears in Laurie as an honorary member of the March family, officially making them **FIVE FOREVER**.

Time passes, and Marmee is making plans to go to Washington to tend to her ill husband, but is short on funds. Jo saves the day, coming up with money to pay her fare. Marmee is just barely gone when Aunt March and Jo have a heated exchange, and Aunt March rescinds her offer of Europe. Instead, Aunt March turns her focus on Amy, to make her into the model society lady that she wished Jo would have been.

Before Jo can settle the matter, Mr. Brooke comes in to announce his enlistment in the Union Army, and to ask for Meg's hand in marriage so he could be **MORE THAN I AM**. All of this seems so sudden to Jo, who questions Meg's loyalty to the family; after all, they had sworn to remain together forever. Jo's world is starting to change significantly!

A few weeks later, visiting Jo in her attic, Laurie arrives with news and a declaration. The news: With Mr. Brooke at war, he is headed off to college in Boston. The declaration: He's in love with Jo – and he wants to marry her!

All this is too much for Jo. She refuses his advances, sends him off, and questions her future. Will she be able to find her way, without her sisters or her best friend? As Act One ends, she vows her life will be **ASTONISHING**, no matter what!

Act Two

Back in New York, 1866. The war has ended, and Mrs. Kirk and Professor Bhaer are holding a telegram for Jo. Jo, however, bursting in, has her own news to share. She has sold her first story to *THE WEEKLY VOLCANO PRESS*! Soon all are privy to its contents—she sold her *OPERATIC TRAGEDY* encountered earlier on, only now it's better, thanks to the Professor's advice!

Once Jo comes down to earth, Mrs. Kirk remembers the telegram: Beth is gravely ill. Jo packs to leave New York immediately. She hastily makes her goodbyes.

Back in Concord, Mr. Laurence has his own plan to make Beth well—he moves his piano into the March home. Beth and her family are overwhelmed by his generosity, and soon all join in another rendition of *OFF TO MASSACHUSETTS*.

After the song, Jo sends a note to Professor Bhaer, telling him of her plans to take Beth and Marmee to Cape Cod with her earnings. She asks him what's new in New York. He tries over and over, but just can't quite find the way to tell her *HOW I AM*.

Once on the Cape, Jo splurges her meager earnings on her mother and sister. All put up a brave front concerning Beth's health, but Jo and Beth privately admit to one another *SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE*.

Back in Concord, eventually Amy and Aunt March return from Europe. Much has changed. MEG is now a mother, Jo is now a published writer, and Beth has passed on. Things are different for Amy, too: she is engaged to Laurie, who consoled her in Europe when Beth died. Together they break the news to Jo; after all, it was *THE MOST AMAZING THING*.

Later, in her attic, Jo asks Marmee how she has been able to handle the loss of Beth. Simply, Marmee insists Beth will always be with them, and that Jo, too, will find she has *DAYS OF PLENTY*.

Jo takes in what her mother has said, and finally sees how she can go on... and how she can keep Beth's memory alive. Jo begins work on what is to become her greatest achievement: *LITTLE WOMEN* the novel. *THE FIRE WITHIN ME* fills her attic, and her heart, as she brings her family to life on paper.

The day of Amy and Laurie's wedding arrives. Amidst the last minute details, Jo and Aunt March finally resolve their issues. Aunt March will leave Jo her house, with the suggestion that she open a school. Her generosity touches Jo in ways she never expected.

Suddenly, in the flurry of wedding excitement, a confused Professor Bhaer enters, looking for Jo. He apologizes for arriving on so auspicious a day, but he comes with good news and a declaration of his own. First, Jo's manuscript has been bought! Jo March is a novelist! As for his declaration....

Well, he bought a kite!

From this point, he proceeds to pour his heart out to Jo, admitting how he's fallen in love with her, and that he's not only share his *SMALL UMBRELLA IN THE RAIN* but his hand in marriage as well.

Jo, always skeptical, questions their chances. Theirs would be a new kind of relationship for a new world. With the courage, grace and enthusiasm that defines our heroin, we leave the musical trusting in the new love she and Professor Bhaer will share.

SCENES AND MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

- Scene One** Summer 1865, Mrs. Kirk's boarding House
"An Operatic Tragedy"
"Better"
Christmas 1863, the March family attic
"Our Finest Dreams"
"Here Alone"
- Scene Two** Early Winter 1864, Aunt March's house
"Could You"
- Scene Three** Winter, 1864, the March Parlor
"I'd Be Delighted"
Annie Moffat's ball
"Take a Chance on Me"
"Better" (reprise)
- Scene Four** Late Winter 1864, March family parlor
"Off to Massachusettes"
"Five Forever"
- Scene Five** Early Spring, 1865, outside of March house
"More Than I Am"
- Scene Six** Late Spring 1865, the attic
"Take A Chance On Me" (Reprise)
"Astonishing"

ACT II

- Scene One** Early Summer, 1866, Mrs. Kirk's boarding house
"The Weekly Volcano Press"
- Scene Two** Summer 1866, March family parlor
"Off to Massachusettes" (Reprise)
Late Summer 1866, Mrs. Kirk's boarding house
"How I Am"
- Scene Three** Fall 1866, Falmouth, Cape Cod
"Some Things Are Meant To Be"
- Scene Four** Winter 1867, the March parlor
"The Most Amazing Thing"
"Days of Plenty"
"The Fire Within Me"
- Scene Five** Spring 1867, outside the March house
"Small Umbrella In The Rain"
"Sometimes When You Dream"

Chapter I: How to Use This Guide

Introduction:

This guide is intended to allow you to explore the themes and story of *Little Women* with your students prior to and after seeing the musical performance. Incorporating national educational standards for Music, Performing Arts, English Language Arts and Social Studies, the guide links the themes of this dynamic musical to students' lives. Each chapter is designed to include historical information along with specific songs and dialogue from *Little Women*. All chapters include activities for your students to engage with to not only enhance your current curriculum but to also deepen their appreciation for the incredible story and wonderful talent in the musical. We hope you find using this guide as enjoyable as the performance itself!

Special Note: Whenever lyrics or dialogue are presented, please encourage your students to read the texts aloud! You can have each student read one or two lines before moving on. In dialogue, you can ask for volunteers to read specific parts.

National Standards for English Language Arts, Social Studies, Performing Arts

The following standards appear throughout each lesson in this study guide to connect performing arts to your current curriculum.

National Standards for English Language Arts:

Students will demonstrate competence in:

Reading by:

- Reading a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
- Reading a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Writing by:

- Employing a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Speaking, listening and viewing by:

- Participating as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- Applying knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- Applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- Using spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

National Standards for Social Studies

Students will demonstrate competence by:

- Studying the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.
- Examining individual development and identity.
- Understanding interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

National Standards for the Performing Arts (Music and Theater)

Students will demonstrate competence in:

Music by

- Evaluating a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain the musical means it uses to evoke feelings and emotions.
- Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Performing Arts by:

- Evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices.
- Identifying and researching cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.
- Articulating and justifying personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.
- Analyzing and critiquing the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

Chapter II: Preparation for the LITTLE WOMEN Musical

Please Note: This chapter contains several elements to prepare your students to fully appreciate and enjoy the performance of *Little Women*. You may find yourself referring back to this section often, as it contains the following sets of information:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. What is a musical? A genre? | Pages 10 - 12 |
| 2. What was the history of the period? | Pages 12 - 16 |
| 3. Who wrote <i>Little Women</i> ? | Page 16 |
| 4. Who are the actors in the musical? | Pages 17 - 18 |
| 5. Who is the creative team? | Pages 18 - 23 |
| 6. Lesson Plan | Pages 24 - 25 |

National Standards: (Theater) Students evaluate and synthesize cultural and historical information to support artistic choices. Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions. (English Language Arts) Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

HOW SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND A MUSICAL?

A musical, in all its various forms, is very much a living art form. A musical can be defined as a stage, television or film production utilizing popular-style songs and dialogue to either tell a story (book musicals) and/or showcase the talents of varied performers (revues). Book musicals have gone by many names: comic operas, operettas, opera bouffe, burlesque, burletta, extravaganza, musical comedy, etc. Revues have their roots in variety, vaudeville, music halls and minstrel shows. The best musicals have three essential qualities: (1) intelligence and style, (2) genuine and believable emotion and (3) the courage to do something creative and exciting. Musicals with these qualities are more likely to stand the test of time.

Much like a play, musicals are separated into portions – or *acts*. Each act exists in order to present the storyline at different times. For example, a second act may fast-forward weeks, months or even years to emphasize the development of the characters and the story line. Each act consists of *scenes* – where certain characters perform songs and have dialogue that tells their parts of the story.

In addition to acts, musicals also have:

A score: These are the songs (music and lyrics) that relate the intelligence and emotion of the story.

A book: also called the *libretto* – is the least appreciated and yet most dramatically important element of a musical. It is the narrative structure that keeps the score from being nothing more than a disjointed medley of songs.

Key players: These are the people who get the show up and running – there is a producer, general manager, stage manager, house manager, dance captain, casting director, and actors, to name a few.

A creative team: These are the people who give the show its internal structure. They include the composer and lyricist, the librettist, the director, choreographer, designers for the set, costumes, sound and lighting in addition to a music director, orchestrator and dance arranger.

If a musicals as art forms explore themes and tell stories, the KINDS of stories they tell belong to a *genre* – what is that?

Unfortunately “genre” has no one definition! Generally speaking, a genre is always a vague term with no fixed boundaries. Many works also cross into multiple genres. In general there are three types of genre:

1. Focus on a setting (like science fiction works, Victorian romances, etc.)
2. Focus on a mood (like comedy or action)
3. Focus on a format (like non-fiction...or musicals!)

So, if a musical is in and of itself a genre, how can we distinguish between the term’s other definition – a traditional division of an art form that is separated by various forms. That is to say popular forms of art – classical, Greek, contemporary or pop – all inform how works of art are created and perceived.

What genre does *Little Women* belong to? Technically, the period the book was written was considered the “Victorian” genre – marked by ideas of “proper” living and moral ideas. However, the Victorian genre is now often regarded as one of many contradictions. It is easy for many to see a clash between the widespread cultivation of an outward appearance of dignity and restraint, and the widespread presence of many arguably deplorable phenomena. During its height, (1837-1901), industrialization and larger-scale warfare produced legions of destitute workers, a history of child labor and exploitation of lower classes.

The book was written in 1868, and reflects the lives of four sisters 1864-1867. The story is semi-autobiographical, yet reflects other artistic sentiments blossoming during the late Victorian genre. Artists of all types (painters, musicians, writer) were reflecting on the hypocrisy of the era, and began expressing in various forms their displeasure with their contemporary forms of politics and economics. Whereas we do not consider Louisa May Alcott to be a “revolutionary,” she did test the boundaries of how women were represented in works of art.

What musicals were performed during the dates of the *Little Women* story? (Note: If you would like to know the stories of these Broadway productions, an auxiliary lesson plan could be implemented using the internet and your library's resources on theater history. It would be interesting to learn the story lines of any of the following musicals, and if possible, research any related articles or critiques of the performances – it could enhance how students understand how art reflects contemporary values and how it is accepted or rejected. Additionally, students may enjoy to know what the 1860s-theater-goer expected from a musical performance.) The following list is not all-inclusive. The names of theaters are included, as are the number of performances each musical produced.

1864

- The House That Jack Built, 1/11/1864, American and Fox's Old Bowery, 57
- Aladdin, 6/2/1864, Olympic, 27
- Mazlum, 7/11/1864, Barnum's Museum, 48
- Harlequin Bluebeard, 12/26/1864, Hippotheatron, 56

1865

- Old Dame Trot and Her Cat, 1/30/1865, Bowery, 56
- Mother Goose!, 2/12/1865, Hippotheatron, 49
- Petroliamania, 3/6/1865, Wood's Minstrel Hall, 51
- Sinbad the Sailor, 11/27/1865, Fox's Old Bowery, 18

1866

- Black Domino, Between You, Me and the Post, 1/29/1866, Lucy Rushton's New York Theatre, 30
- Jack and Gill, 2/19/1866, Fox's Bowery, 105
- Columbus Reconstructed, 7/9/1866, Winter Garden, 24
- The Black Crook, 9/15/1866, Niblo's Garden, 474 (*The Black Crook* was "reconstructed" on 5/27/1867 and 9/30/1867, closing its record run on 1/4/1868)

1867

- Little Boy Blue, 4/1/1867, Bowery, 72
- La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein, 9/24/1867, Francais, 156
- The Devil's Auction, 10/3/1867, Banvard's, 73
- Ye Legend of Ye Grand Queen Bess, 12/9/1867, Kelly & Leon's, 25
- Little Dew Drop, 12/23/1867, Barnum & Amburgh Museum, 36

HISTORY OF THE LATE 1800s

Hmmm. Why should we be concerned with these ideas of genre, history and context? How is that important to our understanding of *Little Women*?

The story of *Little Women* is important to American history because it challenges stereotypical (at that time, Victorian) ideals of how women should live. Throughout the story, there is a tension between Aunt March and Jo regarding this very issue. Should women be quiet and bite their tongue so they may attract an appropriate suitor? Or,

should women be bold and chase their dreams – even if others think they are crazy dreams?

What was happening in the 1860s that could have influenced this work of art, anyhow?

It is crucial to remind your students of how different life in the 1860s was – although most students can quickly agree that life *must* have been different, few can truly state *how* it was different. Young Americans have not lived through a civil war in their own country, they may be unable to conceive of a time when women could not vote, or even that “popular culture” revolved around things like reading and theater (instead of T.V., concerts, and radio stations playing their favorite songs). Since the aspect of historical contextualization is so critical to our understanding of not only *Little Women*, but of *any* piece of literature, any song, any musical or any other text, we now turn our attention to contextualizing this very important aspect.

