The Costume Design of Little Women the Musical

Emily Kimball

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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THE COSTUME DESIGN OF

LITTLE WOMEN THE MUSICAL

by

EMILY KIMBALL

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN
THEATRE ARTS

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
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The Costume Design of *Little Women the Musical*

Emily Kimball

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student’s committee.

________________________________  David McCarl, Advisor

________________________________  George Grubb

________________________________  Melissa Rosenberger

________________________________  Steven Smith

________________________________  Dr. Alisa Eimen
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ABSTRACT

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This document is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. It is an account of the author Emily Kimball’s artistic process in creating and executing the design for Minnesota State University, Mankato’s production of *Little Women the Musical* in the fall of 2017. The thesis chronicles the designer’s process from early production through construction and performance in a total of five chapters: an early production analysis, a historical and critical perspective, a journal, a post-production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works cited are included.
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CHAPTER 1

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

A production of *Little Women the Musical* will be presented by Department of Theatre and Dance of Minnesota State University, Mankato beginning September 28, 2017 through October 8, 2017. The director and choreographer will be Melissa Rosenberger, the production stage manager Brittny Hollenbeck, the lighting designer Steven Smith, the scenic designer Erin Wegleitner, the technical director Matthew Gilbertson, the sound designer George Grubb, the musical director Nick Wayne, the costume designer Emily Kimball. This chapter is the costume designer's analysis of *Little Women the Musical* and will explore the themes of the musical. It will also examine characters and how the themes and characters might be supported by the design of the costumes.

*Little Women the Musical* is a musical adaptation of the children’s novel by Louisa May Alcott. The novel was originally written in two parts and published in 1868 and 1869. It was the first in a series of books chronicling the lives of Josephine (called Jo) March and her sisters as they grow up in 1860s Concord, Massachusetts. *Little Women the Musical* tells of the March family, comprised of Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy, guided by their mother, or Marmee, in the absence of their father, who is serving as a military chaplain at the end of the Civil War. It is a semi-autobiographical retelling of Alcott’s own life growing up with three sisters, a caring mother, and a moralistic father.
The relationships within the March family are what make the musical, and its characters, special. As the sisters mature, events pull them apart and draw them closer together, such as falling in love and moving away. Supportive, frustrating, caring, and constant, the family unit remains one of the most important pieces of the musical. Themes of growing up, change and the desire to have things remain the same are reflected by several characters.

The musical begins with Jo and her friend, Professor Bhaer, at a boarding house in New York City in 1865. Jo, an aspiring author, is attempting without much success to sell her stories to publications. Bhaer, a German professor, advises Jo that her wild theatrical stories do not reflect her voice and that she “could do better” (4). The musical then transitions back to the winter of 1863 and the attic playroom of the sisters’ youth where they express their personal wishes for Christmas. From there, the musical continues linearly through the next year and a half.

Jo is the main character and the driving force of the musical. She is outspoken, awkward in larger social settings, and dreams of finding success as an author. She is often restless at home and rather than perform what is expected by her Aunt March she desires adventure. She declares she wants passion and “to be noticed because I’m unique!” (28) and “I’ll show them all I’m no little woman in a dress all buttoned and pearled.” (9).

Jo and Beth are the closest pair of sisters. Jo reveals that when Beth was born, she told her mother “Beth is mine” and since then they have shared a close bond. For Jo, her sister Amy is the source of much of her frustration. After Jo tells Amy she must
remain home from a party hosted by the Moffat family, Amy burns Jo’s manuscript of
stories. They remain angry with each other until Amy nearly drowns while ice skating.
Realizing she might have lost her sister, Jo confronts Amy about how upset she was at
having her work destroyed but their sisterly bond is more important and they are
reconciled. Jo wants desperately to keep her sisters close, and to remain “just as we are”
and “no matter whatever happens, we must promise that it’ll always be the four March
sisters – forever!” (9). Despite this wish, she also is the most restless. Her aunt had
promised to take her as a companion on a trip abroad if she could practice self control
and learn more proper ways. When Marmee needs funds to visit their father who has
fallen ill, Jo impulsively cuts and sells her own hair. Aunt March sees this act and Jo’s
outburst as a break in their agreement. Jo exclaims “To hell with society! ... We don’t
live for society. We live for what we have inside of us. We live to expand our minds.
Fulfill our dreams” (57). Feeling abandoned at hearing of Meg’s engagement and after
refusing a marriage proposal herself, she sings “now nothing feels the way it was before”.
She, however sings that “I only know that I’m meant for something more, I’ve got to
know if I can be astonishing” (67). This song (“Astonishing”) occurs at the end of Act
One. In Act Two, she has left home and has moved to New York City, determined to
seek success with her writing.

Jo, who says she doesn’t “give two figs about society” (19) perhaps would dress
more simply than her sisters or other women. She could feel out of place in the gown she
wears to the upper class society ball hosted by the Moffat family, stating that she “is not
built for dresses” (22). Her style could mature as she moves to New York and sells her first written story.

Meg is the oldest March sister and referred to in stage directions as “the most beautiful of the sisters” (6). She works as a governess, is proper and desires a comfortable and financially secure life, though not at the sacrifice of love. After their experience at the Moffat ball, Meg meets John Brooke, the neighbor boy Laurie’s tutor, and they form an attachment. Upon coming home she states “I may have left here a girl – but I came home: a woman.” (38). Meg is the most romantic and the first to grow up, reminding Jo that their promise to remain together was made “a long time ago” (61). Her costumes may be more delicate and soft, still practical and a bit more mature than the other sisters.

Beth is the second to youngest March sister and is caring and supportive. Her sisters frequently refer to her as “sweet”. Amy, when leaving home for the first time says “perhaps one day I’ll be as sweet as you” (59). Beth weakens after contracting scarlet fever and remains in poor health. After a trip to Cape Cod with Marmee and Jo, she dies. The example of sweet sincere kindness and a life half lived; she tells Jo “I never made plans about what I would do when I grew up. And I’m not afraid to die. The hardest part, Jo, is leaving you” (91). Her death is what spurs Jo on to write the story of their lives instead of her usual melodramas. Beth may remain in one costume for most of the musical, showing that she never has the chance to grow past the need of her favorite dress.
The youngest sister, Amy wants “elegance and fine things” (28) but is burdened with wearing her sister’s old clothes. She is the most aware of the family’s lack of status and is insecure about her appearance, feeling hurt when a schoolmate called her dress “ragged” (6). Eventually Amy is chosen over Jo as a more suitable companion for Aunt March. She is taken to Europe and exposed to the society and wealth she desired as a child. “I’m sophisticated. You can’t imagine all the experiences I had!” (93). She undergoes the largest transformation and in Act Two she returns home with Aunt March who says, “remember Amy, you’re a lady now” (92). Amy, looking around the house asks “when did this house get so small?” and Aunt March credits being a grand person, saying things in comparison will now appear smaller (92). Amy, though in perhaps faded hand-me-down clothes as the youngest sisters at the start will grow up in elegance and finery.

The matriarchs of the March family are Marmee and Aunt March, and they can be seen as opposites. Marmee is emotionally strong and holds the family together alone. She writes to her husband, aching to tell him how she wishes he was with her, singing “I can’t tell you what I’m feeling . . . I don’t know which part is harder, what I know or what’s unknown” (13). She has her own doubts, wondering “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?” (13). She guides her girls by allowing them to struggle and grow from their experiences. She tells her daughters that “we March women are invincible” (17). She supports their activities, helping assemble costumes and ready the home for a Christmas play they wish to perform for the town. She acts as peacekeeper to her daughters, caring
for her family in her husband’s absence, and values doing good. She lends aid to the Hummels, an immigrant family poorer than her own despite their own hardships.

Marmee, feeling the pain of Beth’s death in Act Two, sings that she can’t succumb to the pain and grief of their loss. When Jo asks her how to find the same strength, Marmee comforts a crying Jo, telling her “you can’t let this defeat you, I won’t let this defeat you” (102). The only way to continue, for both of them, is to move forward. Marmee’s costume could be more practical than her daughters, perhaps in muted or subdued colors.

Aunt March, Mr. March’s aunt, in contrast to Marmee is wealthy. She possesses a different sort of strength that comes from social status and self assurance. Aunt March points out Jo’s faults and wants her to change to fit more appropriately into elegant society. Jo works as her companion. During the song “Could You” she sings that if Jo can “practice self control” she “could captivate the world” if she can change her wild behavior. Rather than accept the value of humility and simplicity, she says “as we grow grand . . . the world around us often diminishes in size” (92). Aunt March’s costumes could display her wealth and when compared to the rest of the Marches. Richer fabrics, elaborate trimming and scale could help communicate this.

The male characters in the musical are all additional relationships that affect the March family. Some are romantic figures that divide the sisters from each other and their childhoods and usher them into womanhood. Mr. Laurence is first a challenge, then later a companion to Beth’s sweet, simple and content life. The costumes of the male characters in the musical could also communicate wealth or the absence of it.
Theodore Laurence, or Laurie, the next door neighbor of the March family, begins the musical as “a boy of 16” (15). He has just moved to live with his grandfather, Mr. Laurence in Concord, MA. He is cocky and self important, telling the sisters that he plays music and has won medals at school. His grandfather wishes for him to take over the family business and he receives instruction at home from a tutor. Jo meets Laurie again at the Moffat party where he asks to be her friend if she “takes a chance” on him (36). Laurie notices how Jo lives in her own way and is different than other girls. He soon becomes “the brother we never had” (51) as he is ceremoniously inducted into the March family. Laurie proposes to Jo before he leaves for college and is turned down. He returns near the end of the musical, having traveled to Europe for business and having married a grown up Amy. Costumes of Laurie’s could begin less structured than his grandfather’s and youthful in his early scenes and become gradually more professional as he assumes the role he originally fought against when he takes up the family business.

