



Little Women - The Musical Audition Information

6th - 9th September 2023 – Putney Arts Theatre

Show Summary

Louisa May Alcott's beloved story of the adventures of the four March sisters is brought to vivid musical life in *Little Women*. The Civil War is in full swing in the 1860s, and the March sisters – Meg, the oldest, a traditional romantic, the spirited, literary and tomboyish Jo, sweet, loving and musical Beth, and artistic and playful Amy – live in Concord, Massachusetts with their mother, while their father is on the battlefield. Filled with adventure (both lived and imagined), heartbreak, and a deep sense of hope, the struggle of these “Little Women” to find their own voices mirrors the growing pains of a wider young America. This timeless, captivating story is brought to life in this glorious musical filled with personal discovery, heartache, hope and everlasting love.

Jo is trying to sell her stories for publication, but the publishers are not interested – her friend, Professor Bhaer, tells her that she has to do better and write more from herself. Begrudgingly taking this advice, Jo weaves the story of herself, her sisters and family members and their experience growing up in Civil War America. *Little Women* embodies the complete theatrical experience, guaranteeing a night filled with laughter, tears and a lifting of the spirit.

The beloved stories of the March sisters, their friends and family members are timeless and deal with issues as relevant today as when they were written. With buoyant, joyful melodies, memorable characters, and a big-hearted message, *Little Women* reminds us that “sometimes when you dream, your dreams come true.”

Our Production

Our show aims to create an atmosphere which highlights the ‘magic’ of storytelling, to link with Jo’s writing aims and the original aim of Louisa May Alcott’s novel. We will do this by embracing lots of physical theatre staging techniques to portray setting and story and by weaving in choreographed set changes using multiple characters in role. There will be numerous opportunities for ensemble dance in the show, as well as plenty of stylised movement sequences. For those not cast in lead singing roles, the ensemble will very much be present throughout this production. Some of the acting ensemble may be required to multi-role.

We will aim in rehearsals to develop all actors' physicality and posture to portray a sense of the period and the changing ages and statuses of the characters over the course of the show. We aim to show the growth and contrast in all the characters and the ‘coming of age’ of the young people. We wish to celebrate and highlight Alcott’s original novel by using projections to show illustrations in a period style and key quotes from

the text. We also aim to engage and immerse the audience in the historical setting throughout this show using a range of pre-show, staging and interactive theatre techniques in the beautiful church conversion forming the Putney Arts Theatre.

Our Creative Team

Find out more about our wonderful creative team on www.cygnetplayers.com/shows/little-women.

Pre-Audition Meeting

An information evening will be held on **Tuesday 23rd May at 7.30-9.30pm, at St Barnabas Church Hall, Lavenham Road, Southfields, SW18 5EP**. This will give an idea of the atmosphere and style of the show and will aim to get the wider theatre community excited about the production. Following that, there will be the all-important trip to the pub over the road! It's a great chance to get to you know other auditionees, meet the creative team, and chat to current members about the society.

Auditions

Preliminary auditions will be held on **Thursday 1st June 7.30-10pm** at the Aspire Centre, 337 Merton Rd, London SW18 5JU and **Sunday 4th June 1-5pm** at St Barnabas Church Hall, SW18 5EP.

Recalls for larger roles will be held on **Tuesday 6th June from 7.30-10pm** at St Barnabas Church Hall.

The [Audition Form](http://www.cygnetplayers.com/shows/little-women) will be available on the website (www.cygnetplayers.com/shows/little-women) on **Friday 5th May**. To book an audition you must **submit your form by Midnight on Wednesday 23rd May after the information evening**. Audition slots are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Audition slots are for an hour, and you will be given a more specific slot a few days before your audition. If you have trouble attending any of the available slots, please contact cygnetlittlewomen@gmail.com.

There is an audition fee of £10 if you are not a current paid-up member of Cygnet Players. This can be paid at audition in cash or by card, or please let us know if you wish to make a bank transfer in advance. If you are successful and are cast, you must then become a member of the society and your £10 audition fee will be deducted from your show fee. If you are already a member, you will not need to pay an audition fee. If you cannot remember whether you are currently a member, please email info@cygnetplayers.com.