1. UNITED STATES HISTORY OF THE LATE 1800s

- Recap of 1840-1860
- Westward expansion/battles over territory

2. POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE LATE 1800s

- North/South/beginning of Civil War
- Lincoln’s presidency (domestic/foreign)

3. ECONOMY OF THE LATE 1800s

- Industrializing North balances issues like child labor, 14 hour-work days, irregular wages. 1873, J.S. Mill dies (the official “end of capitalism”) and Karl Marx publishes *Das Kapital*. Trade unions form at that time, however the resentment of the working classes is mounting during the 1860s.
- The depression of 1839 has crippled many of the working class even in the 1860s, with limited mobility to recover from devastating losses.
- The South’s plantation economy is also buckling under the decreased value in the market of tobacco prices.
- Trade matters in relation to RR and the whiff of unionization.

4. RELIGION IN THE LATE 1800s

- Protestantism (evangelicalism) reinforces the ideas that women are to raise a family in a very closed manner.
- Revivals of the early 1830s have lasting impact on who was to transmit religious information to children – namely, women.

5. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE LATE 1800s

- Literature is changing dramatically from Victorian-styled “proper” and moral stories to more explorative, thanks in part to the transcendentalist movement. There are two forms of transcendentalists: (a) those who rebelled against those Victorian conventions (these authors tended to be well-educated Northern citizens who wrote prior to the Civil War – their topic revolved around the division that war created, for the most part – by doing this, they were trying to create a unique American literature rather than copying convention from Europe) AND (b) those who tried to define spirituality and religion in the face of an increasingly “materialistic” society (and to express that spirituality in more emotive terms and “less rational terms” – i.e. perhaps religion is a feeling rather than a rule book.) These influential writers included Emily Dickenson, Ralph Waldo Emerson (with whom Alcott had contact), Thomas Wentworth Higginson, James and Harriet Martineau, Theodore Parker and Margaret Fuller. These authors are contemporaries of Alcott, although Alcott is typically not considered a true “transcendentalist.”

With all of these activities, the ideas that predominated most literature and other cultural “texts” were those that impressed grander dreaming – was that because of the stifling nature of labor? Population increases and proportionately increasingly difficult and cramped living situations? The Civil War? Westward expansion? All of these issues certainly influenced individual choices – how do your students think this set of events influenced Alcott’s character choices?

Read through this timeline with your students, and reinforce the idea that although they may just see “dates” and “events,” that real people lived through these events at these times – and the story they are about to enjoy is born partially out of this historical circumstances and context:

- 1830 Christian (Evangelical) revivals – religious gatherings that lasted for days – are prevalent throughout the northern United States. These revivals promoted the idea that women were to serve their husbands, among the overt religious messages.
- 1833 The American Anti-Slavery Society is organized.
- 1834 New York Female Reform Society (whose mission was to reform “wayward women” and lead the spiritually poor) was founded; Female workers at the Lowell Mills in Massachusetts stage their first strike.
- 1847 After an economic depression 1839-1843, several religious and artistic communities form their own utopian communes throughout the northeast and promote ideas of equality and freedom beyond the “expected” ideas of political and religious freedom in the United States.
- 1848 Seneca Falls (NY) Convention outlines a program for women’s rights.

- 1850 The first national women's rights convention is held in Worcester, Massachusetts (roughly 30 miles west of Concord)
- 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe (a contemporary writer to Louisa May Alcott) published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which crystallized abolitionist sentiments against slavery.
- 1860 Democratic Party splits into northern and southern factions. The Constitutional Union party forms. Abraham Lincoln is elected president over Southern Democratic candidate John C. Breckenridge (among other candidates).
- 1861 Harriet Jacobs publishes *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The Lower South secedes from the Union. Fort Sumter is bombarded, Civil War begins. (Did you know? The Civil War began more as a battle to reunify the United States? After the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, and in an attempt to boost the Union Army's morale, the focus on the Civil War re-shifted its focus to abolishing slavery?)
- 1862 U.S. paper money is printed for the first time. To help pay for the Civil War, the U.S. Congress establishes the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Port Royal Experiment of returning land to freed black slaves begins.
- 1863 Lincoln's famous *Gettysburg Address*. Union Army draft riots in New York. Louisa May Alcott publishes *Hospital Sketches*. Large cities begin to receive free home delivery of mail. New York City draft riots.
- 1864 Lincoln re-elected. Alexander Graham Bell and his brother develop a "speaking automaton." Quadruplex Telegraph invented by Thomas Edison. Railroads hook on mail cars. General Grant takes control of all Union troops.
- 1865 Federal troops take over Richmond, VA and General Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House. Lincoln is assassinated. Andrew Johnson succeeds to the presidency and unveils his Reconstruction plan. Louisa May Alcott publishes *Moods*.
- 1866 Reconstruction Era begins in the South. The National Labor Union advocates an eight-hour workday. Black Codes developed in the South to rebel against Reconstruction.
- 1867 The 14th Amendment is passed, whereby "citizen" is defined as "male" – this is the first use of the word "male" in the Constitution.

1868 *Little Women* is published. The New England Woman Suffrage Association is formed after women are denied the right to be included as voters in the 15th Amendment.

MEET THE AUTHOR OF *LITTLE WOMEN*: LOUISA MAY ALCOTT!



Louisa May Alcott was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania on November 29, 1832. She had three sisters (Anna, Elizabeth and May) - all were educated by their father, philosopher/ teacher, Bronson Alcott. She spent her childhood in Boston and in Concord, Massachusetts. In addition to her father's lessons, she learned about the world through visits to Ralph Waldo Emerson's library, excursions into nature with Henry David Thoreau and theatricals in the barn at Hillside (now Hawthorne's "Wayside").

Much like her character, Jo March in *Little Women*, Louisa was a tomboy: She once said that "no boy could be my friend till I had beaten him in a race," she claimed, "and no girl if she refused to climb trees, leap fences...."

In addition to racing boys and climbing trees, Louisa loved to write stories. She had a rich imagination and often her stories became melodramas that she and her sisters would act out for friends. In keeping with her feisty spirit, Louisa played the villains, ghosts, bandits, and evil queens in her productions rather than the "softer" characters.

The Alcotts were not a wealthy family. Louisa had dreams, however, and although the times she lived in offered little opportunity for women to independently earn money, she nevertheless decided to become independent and in her words "make my way through this rough and tumble world."

Louisa's career as an author began with poetry and short stories that appeared in popular magazines. In 1854, her first book *Flower Fables* was published. A milestone along her literary path was *Hospital Sketches* (1863) based on the letters she had written home from her post as a nurse in Washington, DC as a nurse during the Civil War. When Louisa was 35 years old, she was asked to write "a book for girls." *Little Women* was written from May to July 1868. The novel is based on Louisa and her sisters' coming of age and is set in Civil War New England. Louisa created Jo March, who was the first American young heroine to act from her *own* individuality; a living, breathing person rather than the idealized stereotype then prevalent in children's fiction.

Louisa published over 30 books and collections of stories. She died on March 6, 1888, only two days after her father, and is buried in Concord, MA.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST?

MAUREEN McGOVERN (*Marmee/The Hag*). Broadway: *Little Women-The Broadway Musical* (created the role of “Marmee” for which she received a 2005 Drama Desk Award Nomination), *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Nine*, *3 Penny Opera*, and in the Broadway National Tour of *The King and I*. Off-Broadway: *Brownstone*. Regional: *Elegies*, *Dear World*, *Letters From 'Nam*, *The Lion in Winter*, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Let 'Em Eat Cake!*, *The Sound of Music*, *South Pacific*, *Guys & Dolls*, and *I Do, I Do*. Films: *The Towering Inferno* and *Airplane!* Dream Works animated video: *Joseph: King of Dreams*. A two-time Grammy nominee, her 25 critically-acclaimed recordings include tributes to Gershwin, Arlen, and Marilyn and Alan Bergman, and the Oscar-winning Gold Record, “The Morning After.” Visit www.maureenmcgovern.com and the Maureen McGovern “Works of Heart” Foundation.

KATE FISHER (*Jo March*) is thrilled to have the opportunity to play what she considers to be one of the greatest female icons of the literary world. Kate has been seen as Cosette in *Les Miserables* both on Broadway and with its Third National Tour. Her favorite regional roles include Eliza Doolittle, *My Fair Lady*, (Helen Hayes Theatre Co., Syracuse Stage & Arizona Theatre Co.); Fiona MacClaren, *Brigadoon*, (Maine State Music Theatre); Emma Carew, *Jekyll and Hyde*, (Arvada Center (Ovation nom.) & MSMT); Maria Von Trapp, *The Sound of Music*, (Hangar Theatre); Bathsheba Everdene, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, (NYMF); Belle, *Beauty and the Beast*; *They all Laughed* (Goodspeed Opera House). Kate is a Denver native and Northwestern University grad. She thanks her remarkable parents, two wonderful brothers and dedicates her performance to her five astonishing sisters.

RENÉE BRNA (*Meg/Clarissa*) is delighted to be “on the road again” with *Little Women* after finishing the *Oklahoma!* 1st National Tour. Regional credits include: *Show Boat* (Magnolia), *Closer Than Ever* (Edinburgh Fringe, Scotland), *How to Succeed ...* (Rosemary), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet). Member of Actors’ Equity. This one is for my Omi.

LOUISA FLANINGAM (*Aunt March/Mrs. Kirk*) celebrates 37 years as a professional union actress with appearances in over 100 productions, including Broadway: *The Most Happy Fella* (Cleopatra); *The Magic Show*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Play Me A Country Song*. National Tours: *Pippin*, *Company*, *Torch Song Trilogy*, *I Love My Wife*. Highlights: *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ma Joad), *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom* (Bea), *Grace and Glorie* (Grace), *Always ... Patsy Cline* (Louise). Her favorite role is Mrs. P.J. Benjamin.

GWEN HOLLANDER (*Amy/The Troll*) is a proud member of Actors’ Equity. Recent credits: Disney’s *Beauty & the Beast* (Belle), *Fiddler on the Roof* (Chava) and the title role in Larry O’Keefe and Nell Benjamin’s *Cam Jansen*. National Tours: *Footloose* and *Titanic*. Love and thanks Dani and Jason, Earl Maulding and her incredible family.

AUTUMN HURLBERT (*Beth/Rodrigo Too*) is a proud member of AEA. This marks her first Broadway tour! Recent credits: *The Middle of Nowhere* (The Girl) and *Evita* (The Mistress). Also a singer/songwriter, she is currently recording a demo of her own music! Thank you to Harden Curtis and much love to my amazing family. Muah!

MICHAEL MINARIK (*Mr. Brooke/Braxton*). Member of Actors’ Equity Association. National Tours: *Urinetown*, *Phantom* (Phantom), *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (Phantom). Regional: *Urinetown* (Bobby Strong), A.C.T.; *Jekyll & Hyde* (Dr. Jekyll), West Va. Public; *Beauty and the Beast* (Gaston), Marriott Lincolnshire; *Camelot* (Squire Dap), Papermill

Playhouse. NY Workshops: *Caligula*, *Dangerous Beauty*, *Pandora's Box*. IN HIM.
www.michaelminarik.com

STEPHEN PATTERSON (*Laurie/Rodrigo*), a proud member of Actors' Equity, is delighted to once again be touring America. Broadway and Tour: *Les Miserables* (Marius). CanStage: *Urinetown*, Rainbowstage: *Miss Saigon* (Chris). Look for Stephen's debut CD "Tonight at Eight," a collection of songs from *Oklahoma!* to *Les Miserables*. Love to family in Canada. R3.
www.stephenpatterson.net

ROBERT STATTEL (*Mr. Laurence/The Knight*) celebrates 50 years as an actor! Recreating his Broadway role in *Little Women*, he has appeared on Broadway in over a dozen plays, including *Philadelphia Here I Come* and *Sherlock Holmes*. Credits: *King Lear* (Drama Desk Nomination); *A Man For All Season*; the title role in Julie Taymor's *Titus Andronicus*.

ANDREW VARELA (*Professor Bhaer*) appeared most recently on Broadway in *Little Women*, prior to that he was honored to perform the role of Jean Valjean with the Broadway cast of *Les Miserables*. Other credits: *King David* (Broadway), *South Pacific* (Carnegie Hall), National tours of *Cats* and *Les Miserables*. Love to my little boy, Oscar.

JULIE BURDICK (*Standby for Beth/Rodrigo Too, Meg/Clarissa, Amy/The Troll, Jo*) is honored to be part of *Little Women*. She holds a B.F.A. from Niagara University. National Tours: *Oklahoma!* (Laurey including Dream Laurey), *Fame* (Iris). Favorite regional: *West Side Story* (Maria), *Twelfth Night* (Viola). Julie thanks her own "Marmee" and wonderful sister, Gretchen, for sharing this beautiful story. Love to Dad, BigJ and BabyJ!

JAMES DARRAH (*Standby for Professor Bhaer, Mr. Laurence/The Knight and Assistant Stage Manager*). Broadway: *Hello, Dolly!*; *Hedda Gabler*. Off-Broadway: *Silent Laughter*, *Once Around the City*, *Billion Dollar Baby*, *Secrets...*, *Boobs!*, *archy and mehitabel*. Tours: *Promises, Promises*; *...Forum*, *42nd Street*, *Some Like Hot*, *RBB&B Circus*. Some Regionals: *Was, As Bees in Honey Drown*. Some Television: "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," "Guiding Light," "One Life to Live."

KEVIN DUDA (*Standby for Mr. Brooke/Braxton, Laurie/Rodrigo*). Member of Actors Equity. Credits: *Cinderella* w/Eartha Kitt (Nat'l Tour); *Memphis* (World Premiere - North Shore); *Cats* (Gateway); *Camilla* (World Premiere - Walnut Street); *Just So* (U.S. Premiere - Goodspeed). Kevin is also the creator of "B'WAY", a one-day workshop with NYC Professionals bringing Musical Theater Training across the country. Thanks to friends & family.

NEVA RAE POWERS (*Standby for Marmee/The Hag, Aunt March/Mrs. Kirk*). Credits include the Broadway productions of *King of Hearts*, *Peter Pan*, *Barnum*, *Can-Can* and over 50 roles in regional theatres and Off-Broadway. Her European credits include Berstein's *Mass*, *Jedermann* and a recurring role in the Austrian sitcom *Der Leihopa*.

SUSAN SPENCER (*Standby for Beth/Rodrigo Too, Meg/Clarissa, Jo*) was last seen on Broadway in the final cast of *Les Miserables* (Fantine). Credits: *Cats* (Grizabella); *Evita* (Eva); *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna); *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (Standby for Sarah Brightman) at Radio City Music Hall and *South Pacific* (Nellie Forbush). Happily married to Andrew "Professor Bhaer" Varela. Love to Oscar!

MATTHEW G. MARHOLIN (*Production Stage Manager*). Broadway: *Blood Brothers*. National Tours: *Camelot*, *South Pacific*, *Tick, tick...BOOM!*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Jekyll & Hyde*,

The Wiz, King & I, Grease, Sound of Music, Urinetown. Off-Broadway: *I Love You . . . Now Change, Over the River.* International: *Porgy & Bess, Phantom of the Opera.* World Premier: *Camille Claudel.*

PEGGY TAPHORN (*ASM/Dance Captain*). An award-winning Director, Choreographer and Actress. Broadway: *Urinetown, Show Boat, Smokey Joe's Café, Me And My Girl, Broadway.* Off-Broadway: *Johnny Guitar; No, No Nanette; The Gay Divorcé.* New York/Regional: *Dreamgirls, Grand Hotel, Swing, Cabaret, Chicago, Sweet Charity, 42nd St.* and numerous others. Peggy also performs a tribute to Betty Hutton.

ALLAN KNEE (*Book*) has written for the stage and film. The film, *Finding Neverland*, starring Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet, is based on his play, *The Man Who Was Peter Pan.* *Syncopation* won an American Theatre Critics Award after premiering at the Long Wharf Theatre and George Street Playhouse. His other works include *Shmulnik's Waltz* (music by David Shire), *Santa Anita '42, The Jazz Age* and *Sholem Aleichem Lives*, which toured with Theodore Bikel. *Little Women* earned him a Richard Rodgers Musical Theatre Award. For young audiences he adapted *Around the World in 80 Days*, which toured nationally for Theatreworks/ USA. For PBS he wrote the four-part adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter.* He is currently working on a musical version of *Finding Neverland.* Allan is a graduate of the Yale Drama School and a founding member of the WorkShop Theater Company and Naked Angels.

JASON HOWLAND (*Music*) is a 1993 graduate of Williams College with an honor's degree in music composition. Last season, Howland's play *Blessing in Disguise*, written with Larry Pellegrini, premiered Off-Broadway. He was the music director and conductor for the long-running Broadway hit *Jekyll & Hyde*, musical supervisor for Broadway's *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and *The Civil War*, the final music director of Broadway's *Les Misérables* and music director for Broadway's *Taboo.* Howland has a co-publishing deal with Cherry Lane Music Publishing, Inc., and is at work on two other musicals, *Mariel* and *Quickstep* and is the creator of the Christmas event, *The Metal Messiah.*

MINDI DICKSTEIN (*Lyrics*) is currently writing a new musical commissioned by Playwrights Horizons in New York. Her songs were included in Lincoln Center's American Songbook as part of *Hear & Now: Contemporary Lyricists.* Other collaborative work: *Notes Across a Small Pond*, produced by the Bridewell Theater, London; *Beasts and Saints*, for Boston Music Theatre Project, ASCAP Workshop and MTW; and several musicals for Theatreworks/USA. Her work has been performed at NYTW, Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage, the Vineyard, the Women's Project and Cucaracha Theater. Awards include the Jonathan Larson Foundation Award, Second Stage Constance Klinsky Award, ASCAP Bernice Cohen Award and New York Foundation for the Arts and Massachusetts Artists Foundation playwriting fellowships. She received her MFA from New York University's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where she was an Oscar Hammerstein Fellow. She is a member of ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild

SUSAN H. SCHULMAN (*Director*). Broadway, Off-Broadway credits include *Sweeney Todd*, Circle in the Square (Tony nomination); the Tony-winning *Secret Garden* (Drama Desk nomination); *The Sound of Music; Little Women; Violet* (Drama Desk, Outer Critics nominations; NY Drama Critics, Lucille Lortel Awards); *Merrily We Roll Along*, York Theatre Co. (Obie Award, Lucille Lortel). City Center Encores!: *The Boys From Syracuse, Connecticut Yankee, Allegro.* Also, *Company* (York Theatre); *Jack's Holiday*, Playwrights Horizons (Outer Critics nom.); *Time & Again* (MTC); *Carnival; A Little Night Music; Arsenic and Old Lace* (ELT). Stratford Festival of Canada: *Hello, Dolly!; Fiddler on the Roof* with Brent Carver; *Man of La Mancha; The King and I.* Nat'l tours: *Sunset Boulevard* with Petula Clark, *Annie Get Your Gun.*

Regional: *Heartland, Follies, The Royal Family, A Little Princess*. Future: *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T*. TV: “On Stage,” PBS; “Smithsonian Salutes Disney.”

MICHAEL LICHTEFELD (*Choreographer*) has choreographed six Broadway musicals, including *Little Women, The Secret Garden, The Sound of Music* and *Sweeney Todd*. He was nominated as Best Choreographer for the Drama Desk Award, the L.A. Ovation Award and three Outer Critics Circle Awards. He choreographed six Off-Broadway musicals and his national and international tours have played all over the world. He also served as choreographer for six seasons at the Stratford Festival of Canada, including this season’s smash revival of *Hello, Dolly!* This is dedicated to his mother, June Lichtefeld.

JOE BOWERMAN (*Associate Choreographer*). Broadway: *Little Women* (Associate Choreographer, ASM, Dance Captain); *Urinetown, the Musical* (ASM, Dance Captain); *The Sound of Music* (Associate Choreographer, ASM); *Laughing Room Only* (Associate Choreographer). Off-Broadway: *Pete ‘n’ Keeley* (ASM, Dance Captain). Associate choreographer for three seasons at the Stratford Festival, Canada.

DEREK McLANE (*Set Design*). Broadway: *I Am My Own Wife, The Women, Present Laughter, London Assurance, Holiday, Honour, Summer and Smoke, The Three Sisters*. Off-Broadway includes *Aunt Dan and Lemon, The Credeaux Canvas, What the Butler Saw*, etc. Other United States: Sondheim Celebration (Kennedy Center) and productions at most major resident theatres and operas. Awards: 1997/2004 Obie Awards, Drama-Logue Award, 2003 Michael Merritt Award, 2004 and 2005 Lucille Lortel Award and five Drama Desk nominations.

CATHERINE ZUBER (*Costume Design*). Broadway includes *Light in the Piazza* (Tony Award), *Doubt, Dracula, Frozen, Dinner at Eight* (Tony, OCC, Drama Desk noms.), *Twelfth Night* (Tony, Drama Desk noms.), *Ivanov, Triumph of Love* (Drama Desk nom.), *London Assurance, Rose Tattoo*. Recent designs: *Intimate Apparel* (Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk, OCC noms.), *Engaged* (Obie Award), Beckett/Albee, *The Beard of Avon* (Lortel Award). Catherine received a 1996 Obie for Sustained Achievement and the 2003 and 2004 Henry Hewes Award (Outstanding Costume Design). Graduate: Yale School of Drama.

KENNETH POSNER (*Lighting Design*). Broadway: *The Frogs, Wicked* (Tony nomination), *Hairspray* (Tony nomination), *Imaginary Friends, Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Tony nomination), *Swing!*, ...*Charlie Brown, The Goat, Uncle Vanya, Side Man* (Lortel Award), *Lion in Winter, Little Me, A View from the Bridge, ...Ballyhoo, The Little Foxes, The Rose Tattoo*. Off-Broadway: *The Wild Party, The Play About the Baby, Tick, tick...BOOM!*; *The Waverly Gallery, Pride’s Crossing* (Lortel Award), *As Bees in Honey Drown, Cowgirls*. Obie Award, Sustained Excellence in Lighting Design.

PETER HYLENSKI (*Sound Designer*). Credits include the new Broadway revival of *Sweet Charity, Little Women, Brooklyn, Ragtime* (London’s West End) for which he received an Olivier Award nomination, *Opening Doors, Princesses, Children’s Letters to God, Laughing Room Only, Dora the Explorer Live, Chef’s Theater, Scooby-Doo Live, Ovarions!*, *Spoletto Festival U.S.A.* (1999 - 2002), *Blue’s Clues Live, Exactly Like You, Easter*, and *Niketown* (NYC). As Associate: Cirque du Soleil’s *Zumanity, Fosse, Taboo, Seussical, The Music Man, Follies*, and *Parade*. Film: re-recording mixer *Search for Life* (AMNH, Hayden Planetarium), *SonicVision* (MTV2, AMNH) *Passport to the Universe* (Futuriscope Planetarium, France).

BERNIE ARDIA (*Wig and Hair Design*), a California native, has enjoyed a 25-year career, starting in television with the “The Young and the Restless.” After working for David Merrick, he

never left the theatre. Mr. Ardia has designed over 50 productions including the Tony® Award-winning *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* with Chita Rivera, *Starlight Express* at the Las Vegas Hilton and NETworks' production of *Cinderella* with Eartha Kitt. He is very happy to have worked with many talented performers including Toni Tennille, Jamie Lynn Sigler, Deborah Gibson, Melody Thomas Scott, Anita Gillette, Mary Wilson, Pat Harrington and even Judge Judy!

DOUGLAS COATES (*Music Director/Conductor*). National Tours: *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Off-Broadway: *Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know*. European Tour: *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Regional: Denver Center, *Barrio Babies*, *Elliot Ness in Cleveland*, Walnut Street, Portland Stage, Garden State Art Center. Numerous summer stock companies, including Main State, Hampton Playhouse, Gateway and Candlewood. Workshops: *The Singing* by Daniel Levy and Lenore Champagne; *Snapshots: A Stephen Schwartz Review*; and *True Home* by Cass Morgan. Former faculty member of Tisch School of the Arts at NYU.

KIM SCHARNBERG (*Orchestrations*). Broadway: *Little Women* (2005 Drama Desk nomination), *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Civil War*, *Linda Eder at the Gershwin*. London: *Doctor Dolittle*. Regional: *Silver Dollar* (Goodspeed), *Romeo and Juliet* (Ordway), *In the Jungle of Cities* (Alley), *Waiting For The Moon* (Lenape). More at www.KimScharnberg.com. For Julie and Will!

JOHN MILLER (*Music Coordinator*). Recent Broadway: *Lennon*, *Sweet Charity*, *Jersey Boys*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Producers*, *Hairspray*, *Movin' Out*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Good Vibrations*, *Brooklyn*, *42nd Street*, *Dracula*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Caroline, or Change*. Studio musician (bass): Michael Jackson, Madonna, Portishead, Eric Clapton, BB King, Sinatra, Carly Simon, Celine Dion, Smashing Pumpkins, Pete Seeger, NY Philharmonic.

LANCE HORNE (*Vocal Arrangements*). Composer for works presented at 1999 NMTC/O'Neill Center; Public Theater; Lincoln Center; NYTW; MTC; Mark Taper Forum; American Opera Projects; Franklin Furnace; the Art Party; the Actors' Fund; BC/EFA; Juilliard; NYU; Bard College; "Sesame Street"; *A Season's Promise*, New World Records. Born Sheridan, WY. B.M., M.M., the Juilliard School. lancehorne.com

BEVERLEY RANDOLPH (*Production Supervisor*). Broadway: *Little Women*, *Into the Woods*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Waiting in the Wings*, *The Sound of Music*, *Steel Pier*, *Passion*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, *Falsettos*, *Metro*, *Cabaret*, *Roza*, *Grind*, *End of the World*, *A Doll's Life*, *Merrily We Roll Along*. Equity Stage Manager & Supervisor for over 30 years.

BARRY MOSS, C.S.A. and BOB KALE (*Casting*). Broadway includes *King Hedley II*, *Titanic*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Crazy for You*, *Scarlet Pimpernel*, the upcoming *Souvenir*, and a new musical version of *A Tale Of Two Cities*. Feature film/"television" includes "Sesame Street," *Dominick and Eugene*, "The Cosby Show," *Big Daddy*, *Little Nicky*, and the voices for *Beavis and Butthead Do America*. Many of the aforementioned in conjunction with Julie Hughes.

KEN GENTRY (*Producer*). Broadway: *Little Women-The Broadway Musical*. NETworks Presentations, the production company Gentry founded in 1995, has produced and managed over 45 tours in the United States including: Cameron Mackintosh's *Oliver!*; *Cinderella*, starring Eartha Kitt; *Rent*; *Show Boat*; *Ragtime*; *The Civil War*; *Jekyll & Hyde*; *Seussical the Musical* and Cameron Mackintosh and The National Theatre's production of *Oklahoma!* NETworks has toured internationally with *Fosse*, *Rent*, *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Cabaret*. Current productions include *Swan Lake* and the 30th Anniversary production of *Annie*, directed

by Martin Charnin. Future productions include Cameron Mackintosh and The National Theatre's production of *My Fair Lady*.

RANDALL L. WREGHITT (*Producer*). Broadway: *Little Women-The Broadway Musical* (Tony nom.), *Golda's Balcony* (Tony nom.), *Metamorphoses* (three Tony noms.), *Hedda Gabler* (Tony nom.), ...*Cuckoo's Nest* (Tony Award), *Electra* (three Tony noms.), *Lonesome West* (four Tony noms.), *Band in Berlin*, *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (four Tony Awards). Off-Broadway includes *The Waverly Gallery*, *As Bees in Honey Drown*, *The Boys in the Band*, *The Food Chain*, *Camping With Henry & Tom*, *Zombie Prom*. London: *The Boys in the Band*, *Lobby Hero*. Upcoming: *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *Crush the Infamous Thing*. Board member, Early Stages.

DANI DAVIS (*Producer*). President, half pint productions: www.halfpintstudios.com. Broadway: *Little Women-The Broadway Musical* (3 Drama Desk, 1 Tony nom), *The Lonesome West* (4 Tony noms.). Producing/writing: music - benefit recordings including *Dare to Dream* for Sanrio/UNICEF 2005. Cherry Lane Music, BMI, AEA, Duke grad. Theatrical credits: Broadway, national tours, Off-Broadway, regional, workshops. For Lena, Betty and Aria.



Maureen
McGovern



Kate
Fisher



Renée
Brna



Louisa
Flaningan



Gwen
Hollander



Autumn
Hurlbert



Michael
Minarik



Stephen
Patterson



Robert
Stattel



Andrew
Varela



Julie
Burdick



James
Darrah



Kevin
Duda



Neva Rae
Powers



Susan
Spencer

LESSON PLAN: Preparation for *Little Women*, the musical

Topic: understanding the historical and cultural context behind the musical.

Materials: timelines, online resources, notebooks.

National Standards: (Theater) Students evaluate and synthesize cultural and historical information to support artistic choices. Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions. (English Language Arts) Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.

Aim: How does the history in which the story was written effect it? How do the talent contribute to its telling?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Evaluate and analyze historical information relating to the musical
- (b) Communicate the story of *Little Women*
- (c) Imagine how life was like in the 1860s.

Do Now: Ask students to reflect on how their lives would be different if they had no television, radio, music CDs and so on. How would they spend their time?

Motivation: Ask then what they can see the talent (creative team, actors) bringing to the interpretation of the story? How would it be different if the musical had their favorite actors in the production?

Development: Have students read the following text from 1890 about writing:

There will be no harm . . . in trying your hand at various kinds of writing. You do not know your own powers, may be, and if you do not place your hopes high you can not suffer great disappointment if you fail to please. In order to secure a reading for your manuscript use a little business sense in preparing it. If you have a reputation already established it matters not upon what you write nor how careless your penmanship, it will be published, otherwise it is necessary to observe the following rules:

Write as plainly as possible, on one side of the paper only; be very particular as to spelling, punctuation and capitalization; use good paper and black ink. If you send your communication to a strange paper enclose stamps sufficient for its return if not accepted. Make no apology for writing it, but in as few words as possible request an examination of the manuscript and its publication if acceptable, or its return if not.

If you have exhibited real literary power it will soon be discovered; if you have not the person who rejects your manuscript has done you a favor.

Source: "An Old Practitioner." *The Mother's Guide and Daughter's Friend*. Indianapolis, Ind.: Normal Publishing House, 1890. Page 507.

The text is written for women – and was written after Louisa May Alcott wrote *Little Women*. Again, in the 1860s, Alcott had many barriers to overcome as a women writer – and she definitely made “no apology” for her writings - do you think this was similar to how Alcott felt about writing? Why or why not?

Homework:

(1) If you and your students have read *Little Women*, ask them to write a paragraph of which part(s) they would like to see on the stage. Why would they like to see that? What would they expect from the performance? If your students have difficulty conceptualizing this task, have them visit the *Little Women* website at: <http://littlewomenonbroadway.com/home.html> where they can view pictures and read the storyline more in depth.

(2) If you and your students have not read *Little Women*, ask them to write a paragraph – as they pretend to be living in the 1860s. Your curriculum undoubtedly can tie into this – social studies, English or history lessons can contribute to your students’ understanding of the times. Ask them to reflect on the larger historical events. Which one fascinates them? Which one could they imagine themselves being involved in? Their paragraph should focus on this kind of role-play: if they were involved in an historical event of their choosing, how would they behave? Reinforce that they will of course be bringing their contemporary voice to the paragraph, yet encourage them to imagine the period where heavy industrialization was giving pause to the “working class,” where women were unable to vote and be financially independent, and where a civil war was breaking out. This paragraph allows them to begin to dream and imagine the times more thoroughly. Once they produce this work, have them read their paragraphs aloud to the class – communication of peoples of other times is one of the major objectives of this lesson!

Chapter III: The Joys of Song

National Standards: (Music): Students evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain the musical means it uses to evoke feelings and emotions. (Theater) Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

Overview: As discussed in the last chapter, women played an especially different role in the 1860s than today. Women were not allowed to vote (and technically were not considered citizens of the United States as the 14th Amendment only refers to “males”) and the Victorian era was coming to an end. The period, marked by ideas of “proper behavior” had steeped in American culture – forming strong ideas for many of what the role of women should be. However, we are learning about a musical where the lead character pays little mind to those conventions – and expresses her wishes through music. How, exactly does she express her dreams, especially since those dreams were “not conventional?”

Themes: Hopes, Social expectations (and trying to adhere to them/revise them), and Achievement expressed through song.

With your students, read the lyrics from the songs “Better” (Act I, Scene I), “Could You” (Act I, Scene II) and “Astonishing” (Act I, Scene VI). After reading the lyrics, ask the discussion questions that follow.

Hopes: Jo has just asked for comments on her story from Professor Bhaer. He tells her she could do “better.” This upsets Jo, and she offers the following song called “Better”:

BETTER?
BETTER THAN WHAT?
BETTER THAN THIS DAZZLING PLOT?
BETTER?
THIS STORY WILL BE MY 'KING LEAR'.
EACH PHRASE IS BETTER.
BETTER THAN HIM.
BETTER! EVEN MY SMALLEST WHIM IS BETTER!
HOW CAN HE MISS WHAT'S SO CLEAR?
HOW CAN I DO BETTER THAN WHAT'S ALREADY HERE?
HOW CAN WHAT HE SAID TO ME BE TRUE?
IF I DON'T SUCCEED, WHAT WILL I DO?
TURN AROUND, GO BACK TO CONCORD?
LEAVE NEW YORK BEHIND UNCONQUERED? NO!
HOW DARE HE MAKE ME DOUBT THE WAY I FEEL?
DOUBT THAT EACH THRILLING PAGE IS WHO I AM?
AREN'T THESE WORDS ALIVE WITH PASSION,
VIVID AS MY ATTIC WHERE IT ALL BEGAN?

DISCUSSION QUESTION: This song is sung after Jo has enthusiastically worked on a story. She is enamored with her story – she worked hard on it and she likes it! The, she is told she can do “better.” Has something similar ever happened to you? What have you done that you liked? What kind(s) of reactions did you receive? Would you give up if someone didn’t like what you produced? Why doesn’t Jo?

Social Expectations: Remind students of the social expectations for women of the period. The following lyrics to “Could You,” between proper Aunt March and Jo reflect many of the sentiments of the day – the way a woman should act, what a woman should expect out of life, and more specifically, the way Jo should act.

AUNT MARCH

YOU COULD NEVER BEND YOUR WILL.
YOU COULD NEVER FOLLOW THROUGH.
YOU COULD NEVER BITE YOUR TONGUE,
THOUGH YOUR TONGUE MAY SPLIT IN TWO.
IF YOU WANT TO LIVE YOUR DREAMS,
THESE ARE THINGS YOU HAVE TO DO.
HOW COULD YOU CHANGE?
YOU CAN’T! NOT YOU.
COULD YOU PRACTICE SELF-CONTROL?
COULD YOU POSSIBLY BE SHY?
COULD YOU WEAR A CORSET TIGHT
IN THE HEAT OF MID-JULY?
THESE ARE RULES YOU MUST OBEY,
EVERY ONE WHICH YOU DEFY.
YOU’LL NEVER CHANGE.
YOU WON’T! THAT’S WHY!
YET SOMEWHERE DEEP WITHIN MY HEART I DO BELIEVE
YOU COULD CAPTIVATE THE WORLD.
IF YOU COULD CHANGE THERE IS SO MUCH YOU COULD ACHIEVE.
IN TIME YOU COULD SUCCEED AND TRAVEL VERY FAR INDEED.
YOU COULD BE BEGUILING.

JO

CHARMING? ME?

AUNT MARCH

SOMEONE WELL-MANNERED,
A MODEL OF GRACE.
LEARN THE ART OF SMILING.

JO

THAT COULD BE HARD.

AUNT MARCH

IT ISN’T VERY HARD
FOR SOMEONE FULL OF DREAMS LIKE YOU.
IF YOU WORK YOU’LL FIND THERE’S
NOTHING YOU CAN’T DO.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: In this first part of the song “Could You,” what are some of Aunt March’s complaints about Jo? How does Jo react? In saying that there’s “nothing [Jo] can’t do,” is she saying she supports Jo’s dreams of being an independent writer? If not, what does she want Jo to become? Why?

Now, read on as they continue their musical conversation:

JO SO, IF I CHANGE WE’LL GO TO PARIS?

AUNT MARCH

CHANGE COMPLETELY OR DON’T WASTE MY TIME.

JO

IF I CHANGE WE’LL STOP IN ANTWERP?

AUNT MARCH

GRACIOUS LIVING WILL MAKE YOU SUBLIME.

JO

IF I CHANGE YOU’LL TAKE ME TO ZURICH?

AUNT MARCH

EVERY CITY FROM DUBLIN TO CANNES.

JO

SURELY, WITH YOUR GUIDANCE,
I COULD LEARN TO USE FEMININE WILES WITH ÈLAN!
I COULD BE BEGUILING.
I COULD LEARN TO CHARM
A DONKEY FOR A CHANCE
TO SEE THE WORLD.
LEARN THE ART OF SMILING.
I COULD BUTTON UP MY MIND
AND KEEP MY THOUGHTS
PERFUMED AND PEARLED.
YES, I SURELY THINK I COULD!

AUNT MARCH

IF YOU COULD THAT WOULD BE GOOD.

JO

THERE’S NOTHING THAT I WOULDN’T SUFFER TO SEE THE WORLD!
I CAN DO IT IF I TRY.
I CAN DO IT BY SHEER WILL.

AUNT MARCH

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WORK
TO ACQUIRE ANY SKILL.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Why is Jo agreeing to change? What is Aunt March asking of her? Does Jo seem happy about it? Why would she “learn the art of smiling” and “button up her mind?” How would that make her happy? How would that make Aunt March happy? Has anyone ever asked you to behave differently in exchange for something you want? How did you react?

Now, their musical conversation concludes:

<p><u>JO / AUNT MARCH</u></p> <p>THESE ARE THINGS A GIRL MUST DO WHEN SHE HAS DREAMS SHE MUST FULFILL.</p> <p><u>AUNT MARCH</u></p> <p>CHANGE HOW YOU WALK AND HOW YOU TALK. CHANGE HOW YOU THINK AND HOW YOU ARE.</p> <p><u>JO</u></p> <p>I’LL HOLD MY BREATH AND HOLD MY TONGUE. DO WHAT IT TAKES TO TRAVEL FAR!</p> <p><u>AUNT MARCH</u></p> <p>COULD YOU?</p> <p><u>JO</u></p> <p>YES, I COULD!</p> <p><u>AUNT MARCH</u></p> <p>GOOD!</p>

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Why does Aunt March feel that Jo “MUST” change in order to fulfill her dreams, when earlier she said fulfilling dreams merely requires work? To fulfill a dream do you have to change your entire being? Do you think Jo will succeed at changing? Why or why not?

Achievement: The songs we have learned so far focus on working on your dream – there are many ways to do this. Simply hope it will happen, work toward your dream, or become someone you aren’t in order to fulfill what you want. This final song is Jo’s

reflection on an unexpected interruption to achieving her dreams: Laurie has just proposed, and she has rejected him. She never gives up on herself, however –

I THOUGHT HOME WAS ALL I'D EVER WANT.
MY ATTIC ALL I'D EVER NEED.
NOW NOTHING FEELS THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE
AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROCEED.
YET DEEP WITHIN ME SOMETHING FLICKERS LIKE A FIRE
AND MAKES ME CERTAIN: I'LL NEVER GIVE UP AND NEVER TIRE.
I DO BELIEVE IN ALL THAT I DESIRE
AND MOST OF ALL I YEARN TO BE
ASTONISHING.

THERE'S A LIFE THAT I AM MEANT TO LEAD,
ALIVE LIKE NOTHING I HAVE KNOWN.
I CAN FEEL IT AND IT'S FAR FROM HERE.
I'VE GOT TO FIND IT ON MY OWN.
EVEN NOW I FEEL IT'S HEAT UPON MY SKIN:
A LIFE OF PASSION THAT PULLS ME FROM WITHIN.
A LIFE THAT I AM ACHING TO BEGIN.
I'VE GOT TO KNOW IF I CAN BE
ASTONISHING.
ASTONISHING.