Mr. Laurence is an elderly man who lives next door to the March family. The sisters call him “sinister” and Meg comments “they say he’s a very angry and bitter man” while Beth thinks “he looks sad” (11). Later Beth says that his “face is very hard” (45). Near the beginning of the musical Mr. Laurence has a specific plan for his grandson, Laurie. He sees Laurie’s relationship to the sisters as frivolous and a distraction and has “forbidden him to associate with this family . . . because a man needs an iron will if he’s to succeed in this world. And this family will only soften him” (45). He softens after meeting Beth however, sharing a moment with her when he discovers her talent at playing piano. He invites her to come to his house and play on his more grand and
expensive piano. When her illness prevents her from visiting, he gives her the piano. He becomes a great friend of the family, accompanying Marmee on her trip to Washington.

Professor Bhaer, an immigrant German philosophy professor, begins as Jo’s acquaintance in the New York boarding house at the beginning of the musical. He says he seeks order and quiet and finds the other boarders “strange” (103). As his relationship with Jo grows, he becomes attracted to her determination and the way she disrupts his routine, saying in her absence “the house is far too quiet now” (87) after she returns home to her family. He is not a wealthy man and Bhaer’s costumes may be rougher and more loosely woven, giving him a less put together look compared to the more upper crust Laurences.

Other characters in the musical are characters of Jo’s fantastical “Operatic Tragedy”. Seen briefly in the opening scene as Jo starts to act out the story she wants to have published are Braxton, Clarissa, and Roderigo. Later in Act Two, these characters are joined by a hag, a troll and a knight to tell a melodramatic story of a woman on a quest. The look of these characters could appear professionally costumed, as if they are members of a production that might be attended by an 1865 audience, though they exist, in stage directions, “in Jo’s imagination” (71). They might seem like echoes of the dress-up costumes the sisters put on at Christmas in “Our Finest Dreams” as little girls, which would be cobbled together from old clothes and found treasures, worn and used often.

A primary function of the costumes in this production will be to help set the time period. The most defining characteristic of 1860s are the large, bell shaped hoops women wore. Skirts made of lightweight fabrics were supported over hoop skirts in formal and
informal settings. Menswear was relatively formal as well and frock coats and tail coats were tailored.

Another role the costumes in this production might serve is to communicate the passage of time. The motif of the changing calendar is also touched on in the story as the characters begin, or resist, growing up. Growing up is a large theme of the musical and costumes can support the changes the characters go through. As Jo becomes more successful and she becomes more comfortable as a person, her style could mature. Meg becomes a mother in the second act and her wardrobe would reflect a mature woman. Amy is the most noticeable transformation, as she begins as an impetuous child and through her education and travels becomes a wealthy married woman.

Costumes in this production might be used to reflect the March family’s status. Throughout the musical, characters refer to garments that are borrowed, passed down or repurposed. In a family of sisters and as a way to save money this makes sense. Costumes can help distinguish the difference between the societal status of the characters through contrast. The March family might have clothing made from simpler, more homespun fabrics and colors. Attendants at the Moffat’s ball could be dressed more finely than Meg and Jo, who wear hand-me-downs and patched dresses.

Costumes for this production can assist in the visual storytelling by communicating time period, personalities of the character and relationships between them and a sense of wealth and status. This might be achieved through fabric and color choices. Research and further script analysis will be important in forming these design choices.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will provide a historical and critical analysis of the musical *Little Women*. In this chapter, the designer will introduce the source material, the life of the author, the autobiographical nature of the novel and characteristics and reception of the book. It will also discuss the popular adaptations of the story.

Louisa May Alcott wrote the coming of age novel *Little Women* about the four March sisters growing up during the Civil War in their idyllic home in Concord, Massachusetts. Alcott’s personal experiences influenced her writing greatly. Her family served as subjects and models for the family in her most successful book; and real life situations supplied the events. To understand Louisa May Alcott as a writer, it is first necessary to learn about her upbringing and character. To do this, one must begin with her family.

Her mother, Abigail May, was the descendant of local colonial gentry. On Abigail’s mother’s side, the Sewells were related to the Quincys and the Adamses and by marriage to John Hancock. Her father, Colonel Joseph May was from a humbler line. The couple had a financially successful and harmonious life until an ill-fated business investment lost the family their fortune. May shrewdly made back their income and the family lived comfortably. Abigail, called “Abby” or “Abba”, was the youngest of twelve, though only three of the children would live to adulthood. She was close with her
brother Samuel and sister Louisa and the three of them shared a love of learning. At one point, Abigail and Louisa had planned to open a school together. After the death of her mother and her father’s remarriage, Abba was displaced as lady of the house. The spinster daughter, Abba moved to live with her brother (now a Unitarian minister) and his wife Lucretia. She was alone one day at the parsonage when a tall man appeared looking for Reverend May. This was Bronson Alcott.

Born Amos Bronson Alcox to a poor family of farmers in 1799, he was the first of his mother’s children to live past infancy. Bronson was the treasure of his mother, who taught him to read, write and draw. Bronson and his cousin William left the home at thirteen with plans of private study. They changed the spelling of their name, finding other family member’s misspellings, to the more refined “Alcott”. They collected and purchased volumes of books on any topic, mostly classics and “more Bibles than they could use” (Reisen 9). The country boy sought to find a route to illumination and discovered John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, a book that would shape not only his views but his future children as well. This allegorical story follows Christian, an everyman hero, on a journey rife with pitfalls, obstacles and sacrifices from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Bronson saw this as a model for his own life. In the novel, the March women make allusions to characters and events in Bunyan’s story.

At seventeen Bronson left a position working at a clock factory, passed an exam and received a teaching certificate, though schoolteachers were paid less than factory workers. He did not receive the post he hoped for and instead became a peddler, first in Connecticut and later throughout the South. Bronson’s debts exceeded his profits after
five years on the road. He observed elegant plantation owners and was invited into their
homes to peruse their fine libraries. When not permitted to stay, he saw slavery first hand
during nights sleeping in shared field houses.

Bronson walked the five hundred miles and returned home to Connecticut, in debt
six hundred dollars to his father. A position opened at the Cheshire public school and
Bronson began teaching. He started with changing the uncomfortable benches, fixed the
lack of heat and poor lighting and provided each student with proper slates for writing,
paying for it himself. His method was Socratic and he did away with memorization and
corporal punishment, things that he believed suffocated curiosity and creativity. His
methods were admired by the small circle of intellectuals and freethinking educators of
New England, Samuel May being one of them, and an invitation to discuss and compare
methods and philosophies was extended by the Mays.

When Abba May and Bronson Alcott met in 1827, they formed a quick
attachment. Abba was attracted to his views on education and saw in him her intellectual
and spiritual equal, although her opposite in family and temperament. Their flirtation
consisted of a ten month correspondence. Bronson’s teaching career moved from school
to school, as his ideas were thought indulgent by parents and he fell out of favor.
Patronage, however, reappeared through Samuel May’s connections for a position at a
school in Boston. Abba, hoping to strengthen their relation by proximity, applied and
was given the position as Bronson’s teaching assistant. The two were engaged, though
the sudden death of her sister Louisa and the care of her children, given to Abba, forced
the wedding to be postponed. On May 23, 1830 the couple married in Boston.
Attendance at the school was dropping and the couple relocated to Philadelphia where Bronson accepted a new teaching position, a pattern he would continually repeat. Bronson’s views on education and child psychology were revolutionary at the time and are some of the first examples of recorded early childhood development. He took careful notes on each of his daughters, writing constantly about their behaviors and interactions and shaping them spiritually and intellectually. He began this on March 16, 1831 when Anna was born. She was fair haired and blue-eyed like her father, who recorded her every move with a scientific curiosity. The couple’s second daughter was the exact opposite to her sister. Louisa May Alcott was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania on November 29, 1832 on her father’s thirty-third birthday. She resembled her mother in appearance and already in the first years of her life, in temperament. Bronson’s observations on his children continued, he noted Louisa to be stubborn, free spirited and wild, though a bright quick learner and reader. Later, her sister Elizabeth was born.

Bronson was heavily influenced by and involved in Transcendentalism. His friends and patrons were leaders in the popular philosophy that focused on the search for the divine inward and to nature, interested less in politics than in the creation of “instinctive self-hood”. Transcendentalists “criticized the dominant materialist ideology, but remained optimistic about human perfectibility. They believed that the transformation of human consciousness marked a first step toward creating an earthly paradise” (Elbert 42).

The family relocated again, this time to Boston where Bronson’s newest school, Temple School began. The success of the school lasted less than a few years, due to
Bronson’s unpopular opinions published in a written work *Conversations with Children on the Gospels*. He fell out with parents and society and the family left Boston for Concord at the suggestion of and with financial support from Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In Concord, young Louisa May and her family lived in a rented cottage. The children played outside in the woods, were educated by Bronson and life was laborious. There was a wide contrast in the family’s intellectual company and their material poverty. Bronson grew impatient and sought a new adventure in England after hearing of a school that was named for him and ascribed to his educational ideas. He left his wife and daughters, with the youngest daughter May, a new addition, and they greatly missed him in his absence. Bronson returned home after six months with renewed energy and new companions with a goal to develop a utopian communal home founded on a new social model, what he called a “Consociate Family”. Charles Lane, his twelve-year-old son William and Henry Wright moved in to the cottage. Abba had been giving lessons to the girls in Bronson’s absence; now Lane took over, schooling them in all subjects for hours. During the short breaks they were afforded, the girls would join their mother in ceaseless housework, increased by the addition of new members. Abba was displaced as primary companion to her husband and grew weary quickly of this new communal arrangement. During this time the family’s finances remained unstable. New property was found for the Consociate family and Abba’s brother Samuel May and Emerson begrudgingly co-signed to purchase 16 acres outside of Concord.

Bronson hoped that this experiment would be the culmination of all his educational theories and promote the self-improvement of everyone. To Bronson, the
“evils of life are not so much social or political, as personal; and a personal reform only can eradicate them” (Saxton 151). If one gave up every individual inclination, their reward would be perfection. Throughout this time, Bronson withdrew more and more from the traditional role as husband and father. Their diet consisted mostly of crude bread, water and apples.

Alcott’s account in her diary while living at Fruitlands (the name given to the property) was dryly rewritten as a work she called “Transcendental Wild Oats”. Her father set to planting and plowing, by principle without the use of animal labor. It was tight quarters for them all, though the country life allowed Alcott to slip away and run to the woods, pretend she was a horse, sing, play, and make up stories. But she still was required to keep what her father called her “demonic nature” in check. Her journals were filled with self-reflections on her behavior and remorse over not doing enough good. Her mother would leave her small notes in the margins or gifts of encouragement and their bond was never stronger. They grew to rely on each other emotionally.

Fruitlands’ sustainability was wavering and two factors contributed to the end of the experiment. Samuel May was tired of paying the note he had signed for Bronson’s debts. In a time when separation and divorce was nearly unheard of, Lane eventually came to realize his presence and the Fruitlands mission was causing a damaging rift in Bronson and Abba’s marriage. He chose to remove himself and his son and go home to England. The dissolution however caused lasting problems for the Alcotts. Bronson wanted the freedom to experiment communally and spiritually and discussed with his family the possibility of separating. He spent the next Christmas away from the family,
and they celebrated a humble, sad holiday. Bronson did return but in a depression that Abba couldn’t lift, and he was relieved to surrender “any effort to steer the family, and from then on Abba made most decisions” (Saxton 167). The Alcotts’ almost nomadic lifestyle wore on Abba, who, though a figure of strength to her daughters, was herself often depressed.

For a time, the family relocated back to Boston. Alcott disliked the faster pace of the city and missed the freedom of being outside often. During her adolescent years, Alcott was frustrated by her high energy and lack of domesticity and patience. She was always trying to perfect herself, constantly being encouraged by her instructors or parents to improve and be “good”, or rather be more passive and gentle. Alcott vowed that she would do something “by and by. Don’t care what—teach, sew, act write, anything to help the family; and I’ll be rich and famous and happy before I die, see if I won’t” (Saxton 185).

From the family’s time at Fruitlands and on, Alcott knew that her father was not a reliable provider for the family. She worked as a seamstress, a teacher and a laundress. Abba took in boarders and sewing for extra income. For Alcott it “became her intention never to ask for anything” (171) and the family came to rely on Alcott for financial support as she grew older. Nearly all of her earnings would go to her family for their survival. Her first writings included dramas she and her sisters would perform in their home, poems, and short stories. She chose to focus entirely on writing, foregoing the benefits of marriage so that her family would have her undivided attention, even long after the funds were needed. “Self-abnegation simply became a habit” for her
Alcott’s first published story earned her five dollars and she reveled in her industriousness. She realized the ability to control her circumstances in a new way; by earning money. Her next published work was revised children’s fairy stories she’d written as a girl, *Flower Fables* for which she received thirty-two dollars.

In 1858, a house with ten acres and an apple orchard in Concord was purchased (with the usual financial assistance). The second youngest sister, Elizabeth, was in poor health from scarlet fever and died before the family moved in to Orchard House. Soon after, Anna announced her engagement to John Pratt. Alcott felt deeply the loss of two of her sisters, losing one by death, and the separation from another by marriage. She noted that the past years events were tests of “character and courage” and had “taken a deep hold and changed or developed” her (Elbert 113).

Alcott continued living in Boston, focusing more intensely on her writing and feeling alone. She began incorporating her ideals and opinions into her book *Moods* (later published in 1864) specifically about the changes women were facing socially and the balance of domesticity and independence. When the Civil War began, Alcott, the closest thing the family had to an eldest son, enlisted in the way she could; she volunteered as a nurse in 1862. She wrote to her family about her experiences and later compiled them into her book *Hospital Sketches*. Previously her writing was children’s stories or fantasies and for the first time the character was herself, a new heroine.

The years that followed the Civil War’s end and Alcott’s experiences as a hospital nurse were full of sadness and anxiety. Plagued by poor health herself from a fever she contracted while working in the hospital, she no longer had the physical energy to sustain
her frantic mind. An opportunity to travel to Europe was presented to her, as the companion to a frail, invalid lady. Though using her nursing skills she found caring for another tedious and she grew impatient at the limitations of their travel. In Vevay, Switzerland she met a young Polish boy whom she called “Laddie”. He was “enough her junior that she could tell herself she loved him like a mother—although he acted nothing like a son” and even Alcott, at 33, herself admitted that “it was impossible for anyone to resist his pleading eyes” (Reisen 193). The two spent much of her remaining time traveling together but sadly parted company. Laddie, forever youthful and charming in Alcott’s mind, was the influence for the character of Laurie. Alcott enjoyed the rest of her adventures less and finally she and her invalid charge returned home. Her mother was very ill and Alcott once again turned to nursing and supporting her family, still happy to have been missed.

Though Alcott’s writing had been primarily observational and for adults children’s fiction was a genre with which many women authors of the mid-century found success and employment. Alcott received an offer from a popular magazine, Merry’s Museum, to become an editor and contributor. Characteristically, children’s fiction had been “generally pious, dull, and curiously unspecific about the details of everyday life” (Elbert 182). There were also very few books for adolescents, especially between the ages of fifteen and twenty. By the 1860s however, brought about by the changing attitude and evolving sentimentalization of childhood due to influences from Romanticism and Transcendentalism, these stories began to become more lively and
popular to American readers. Publishers saw this as a new market and encouraged authors to write in great detail.

Alcott was certainly aware of the clichés and styles of this relatively new genre. These stories of domestic fiction often were moralistic in nature, preachy and full of didacticism. Thomas Niles, a literary agent from the Roberts Brothers’ publishing firm, approached Alcott and suggested that she “write a girls’ book” (183). Alcott gave in and after moving home to Orchard House in May 1868 she sat at the desk her father had built for her years ago and began to write. She delivered the first twelve chapters by June. She and Niles confessed it to be “dull” but in two months the final 412 pages were submitted. Early published copies included her sister May’s own illustrations. Alcott was given the choice of flat rate or a percentage of the book’s sales and her own copyright. Perhaps her most successful business dealing, she later commented in a diary that together, she and her agent were “an honest publisher and a lucky author, for the copyright made her fortune and the dull book was the first golden egg of the ugly duckling” (Elbert 184).

In November 1868, Alcott was busy working on the second half of Little Women, completing a chapter a day. Readers of the book’s first part needed to know who the girls married, though Alcott was determined not to marry Jo to Laurie to please anyone, “as if marriage were the only end and aim of a woman’s life” (Elbert 187). The second volume was published on April 14th. Four thousand copies had already been preordered, and only two weeks later, thirteen thousand copies had been sold at one dollar and fifty
cents (Elbert 221). This was more than twice what the first book had sold in six months (Reisen 222).

Alcott drew on what she knew—her life with her sisters—to create the story of Little Women although the life she created on the page was a version painted over and idealized. In an interview for National Public Radio, children’s book specialist Anna Silvey points out “she very much wrote their story as she would have like it to have been. She really softens the hard edges of her life. She makes Jo a much more lovable, accepted character than Louisa May Alcott herself ever was”.

Louisa May Alcott combined conventions of the sentimental novel popular in her era with ingredients of Romantic child’s fiction, creating a new form of which Little Women could be considered a distinctive model. She wrote characters with multiple facets, reflected in the unique personalities of Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March. According to Alcott biographer Sarah Elbert the book “enlarges the myth of American womanhood by insisting that the home and the women’s sphere cherish individuality and thus produce young adults who can make their way in the world while preserving a critical distance from its social arrangements” (Elbert 199). The book points out the tension between a woman’s conventional role in traditional household matters and her new right to individual achievement and independence. In this conflict, Alcott presents characters who encounter a range of domestic arrangements and income earning work in alternative communities. Communicating the old responsibilities and new rights while simultaneously offering viable alternatives to patriarchy are part of the novel’s lasting popularity. Other opinions as to why the book remains popular are due to Alcott’s
honesty in dealing with “admirable and less commendable” character traits (MacDonald 95). Children reading the book can sympathize with the desire for independence and self-discovery.

_Little Women_ significantly reassures young readers, who are generally younger than the twelve year old Amy March in the first volume, “that they will remain truly themselves in growing up. All the March sisters are engaged in a search for their adult selves and all—Jo most painfully and powerfully—fear that their unique human potential will be lost or destroyed in the process of growing up” (Elbert 199). Older readers returning to the novel discover with Jo, like the toys and objects forgotten and refound in the attic, where the source of individuality originates, in memories of those who knew them in childhood, in the family. “The greater sophistication of older readers also finds play in her novels, both for the adult who returns to them after a considerable time, and for the scholar, who is most likely to judge the literary sophistication in greatest depth” (MacDonald 98). Alcott’s skill convinced her readers that the optimism, warmth, and affection with which she portrayed her characters were sincere.

Some interest now in _Little Women_ may be out of historical curiosity, informing new readers what life was like in a different century.

The themes of happy family life, honest, hard work that eventually overcomes realistically portrayed difficulties, and eventually growing up, marrying, and having a family of one’s own have enduring significance. Even modern readers believe in such values, though they have been mistreated and sentimentalized elsewhere (MacDonald 99).
Little Women has been made into seven films, a 1958 television series, multiple plays, a musical, a ballet, and an opera. Among the most famous films are the 1933 version starring Katharine Hepburn, the 1949 version starring June Allyson (with Elizabeth Taylor as youngest sister Amy), and the 1994 version starring Winona Ryder.

The musical has a book by Allan Knee, lyrics by Mindi Dickstein, and music by Jason Howland. This musical adaptation went through many transformations before becoming the version it is now. Book writer Allan Knee has the longest connection to the project. It was his play version of the novel that first attracted TheatreWorksUSA, a producing organization. Knee was approached and asked to develop his adaptation into a musical. The project won a Richard Rodgers development award for its music and lyrics, by Kim Oler and Allison Hubbard respectively. Renewed interest was piqued and a workshop was scheduled for the spring of 2000. Five months before the Boston tryout and a hopeful move to Broadway by the fall, producer Randall L. Wreghitt replaced the songwriting team following the workshop and reading. New writers, composer Jason Howland (who was an original producer and then stepped down) and lyricist Mindi Dickstein, were brought in to completely replace the material. Wreghitt told Newsday he believed Oler and Hubbard “couldn’t take the show where it had to go”. Howland and Dickstein created an entirely new score.

Another workshop, with new music and lyrics, ran at Durham, North Carolina’s Duke University in February of 2001. The hope was to have this new version ready for the same Broadway run in the fall but the business and creative details were not resolved in time. Of the Duke workshop, Theater Previews’ managing director Zannie Moss said,
“We’re expecting that the show will change nightly . . . The focus of the workshop will be to develop and test the new material and to polish the flow of the piece.” (Jones 2001).

With new writers brought on, the musical continued to develop and move toward the tryout date. With a few weeks until opening, the new score, featuring a more present day sound, was championed by the new writers. “We feel it’s a contemporary story, without being overt about it” said lyricist Dickstein. “Just as there are contemporary qualities to the music and the character and story and certainly the lyrics . . . what we always say is that we’re honoring its essence – the spirit of the story, yet also trying to bring out what’s in it that is modern. Alcott was a modern woman” (Jones 2004).

Composer Howland mentioned that in presentations, industry people would comment on the score, saying it wasn’t in the correct period. Howland defended the modernity of the score, saying the sound was to fit the character of Jo, who they saw as a contemporary heroine.

The Broadway production opened at the Virginia Theatre on January 23, 2005. It was directed by Susan H. Schulman, with choreography by Michael Lichtefeld, set design by Derek McLane, costume design by Catherine Zuber, scenic design by Peter Hylenski and lighting design by Kenneth Posner. Starring as Jo was Sutton Foster, fresh off her Tony award winning performance as the title character in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. The musical opened to relatively lukewarm reviews. Most critics recognized the performance of a musical theatre favorite Foster, leading the cast with her star power.
Interestingly, most critics found the music and lyrics the most objectionable part of the production. Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* called the score “brisk, sprightly and forgettable” and the lyrics were “largely so generic they could slide right into a variety of different musicals” (Brantley). Another critic, John Simon in *New York Magazine*, echoed Brantley in regards to the music, saying it gave “mediocrity a bad name, trudging at best” and adding that Knee’s adaption was little more than a skeleton of a script, asking “where is the flesh?” (Simon). For *Talkin’ Broadway*, reviewer Matthew Murray stated “why the authors opted for such run-of-the-mill writing to bring to life such a flavorful book is never clear” (Murray).

Other reviews focused on the broad and quick nature of the storytelling, pointing out that while most memorable moments of the novel are seen on stage, the general characteristics of the sisters are also generic and superficial. *Little Women* closed on May 22, 2005 after 137 performances and a national tour followed.

The story of the four March sisters, their loving mother and the men they love is an enduring classic piece of American literature. Louisa May Alcott created a story of “domestic realism” that teaches children that everyone has a unique self and that in growing up passions are not lost, but they mature and can be matched in partnership with another. Young women especially can see themselves in each of the sisters, in either their desire for finery, romantic love, or to be noticed for their drive or artistic endeavors.
Friday, April 28

Today was our first production meeting. Melissa Rosenberger, our director, presented some of her initial thoughts on the story and with the concepts she connected to in the script. Some of the more prevalent words she gave to the design team had to do with home, change, the seasons, and family.

Thursday, May 4

Today’s meeting included some discussion about the number of ensemble members that could potentially be cast. While the script calls for as few as 6 it could have as many as 24. Thankfully that was deemed too many by Nick Wayne, the musical director, and Rosenberger. Soon they’ll have a better sense of what the production needs vocally. The director also was going to decide how to cast the characters in the “Operatic tragedy” and if they will be, as in the original Broadway version, played by the actors playing the March family or if they will be ensemble members. The chorus also appears at the Moffat Ball as party-goers and some (if not all) could be ice skaters at the pond.

Hearing Rosenberger speak about the idea of seasons and seeing evidence of the changing of seasons throughout the musical, I got the idea that the sisters could each represent one of the four seasons. This could inform color choices mostly and correlate
to each of their personalities and character traits, as well as help show how they may
mature. For instance, the character of Jo is so practical and boyish, so perhaps she’s an
‘autumn’ whereas Amy, who wants stylish things, would want brighter more summery
hued clothes.

We also talked about how to play with silhouettes and how true to the period we
should be without becoming what a modern audience would think of as ridiculous;
posing the question of “how much hoop is too much hoop?” The size of the stage also
has to be considered if up to 14 women are waltzing in ball gowns. We discussed
trimming down the skirts maybe and keeping the silhouette more modest when at home.

Tuesday, May 23

This was our last production meeting before the summer break. Set designer Erin
Wegleitner presented a rough model. We talked about the need for doorways and stairs
that could allow a hoop-skirted actor to walk through with ease.

I presented research, photographs and illustrations from the 1850s and 60s,
primarily of portraits and a few images of people in ice-skating clothing and outerwear. I
also showed some examples of Civil War era reproduction fabric prints to give an idea of
the color palette and patterns I am considering for the costumes. I voiced my idea of the
women representing an individual season and the director responded well to it. We
talked about the wear of the March’s clothes also, that they would be more homespun and
worn, though not shabby.
Friday, June 30

I spent the day in Concord, Massachusetts learning more about Louisa May Alcott. I saw her home, Orchard House, and where she is buried (Appendices Figure X and Y). My mother and I took the tour of the home and spent time walking the grounds. Our tour took about an hour and we were shown the entire house. Thinking back to conversations about doorways and how much space people might take up I was struck at how small everything was. The house had narrow doorways and small sets of steps. Artwork from the youngest daughter, May was arranged all over the house, some that was even on walls and trim around the windows, as she was encouraged to draw on any surface as a child. Highlights were a trunk of clothes that the sisters used for putting on plays and the oldest sister Anna’s handmade wedding dress. It was a very simple light grey silk skirt and bodice with velvet binding on the bodice and very small glass black buttons. Afterward I asked if there had been another visitor who had been asking a lot of questions, knowing Erin Wegleitner had already visited weeks earlier. They told us they’ve had a few guests asking very specific questions and that most were students writing papers or doing research projects. Unfortunately we weren’t allowed to take photos but their Facebook page often posts pictures of the interiors. We then drove to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery where Louisa May Alcott is buried in a section called Author’s Ridge, near Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Traditionally people leave something there; we left a penny and a pen (Appendices Figure Z).
Wednesday, August 16

At this morning’s production meeting we talked over the upcoming schedule. It was the first meeting back from the summer break with the production team. I had a stack of pencil drawings to show to the design team. I was very excited to share them. This summer I’d experimented with using brown paper instead of white for renderings and liked it a lot.

I asked the director to consider the scene after Beth dies. Historically everyone would likely be in black, something I’d support costuming but with time and budget constraints was hoping to steer away from. She thought that the solemn mood could be conveyed in other ways and as long as they weren’t dressed in bright, cheerful colors, but maybe subdued with a black or dark shawl, it wouldn’t be necessary.

While I was on campus I stopped into the costume shop and met the new Costume Shop manager, Scott Anderson. We talked briefly about the designs and he commented that “you’re not allowed to build everything just because it’s your thesis” which I know is a point David McCarl, my advisor, wanted to make to me. I don’t think there are an unrealistic amount of things we would build. There are not very many shows set in this time period so the options of things to pull might be relatively limited. I know, too, that part of the process is finding what can be pulled and how well I can use what we’ve already got.
Monday, August 21

Today was the first day of classes. Though I come into the shop officially tomorrow, I talked over designs and potential builds (constructing new costumes) for the costume shop with Anderson, the new shop manager. I had made a list from the costume plot I’d made after reading the script that included what pieces might be pulled, bought or made. I was asked “isn’t that my job?” by Anderson. I didn’t think it was but I wasn’t sure if that was my impression from my “one-woman-shop” designer/manager/cutter/stitcher mindset.

I asked the director if she had a strong opinion about whether or not to corset the women – her initial thought was no, so that means the bodices will need structure on the insides for support in order to achieve the period silhouette. Until there is a cast list we’re waiting to get started.

Tuesday, August 22

Auditions took place yesterday and now there is a cast list and we can begin draping costumes. I had earlier made a list of costume pieces for the show and I used that list to begin pulling a few items, primarily vests for the men. This evening I presented my renderings to the cast at their first meeting and explained a little of the direction the costumes.

One major change from yesterday was that the director does in fact want corsets. Since the corsets we have in stock create an incorrect silhouette for this specific time period this means we’ll be building new corsets from scratch.
Friday, Aug 25

The costume shop has made swift progress with mockups. Anderson has already begun draping pieces and it is an interesting feeling having my ideas executed by someone else.

I met with the director in the costume shop to go over a few of her notes. We went over her ideas for the Operatic Tragedy. She was first saying she wanted pieces of the ‘actors’ to be left onstage for the sisters to then pick up after transitioning back to the attic. After discussing it, she decided to instead have the players be a separate group and that they keep all their costume pieces. The Marchs will have their own set of play clothes in the attic that would hearken back to what the players had.

She also said that she does in fact want to see ice skates during the winter scene. They will not be worn by those dancing (or, “skating”) but will be used as the characters are seen putting on skates or slinging them over their shoulders. This sounds like a perfect thing to talk about in a production meeting, as they would likely be made from wood and maybe leather-like materials. A costumes/scene shop/props collaboration sounds a likely solution.

Rosenberger also has chosen where she wants to place the ensemble members in extra scenes. Four of them will cross the stage at the opening scene as New Yorkers passing by and entering the boarding house. Costumes for this will most likely be pulled from stock. The other four will be beach goers when Jo and Marmee take Beth to Cape Cod.
Friday, August 25

I ended today very frustrated. After everyone had left for the day, the shop manager called me to his office and asked how I was feeling about the show. I told him I was pleased with the progress and he remarked how there are only a few things left to be draped. I asked if there might be a project that hasn’t been begun that I could work on, start to finish. He very plainly said no. This seemed odd to me and while I’m the designer on the show, I’m also a stitcher and graduate assistant who is expected to stitch and work on the shows in the shop. I’d also love another construction piece to put in my portfolio and, thinking this might be one of the last chances I could have as a grad student to do that, I asked again. I was told it is my job to “worry about other things.” I know one of the lessons I’m learning in this process is to allow others to execute my designs and not rely only on myself, but I’m also a stitcher who is building a portfolio. I left for the day a little dejected.

Saturday, August 27

This weekend I purchased fabric for the show. Anderson came along so that he could see S. R. Harris, the fabric warehouse in the Twin Cities. It’s a great resource to have in the area.

I realize Anderson was trying to be helpful but there were times when I didn’t need the assistance or distraction and in this instance the help actually slowed my shopping down and was more stressful. Fabric shopping for me involves a lot of
browsing, especially for this show because I haven’t looked at this store for many cotton prints and that was primarily what I was looking for. I’m also not accustomed to having someone along who had their own opinions. Suggestions were welcome, criticism or being chastised to “focus” wasn’t. Since I chose to go on the weekend and the time was mine, I strove for efficiency but was fine with taking whatever time I needed. I could tell that Anderson was ready to be done.

Also, knowing he was coming along and having draped nearly all the designs so far, I didn’t make a list of yardage estimates before we left, something I’m used to doing when shopping alone, and in an effort not to do everything myself, didn’t do before we arrived.

I think soon I will need to talk with my advisor about what my responsibilities actually are and what is expected of me. I don’t want to come to the end of the project and find out I was causing problems by being either too involved and not “sharing with the class” or too hands off and aloof or unprepared. Right now that is my biggest frustration.

Monday, August 28

Today was a day full of fittings. All of the women came in for 15 minutes for corset fittings. The muslin mock up was pinned to fit them and Anderson marked the new seamlines. During the first fitting I watched Anderson pin the seams and by the second or third girl I was doing most of the pinning as Anderson began making the adjustments on the pattern pieces.
I also saw Matthew Sather, Gary DuCharme, and Billy Gleason and fit the pieces I’d pulled for them. Sather and Gleason each begin the show as part of the “Operatic Tragedy” and I found doublets and breeches in the Elizabethan section of stock for them. I’ll also add dramatic cloaks, hats, boots and hose. On these actors I fit pieces of their more formal costumes too. DuCharme’s costumes were pieces he’d worn this summer during Highland Summer Theatre and are from a slightly earlier time period, with more fullness in the sleeves and back than a 1860s coat. For the younger men I might need to take McCarl up on his offer to build them slimmer coats. I’ve sought McCarl’s help for seeing the differences in cut of the menswear, since much of our stock is either too early or too contemporary. I’ll also look for some sources online to perhaps purchase a coat.

Tuesday, August 29

Today I spent most of the morning pulling pieces for the ensemble members for the skating scene and twice I was asked if I needed help. I don’t need someone standing there as I pull pants but I don’t want to seem like I’m not accepting assistance if I need it. Later, I brought an armful of things down to the shop and asked someone to help me bring the rest. That time, I did need the help.

The afternoon was full of fittings again, this time with members of the ensemble and was spent determining what they will wear as children at the skating pond in one of the winter scenes. All of these pieces were pulled from stock and I wanted them to appear very homespun and rustic. I was having fun with the female actors as they were
interested in helping me match blouses to skirts and capes to hats and gloves. I could tell they were excited to have some input.

At the first fitting of the day, Anderson was more involved but as the day progressed and he was more focused on corset pieces, I continued on without him. The pieces weren’t complicated, most of them being simple alterations, and I was confident in fitting them alone.

Some of the women who came in today asked me about hair styles. I intend to collect a few research images for them and email them some examples. The popular hairstyles were essentially low buns, gathered into braids or twists with a center part. As of now, I’m only planning on using a wig on Alexis Vencill as Jo.

Wednesday, August 30

Last week my advisor was helping me in the costume stock locate dresses that were built for previous productions that might have a wide enough skirt to fit over a hoop skirt. I separated them and I brought them down today to make sure they would fit. Two dresses, each a soft pink color, could fit into the color scheme well. And while I want these dresses to contrast the party dresses of Jo and Meg, the two dresses (from Les Misérables, I believe) are perhaps too dark. I’m also not a fan of the fabric overlays – both have an iridescent polyester sheen to them. After placing them over the hoop, Anderson asked if they were going in the show. I expressed that I’m not sure they fit in with the others and I was told that I have to make them work because “we’re not building anything else.”
Is that a decision I would get to make? If another designer were to look through stock and, after exhausting the other options because what was available wasn’t fitting with the overall aesthetic, wouldn’t it be up to the designer to ask for another dress to be made? I realize another party dress wasn’t in the original build list and there is much to do but I’m annoyed that I was told it was not an option.

I placed orders today for fabric for Aunt March’s dress. Originally I had designed it with a wide dark blue stripe but I wasn’t finding that color in the proper weight. I ended up finding a taffeta in a green stripe. I don’t have much green in the color palate so I opted for this fabric.

Thursday, August 31

The women were all called in today to fit their corsets. After alterations were made (a few needed a tuck pinched out somewhere) their measurements were retaken and compared to their un-corseted measurements. There was some confusion about whether they would get them in rehearsal by this evening or tomorrow, as a few of the repairs weren’t completed or official labels sewn in. These tasks can be completed tomorrow when they are returned.

Anderson called my attention to one of Meg’s dresses, worn by Ashley D’Lynn Gunn, being worked on by graduate student worker Kristin Fox, and asked if I could see the pleating on the front of the bodice. I said I could and that the silhouette and detail was what I wanted. This was the second time a design choice was questioned based on if it “could be seen from stage”. Yes, I can see it. Yes, that is what I want. I maintain that
details make costumes interesting; they can make costumes into clothing for the actors. Details can assist in establishing period for the show overall, personality for the characters, and visual interest. If I didn’t want a Civil War era seam there, they could all just look like prairie dresses…and I could have pulled those from stock.

The cotton print for Beth’s dress was dyed today. I’m not completely sold on the print still. I had some reservations on Saturday when I bought it. My concern then is that the print is too large but I wanted to see it dyed first before determining if it still fit with what I was envisioning.

Friday, Sept 8

Tonight I watched the rehearsal since I wasn’t able to attend the designer run on Tuesday because I was sick. I brought the hoop skirts for the women and noticed how much that changed their movements. I also made some minor changes in my costume paperwork, mostly regarding when Alexis Vencill as Jo will wear a certain costume piece. I’m changing the order in which she’ll wear a skirt and I’m going to look for a pinafore for her to add for the scene with Aunt March. Depending what I find I might want to build one out of the brown and tan paisley fabric that I bought but haven’t used yet.

Monday, Sept 11

Even though a handful of notes got done today I feel as if I personally got nothing done. After lunch I began by looking through the rack and moving things back into the
dressing room to free up some space on the rack, but there were a handful of other simple alterations that needed still to be done. I volunteered to start doing them just to have them done knowing that all of the constructed items that were ready were already in hand. I chose to build the Bertha collar piece that is getting added to Mikhayla Clausen's dress. I also somehow was tasked with teaching a new student handsewing. I love teaching people the new skill but yet again felt that my time was more valuable in uninterrupted work or more difficult work at the time.

Tuesday, Sept 12

So far this week I feel as if nothing has been accomplished. I know this isn’t so…I’ve had a handful of fittings, alterations are getting done (thankfully more than just labeling things) and builds are moving forward.

I’m having great difficulty with the menswear. I’m wishing I would have anticipated this by just saying I wanted to build the entire ensemble period tail coats. Finding formalwear that will pass for the correct time period is proving a bigger challenge than I thought it would. On top of that, I realized I’d fit the wrong style vest on most of the men for the Moffat ball scene. More accurately I should have them in lower cut vests. A dig through the formal vests box was unsuccessful. I want them in colored vests, otherwise I fear they’ll look like waiters. I asked for David McCarl’s help in identifying a few tail coats I’d pulled today but of the 5 only one was deemed passable. Of the vests in the box, only perhaps two are period looking. I’ll do another sweep in the regular vests and the period vests to see if I can find more.
Wednesday, September 13

Today I had a number of disappointments and I’m beginning to feel like I have no control anymore. I’m losing my trust in Anderson. He informed me that there isn’t enough plaid fabric for Jo’s party dress bodice and then later the wedding bodice (each made of the same fabric). I was annoyed since he was the one who calculated yardage and frustrated that he wasn’t planning on attempting to match the plaids until I specifically asked him to. Who doesn’t match plaids?! Later in the day he said there isn’t enough fabric for the lining of Jo’s coat.

There were a few more instances of contention in the shop today too. Anderson asked me what I wanted Jo’s coat collar to be made of and first I suggested using the same fabric as the lining, a contrasting rust color. He told me he thought that was “a mistake”, seeming like he was leading me to choose the fabric he wanted to use. Another instance, Cam Pedersen, while working on the dress he was building, asked if using white thread on a yellow fabric would work. As I nodded my head, Anderson told him to use yellow.

Fittings were scheduled for the afternoon. Billy Gleason was fit in the tail coat that McCarl is building. I joked about how I regret not having the shop building the ensemble men coats also. I fit Lydia Prior in her blue dress, which was great since the other women I’d tried some of the party dresses on needed far more adjusting. Seeing the dress on a body improved my opinion of it. There are more important things to worry about!
Thursday, Sept 14

Today I felt as if we accomplished a lot and I was happy with my own work pace. Anderson said he was starting to feel sick and I offered to assist in transferring fitting notes from the mockups to the paper patterns. I ended up altering the last 3 patterns and cut out 2 of them. I handed the projects off decided to move forward on other alterations. Most of the day I was supervising workers on their projects as I worked on my own and I liked having them come directly to me for instructions. I was also having activity credit students prep projects for me to take over, like ripping seams or removing trim, to have another perhaps more skilled person take over on the next step.

Sunday, Sept 17

I came in today to cut and stitch the bodice for Aunt March, played by Mikhayla Clausen. I had volunteered to supervise a student group using the costume shop and stock room as a set for a film shoot so while I was in the shop I wanted to be working. I chose to cut the bodice pieces on the bias and have the front and back stripes form a chevron. I also wanted the stripes to match as much as possible so I cut the princess seams (long vertical seams used to shape rather than using darts) along the stripes. I chose to recut the flatlining (fabric used to back the outer fabric and add weight) of the sleeves, which had been done a few days ago in the shop but against the green of the bodice I decided the fabric under the white semi-sheer paisley wasn’t matching the way I had hoped it would. So I chose to line it with a solid white cotton.
I also put together an extra blouse for Jo. I had fit a white blouse that had been in *The King and I* and I pulled it from stock for Alexis Vencill. While I plan on using that first blouse, I needed another blouse that wasn’t quite as fancy for earlier in the musical when Jo goes ice skating. It is ready for a fitting tomorrow.

Monday, Sept 18

All of the builds were fit on the women today. Fittings, while exciting, are always somewhat stressful. This show especially in fittings, so far, has also been stressful. Most of the time, I enjoy having time to talk to the actors about their rehearsal experience, things they’ve discovered about their movement and their character, and how I can help them in creating their characters. With these fittings, Anderson has made them tense. At the end of the day I regret not inviting McCarl into the fittings as he offered. At times, I felt uncomfortable making design comments, thinking they would be ignored or rejected.

In the afternoon today I received word that the publicity photos have been moved up an entire day. This pushed forward many notes in order to get them done by tomorrow at the end of the day.

After all the other workers had left the shop, Anderson addressed me and asked for me to stop “bypassing him”. I asked him to clarify what he meant, and if he had examples. He mentioned that he thought I was doing this “in fittings and with students” and that “there are notes that aren’t even in the book” (the book of fitting notes from which we assign tasks). I replied that if that is so, it’s an oversight on my part. I’m not purposefully keeping notes from people. Thinking back, what I could have stated was
that anything I’ve done that might seem like bypassing was in service of getting the show done or what I felt was a design choice and therefore could be made on my own. If it is with a student, perhaps he was referring to how I might have instructed a shop worker to do a note in the way I’d like it done…and in that case I’m also a grad student stitcher who can assign tasks or explain instructions confidently and ask that it be done a certain way. It was just another example of what my place actually has been during this build process. I wear multiple hats, primarily as the designer, and that hat, in my opinion, supersedes shop manager in this instance. And while I’m confident in all aspects of designing, shop managing and stitching, I’m growing more accustomed to having a person there to support my decisions as the cutter/draper/shop supervisor. So far I don’t feel very supported.

Tuesday, Sept 19

Today was an immensely productive day! The dresses that had been chosen for the publicity shots, one look each for the girls and Marmee, were nearly complete, or far enough along that the backs could be pinned closed or hems hidden by their poses. I worked in the shop on a few notes until the actors were called for photos. Anderson and I got them into costumes, pinning where necessary and he took notes of what still needed to be adjusted on those pieces.
Thursday, Sept 21

Builds progressed nicely yesterday and today. I personally feel as though I accomplished a lot today, mostly completing a handful of alterations that had yet to be touched. Many of them were relatively simple notes but complicated pieces, like on the costumes for the “Operatic Tragedy” scene, which are constructed much differently than our skirts and bodices.

I attended the run tonight and worked on my costume plot to discover anything I’ve missed. I made notes during the rehearsal for things I still need to pull, mostly accessories and outerwear and shoes.

Monday, September 25

Watching first dress rehearsal last night I took many notes for the shop. I had questions for the director that were addressed during the performance. I had a handful of notes for actors and wardrobe. Anderson asked me at about 10:30 how long I thought it would take me to get through my notes because he had been working on them since 7 AM this morning. He was checking them off from the top to the bottom. By the time shop workers came in we got through to the finishing notes that I took. At some point it was actually more difficult to explain a finishing note or a trimming note to a student who had no idea what I wanted and it was far easier for me to be left to finish the garments. Anderson kept trying to get me to hand off these tasks but I felt as if they were rather exclusive to the designer. Earlier in the day he made it seem as if after lunch I would
begin working on *The Aeneid*. There was no way I was going to be free to work on *The Aeneid* by the afternoon.

While watching tonight’s second dress rehearsal I was frustrated to find that a handful of notes that I was assured were done were not done. There were still several petticoats that were too long despite them being on the work notes list.

It's been nice having the wardrobe crew in before call to accomplish a few simple tasks that haven’t been able to do yet, such as pulling T-shirts and tights for the show. Tonight after things were checked in in the dressing rooms I supervised them in labeling tights for the women. Wardrobe crew had asked for a bit more time after the rehearsal to run a quick change. After the director choreographed the curtain call, I was able to oversee the quick change with Vencill from her first outfit into her party bodice and skirt. Taking input from the wardrobe crew members we determined that some of the closures needed to be changed to something easier to fasten.

Wednesday, Sept 27

I feel like the show is finally done. I spent time today putting away the extra items and notions I’d pulled and had scattered around the shop. Later I began working on the note I’d taken last night. One of Ashley Ziegler’s hems was still not laying correctly and I wanted to take up the length while adding some more weight to the bottom. I then checked in with wardrobe crew as they arrived and gave them a few dressing notes before leaving to get dinner before the Corporate Preview.
I wasn’t anticipating taking notes during the show tonight but I did. Two notes in particular were notes I’d taken last night and passed along to the shop to be done in the morning. The first, Jo’s coat, was longer in the front on one side and I was told when I came into the shop that it was because the buttons had been sewn on incorrectly, causing the unevenness. Buttons I’d sewn on at the end of the day yesterday. After examining the jacket after the show tonight, the buttons were not sewn on wrong, but instead the jacket center fronts were off by 2 inches.

The second of the notes was a gapping sleeve placket that I had also requested to be addressed and it hadn’t been. I realized that perhaps there was a miscommunication about where snaps needed to be added, and my annoyance might be misplaced if the placement or wording wasn’t clear.

I stayed to finish these notes until security came to lock up. Two members of the wardrobe crew offered very graciously to stay a bit longer after their check out was over to help me rip a few seams and press the pieces I altered. I left feeling frustrated. I realize I have problems with control and allowing people to do things and not only relying on myself but when things aren’t done the way I want them, it seems at times the only way to get them done properly is to do them myself.

Aside from these issues today, I’ve very pleased with the show. Tuesday night I wasn’t taking as many notes and found myself just enjoying the show. Watching the performances has endeared me toward the script, though I have my own opinions on the weaknesses of the adaptation itself. It helped having an audience too, I believe and I liked seeing the show with friends who have been working on the show in the shop.
alongside me. I’m to the point that I’m just proud of everything—the designs, the people who worked on it, the actors and technicians, all of it. I can’t wait to have my family see it this weekend.

Saturday, September 30

Photocall was held tonight after the run. A miscommunication caused the call to start late and wardrobe crew member Nat Vorel to step in and be the one taking pictures. Cameron Pederson, the student who designed the wigs for Jo, was also there to take pictures of the wigs being worn. The list of photos hadn’t been shared with me and I requested additional pictures and adjusted the composition to show the costume better. Vorel shot from many angles and was able to get some good close ups.

Thursday, October 6

Tonight we had our Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival response after the show. Unfortunately the response for me wasn’t as constructive as I was hoping it would be. Firstly, the dialogue was much more of a discussion than a response, which is different than most KCACTF responses I’ve had. It was odd that she first asked the designers to speak a bit about our process and then moved on. Some of the things the responder brought up were things we’d addressed in technical rehearsals, such as getting Amy wet after she falls through the ice. She commented that she could tell Jo was wearing a wig in the first act, though the second act up-do was more believable.
After the large group discussion, I asked her personally, as someone who has designed in the theatres here before, if she perceived certain details or if they were lost. She pointed out that the Ted Paul is difficult to see many things, though she was seated up closer and liked the things she saw. She complimented Beth’s dress and Jo’s second act costumes.

Sunday, October 8

After the show closed this evening, strike took place. I led the wardrobe crew and a few additional people assigned to help. I enjoyed having more assistants since there was a lot of laundry to sort and many things to hand wash and organize. At the beginning of the production process we learned that the actors might be asked to participate in events throughout the season celebrating the 150 of the university’s existence. We kept some of the dresses aside in case those might be needed for any upcoming sesquicentennial events.
This chapter is the costume designer's analysis after closing the production of *Little Women*. It will focus on the implementation of initial design ideas based on the analysis of the script that was addressed in Chapter 1.

One of the first elements of the script the designer saw as important was the relationship of the four March sisters. Their bond to each other and to their mother was an especially crucial aspect of the production. As the characters are introduced, there is an unusual and special connection in this family. During the years surrounding the Civil War, the little women grow up, grow apart, and after returning home find that family is their strongest bond. Jo uses these experiences and captures them in the great novel she always wished to write.

Early in the design process, the costume designer wanted to create a color palette that coordinated within the family and that reflected the March’s humble situation. After listening to director Melissa Rosenberger express that seasons and change were inspirational words to her for this production, the designer developed color schemes for each of the four sisters that would represent a season. Jo, whose status changes from boyish girl to independent women, was Autumn. A palate of tans, golds, and oranges suited the practical yet professional young woman she became. Meg, romantic, feminine and sweet, was Spring. Her costumes featured delicate floral prints in pinks and purple.
When she put on a dress for a party it had purple stripes with a soft ruffle and rose. The youngest Amy; vain, impatient, and prone to tantrums was Summer, in warm yellow, peach and pinks. Later when she arrives home after a long absence and now a lady of higher social standing, her dress was a deeper magenta. Lastly Beth, the frail, demure and delicate sister, was constant in her Winter blue dress. Marmee, the girls’ mother, had two costumes. The first was a dark blue floral and the second was a light green floral. Considering the themes outlined in early production meetings, the designer chose colors and patterns that would complement each character according to her analysis. While the designer felt strongly about assigning seasonal colors to the sisters, to an audience the choices might have merely helped differentiate between characters rather than communicate the designer’s concept.

Fabrics for the Marches while at home were primarily cotton prints. The designer intended these simpler fabrics to make the family seem humbler in status then their wealthy relative, Aunt March. The dresses for the party on the ensemble women were satins and shinier fabrics and more elaborately decorated than the matte silks on Meg and Jo.

A consideration with the Marches, and Jo especially, was to economize the amount of different looks and the times a character might change clothes. For Jo, the designer wanted to show that Jo has matured since moving to New York and finding the success she longed for. She entered the New York boarding house in new clothes, more tailored and almost masculine. When she returned home, she kept parts of her new clothes and paired them with a skirt seen in the first act, combining her new self with her
comfortable memories. The designer wanted to assist the visual passage of time within the production while still communicating the lower middle class status of the Marchs.

Alterations to the original designs occurred throughout the process. In some instances, this was due to necessity or practicality. Some of the designs were flexible because the designer anticipated that the costumes would likely be pulled from existing stock, as with the costumes for the “Operatic Tragedy”. Though a red doublet was rendered for the hero Roderigo, matching gold doublets were found in stock for the two actors. Another significant change was the dark navy striped fabric intended for Aunt March. When no similar reasonably priced fabric was found, the designer purchased green striped fabric instead.

Using costume pieces from the costume stock available was necessary for a show in this time period. Knowing that very few plays are set in this time period, on the first pass through the stock, only a few specific pieces were found. It became evident that a number of pieces would need to be altered in a way to make them seem more appropriate to the 1860s. For this, the suggestions of the designer’s advisor were invaluable. Some of these changes were as simple as adding a hoop skirt underneath and refitting the bodice on a new actor. Costumes from several shows in surrounding time periods, such as A Christmas Carol, Quilters and Les Miserables, set closer to the 1830s and 40s, were pulled and altered to fit believably into the world of Little Women. Four dresses in particular were needed for the party scene for the ensemble. Three were found easily with a wide enough skirt that could accommodate the hoop (which were also found in stock) and fit nicely into the aesthetic of the rest of the production. Two more were
pulled and it took some convincing for the designer to consider using either of them because of the type of fabric they were made from. However, after seeing them and fitting them on the actor, the dress worked and looked better than originally thought.

For the same scene, the women’s partners needed to be in formal menswear. These jackets were going to be pulled from stock from the beginning, the designer not realizing the minute details in differences of the cut of formal tails throughout the years. Also, with the sizes needed to fit the actors, the pieces found in stock and the modern cuts of the jackets proved limiting. The designer ultimately chose to use jackets that were as neutral as possible to fit the actor, also realizing that more people will be looking at the women.

One of the biggest challenges for the designer was understanding the scale of the theatre and what amount of detail could be clearly seen from the audience. As a designer who enjoys very small, even nearly undetectable details, it proved difficult to forego small and delicate minutiae in favor of larger and more pronounced statements. Buttons that would be perhaps more appropriate for the period up close would need to be larger or in a higher contrast of color in order to read from many rows away. This was most evident on costumes for Meg. Three pieces were constructed and made out of white cotton with small purple print. Small pleats on the bodices were edged in lace to make the seams more pronounced, though under lights she looked nearly entirely white. In technical rehearsals, the designer replaced the matching skirt for a darker skirt in one scene and added a purple sash for the last. This production was the second time for the
designer creating costumes for this large of a theatre and some of the small details on costumes were indeed lost to many of the audience. It is a lesson still being learned.

Another significant challenge was communicating as a designer to the costume shop. The designer later recognized that it was sometimes difficult to accept assistance from those around her in the shop. When she felt the assistance offered wasn’t executing her vision, she became frustrated that minutia was being overlooked or changed. On the other side, she came to realize that the designer didn’t realize that the help being offered from her advisor was in her best interest to accept. He was there to be an advocate for her vision and her right to the design choices when communicating to the shop manager and she didn’t make use of his of presence in fittings or in the shop as often as she could have.

One personal touch the designer wanted to incorporate early on involved knitted and crocheted items. The first was a knit garment for the character Beth. Preliminary research produced images of Civil War era women wearing knit shawls that were long and narrow in the front, tied behind the back to allow free motion. After more investigation, a pattern transcribed from a popular publication in 1860, a Godey’s Ladies Book, was found and the designer knit the shawl for Beth. The other piece was a crocheted snood for Marmee, made by the designer’s mother.

A few late, personal discoveries were made in the process as well. The first was in collaboration with the director specifically. After taking fit and design notes in the technical rehearsals, the designer began to see opportunities for ways to better integrate the costumes into the dramatic action, small moments where a costume piece could
maybe help inspire an acting choice. An onstage costume change, suggested in an earlier production meeting to speed another larger costume change for Jo, featured Marmee helping Jo out of her party dress, and so she wasn’t walking around the cold house only in her underwear, the designer suggested a shawl be given to Jo by Marmee. Watching that scene, the designer suggested to the director if Jo could use the shawl to get the idea for her next story by placing it over her head, mimicking the “madwoman in the attic” she was writing about. The designer also proposed that when Marmee comes to the attic after Beth’s death, she could be holding Beth’s shawl, as if she were putting it away. The director was open to each of these ideas and gave the notes for the actors.

The second discovery was in connection to the story of Jo March. After seeing the production through the technical rehearsals and attending many of the performances, a thought came to the designer from one of the earliest production meetings. The director, while giving the design team some of her first concepts, discussed how in reading a story like this that people will gravitate toward one of the characters, seeing themselves in a member of the story. A reader or audience member might be connecting that type of person to someone in their own life, a sister, or their mother or perhaps be identifying themselves as a “Meg”, a “Marmee” or a “Jo.” The designer reflected on Jo’s sentiment of following her passion and her desire to be noticed for her uniqueness and fire and connected to the designer’s own discipline. This work specifically, and the culmination of the past 3 years of graduate study, combines all aspects of what the designer has learned into art. Art is an interesting form of expression and theater especially in its need for an audience. This production is in one way for the purpose of
entertaining an audience. It is also simultaneously a very personal artistic expression for
the designer in more than just wanting to make beautiful clothes, because that doesn’t
require an audience. By collaborating not only with other designers but also organizing
the combined talents and research into the telling of the story, this channels the designer’s
passion in a different way.

At the beginning of the design process, and as laid out in Chapter 1, the designer
identified what the costumes for this production were to achieve Costumes were to
communicate personality, relationships and social status. They would help establish the
time period of the production, assist in the passage of time and evolve with the
characters’ journeys. Most costumes were to be realistic and functional while others, as
with the Operatic Tragedy, were more fantastical.

Overall the designer was pleased with the overall process and execution of the
design. Collaboration, interpersonal communication, research and rendering methods and
personal reflection were all lessons learned in this process. The end result was as
accurate a representation of the designer’s vision as possible and the creative
achievement was considered a success.
CHAPTER 5

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter includes a discussion of the designer's comprehensive experiences and training that assisted her in the design process for the production of Little Women. It will highlight the period of study at Minnesota State University, Mankato and professional experiences before and during her time in graduate school.

Throughout her time in the MFA program, Kimball has taken several classes that assisted her in the creation of the design for Little Women. She learned about script and character analysis and elements of design composition in Costume Design her first semester. In this class, the designer was assigned weekly figure drawings to improve her sketching skills in addition to designing and presenting renderings.

That same semester she also was in the Dramaturgy class where in depth historical research was conducted to support two hypothetical productions. She chose to research Hello, Dolly! and Mary Zimmerman’s Metamorphoses and compiled educational materials for the class who acted as future audiences or potential cast members. In this course, the designer connected the historical time period to the script, learned new methods of research and presentation styles and responsibilities expected of a dramaturg.

The following semester, the designer was registered for Director/Designer Communication Seminar, a course taught by Dr. Paul J. Hustoles, which emphasized the
collaborative process within a production. Along with other graduate students, Kimball read books pertaining to communication theory, both in the outside business world and within the world of theatre. As part of the class, she and seven others produced work (including designs, dramaturgical packets and critical responses) for a total of eight different productions, fulfilling in a different position for each show. With each work, she was responsible for supplying or adhering to the director’s chosen artistic style and concept. This gave her the opportunity to learn more about the other design areas in a practical way and alongside other unrealized designs from other design and directing students.

This semester also included the course Drawing and Rendering. In this class, professors David McCarl and John Paul taught many techniques to strengthen and improve drawing skills needed in the production processes of any show. New materials were introduced to her and Kimball had the chance to experiment with different mediums. This class enhanced her rendering skills, a better tool for communicating her ideas as a designer in the future.

An Advanced Makeup class, also taught by David McCarl, exposed Kimball to the world of making molds for simple latex prosthetics as well as better makeup design techniques. The course challenged her in ways of design, having to recreate an animal face on a human face and getting the chance to design a fantasy creature using clay and molded latex appliances.

In the fall semester of 2015, Kimball was enrolled in Theatre Research taught by Matthew Caron. In this course, Kimball learned more about scholarly research, how to
identify and focus topics, finding sources and submitting papers for publication. One of the papers she wrote for this class was submitted and published in an online theatre journal.

She also learned about Scenic Design in the course taught by professor John Paul. She had never drafted previously or needed to provide paint elevations for a set design so these were new experiences. When it came time to build models, Kimball used her knowledge of polymer clay and craft miniatures to create her final model project.

During this semester, she designed the costumes for The Miracle Worker, directed by Matthew Caron as a minor project. This process taught her more about the collaborative design process and she was able to work primarily with other graduate students as the members of the design team.

The later half of the year, she was enrolled in two other Matthew Caron courses, Theatre History I and Theatre Management. Theatre History I covered the broad range of theatre’s origins through the 1600s, covering movements, famous playwrights, actors and historical figures and works of importance in the time periods. As a graduate student, Kimball was periodically given the chance to lead small group discussions with undergraduate classmates, coming up with study questions and guiding the conversation. In Theatre Management, Kimball learned about methods of managing theatre companies, personnel and budgets. The class projects ranged from in-class exercises to larger scale flow charts and the creation of new production companies. Many of these projects included in-class presentations as well and Kimball’s ability to create engaging presentations was increased.
In that same semester, Kimball was also in David McCarl’s Costume History class. This survey class began with a study of Egypt, Greek and Roman fashions and followed costume history up to the 20th century. This class helped immensely in Kimball’s understanding of period silhouette and terminology. Taking the Costume History course gave her a historical frame of reference when creating the costumes for the production of Little Women.

In the fall of 2016, Kimball was the costume designer for the production of Frankenstein 1930 at Minnesota State University, Mankato. This production had a dark, more intense concept than the designer had worked on previously. It was an exercise in creative collaboration and involved a specific makeup aesthetic integrated into the design of the show.

Kimball also took Sound Design during the fall which introduced her to the techniques and nuances of sound, not only in relation to theatre productions but also in everyday life. Part of the class was focused on simply noticing sounds and how they can be subtle or very intentional, what sounds can communicate and how a production can be strengthened and supported with sound and music. Having never taken a class related to sound before, Kimball found this class thought-provoking and informative.

She also chose to take an independent study with advisor David McCarl covering Draping and Tailoring. This class was instrumental in the designer’s process of The Glass Menagerie, a production serving as Kimball’s Major project. In this course, the designer learned different draping and tailoring techniques and draped mock ups for two of the three costume pieces built for The Glass Menagerie in a concentrated and focused
classroom setting. The design concept was vastly different from *Frankenstein 1930*, and the designer had spent time looking through the available costume stock from the 1930s. When it was time to begin pulling costumes for *The Glass Menagerie*, the designer had a better understanding of what was available.

Prior to her experiences at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Kimball had worked in a variety of theatre companies. After receiving her undergraduate degree, she worked as a costume intern at the New London Barn Playhouse in 2011. Experiences that summer season included learning basic millinery, strengthening construction skills, and working on the wardrobe crew for two productions. It established working relationships with costume designers and artistic staff members that are still influential for Kimball. She has returned to the New London Barn Playhouse most recently as a costume designer. Kimball was an intern for nine months at Meadowbrook Theatre in Auburn Hills, Michigan and she developed many sewing skills and was given more responsibility as a cutter and stitcher. She also worked on the wardrobe crew and learned about preparing paperwork for the wardrobe crew members, how to prepare a show backstage and how to work with a wide range of actors.

In the summer of 2015, Kimball worked for Cathy Parrott, the associate designer for Emilio Sosa, on the pre-Broadway production of *On Your Feet* in Chicago, Illinois. Kimball was to assist the local shopper hired for the production, as well as the members of the design team travelling with the show from New York. Kimball's primary task was to handle financial records, receipts, cash withdrawals and deposits, swatching for the designer and returning items not needed for the production as the team bought costumes
for the swings and understudies and added new costumes for new scenes being added
during the process of technical rehearsals. The shopping and organizational skills she
gained through that experience were invaluable.

Outside of the program, Kimball has been working at Bethany Lutheran College
as the costume designer and shop manager since 2012. There she is in charge of all
costume production, including design, shopping, organization, draping, pattern making,
stitching, alterations, paperwork, budgeting and training student workers. This amount of
responsibility grants quite a bit of freedom as the prime decision maker regarding
costumes. From being the sole costume shop member of the production staff, she has
been accustomed to making decisions and working as a single entity, often with little
assistance or with an untrained student workforce. Because of this, she had developed a
very independent mode of operating and a willingness to finish something alone. In the
graduate program at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Kimball has found valuable
opportunities to learn how to better integrate into a costume shop staff and to delegate
tasks to and accept assistance from other students and workers.

Having a body of work from the past several years that include both construction
and design, this designer was able to draw on those experiences to influence the choices
made during the creative process for Little Women. Being at an institution and in a field
that allows one to further skills, develop better ways to communicate and improve how to
healthfully and successfully balance professional and creative fatigue will continue to
inform this designer.
APPENDIX A

COSTUME RENDERINGS
Jo

New York
Act Two

LITTLE WOMEN
Jo
Astonishing

LITTLE WOMEN
Meg

Christmas

Little Women
Beth
Christmas

Little Women
Beth
Christmas
Little Women
Amy

Christmas

LITTLE WOMEN
Aunt March

LITTLE WOMEN
Laurie
Astonishing

Little Women
The Hag
Operatic Tragedy

Little Women
RODERIGO
Operatic Tragedy

LITTLE WOMEN
BRAXTON
Operatic
Tragedy

LITTLE WOMEN
THE TROLL

Operatic Tragedy

LITTLE WOMEN
APPENDIX B

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS
Marmee reads Father’s Letter to her girls  Marmee (Ashley Zeigler), Meg (Ashley D’Lyn Gunn), Jo (Alexis Vencill), Beth (Zoe Hartigan), Amy (Katie Mae Van Deinse)
Aunt March (Mikhayla Clausen) instructs Jo (Alexis Vencill).
The sisters (Alexis Vencill, Zoe Hartigan, Ashley D'Lynn Gunn, Katie Mae Van Deinse) welcome Laurie (Billy Gleason) into their circle.
Meg (Ashley D’Lyn Gunn) and Jo (Alexis Vencill) prepare for the ball with Marmee (Ashley Ziegler), Beth (Zoe Hartigan) and Amy (Katie Mae Van Deinse).
The Hag (Ashley Ziegler), the Troll (Katie Mae Van Deinse) and The Old Knight (Gary Du Charme II) sing during the Operatic Tragedy.
Jo (Alexis Vencill) with Beth (Zoe Hartigan) when she is given Mr. Laurence’s piano.
Jo (Alexis Vencill) and Beth (Zoe Hartigan) fly a kite at the beach.
## Costume Budget Report

**Little Women**  
*Designer: Emily Kimball*

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<td>Mr. Laurence</td>
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Orchard House, Louisa May Alcott’s home, in Concord, MA.
The gravestone of Louisa May Alcott in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery Concord, MA.
WORKS CITED


WORKS CONSULTED