Membership and Show Fee

Membership is £35 a year if you pay as a one-off, or only £30 when you set up a standing order. This lets you audition for all productions within that year (usually two musicals and a play). It also gives you discounted members' rates to our social events and access to the dedicated members' Facebook group and mailing list.

In amateur dramatics, because we are self-funded and doing this for fun, a show fee is paid by participants to cover all the costs of the show – things like performance rights, venue hire, scenery, costumes, lighting, insurance and lots more! For Little Women, the fee will be **£100**.

The cost of living has risen sharply recently and we don't want financial circumstances to be a barrier to participation. If you are concerned about the show fee or membership cost, or due to current circumstances you are unable to pay the full amounts upfront, please speak to the Cygnet Players committee in confidence to arrange a payment plan by emailing info@cygnetplayers.com.

Other Costs

So there are no surprises (especially if you are new to 'am dram'), it's worth noting that there may be other costs associated with participating in the show. Many of these are optional (for example, show t-shirts and contributions to gifts for the creative team), but we may ask cast members to provide their own character/tap/dance shoes, makeup, and other personal items.

Character Breakdowns

Note on gender of parts: We are open to all genders for each part; you need only be comfortable presenting as the gender of the role as it is written. For example, if you are non-binary but wanting to portray a male character, we welcome this. Character descriptions below give the gender of the character as written.

Note on Ethnicity: There are no specified ethnicities in the story so we encourage all ethnicities to apply for any of the roles, including for the lead roles of the four sisters.

Note on disability accommodation: Some parts require technical dancing but there are a number of parts which would suit performers with physical and other disabilities, so we encourage people of all abilities to audition. Accessibility information for our rehearsal and performance venues can be found at the end of this document. If you think you may need any specific adjustments for auditions or have any questions please email cygnetslittlewomen@gmail.com.

Note on accents: US accent (Concord, Massachusetts) preferred although not essential.

Note on playing ages: Ages noted below are playing ages and are included only to give a guideline of the characterisation required.

Jo March

Our story's protagonist. Passionate, adventurous, and brave. She has the idea of writing Little Women and eventually becomes engaged to Professor Bhaer.

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Any

Age: 18 to 28

Vocal range top: A5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Professor Bhaer

German Professor who exemplifies proper manners. He is a boarder in Mrs. Kirk's boarding house and eventually falls in love with Jo.

Gender: Male

Age: 30 to 45

Vocal range top: F#4

Vocal range bottom: G2

Amy March

The youngest, most energetic sister with a rather pompous air about her. She later marries Laurie.

Gender: Female

Age: 14 to 25

Vocal range top: Gb5

Vocal range bottom: -1

Meg March

The world-weary, yet hopeful, oldest sister who yearns for a great life. She marries John and has twins with him.

Gender: Female

Age: 21 to 32
Vocal range top: Gb5
Vocal range bottom: A#3

Beth March

The second youngest sister who tragically dies of Scarlet Fever. Peace-maker, lover, and an optimist who is always encouraging her sisters to dream.

Gender: Female
Age: 17 to 24
Vocal range top: G5
Vocal range bottom: A3

Marmee March

The girls' mother. She is the strong backbone of the family, who is courageous in spite of the difficult odds she faces.

Gender: Female
Age: 45 to 55
Vocal range top: Eb5
Vocal range bottom: Eb3

Mr. Laurence

Lonely in his mansion, and often at odds with his high-spirited grandson Laurie, he found comfort in becoming a benefactor and friend to the Marches.

Gender: Male
Age: 45-65
Vocal: Baritone
Vocal range top: D4
Vocal range bottom: D3

Laurie Laurence

The bright-eyed boy-next-door with considerable charm. He loves Jo but later falls in love with Amy.

Gender: Male
Age: 18 to 23
Vocal range top: Bb4
Vocal range bottom: Bb2

Aunt March

A formidable, overbearing matron and great-aunt to the March sisters. The wealthy socialite in town.

Gender: Female
Age: 45 to 65
Vocal range top: F5
Vocal range bottom: E3

Mr. John Brooke

Laurie's tutor and a rather stiff man; shows very little emotion. He later marries Meg and changes.

Gender: Male
Age: 30 to 40
Vocal range top: F#4
Vocal range bottom: C#3

Featured Singing / Acting & Movement / Dance Ensemble Roles

Please note that whilst you may be cast in one of the below smaller ensemble roles, you may also be asked to multi-role or to be involved in movement/dance sequences. Some of the below roles are purely spoken, whereas others involve singing. This is indicated below for your information. We are aiming to select around 8-10 ensemble members in total, depending on numerous factors at auditions.

Mrs. Kirk

The owner of the boarding house in New York where Jo works and Professor Bhaer lives.

Gender: Female

Featured

Age: 40-55

Spoken

Rodrigo

A character in Jo's story, heroic and handsome.

Gender: Male

Ensemble

Age: 28-38

Tenor

High Note: B4

Low Note: Bb2

Clarissa

A character in Jo's story, beautiful and romantic.

Gender: Female

Age: 20-38

Ensemble

Soprano

Rodrigo II

A character in Jo's story, looks much like Rodrigo.

Gender: Female

Ensemble

Age: 25-40

Soprano

High Note: G5

Low Note: A3

Hag

A character in Jo's story, terrifying.

Female

Ensemble

Age: 30-55

Mezzo-Soprano (belting)

High Note: D#5

Low Note: D #3

Troll

A terrifying character in Jo's story.

Gender: Female

Ensemble

Age: 30-55

Soprano

High Note: Gb5

Low Note: Middle C

Knight

Character in Jo's story, aged and frail.

Gender: Male

Ensemble

Age: 40-55

Baritone

High Note: D4

Low Note: D3

Braxton

Character in Jo's story, a villainous aristocrat.

Gender: Male

Ensemble

Age: 35-50

Tenor

High Note: F#4

Low Note: C#

Swings

In case of extenuating circumstances, we may cast swings and/or understudies for the main parts (details on which roles to be announced) from the ensemble. There will not be an allocated show for understudies to perform in and this is just a precaution, but you will have the chance to attend rehearsals and receive training for principal roles. If you are interested in being a swing, please state this on your [audition form](#) or during your audition. Hopefully swings will not be needed but your support in helping to alleviate any disasters resulting from emergency absence is very much appreciated!

Audition Pieces

You can audition for more than one part, but please audition with the pieces from your preferred role. All audition pieces will be added to this Google drive in the lead-up to the auditions.

[Audition Material](#)

Dancing / Movement

There will be dances in this show and at least two will be fairly advanced. Everyone will be asked to workshop a short movement exercise in the audition. Please note that there are many roles for whom advanced dancing is not a necessity. It may also be possible to split the ensemble into character actors and dancers; we will work with your strengths.

Acting / Dialogue

Audition pieces for each character will be available on the drive. One of the audition panel will read in the lines of the other characters in the piece.

If you are auditioning for Ensemble only and wish to sing/ speak as part of this, there is a short piece specified for the ensemble. If you are auditioning for the ensemble and only wish to move/dance then there is no speaking audition piece – but try to show character in your singing and movement audition.

Singing

Audition pieces for each character will be available on the drive including an indication of which part(s) the song is for; recall songs will also be added. If you are going for a solo singing role (named part) or would like to be considered for a solo line, please prepare one of the principal pieces (the most relevant for the part(s) you are auditioning for) plus the ensemble piece. If you are just going for the ensemble, feel free to just prepare the ensemble piece. If the role you are going for does not have an audition song listed (eg. Mrs. Kirk), then please prepare the ensemble part most suited to your voice.

Rehearsals and Shows

Rehearsals will be on **Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7.30pm-10pm**, and from **30th July** onwards, on **Sundays at 2pm-6pm**, at St Barnabas Church Hall, Lavenham Road, Southfields, SW18 5EP. The first rehearsal will be **Tuesday 13th June**.

The rehearsal schedule has not been fully formed yet and will partly depend on cast availability, so please let us know your availability as accurately as possible on the audition form. We understand that people may have long-standing commitments and holiday bookings that can't be moved (please do not subsequently book any holidays during the rehearsal period once casting has been completed), but please do your best to

prioritise the show so we can make it as good as it can possibly be. It's very difficult to have productive rehearsals with lots of people missing! Availability will be considered as part of the casting process.

Show week at the venue is from **Sunday 3rd to Saturday 9th September 2023** with full cast called:

- Sunday 3rd September – Get-in and Sitzprobe: all cast required 9am-11pm
- Monday 4th – Technical rehearsal, 2pm-Late (cast called from 6pm)
- Tuesday 5th – Dress Rehearsal, 5pm-11pm (cast called from 6pm)
- Wednesday 6th - Friday 8th – Shows, call time 6pm-11pm (7:30pm show)
- Saturday 9th – Shows, call time 12pm-Late (2.30pm show, 7.30pm show, get-out)

Performance Captains

We will be appointing Performance Captains from members of the cast. The Performance Captains will support the creative team and assist in running some rehearsals. There will also be opportunities to get involved in some direction and choreography. Please note on your [audition form](#) if you would be interested in being a Performance Captain.

Promoting the Show

It's crucial that everyone involved with the show does everything they can to spread the word and encourage their friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances to buy tickets and come along. At the end of the day, we want big audiences to perform too and appreciate all the hard work that you've put in!

The Committee marketing team will coordinate efforts across our social media channels and we ask everyone involved to help by sharing posts, and capturing photos and videos in rehearsals that we can use for content. If you have a particular flare for insta stories and want to help further with the social media campaigns, there will be opportunities to be more involved to support the marketing team in coordinating campaigns.

Closer to show week, we will organise some targeted promotional events, such as flyering and live performances in areas local to Putney Arts Theatre. We are currently planning for either Saturday 12th or 19th August around midday – please save these dates! More details on these events, including confirmation of dates, will be given in due course. Each member of the cast will be expected to attend some promotional events, as these are vital for making sure you have big audiences to perform to! Dates for these will be shared as soon as possible.

Social Events

During the rehearsal period we have some socials planned, a great opportunity to get to know your fellow cast members and meet other members of the society. Dates we have so far are:

- Quiz Night - Sat 17th June
- Barbecue - Sat 5th August

Put them in your diaries and look out for further details on email and social media!

Contact

Please contact cygnetslittlewomen@gmail.com with any questions.

Break a leg for your audition!

About Cygnet Players

Cygnet Players is a young and vibrant company based in South West London. We rehearse in Southfields and put on shows in Putney, Fulham and other venues in South West London. We usually perform two musicals and a play every year, as well as putting on various concerts and other events. We also have regular social events, which are great opportunities to meet and catch up with other Cygnets. We always welcome new members, so if this is your first show with us – welcome to the family!

For more information about the company in general, have a look at our website at www.cygnetplayers.com or email info@cygnetplayers.com.

You can also find us on social media:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/cygnetplayers
- Instagram – [@cygnetplayers](https://www.instagram.com/cygnetplayers)
- TikTok – [@cygnetplayers](https://www.tiktok.com/@cygnetplayers)

Diversity and Inclusion

Cygnet Players strives to create an accessible and welcoming environment for members and audiences. We are committed to diversity and inclusion within our casting and storytelling to ensure there are opportunities for all people, from every walk of life, to take part.

As part of this, we are committed to a conscious casting process; making conscious decisions about how a show can be cast, rather than following the “traditional” model that repeats whatever has been done before. We are always open to non-traditional casting, and conscious artistic decisions will be made whenever race, ethnicity, gender or other factors are a key component of the story or integral to the relationships between characters. Where this is the case, it will be clearly highlighted in character breakdowns.

Cygnets is a member of the South West London amateur theatre societies’ Inclusion, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility Group (IDEA): a group of five societies working towards improved diversity and inclusion in amdram.

We are open to feedback to improve our processes and create a warm and welcoming atmosphere that creates opportunities for people of all ethnicities, gender identities and physical abilities.

If you have any suggestions, feedback or ideas please speak to a member of the Committee or Production Team, or email swamdramidea@gmail.com. It will always be treated in the strictest of confidence but if you wish to provide feedback anonymously, please fill in [this form](#).

Disability Accommodation

Our rehearsal venue (St. Barnabas church) has step-free access to the rehearsal rooms and accessible toilet facilities. The performance venue (Putney Arts Theatre) has step-free access to the stage, foyer, toilet facilities and auditorium. The auditorium has allocated wheelchair spaces. The theatre has a hearing loop installed and for anyone with any visual impairment, and we can organise a touch tour. The theatre welcomes all therapy and service dogs. If you have more specific questions or requirements, please email info@cygnetplayers.com.