malvern theatre company

is proud to present our 374th major production

Little Women

The Broadway Musical

Book by Allan Knee

Music by Jason Howland

Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein

Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott

23 August – 7 September 2024

Directed by Alan Burrows

Licensed exclusively by **Music Theatre International (Australasia)**

Synopsis

Louisa May Alcott's beloved story of the adventures of the four March sisters is brought to vivid musical life in *Little Women – The Broadway Musical*. The Civil War is in full swing and the March sisters – Meg, the oldest, a romantic; the spirited and tomboyish Jo; sweet and loving Beth; and irascible, playful Amy – live in Concord, Massachusetts with their Marmee while their father is on the battlefield.

Filled with adventure (both lived and imagined), heartbreak, and a deep sense of hope, their struggle to find their own voices mirrors the growing pains of a young America.

Director's Notes

It is a pleasure to bring to Malvern's stage a musical drawn from Louisa May Alcott's classic 1868-69 semi-autobiographical two-volume novel *Little Women.* The story or book addresses three major themes: domesticity, work and true love, all of them interdependent and each necessary to the achievement of its heroines' individual identities.

I am indebted to my creative team for helping to realise our vision and to the combined efforts of both the Malvern Theatre Company and the Lilydale Athenæum Theatre Company for bringing this production to fruition.

Setting

Set in the home of the four March sisters, Concord Massachusetts and in New York between 1863 and 1865.

About the Playwright, Lyricist and Composer

Little Women – The Broadway Musical

Book by Allan Knee | Music by Jason Howland | Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein
Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott

Allan Knee, Jason Howland and Mindi Dickstein are each respectively an experienced playwright, lyricist and composer, with many works and awards to their names. However, *Little Women – The Broadway Musical* would not be possible without the inspiration of Louisa May Alcott's book of the same name.

Alcott was an American novelist, short story writer and poet best known for writing the novel *Little Women* in 1868 and its sequels *Good Wives* (1869), *Little Men* (1871) and *Jo's Boys* (1886). Raised in New England, Alcott grew up among many well-known intellectuals of the day, including Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau. *Little Women* is loosely based on Alcott's childhood experiences with her three sisters, Abigail, Elizabeth and Anna. The novel was well received at the time and is still popular today among both children and adults. It has been adapted for film, television and the stage many times.

Cast

Jo March	Anna Bearsley
Professor Bhaer	Adam Bianco
Amy March / Troll	Elleni Habibis
Meg March / Clarissa	Liliana Braumberger
Beth March / Rodrigo 2	Emma Venzke
Marmee March / Hag	Megan Coe
Mr Laurence / Knight	Reg Ellery
Laurie Laurence / Rodrigo	Elliot Shute
Aunt March / Mrs Kirk	Julie Arnold
Mr John Brooke / Braxton	John Ninis

Production Team

Director	Alan Burrows
Musical Director	Adam Bianco
Choreographer	Susan Lewis
Stage Manager	Nicholas Opolski
Set Designer	Barry Pearce
Lighting Designer	Deryk Hartwick
Sound Designer	Colin Prohasky
Projection Designer and Painter	Barry Pearce
Set and Props Assistant	Robyn Sawtell
Lighting Operator	Nicholas Ryan
Sound and Special Effects Operator	Colin Prohasky
Dresser	Ann Hubbard
Costume Designers	Dina Mac Namara, Maria Smedes
Props Designer	Margaret Baxter, Andrew Ferguson
Technical Director	Michael Birkett
Set Construction	David Allen, Noel Ellis, Peter Erlanger, John James, Graeme Munro, Max Murray
Production Coordinator	Andrew Ferguson
Program Designer	Janine Evans, Harry McArthur
Program Coordinator	Monica Greenwood
Photography	Lorraine Bell
FOH Manager	Judy Clues
Ticketbox Manager	David Gordon
Ticket Secretary	Kerry Carr



Alan Burrows
Director

Alan has worked for over 50 years in all facets of theatre. This is his twelfth production with Malvern Theatre Company, his last show being *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* in 2022. A multiple award winner, Alan has received awards from the Music Theatre Guild of Victoria for *1776*, the Victorian Drama League for *Educating Rita*, *Noises Off* and *Bette and Joan* and from the Lyrebird Awards for *Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks.*



Susan Lewis
Choreographer

Susan has over 30 years of experience behind her, receiving numerous awards for choreography or direction of shows including *42nd Street*, *A Chorus Line* and *Hot Shoe Shuffle.* Previous Malvern Theatre Company credits include *Ladies in Black* and *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder.* Susan runs *Tappy Feet* adult tap classes, choreographs for *The Time Steppers* and coaches Kindergym.