I'LL FIND MY WAY.
I'LL FIND IT FAR AWAY.
I'LL FIND IT IN THE UNEXPECTED AND UNKNOWN.
I'LL FIND MY LIFE IN MY OWN WAY - TODAY.

HERE I GO AND THERE'S NO TURNING BACK.
MY GREAT ADVENTURE HAS BEGUN.
I MAY BE SMALL BUT I'VE GOT GIANT PLANS
TO SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS THE SUN.
I WILL BLAZE UNTIL I FIND MY TIME AND PLACE,
I WILL BE FEARLESS, SURRENDERING MODESTY AND GRACE.
I WILL NOT DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE.
I'LL SHOUT AND START A RIOT,
BE ANYTHING BUT QUIET.
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
I'LL BE ASTONISHING,
ASTONISHING,
ASTONISHING
AT LAST.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How does Jo think she'll achieve her dreams? By conforming to what Aunt March wants? Laurie? Why do you think she's changed her mind? How is she so hopeful? How do you think she remains so positive? Think about a time that you kept a positive attitude during a difficult time – what did you achieve because of your positive outlook?

LESSON PLAN: The Joys of Song

Topic: relating to song lyrics as a way of story-telling.

Materials: lyrics, notebooks.

National Standards: (Music): Students evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain the musical means it uses to evoke feelings and emotions. (Theater) Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

Aim: How do the lyrics aid in your understanding of Jo's character?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Evaluate how the music affects their emotions
- (b) Identify how the lyrics relate to the historical period of the musical

Do Now: Poll students: what song do they think told the best story. Why?

Motivation: Imagine the story being told without these songs. Would you be able to relate to it more easily if they were absent?

Development: Think about the time period the musical is set in. Have your students partner off. One person should embody the mentality of Aunt March, the other should embody Jo. Have them discuss Jo's dream – however, the dream can be anything the student role-playing as Jo can be – the dream needn't be about writing. For example, the student opposite "Aunt March" can dream of becoming a doctor, actor, lawyer, and so on. The "Aunt March" character may find this objectionable for many reasons: in the 1860s, the world simply didn't need an over-abundance of rock stars, or it was improper for someone to pursue a certain line of work when it was, in fact, more important to be proper. Have your students role play for 5-7 minutes, and walk around the room to make sure they are developing the role play properly. If time allows, have students relate to the larger class their dilemma between "Aunt March" and "Jo."

Homework: Have students think about their favorite song lyrics – if they have no favorite song lyrics, have them choose from the songs in this chapter. What story do the lyrics tell? Ask them to write one paragraph of how the song is (a) situated in a certain time period – what clues do they see? And (b) how the lyrics are relevant to their lives.

Chapter IV: Being an Original (Girl Power!)

National Standards: (English Language Arts) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity. (Music) Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

Overview: We have reviewed the role of women in the U.S. during the 1860s. However, up until this chapter, we have done so only in a cursory manner. To fully understand the historical context surrounding the story of *Little Women*, we must more fully appreciate how other women – other than the fictitious characters of Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy – were living their lives and what they were thinking. This is an opportunity to compliment your existing curriculum as it draws from sources not typically utilized by textbooks and other teaching tools: This chapter uses **primary sources** in addition to **dialogue** in the musical *Little Women* to teach from. It is important to reinforce that women are not “victims” of their context during this period: many women were becoming outspoken advocates for various causes.

Let’s look at some primary sources to understand who was saying and doing what, exactly, during the 1860s? We’ve read now about the history – and we have considered how people make choices in their context during certain times. But, do we really understand how external forces may have shaped the larger context for Louisa May Alcott and other women of the 1860s? Reading the following primary source texts can help to develop a deeper appreciation to what some of the external social expectations were – and how they were expressed. For example, consider the following text, which emphasizes proper behavior for men AND women in a ballroom (do you think Jo and Meg knew about these rules when they went to their ball?):

GIVING A BALL.: If you cannot afford to give a ball in good style, you had better not attempt it at all. Having made up your mind to give a ball and to do justice to the occasion, and having settled upon the time, the next thing is to decide whom and how many to invite. In deciding upon the number a due regard must be paid to the size of the rooms; and after allowance for a reasonable number who may not accept the invitation, there should be no more invited than can find comfortable accommodations, both sitting and standing-room being taken into account, and at the same time have the floor properly free for dancing. The more guests you have the more brilliant, and the fewer you have the more enjoyable, will the occasion be. Any number over a hundred guests constitutes a "large ball;" under fifty it is merely a "dance."

CHOICE OF ATTIRE: Certain fashionables seek to gain a kind of reputation by the odd choice of their attire, and by their eagerness to seize upon the first caprices of the fashions. Propriety with difficulty tolerates these fancies of a spoiled child; but it applauds a woman of sense and taste, who is not in a hurry to follow the fashions, and asks how long they will last, before adopting them; finally, who selects and modifies them with success according to her size and figure.

REFUSING TO DANCE: A lady cannot refuse the invitation of a gentleman to dance, unless she has already accepted that of another, for she would be guilty of an incivility which might occasion trouble; she would, moreover, seem to show contempt for him whom she refused, and would expose herself to receive in secret an ill compliment from the mistress of the house.

TALKING TOO MUCH: Ladies should avoid talking too much; it will occasion remarks. It has also a bad appearance to whisper continually in the ear of your partner.

DUTIES OF LADIES.: Ladies who dance much, should be very careful not to boast before those who dance but little or not at all, of the great number of dances for which they are engaged in advance. They should also, without being perceived, recommend to these less fortunate ladies, gentlemen of their acquaintance.

GENERAL RULES FOR A BALL-ROOM: (1) A lady will not cross a ball-room unattended. (2) A gentleman will not take a vacant seat next to a lady who is a stranger to him. If she is an acquaintance, he may do so with her permission. (3) When a gentleman escorts a lady home from a ball, she should not invite him to enter the house; and even if she does so, he should by all means decline the invitation. he should call upon her during the next day or evening. (4) Any presentation to a lady in a public ball-room, for the mere purpose of dancing, does not entitle you to claim her acquaintance afterwards; therefore, should you meet her, at most you may lift your hat; but even that is better avoided - unless, indeed, she first bow - as neither she nor her friends can know who or what you are.

SOURCE: *Manners, Culture and Dress of the Best American Society*. By Richard A. Wells, A.M. King, Richardson & Co., Publishers. Springfield, Mass.; Cincinnati; Sacramento; Dallas, Texas. 1893.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: How have the “rules of dance” changed since the late 1800s? Can you think of a place that still follows these rules? Why or why not? Do you think men and women agreed on these rules at the time? Why or why not?

Although you may think the above text terribly old-fashioned, many women believed in this behavior! And many women, such as Helen Kendrick Johnson felt that women who wanted to vote and work outside the home were off their rockers! She said that women suffrage was undemocratic and that women who wanted to pursue passions outside of the house and family would cause America to crumble. Read an excerpt from her book, *Women and the Republic*, published in 1913 (written over a much longer time period, however):

On suffrage:

“It seems to me that, instead of being "a legitimate outgrowth of the fundamental principles of our government," woman suffrage is really incompatible with true republican forms. Pre-civilized conditions, aristocratic tendencies, the forces that would destroy government-these appear to be its natural allies. We must study more closely its connection with representative government the better to comprehend this portentous truth.” (Chapter II)

On women pursuing passions outside the home:

“With the steady improvement in machinery and in education, the wife and mother can be more and more relieved of work. But the home depends as much as ever upon her love, her skill, her care. She now has means, which science has just taught the world, of learning how to provide, on proper principles, for children, how to dress sensibly, cook wholesomely, make the home sanitary. Nursing is a fine art now, and comforts can be placed within the reach of every invalid, if the mother knows how to do it. If home is to be hospitable, and a centre of social influence, all the artistic and homely powers are demanded. If the family is to be well-dressed, the mother must attend to it. If home is to be beautiful, the mother and daughter must make it so. In these days, there is little need of slaving; and there is a glimpse ahead of leisure for thought and self-culture such as men would find it hard to make. The long and enforced retirement of maternity may prove a time for most valuable improvement. In our social life there is too little culture that is the result of absorption by a quiet process of mental assimilation. The place where this can be best achieved is in the home. The danger of our fascinating modern life, with its endless calls and opportunities outside, lies in the strain it puts upon systems that are far more delicately organized than man's. Nature meant that women should have periods of quiet. Let us honor our own natures, exalt our own opportunities, love and lead our own lives, and so bless the world and the Republic through perfected homes.” (Chapter XI)

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What do you make of Mrs. Johnson’s reasoning? How do you think Jo would react? How would Aunt March react?

Next, let's consider the sentiments of women who were thinking about gaining different types of independence. Here's a sampling of women who "branched out" of the typical expectations of raising a family and staying home (this was the period, also, remember, of the Wild West expansion – although the musical doesn't deal with that issue at all, it is an interesting aside because gender stereotyping really fell apart in the unsettled West). As you read through these mini-bios, ask your students how they imagine these women:

Martha Dartt Maxwell (1831-1881) Maxwell, an accomplished hunter and taxidermist, developed a method for preserving and stuffing animals in strikingly lifelike poses for display in natural habitat settings. Her talent led to her inclusion in an exhibition entitled "Woman's Work" at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, where she was so bombarded with questions that she occasionally retreated into her "cave."

Rosalie Jones (dates unknown) Suffragist, heiress, chauffeur, and auto mechanic, Jones (left) believed that everyone, regardless of gender, should work for a salary, even married women. A 1915 article in the *Literary Digest* quoted her as saying that she chose to be an automobile mechanic because "I understand motors; secondly, because I wished to demonstrate that if women can equal men in subordinate positions they can equal them in a larger sphere."

Madame Gardoni (dates unknown) Pictured in an 1867 edition of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Gardoni was a German immigrant who became the first woman barber in Galveston, Texas, and probably one of the first in the country. Her business was successful enough, according to the paper, for her to employ two male assistants in her shop. The newspaper also noted that her customers praised "the style in which she harvests the stubble from the face of men."

Mary M. Miller (dates unknown) The first woman licensed as a steamboat captain, Miller navigated her husband's vessel on the Mississippi, Red, Ouachita, and other western rivers. Like other women who followed her example, Miller took the step of getting her papers in 1884 for economic reasons; it was less costly for her to take the helm in her husband's absence than to hire another male captain in his place.

Mae E. Willis Tyler (1851-1892) A native of Wisconsin, Tyler taught school until forced to stop due to ill health two years after her 1876 marriage. Soon after moving to Ashland, Oregon, in 1885, she learned the art of photography and opened a studio and gallery, which before long ranked among the best in the state. Donning a dress adorned with samples of her work, she advertised her artistry.

Kitty Wilkins (1857-1936) An astute Idaho businesswoman whose beauty was widely noted, Wilkins developed a herd of four thousand horses, with excellent breeding stock, and won the steady patronage of the U.S. Cavalry. Filling orders from as far away as Illinois and California through round-ups of wild mustangs and savvy purchases, the expert horse trader--dubbed the "Horse Queen of Idaho"--always personally delivered her horses, reputedly earning \$2 million from her sales.

Idawalley "Ida" Zoradia Lewis (1842-1911) When Lewis's father--keeper of the Lime Rock Light off Newport, Rhode Island--suffered a stroke in 1857, the then-teenager assumed his duties, affecting her first rescue when only 16 years old. In 1879, she officially succeeded her father and became the first female lighthouse keeper in the country. Her many heroic rescues of men and women--and one sheep--attracted national attention, making her a well-known hero in her day.

Lastly, we haven't delved into the issue of suffrage – mainly because it does not play a prominent role in the musical. However, it is important for students to understand and know the forceful women behind the movement, active prior to and after the Civil War: Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Cady Stanton, Olympia Brown, Lucy Stone (and others). Here is an excerpt from Lucy Stone's 1867 speech entitled "The Morality of Nations: An Address Delivered Before the American Equal Rights Association:"

“Must we be told that woman herself does not ask the ballot! Then I submit to such, if such there be, the question is not one of privilege, but of duty--of solemn responsibility. If woman does not desire the ballot, demand it, take it, she sins against her own nature and all the holiest instincts of humanity, and cannot too soon repeat.

After all, the question of suffrage is one of justice and right. Unless human agreement be in itself an unnatural and impious usurpation, whoever renders it support and submission, has a natural and inalienable, imperishable and inextinguishable right, to an equal voice in enacting and executing the laws. Nor can one man, or millions on millions of men acquire or possess the power to withhold that right from the humblest human being of sane mind, but by usurpation, and by rebellion against the constitution of the moral universe. It would be robbery, though the giving of the right should induce all the predicted and dreaded evils of tyrants, cowards and white male citizens.”

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Now that we've read and learned a little about the women of the late 1800s, can you see Jo in any of these roles? As an entrepreneur? A suffragist? Why or why not?

DID YOU KNOW...that although women achieved the right to vote in 1920, the fight for suffrage began at America's inception? In 1776, Abigail Adams (wife of the second president, John Adams). Here is a sample of her fervor (letters available online at: <http://www.thelizlibrary.org/suffrage/abigail.htm>)

ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS

MARCH 31, 1776:

"I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them

than your ancestors.

"Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.

"Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

"That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute; but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up -- the harsh tide of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend.

"Why, then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity?

"Men of sense in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the (servants) of your sex; regard us then as being placed by Providence under your protection, and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness."

JOHN ADAMS TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

APRIL 14, 1776

"As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh.

"We have been told that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and negroes grew insolent to their masters.

"But your letter was the first intimation that another tribe, more numerous and powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented.

"This is rather too coarse a compliment, but you are so saucy, I won't blot it out.

"Depend upon it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems. Although they are in full force, you know they are little more than theory. We dare not exert our power in its full latitude. We are obliged to go fair and softly, and, in practice, you know we are the subjects.

"We have only the name of masters, and rather than give up this, which would completely subject us to the despotism of the petticoat, I hope General Washington and all our brave heroes would fight."

ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS

MAY 7, 1776:

"I cannot say that I think you are very generous to the ladies; for, whilst you are proclaiming peace and good-will to men, emancipating all nations, you insist

upon retaining an absolute power over wives.

"But you must remember that arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken; and, notwithstanding all your wise laws and maxims, we have it in our power, not only to free ourselves, but to subdue our masters, and without violence, throw both your natural and legal authority at our feet."

Shifting our attention back to the musical at hand, review the lessons from “Could You” in the previous chapter. After reading the texts above – and after re-considering the previous chapter, what do your students make of the texts? What are we to make of Amy’s character? The youngest March sister, an artist, exposed her whole life to strong-willed women seems to accept the traditional role of a woman. Read an excerpt of the dialogue between Amy and Aunt March as they return from Europe:

AMY: Did you see the look I gave the coachman, Aunt March? His impertinence! He caught every bump in the road.

AUNT MARCH: One should always be civil to a coachman. You must respect those who have the reins – until you wrench the reins from them.

AMY: Yes, Aunt March.

AUNT MARCH: And remember, Amy, you’re a lady now.

AMY: Yes....I’m a lady. When did this house get so small?

AUNT MARCH: As we grow grand, Amy, the world around us often diminishes in size. I have known people who have almost disappeared before my very eyes.

AMY: You’re such a dear, Aunt March! Thank you for everything.

AUNT MARCH: I’ll go see to that wretched coachman.

AMY: Remember, Aunt March, respect those who have the reins.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Why do you think Amy believes in the traditional role of women in the 1860s? Do you think she was for or against women suffrage? Why?

LESSON PLAN: BEING AN ORIGINAL (Girl Power!)

Topic: exploring the social roles of women through the musical.

Materials: lyrics, notebooks.

National Standards: (English Language Arts) Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity. (Music) Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

Aim: How do the characters express and reject ideas of what women should be?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Appreciate non-fiction and fictionalized accounts of gender history in the U.S.
- (b) Understand the individuality of the characters in the musical.

Do Now: Ask students what year women gained the right to vote in the U.S.? (1920)

Motivation: Ask your students to think of any social expectation that holds them back. They should write this in their notebook, to be used later in the homework.

Development: Read the lyrics to the song “Here Alone,” as sung by Marmee. Marmee is undoubtedly a strong woman who nurtures her family. As you read the lyrics, ask your students what sentiments are valid today, and which sentiments may reflect the 1860s only. She sings this song after reading a letter from him while the girls are making Christmas plans at the close of Act I, Scene I.

Marmee:

‘MY DEAR HUSBAND:’

WRITE A LETTER, BE INVENTIVE.
TELL YOU EVERYTHING IS FINE.
BE ATTENTIVE TO THE DISTANCE.
SEND MY LOVE WITH EVERY LINE.
EVERY WORD SHOULD BRING YOU CLOSER
AND CARESS YOU WITH ITS TONE.
NOTHING SHOULD REMIND YOU
THAT I AM HERE ALONE.

I CAN’T TELL YOU WHAT I’M FEELING.
I CAN’T TALK ABOUT THE WAR.
HOW THE PEALING OF THE CHURCH BELLS
BRINGS THE BATTLE TO OUR DOOR.
I DON’T KNOW WHICH PART IS HARDER,
WHAT I KNOW OR WHAT’S UNKNOWN,
OR RAISING LITTLE WOMEN
WHEN I AM HERE ALONE.

HERE ALONE.
HERE WITHOUT YOU.
HERE IN THIS LIFE
I CHOSE WITH YOU.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I MISS YOU
AT THIS HOUR OF THE DAY?
HOW I WISH YOU WERE THE TWILIGHT
COME TO TAKE MY FEARS AWAY.
CAN I MANAGE FOUR YOUNG WOMEN?
I’M NOT CERTAIN I KNOW HOW.
WILL I BE THERE WHEN THEY NEED ME?
DO I FAIL THEM EVEN NOW?
I WISH THAT YOU WERE WITH ME,
WISH THAT I COULD BRING YOU HOME.
THE NIGHT SEEMS SO MUCH LONGER
NOW THAT I AM HERE ALONE.

DISCUSSION: Marmee is a very strong woman, who has to raise four daughters alone during a time of war. Do you think her sentiments are timeless or pertain only to that situation? Do you think your mother or father ever feels this way?

Homework: With a partner (or in groups of 4, depending on the size of your class), re-write the beginning of the story. This time, however, all four girls are not free-spirited, strong-willed – they adhere strongly to the “Victorian” age in which they live. How

would they interact? How would they react to having little money on Christmas? What other expectations do you think they may have of themselves? Of each other?

ALTERNATELY, you may write Jo as the character who adheres to Victorian ideals, and Amy as the character who doesn't really care about them. How would that alter the story? Would it be as adventurous?

With the same writing partner (or team) re-write the beginning with the four girls concerned about not having money for Christmas TODAY. Develop ideas like their dreams, their hopes and their methods to erase a somewhat empty celebration. How does one do that now?

These dialogues need not be long. At the end of the writing, students should compare the two scripts – is there an element of “being a woman” in both of them? Why or why not? How did the girls' concerns change? How are they the same? Ultimately, we are looking for students to make a historical connection to the thematic of being an individual in a larger society: how did they achieve that in their dialogues?

Chapter V: The MEN of *Little Women*

National Standards: (English Language Arts) Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information). (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

OVERVIEW: We have now spent much time considering the women of *Little Women* – but what about the men? After all, the women interact with men – Jo is mentored by and falls in love with Professor Bhaer, Meg married John Brooke, Amy and Jo both enjoy the company of Laurie, and Beth reaches out to Mr. Laurence. Who are the men of the story, and how do they play a critical role in the musical?

Many today believe that the stories of history are necessarily male in nature – in the late 1960s, many departments in universities began to incorporate the “female” or gendered way we understand the world. That is to say most of history reflects the letters and events that men were involved in – soldiers writing home from battles, sailors discovering far-away lands, or 17th century kings and politicians – all tended to be male. Therefore, when we speak of history – especially a history of the Civil War, it is thought to be predominantly male reflection of the human experience.

We have spent considerable time in this study guide considering the shifting nature of gender roles for women: could it be that gender roles were shifting during this period for men, too? Surely the male condition cannot remain static over time – surely it must change. During the period we are considering historically, a strong argument can be made that male roles were indeed changing in the United States.

With the rampant industrialization, increased immigration and the abolition of slavery after the Civil War, a phenomenon began to occur in the United States (although this phenomenon is not isolated only to the U.S.) – that of the “self-made man.” What is a “self-made man?” Good question! The “self-made man” phenomenon began during the 1830s – where men (typically bachelors) split from their families to capitalize on occupational opportunities traditionally unavailable in their immediate hometowns. These are the men who embody a “pioneering” or “entrepreneurial” spirit synonymous with “the American Dream.” People (in this case men) who came from no money, little to no education, who were able to fulfill dreams and make their lives on their terms.

Romantic as it sounds, these men ranged from average to great: some argue that President Lincoln was truly the first “self-made man” in America. Read the following excerpt from Kenneth J. Winkle, a Professor at the University of Nebraska who specializes in 1860 American History (Note: this excerpt appeared in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Summer 2000):

The self-made ethic originated precisely during this decade of unprecedented expansion. In fact, it performed an important cultural function during this climactic economic transition. The relatively sudden appearance of a host of new occupational opportunities for young men transformed not only Lincoln personally but American society as a whole. Historians have identified the emergence of an "American entrepreneurial culture" during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, which Robert Wiebe termed the "opening of American society." This period of formative commercial organization spawned a generation of young men who aggressively took advantage of the full range of new economic opportunities becoming available to them for the first time. "The elaboration of a national market," according to Joyce Appleby, "depended on many, many young men leaving the place of their birth and trying their hand at new careers," just as Lincoln did. Instead of following—and honoring—the traditional paths blazed by their parents and ancestors (for Lincoln, as for most Americans, this was agriculture), these young innovators struck out on their own in a dramatic burst of individualism that carried significant risks but also promised substantial rewards. "The range and sweep of enterprise in this period are awesome," Appleby concluded, "suggesting the widespread willingness to be uprooted, to embark on an uncharted course of action, to take risks with one's resources—above all the resource of one's youth." In the process, a minority of pioneering entrepreneurs redefined "success" in American culture through a "shifting of loyalties from home and habit to self and progress." Success no longer meant maintaining the integrity and independence of a lineal family while passing on a farm or a shop to the next generation. Young men now sought immediate, tangible, personal rewards and joined a new, hectic competition for individual success. In transforming American cultural ideals, these innovative youths set an example for future generations. As Appleby concluded, "Their lives served as models of innovation in a society losing all desire to replicate past ways of doing things." In short, they became America's "new cultural heroes."

Rising through their own exertions and owing little to tradition—and even less to their families—the new entrepreneurs acquired the label "self-made men." Significantly, the label itself was new and was in fact invented in 1832 by Lincoln's own personal "cultural hero," Henry Clay. Just nine years later, Lincoln himself acquired the label. The term echoed the rise of a new commitment to individualism in America. Indeed, the word "individualism" first appeared in 1827 in England and, in an American context, in 1835. In the first book celebrating the self-made man, published in 1848, John Frost posed this definition: "A self-made man means one who has rendered himself accomplished, eminent, rich, or great by his own unaided efforts." The seeds of self-made success lay within the individual rather than society or a family. As Ralph Waldo Emerson summed it up, "the reason why this or that man is fortunate is not to be told. It lies in the man; that is all anybody can tell you about it." Lincoln, of course, became the quintessential self-made man, as well as the greatest American cultural hero of all. As John Cawelti concluded in his analysis of the nineteenth-century self-made ethic, "the legend of Lincoln was the highpoint."

More than just a congratulatory label, the self-made ethic encouraged and facilitated this new quest for individual success. Cultural historians have analyzed the functions that the self-made ethic performed in nineteenth-century society. Arising in the pivotal 1830s, the self-made ethic justified the single-minded pursuit of opportunity. The myth of the self-made man smoothed the potentially acrimonious transition from families as the basis of American society to the new economic order based on individual achievement. Departing from the traditional celebration of the family as the foundation of any stable society, the self-made ethic now celebrated individual advancement, even when achieved at the expense of one's family. Henry Clay himself coined the term in defense of entrepreneurs who *earned* their wealth rather than *inheriting* it. Self-improvement, not family, was the new source of success in America. Indeed, historian Susan Gray has recently contrasted the "self-made men" of the mid-nineteenth century with the "family-made men" of an earlier age. Within a fluid and dynamic industrializing economy, inherited wealth and security now seemed less relevant than ever before. By the 1830s, the transition to a new market economy demanded a generation of individuals who were willing to forego the traditional security of a family, to take personal risks in pursuit of profit, and to seize opportunities whenever and wherever they appeared.

Lincoln clearly fit—and benefited from—this contemporary conception of "self-made manhood." Lincoln left his family in 1831, at age 22, and arrived in New Salem, in his own words, "a strange, friendless, uneducated, penniless boy." In fact, this oft-quoted passage was as much a boast as a lament. As Cawelti observed, "When he becomes successful, the American self-made man likes to boast of his achievement, to exaggerate the obscurity of his origin."

So...how does this idea of a "self-made man" fit into *Little Women*? If Lincoln is to be considered America's first great self-made man (and many argue it was Teddy Roosevelt), does that change the way we should think about the men of our musical? Consider only the idea that there has been a shift from "family-made men" (as noted above, whereby men inherited fortune in a patrilinear fashion) to "self-made men," how might you categorize the men in our story? Who exactly ARE the men of our story?

1. **Professor Fritz Bhaer:** a German immigrant, teacher of philosophy. Initially, we learn that Professor Bhaer is somewhat irritated by Jo's enthusiasm for her stories and her thirst for adventure (he confesses he has appreciated silence to study, as opposed to listening to banging doors and exuberant exclamations). Similarly, as we saw in Chapter III, it was Professor Bhaer's suggestion that Jo could do "better" with her work that caused Jo some anger. Although most might consider this seeming antagonism to not be cause for friendship, Jo and the Professor do develop an affection for one another. They attend lectures together, they work on Jo's German, the Professor offers to accompany Jo home as Beth falls ill – and the Professor realizes that in Jo's absence, he longs to see the woman who has rejected the traditional idea of marriage in order to pursue her dreams. He visits Jo in

Concord on Amy's wedding day, and proposes to her. She accepts and announces they will start a school together – much to his amazement.

2. **Mr. Laurence:** The March's crotchety next-door neighbor is easily angered by the antics of the "dreadful little March girls," within reason: Jo chopped down his Douglas Fir tree without permission, his grandson Laurie spends too much time with Jo and misses his tutoring lessons...and is simply not amused by the energy and whims of his neighbors. However, Mr. Laurence warms to the girls, especially Beth's love of playing the piano – and the neighbors become friendly toward each other. Mr. Laurence assumes a rather patriarchal role for the March family, since the girls' father is fighting with the Union Army throughout the story.
3. **Laurie:** Theodore "Teddy" Laurence, III ("Laurie") is the Mr. Laurence's grandson and we assume roughly the same age as Jo. He is free-spirited, perhaps a bit misguided, and full of energy. He enjoys following his imagination, yet is bound to respect his grandfather's wishes to become educated and eventually to take on the family business. Of the four men in the musical, we get to know Laurie the best: after saving Amy from falling through ice, he is accepted as the "fifth" of the four sisters – and is a friend for life to them. Sadly, he falls in love with Jo and offers her his hand in marriage, which she rejects. He wanders Europe and coincidentally meets Amy and Aunt March on their travels. He and Amy then fall in love – and they *are* married.
4. **Mr. John Brooke:** Originally from Maine, Mr. Brooke is now Laurie's tutor in Concord. He is soft-spoken, intelligent, and captures Meg's heart. Before the two are married, he joins the Union Army in the last year of the Civil War – out of a sense of loyalty to the men who have fallen in the war. Of the four male characters, we learn the least about Mr. Brooke, other than the fact the sisters accept him just as much as Laurie.

DISCUSSION: After this brief introduction to the four male characters – who was a self-made man? A family-made man? Any of them? What other characteristics do they share? Why do you think the men are so accepting and warm towards the March sisters, especially since the girls aren't necessarily "typical" girls of the era?

Now that we've contextualized the men of *Little Women*, how are they important to the story? Let's think about their interactions with the March sisters for a moment. All become friends – and all seek to nurture each others' interests and abilities. How do they interact? The women don't immediately accept them – Jo especially does not immediately accept Professor Bhaer (he did, after all criticize her work), nor does she accept Laurie immediately. All the men, in their own ways, ask for acceptance into the women's lives. Consider the following song Laurie sings to Jo outside the ball (Act I, Scene III):

WE COULD DO A HUNDRED THINGS,
DO ANYTHING YOU PLEASE.
WE COULD FLY ON GOLDEN WINGS
ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS.
I'LL BET WE COULD GET A CAMEL THROUGH A NEEDLE
IF YOU'LL TAKE A CHANCE ON ME.

WE COULD CATCH A THOUSAND STARS
AND STAND THEM ON A PIN.
WE COULD LEAP FROM HERE TO MARS
AND MAKE THE PLANETS SPIN.
IF YOU WANT TO DO ALL THE THINGS YOU'VE EVER DREAMED OF:
COME ON, TAKE A CHANCE ON ME.

WE COULD BE SUCH FRIENDS.
FRIENDS ARE NEVER LONELY.
ALL I KNOW IS BOOKS.
BOOKS ARE SOLITARY.
BUT I SEE YOU EVERY DAY,
HOW YOU LIVE IN YOUR OWN WAY,
AND YOU MAKE ME WANT TO DARE
TO TAKE A CHANCE ON YOU.

WE COULD LIVE A MILLION DREAMS,
BUT ONLY IF WE DARE.
WE COULD GO TO SUCH EXTREMES.
THERE'S SO MUCH WE COULD SHARE.

DISCUSSION: Why does Laurie feel that Jo needs to “take a chance” with his friendship? To what part of Jo does he reach out? Do you think the two are suited to be good friends? Why or why not? Does this request fit with the other ideas of “Victorian” behavior (or “ball etiquette” discussed earlier) or the behavior of a self-made man?

In the above song, it seems as if we accept that friendships are made through similar personalities: yet it is Laurie’s exuberance that eventually drives her away from him. At the end of the story, however, it is personality differences that draw Jo and Professor Bhaer together (Act II, Scene V):

PROFESSOR BHAER

IF I SAY RAIN, THEN YOU SAY SUN.
IF I SAY YES, THEN YOU SAY NO.
IT SEEMS BEFORE WE START, WE'RE DONE.
WE EVEN ARGUE AT "HELLO"
IF I SAY, SHARE WITH ME THIS SMALL UMBRELLA.

JO

I SAY, WHO CARES IF I GET WET?

PROFESSOR BHAER

WE ARE AS DIFFERENT AS THE MORNING AND THE NIGHT.

JO

NO, WE'RE AS DIFFERENT AS THE WINTER AND THE SPRING.

PROFESSOR BHAER

WE ALWAYS SEEM TO FIGHT.

JO

WE DISAGREE ON EVERYTHING.

PROFESSOR BHAER

AND YET...
YOU MAKE ME SMILE,
YOU MAKE ME LAUGH,
YOU MAKE ME CARE.
HOW CAN I EXPLAIN?
INSIDE MY HEART
I FEEL A PAIN
WHEN YOU'RE NOT THERE.
THOUGH WE ARE NOT AT ALL ALIKE,
YOU MAKE ME FEEL ALIVE.
IF WE HAD THAT IN COMMON,
THAT ONE SMALL THING IN COMMON,
LOVE COULD BE LIKE A SMALL UMBRELLA IN THE RAIN.

DISCUSSION: Again, we have a man asking Jo for her friendship – why do you think the Professor accepts the differences between them so easily? Why does Jo – especially since she seems not to care what others think?

Lesson Plan: The Men of *Little Women*

Topic: To better understand the role of the men in the story.

Materials: Lyrics, notebooks, internet and print resources.

National Standards: (English Language Arts) Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information). (Social Studies) Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Aim: How do the men of the story contribute to its success?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Articulate their ideas about the men of *Little Women*
- (b) Contextualize the ideas of gender as the characters interact.

Do Now: Ask students if they think the story would be the same if there were no men?

Motivation: Do your students feel the men harbor any of the “anti-suffrage” or “Victorian” sentiments discussed in the previous chapter?

Development: In a large discussion, ask how the men balance the women’s roles – or do they? Does every story need both men and women to be effective? Why or why not?

Homework: Divide the class into groups of four. Try to balance the groups between gender. Ask each group to develop ideas for the following questions:

1. How do you define “gender?” Define the term together, as a group. Write it down.
2. Each member of the group silently writes responses to the following questionnaire:

Circle True or False:

Females are better at taking care of children.	True	False
Males are better at handling stressful situations.	True	False
Females are better friends than males.	True	False
Males should protect women.	True	False
Females should not work outside the home.	True	False
Men are better at achieving their dreams.	True	False

3. After each group has completed their questionnaires, collect them. Ask a student to tabulate the results as you review each group's definition of "gender" with the entire class. Unpack the ideas of "self-made men," ask if that idea still holds true today. Ask if a "metrosexual" (a contemporary buzz-word for a man who likes to groom his nails and dress nicely, etc.) could be a "self-made man." Why or why not? How, then have ideas of the male gender changed since 1860?
4. Ask the tabulator to announce the results of the questionnaire – what kinds of ideas does your class seem to have of "gender?" Discuss each point and ask why students responded as they did. Then, draw the discussion back to the musical – how would Jo or Laurie feel about the questions in the survey?

Chapter VI: Love and Loyalty

National Standards: (English Language Arts): Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. (Performing Arts) Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement. Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

OVERVIEW: “Love is a many splendor thing” once wrote Shakespeare. And, for as many ways as love is “splendid,” there are equally as many definitions. There is the love between mother and child, between human and cat or dog, there is sisterly and brotherly love, the love between friends and romantic love – to name a few. There is the enthusiasm of a favorite song or item (“I LOVE ice cream!”) and there is simply strong affectionate emotion (“I LOVE to go running!”). When we think about “love” in historical context, none of those forms are necessarily different, however the expression of “love” does change over time.

We have now studied the intense characters of *Little Women* – in their historical setting, in their character, in their gendered differences...and we know that the characters of the musical are simply full of love – love for life, love for family, love for each other. If we could return briefly to the idea of “women” and “men,” we also know that some of the women and men fall romantically in love with each other – Laurie falls in love with Jo, Meg falls in love with John Brooke, Marmee is in love with her husband, and Amy falls in love with Laurie. Oh! And Professor Bhaer falls in love with Jo as well – the outcome is that those forms of love result in marriage.

If we can entertain the idea that how “love” is expressed throughout time can change – how could marriage be different between the 1860s and now? One answer is the common “companionate marriage,” whereby a man and woman married to simply live their lives together – as companions. That is not to suggest by any means that romance did not drive marriages of the late 1800s, rather it was a quite common marital arrangement at that time. That trend seemed to wane as late as the 1950s, when women in America were yearning the independence they felt when so many men had been deployed for WWII...some argue that a companionate marriage is long dead, while others feel it is a thriving tradition. In the 1830s, when so many Americans became disenchanted with an increasingly materialistic world, many utopian societies were formed – and many practiced their own forms of marriage. For example, the Oneida Community in New York practiced “complex marriage,” whereby up to 200 people at one time could be married to one another! Or the early Mormon settlements practiced polygamy, where one husband could have up to 20 wives. By 1878, however, the Supreme Court had ruled such marriages were illegal – and that marriage was to always

be between two parties only, since marriage is a civil contract that can be regulated by law.

Regardless of the controversies over marriage in the late 1800s (think about the controversies about marriage today!), we can all agree, however, that the way love is expressed in *Little Women* is at least a *little* different than how love is expressed in contemporary theater, film and TV shows. Of course Marmee's love for her children, and the sisters' love for one another is simply over-abundant and blatant – let's look at each of these two scenarios through the eyes of our characters.

THE LOVE OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Without question, the sisters love each other dearly. Although they squabble, they continually promise to be together forever – and they do fight for this. Read below, however, as they invite Laurie into their foursome. Pay special attention to the fervor they express, and the promises they make one another (Act I, Scene IV):

FROM NOW ON WE ARE JOINED
AND WE SHALL NOT BE PARTED.
FROM THIS DAY ON IT'S ALL FOR ONE
AND ONE FOR ALL FOR LIFE.

WE'LL LIVE LIKE MUSKETEERS.
TOGETHER WE'LL PREVAIL.
WE'LL BE FIVE FOR ALL FOREVER FROM NOW ON.

NOW EACH OF US MUST SWEAR FOR ALL ETERNITY:
OUR BOND SHALL NEVER BE UNDONE
NOTHING SHALL SEVER THIS FRATERNITY.
WE'LL ALWAYS LIVE AND DIE AS ONE.

FROM NOW ON WE ARE JOINED
AND WE SHALL NOT BE PARTED.

FROM THIS DAY ON IT'S ALL FOR ONE
AND ONE FOR ALL FOR LIFE.
TOGETHER WE WILL FIGHT.
YOUR BATTLES WILL BE MINE.

WE'LL BE FIVE FOR ALL FOREVER FROM NOW ON.

DISCUSSION: Do you think the sentiments expressed in these lyrics is old-fashioned? Why or why not? Do you think the promises are realistic or made merely to solidify friendship?

We see love even when the sisters are angry at one another: As Jo and Meg go to the ball (Act I, Scene III), Amy is furious. She desperately wants to go along – or in Jo’s place – and she’ll even insult and hurt her sister in order to do so:

	AMY
I'm going to the ball.	
	JO / MARMEE
You're what? / Amy, no –	
	AMY
I found this old dress and it almost fits...why shouldn't I go?	
	JO
Because you weren't invited.	
	AMY
I can go in your place...You don't care about good society and I do.	
	JO
I don't care about snobs. People who think they're better than you just because they have grander houses... I want to be noticed because I'm unique. Not because of some silly sash.	
	AMY
Sashes aren't silly. Aunt March says the right accessories could be the key to a girl's success. Jo hates balls. She should stay in her musty old attic and write her dreadful little stories –	
	JO
My stories aren't dreadful!	
	AMY
Nobody reads them and nobody likes them! ...	
	JO
Well, I like them! I'm sending this one off to a very prominent New York publisher -	
	AMY
And he'll hate it!	

Amy does not go to the ball, and burns Jo’s story! Later, Jo learns of this (and Amy has the courage to confess to what she has done). And, through her anger, Jo still cares for her sister. After Amy fell through the ice, they have the following conversation (Act I, Scene IV):

JO

You skate recklessly. If it wasn't for Laurie you could have been killed.

AMY

Maybe it would have been better if I had.

JO

You must never talk like that! When the ice broke underneath you, all I could think was: I could have lost you...I was devastated when you burned my story. I didn't understand how you could do such a thing. Promise me – promise you'll never think of me as an enemy. But a sister who loves you.

AMY

I promise, Jo.

BETH

The March sisters forever.

GIRLS

Forever!

DISCUSSION: What is it about these sisters that bonds them so closely to one another? What is it that prompts Jo to forgive Amy? Is forgiveness a necessary part of being in a loving relationship? Why or why not? What inspires loyalty among the sisters?

Perhaps the saddest element of the musical is Beth's death. Sisters who have pledged to be together forever are slowly raveling apart – Meg is to be married, and Beth falls gravely ill. Amy is in Europe when the tragedy occurs, and Jo must find the courage – through the love of her family – to move beyond her pain. Marmee offers these words to Jo (Act II, Scene IV):

I NEVER DREAMED OF THIS SORROW.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE REASON TO LAMENT.
I HOPED I'D NEVER KNOW HEARTBREAK.
HOW I WISH I COULD CHANGE THE WAY THINGS WENT.
I WANTED NOTHING BUT GOODNESS.
I WANTED REASON TO PREVAIL.
NOT THIS BARE EMPTINESS.
I WANTED DAYS OF PLENTY.

BUT I REFUSE TO FEEL TRAGIC.
I AM ACHING FOR MORE THAN PAIN AND GRIEF.
THERE HAS GOT TO BE MEANING.
MOST OF ALL WHEN A LIFE HAS BEEN SO BRIEF.
I HAVE GOT TO LEARN SOMETHING.
HOW CAN I GIVE HER ANY LESS?
I WANT LIFE TO GO ON.
I WANT DAYS OF PLENTY.

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE THERE IS REASON FOR HOPE.
YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWERS WILL COME.
YOU CAN'T LET THIS DEFEAT YOU.
I WON'T LET THIS DEFEAT YOU.
YOU MUST FIGHT TO KEEP HER THERE WITHIN YOU.

SO BELIEVE THAT SHE MATTERED
AND BELIEVE THAT SHE ALWAYS WILL.
SHE WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU.
SHE'LL BE PART OF THE DAYS YOU'VE YET TO FILL.
SHE WILL LIVE IN YOUR BOUNTY.
SHE WILL LIVE AS YOU CARRY ON YOUR LIFE.
SO CARRY ON FULL OF HOPE.
SHE'LL BE THERE
FOR ALL YOUR DAYS OF PLENTY.

Jo is still troubled by this idea – and feels empty and lost without Beth. However, the pain inspires her:

EVERYTHING I PROMISED THEM [her sisters] IS HERE.
ALL OF US THE WAY WE USED TO BE.
HERE WE ARE TOGETHER AND WE'RE EVERYTHING WE WERE:
SOLID LIKE A FORTRESS, EVERY ONE OF US STILL HERE.
STILL THE FIRE WITHIN ME.
HERE I GO AND THERE'S NO TURNING BACK:
MY GREAT ADVENTURE HAS BEGUN.
I MAY BE SMALL BUT I HAVE GIANT PLANS
TO SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS THE SUN.
HERE IN ALL THE SMALLEST DETAILS OF THE PAST,
HERE IN THIS ATTIC, SUDDENLY LIFE IS SOMETHING VAST.
THE FOUR OF US FOREVER HERE AT LAST.
AS UNEXPECTED AS CAN BE.
ASTONISHING.

DISCUSSION: How does Marmee inspire Jo to cope with the loss of her sister? What does Jo decide to do because of this tragedy?

ROMANTIC LOVE

We now turn our attention to the fact the sisters mature in the story – they also love others in addition to their immediate family. Prior to Beth’s death, Jo could not have accepted romantic love – she declined Laurie’s proposal of marriage – ostensibly because she wanted to write (Act I, Scene VII):

WHO IS HE, WHO IS HE WITH HIS ‘MARRY ME,’
WITH HIS RING AND HIS ‘MARRY ME’?
THE NERVE, THE GALL.
THIS IS NOT, NOT WHAT WAS MEANT TO BE.
HOW COULD HE RUIN IT ALL WITH THOSE TWO WORDS?

I THOUGHT I KNEW HIM, THOUGHT THAT HE KNEW ME.
WHEN DID HE CHANGE, WHAT DID I MISS?
A KISS? WHEN I THOUGHT, ALL ALONG,
THAT WE WERE MEANT TO FORGE FRONTIERS.
HOW COULD I BE SO WRONG?

AND I NEED, HOW I NEED MY SISTERS HERE,
IF I CAN’T SHARE MY DREAMS,
WHAT WERE THEY FOR?
I THOUGHT OUR PROMISE MEANT THAT WE WOULD
NEVER CHANGE AND NEVER PART.
I THOUGHT TOGETHER WE’D AMAZE THE WORLD!
HOW CAN I LIVE MY DREAMS OR EVEN START
WHEN EVERYTHING HAS COME APART?

I THOUGHT HOME WAS ALL I’D EVER WANT.
MY ATTIC ALL I’D EVER NEED.
NOW NOTHING FEELS THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE
AND I DON’T KNOW HOW TO PROCEED.
YET DEEP WITHIN ME SOMETHING FLICKERS LIKE A FIRE
AND MAKES ME CERTAIN: I’LL NEVER GIVE UP AND NEVER TIRE.
I DO BELIEVE IN ALL THAT I DESIRE
AND MOST OF ALL I YEARN TO BE
ASTONISHING.

THERE’S A LIFE THAT I AM MEANT TO LEAD,
ALIVE LIKE NOTHING I HAVE KNOWN.
I CAN FEEL IT AND IT’S FAR FROM HERE.
I’VE GOT TO FIND IT ON MY OWN.
EVEN NOW I FEEL IT’S HEAT UPON MY SKIN:
A LIFE OF PASSION THAT PULLS ME FROM WITHIN.
A LIFE THAT I AM ACHING TO BEGIN.
I’VE GOT TO KNOW IF I CAN BE
ASTONISHING.

DISCUSSION: Do you think there is any other reason besides Jo wanting to write stories that caused her to reject Laurie's proposal? Read the lyrics carefully – what clue(s) does she give?

MEG & MR. JOHN BROOKE

Meg is entranced by Mr. John Brooke, who offers her his hand in marriage prior to his leaving to fight with the Union Army (Act I, Scene V):

MR. BROOKE

IF YOU COULD FIND IT IN YOUR HEART,
IF YOU COULD LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU,
IF ONLY YOU'D CARE WHILE WE ARE APART –
THEN I WOULD BE RICH.
I WOULD BE WISE.
I WOULD BE MORE,
MORE THAN I AM.

IF YOU WILL WAIT WHILE I AM GONE,
IF YOU'LL IMAGINE ME HERE WITH YOU.
IF ONLY YOU'LL CARE IF I CARRY ON,
THEN I COULD BE STRONG.
I COULD BE BRAVE.
I COULD BE MORE,
MORE THAN I AM.

IF YOU WILL SAY YOU LOVE ME
ENOUGH TO MARRY ME,
I WILL COME HOME AND LOVE YOU FOR ALL OF MY LIFE.
AND I WILL BE MORE, MORE THAN I AM.
SAY YES, MAKE ME MORE THAN I AM.

MEG

I'LL MARRY YOU TOMORROW.
I'LL MARRY YOU TODAY.
COME HOME AND I WILL LOVE YOU
FOR ALL OF MY LIFE.

MEG/MR. BROOKE

I SWEAR TO YOU NOW WITH ALL MY HEART,
I SWEAR I WILL LOVE YOU AS YOU LOVE ME.
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, THOUGH WE'LL BE APART,

WITH YOU I AM MORE THAN I AM.

DISCUSSION: What do you think makes Meg more receptive to the idea of marriage than Jo? Although we're not certain of her ambitions, do you think she is any less ambitious than Jo?

AMY & LAURIE

Rather unexpected as one of the outcomes of the story, Amy and Laurie fall in love and will be married! How did that happen?

AMY: WE WERE UNDER THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS -
LAURIE: IN A GONDOLA.
AMY: UNDER ITALIAN SKIES -
LAURIE: SHE WAS SINGING LULLABIES.
AMY: HE SAID HE LIKES THE WAY I SING.
LAURIE: THE DAY WAS OURS.
AMY: WE TALKED FOR HOURS.
LAURIE: IT WAS AMAZING.
AMY: I SAID I LOVE FIREFLIES.
LAURIE: I SAID SO DO I!
AMY: I TOLD HIM I HATE GOODBYES.
LAURIE: THERE WAS SOMETHING IN HER EYES.
AMY: I SWEAR THAT BELLS BEGAN TO RING.
LAURIE: WE FOUND THAT WE -
AMY: WERE SO ALIKE - IT WAS AMAZING.
LAURIE: AMAZING! THERE WE WERE IN VENICE -
AMY: IN A GONDOLA-
LAURIE: IN VENICE.
AMY: WHEN HE SUDDENLY STOOD UP-
LAURIE: AND SHOUTED:
(BOTH): WILL YOU MARRY ME!
AMY: IT WAS SO ROMANTIC!
LAURIE: THEN I FELL INTO THE WATER -
AMY: AND BEFORE WE EVEN KNEW IT -
LAURIE: SHE DOVE IN AND RESCUED ME!
AMY: IT HAPPENED BEFORE WE KNEW.
LAURIE: HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?
AMY: AMAZING WHAT TIME CAN DO.
LAURIE: FROM THAT MOMENT MY HEART FLEW.
AMY: WE'LL BE MARRIED IN THE SPRING
(BOTH): WHO EVER THOUGHT IN ALL THE WORLD
WE'D FALL IN LOVE AND YET WE DID.
AMY: IT WAS AMAZING.

DISCUSSION: How is Amy & Laurie's proposal different than Meg & John Brooke's? How do you think Jo feels about Amy & Laurie's wedding?

Lesson Plan: Love and Loyalty

Topic: To examine the role of familial and romantic love.

Materials: Lyrics and notebooks.

National Standards: (English Language Arts): Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities. (Performing Arts) Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement. Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

Aim: Would the story be different without the love between the sisters and their husbands?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Discuss figurative language and genre conventions to understand the role of love
- (b) Articulate how the different forms of love add to the production
- (c) Communicate how the forms of love add to the overall story

Do Now: Ask students which form of love they find the most appealing in the story.

Motivation: Ask your students to list the various forms of love and their expressions in the musical.

Development: Partner off students – have them discuss which form of love they found the most appealing and why.

Homework: With the same partners, ask your students to build on the images of the lyrics – are they enthralled with the gondolas? With the idea of being “more than I am” with another person? With the idea of keeping love alive? Or in being confident with your friends to pledge your love “forever?” In those four formats of love discussed in this chapter, how could they build off of those expressions and images? For example, if students are enchanted with the idea of pledging love for your family or friends forever – what adventures can that open the group up to? What could that close off? Have them write a sample dialogue building on that theme. This should be no more than one page – and it should be adventurous (e.g. if the gondolas are the images used, what kind of adventure could Laurie and Amy continue to have in Italy? Or New York? Or Concord?) Encourage your students to build off of the enthusiasm and loyalty expressed between characters. If time permits, have them perform their dialogue for the class.

Chapter VII: Sweet Taste of Success

Note: This chapter should be covered only after seeing the musical.

NATIONAL STANDARDS: (Performing Arts) Students should be able to analyze, critique, and construct meanings from formal theatre.

OVERVIEW: By now, you've seen the musical. Throughout this study guide, we've unpacked the major themes – and now it's time to tie it all together!

We met Jo first as she was struggling in New York to sell her writing. She was not doing so well – and received critiques she did not enjoy hearing. We then flashed back to meet her family, and learned of their commitment and love for one another as they matured. We learned of the stereotypes Jo endured and rejected, and the social expectations that were placed on women and men during the historical period of the late 1800s. We met strong women and their male friends, and we followed Jo as she blossomed into a published author with a romantic interest of her own.

We also witnessed several difficult times: the disappointment that the sisters may not necessarily be “together forever,” the burning of Jo's story, the death of their sister Beth, all with the constant backdrop of the Civil War. Oh – and let's not forget the near constant rejection of Jo's stories from Amy to New York publishers! These are events that could unravel many – trying times cause some people to abandon their dreams.

However, the March sisters never abandoned their dreams. They relied on each other and themselves to achieve their dreams and to be happy. They persevered through hard work, persistence and faith that their hopes would be someday realized – and those hopes would be amazing and astonishing! How did they do that?

Let's take a look at Jo's parting words (Act II, Scene V) to get an idea of how success was achieved:

SOMETIMES WHEN YOU DREAM
YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE
IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS.
SUDDENLY A DAY CAN BE SO AMAZING.
AND SOMETIMES WHEN YOU YEARN
YOU BURN THE AIR.
AND THEN YOU ARE NOT THE SAME...

DISCUSSION: Did Jo rely only on dreaming to achieve success? How else did she reach her goals? She says that when your dreams come true you are not the same – how did the process of fulfilling her dreams change her?

LESSON PLAN: Sweet Taste of Success

Topic: Achieving success.

Materials: Notebooks, any prior written homework and copies of song lyrics.

National Standards: (Performing Arts) Students should be able to analyze, critique, and construct meanings from formal theatre.

Aim: Do you ever have to revise your dreams in order to achieve success?

Performance Objectives: Students will be able to:

- (a) Discuss various layers of meaning in the musical
- (b) Articulate how they envision “success”
- (c) Communicate how they envision themselves achieving their dreams, as well as how that achievement happened in the story of *Little Women*

Do Now: Ask students which form of love they find the most appealing in the story.

Motivation: Ask your students to quietly write down their biggest aspiration – it could be anything from what they want to do when they are older to what type of person they want to become...encourage them to dream big dreams! Nothing is impossible!

Development: Ask your students to reflect on their goals. Have them write out a quick plan on how to achieve that goal – a course of study, making new friends, believing in themselves. Once they have thought through that process, ask them to envision realistically what obstacles may stand in their way. How do they plan on overcoming those obstacles? How difficult might that be? What would they need to forge ahead with their dreams?

Homework: In groups (so as to broaden perspective), ask students to pick their favorite scene from the musical. What draws them to that scene? How did the scene further the idea of fulfilling dreams? What obstacles were overcome? Students should write these ideas and submit them to you – nothing more than one page.

Supplemental Material

Books:

(free, downloadable e-book) of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* can be found at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/514> or chapter-by-chapter at <http://alcott.thefreelibrary.com/Little-Women>.

Harland, Marion. *Common Sense in the Household: A Manual for Practical Housewifery*. New York: Scribner & Co. 1872. Available electronically at: <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/books/commonsense/comm.html>.

Web-based resources:

Look directly at the musical's website! Here you can find out more information on the cast and the production: <http://littlewomenonbroadway.com/home.html>

A truly comprehensive timeline of American history and American literature can be found at: <http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/1860.htm>

Primary sources for almost any historical topic are linked at <http://www.teacheroz.com>. This instructor has gathered thousands of links – and they are simply wonderful resources for anything ranging from the Civil War to 19th Century American History to Gender History – to any other kind of history or social studies you may be teaching.

National Educational Standards are available online at:

English Language Arts (through the National Council of Teachers of English)
<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

Social Studies (through the National Council for the Social Studies)
<http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>

Performance Arts (through the Kennedy Center) <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/standards.cfm>

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