Adam Bianco
Musical Director & Professor Bhaer

Adam is delighted to undertake the dual roles of Musical Director and performer for this production.

As a musical director his credits include Trinity College and The University of Melbourne's production of *Fame*, Theatreworks and Magnormos' *Dutch Courage* and Catchment Players production of *We Remember Bali Memorial Concert*. Adam has received a Music Theatre Guild of Victoria Judges' Award for his original composition of a new musical titled *The Lane*.

As a performer, Adam has worked with Babirra, CLOC, Windmill Theatre and the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Victoria in such iconic shows as *Anything Goes, Fiddler on the Roof, The Merry Widow, Sweeney Todd, The Sound of Music* and *The Phantom of the Opera.*



Anna Bearsley
Jo March

Anna is thrilled to be making her debut at Malvern Theatre Company. Her previous roles include 'Alice' in *Alice by Heart*, 'Heidi' in *Title of Show*, 'Julie' in *Così*, 'Janet' in *The Drowsy Chaperone* and 'Smee' in *Peter Pan: A Musical Adventure*, which earned her a Music Theatre Guild of Victoria nomination.



Elleni Habibis
Amy March / Troll

This is Elleni's debut role with Malvern Theatre Company. Her favourite previous roles include 'Brigitta Von Trapp' in *The Sound of Music* and 'Maggie Jones' in *42nd Street* as well as working alongside both Victorian Opera and Opera Australia. Elleni is currently studying a Bachelor of Music Performance at the University of Melbourne.



Liliana Braumberger
Meg March / Clarissa

Liliana is a Melbourne performer whose recent highlights include performing in a second season of the comedy musical *Lucky Stiff* with Be You Productions and playing 'Elinor' in *Sense and Sensibility: The Musical* with 24 Carrot Productions. This is her first production with Malvern Theatre Company and is delighted to play Meg.



Emma Venzke
Beth March / Rodrigo 2

Emma graduated from Federation University Arts Academy as the inaugural Project 11 Performing Arts Prize recipient. Her highlight was as 'Dance Captain' / 'Stepmother' in *Into the Woods*. She performed her cabaret piece *Who Could Love A Nerd Like Me* at 10 Act Cabaret and is now excited to make her Malvern Theatre Company debut.



Megan Coe
Marmee March / Hag

Megan has been involved in Melbourne's non-professional theatre community for over 30 years. Her credits include 'Anna' in *The King and I*, 'Nellie Forbush' in *South Pacific*, 'Miss Adelaide' in *Guys & Dolls* and 'Annie Oakley' in *Annie Get Your Gun*. Megan is the recipient of multiple Music Theatre Guild of Victoria and Lyrebird awards.



Reg Ellery
Mr Laurence / Knight

Reg is very happy to be returning to the Malvern Theatre Company, previously playing 'Richard D'Oyly Carte' in *Tarantara! Tarantara!* and 'Mr. Gardiner' in *Mr. Bennett's Bride*. He has performed at Warrandyte Theatre Company in *Visitors, Love Letters* and *The Lady from the Sea* and as 'Headmaster' in *The History Boys* (1812 Theatre).



Elliot Shute
Laurie Laurence / Rodrigo

This is Elliot's second show with Malvern Theatre Company, previously playing 'Patrick' in *Ladies Day*. Past roles include 'The Mad Hatter' in the Australian premiere of *Alice by Heart* (Fab Nobs Theatre Inc) and 'Dennis' in *All Shook Up* (Babirra Music Theatre), earning him a Music Theatre Guild of Victoria Nomination for Supporting Actor.



Julie Arnold
Aunt March / Mrs Kirk

Although debuting in musical theatre, Julie is known more for her acting, having last performed at Malvern Theatre Company as 'Emily Penrose' in *The Lifespan of a Fact*. She has won several acting awards for roles including 'Martha' in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and 'Joan Crawford' in *Bette & Joan*.



John Ninis
Mr John Brooke / Braxton

John is excited to be taking part in his first production with Malvern Theatre Company. Recently he has performed in an eclectic mix of shows, including *Bright Star* by Fab Nobs Theatre Inc, Theatrical's *Dogfight* and *Eurobeat* with PEP Productions. Funnily enough this is his third soldier role in the last year!

Thanks to our Sponsors

Community Bank Malvern East Bendigo Bank

Community Bank Malvern East is a local bank with 23 years history dedicated to servicing the community with personalised service and great banking products. They are committed to remaining in the area with them recently purchasing their premises at 268 Waverley Rd, Malvern East. With more than $5m given back to community groups, they have demonstrated they feed into the prosperity of their community, not off their community. Further details at **bendigobank.com.au/branch/vic/community-bank-malvern-east.**

L'Olivo MALVERN EAST

L'Olivo is a small, family-owned restaurant located at 171 Waverley Rd in Malvern East. In a warm, friendly atmosphere, L'Olivo serves up an array of tasty Mediterranean delicacies including tapas, pastas, pizza and much more. Recommended for a pre or post-show meal, coffee or drink! Visit **lolivo.com.au** for further details or to book.

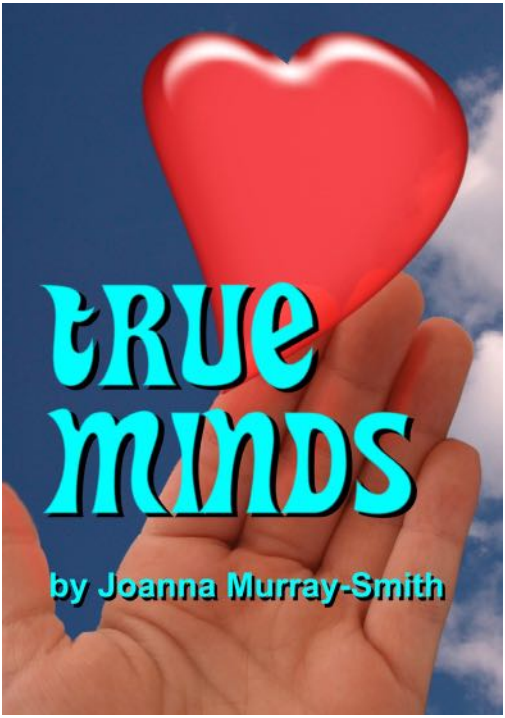
AUV

AUV Real Estate specialises in private sales and property management. They have achieved consistently strong results in the Malvern East area in 2022 and 2023. With both leasing and sales services being offered, they can meet all your needs, no matter the enquiry. Further details at **auvrealestate.com.au.**

Menzies Malvern

For over 20 years Menzies Malvern, a contemporary retirement village, has provided an exceptional lifestyle in the heart of cosmopolitan Melbourne. Live a short stroll from the delights of Malvern's cafes and boutiques while enjoying the peaceful retreat of your beautiful home. Menzies Malvern will enrich your wellbeing with a warm community of like-minded neighbours, resort-style luxuries and thoughtfully designed surrounds. It's your place to live well. Further details at **menziesmalvern.com.au.**

Next at Malvern Theatre Company



True Minds

Directed by Dexter Bourke

25 October – 9 November

Daisy Grayson is the author of a very successful book, which claims that, despite being an old-fashioned notion, 'no man will marry a woman that his mother doesn't approve of'. Tonight, Daisy is set to meet her fiancé's mother, a frightening, fierce, arch-conservative, and hopes to win her approval. But a sudden storm brings unwelcome visitors: her alternative-thinking mother, her Marxist father, and, even worse, her ex-boyfriend, just out of rehab.

True Minds is a fast-talking, frenetically-paced romantic comedy about love and relationships, that explores the area between following the heart and listening to the head, from one of Australia's most popular and successful playwrights.

To book tickets, visit our website at **www.malverntheatre.com.au/book-tickets** or phone 1300 131 552.

Acknowledgements

Malvern Theatre Company acknowledges that we are performing on the traditional land of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri People and offer our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Malvern Theatre Company is very grateful for the support provided by the City of Stonnington.

As an organisation, we take pride in supporting the local volunteer network in the community and the charitable organisations that underpin this important work. As such, we have donated all benefits of the Charity Night performance to the following organisations:

- Ashburton Baptist Church
- Order of the Eastern Star (Box Hill Chapter)
- RSPCA
- The Compassionate Friends Victoria
- The Country Women's Association of Victoria (Umina Branch)

If you are a member of a Volunteer group or a Charitable organisation and would like to raise funds by arranging a group to attend our Charity Night Preview Performance, please contact us at **malverntheatrecompany@gmail.com.**

Calling All Volunteers

Would you like to volunteer at Malvern Theatre? There are many opportunities to be involved. Please visit our website and click on the 'Volunteer' tab to express your interest.

LILYDALE ATHENAEUM THEATRE COMPANY INC

Enjoying the show? Why not catch it again at Lilydale Athenæum Theatre - 14 -30 November. Visit **lilydaleatc.com** to find out more, and to book your tickets.

Proud member of

2024 THE VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE