

## What to expect when I go to the Relaxed Performance of Little Women:

When I come into the theatre, the stage at the front will be covered by a red curtain. This is where the play will take place.

There are many actors in the play I am going to watch. They are all adults, but some play children. A few of the actors will come on stage to introduce themselves and say hello along with Ksenia, who works in the office at MTC. Ksenia will also explain some of the events in the show so I do not get too surprised, and some sounds that I will hear during the show so that I can get used to the volume.

The play I will see is called *Little Women*. It is the story of four sisters growing up and finding their place in the world and celebrating love and family.

The characters will change the clothes they wear during the play to show that it is a different day or event.

When the play starts, it is Christmas 1860 in Concord, Massachusetts. The American Civil War is being fought, and Mr. March is with the army as a Chaplain so the family has not seen him for a long time. Jo and her sisters Meg, Beth, and Amy live in Concord with their mother, who they call Marmee. The family was well-off before the war, but now they do not have very much money. The girls are rehearsing a play that Jo has written.



The main character is Jo March, age 16. Her full name is Josephine, but she does not like when people call her that. She loves writing. Jo has a strong sense of justice. When she is young she has a fiery temper that she harnesses into passion as she grows older. Sometimes Jo will talk to us in the audience.



Meg, short for Margaret, is the oldest March sister. She is 17 at the beginning of the play. Meg remembers what it was like to have more money and longs for that life, but as she grows up she realizes that love and kindness are more important. A few years later, Meg marries John Brooke and has twins.



The third sister, younger than Meg and Jo, aged 15 at the start of the play, is Beth. Beth is very shy and kind and loves to play the piano. She prefers to stay home and care for her family and the neighbours. Jo and Beth have a special connection.



The youngest sister is Amy, age 14 at the start of the play. Amy wants to be an artist and is always trying to make herself beautiful. She is spirited and can be careless or selfish, but grows up to become more thoughtful and sweet.



Mr. Laurence, a stern old gentleman, lives next door in a grand house. His daughter, who loved music, passed away long ago. The first Christmas in the play, his grandson has come to live with him.



The grandson's name is Theodore Laurence, but he asks to be called Laurie for short. Sometimes, Jo calls him Teddy. Laurie becomes a great friend of the March family. He is 16 years old at the beginning of the play.



Marmee is the mother of the March sisters. She teaches her daughters the virtues of helping others but also standing up for themselves and doing what is right. Even though the expectations of society are that the girls should grow up and get married to bring money into the family, Marmee wants them to each follow their dreams instead.



Mr. March returns home partway through the play when he is been injured in the war. He calls his daughters his “little women” and is proud of them when they think of others before themselves and help those around them.



Aunt March is Mr. March's sister and aunt to the four girls. She is wealthy and owns a large house called Plumfield. She expects the girls to marry rich men and move up in society. Early in the play, Jo works as Aunt March's companion, but they do not get along well.



Sallie Gardiner and Annie Moffat are friends of Meg's who come from rich families. They invite Meg to a New Year's party and a ball.



Mr. John Brooke is a young man. He is Laurie's tutor, so he spends a lot of time with his pupil and the March sisters next door. Later in the play, he and Meg get married.



Mrs Kirke is a friend of Marmee's who lives in New York and runs a rooming house there. Jo moves to New York to be a governess to the Kirke children.



Professor Bhaer lives in Mrs Kirke's rooming house and works as a tutor. He used to be a well-known teacher in Berlin but moved to America to make more money to help his family. He is kind and good-natured. He and Jo become friends and eventually fall in love.





The stage will transform to show different locations.

This is the March house.



This is Beth's bedroom in the March house.



This is Plumfield, Aunt March's mansion.



This is the library at the Laurence house.



This is the fancy home where Meg and Jo attend parties.



This is the frozen pond by the March's house.



This is New York.



This is a park in Paris.



## **About Watching the Relaxed Performance**

During the play, there will be bright lights and piano music on the stage. Sometimes the actors yell.

I can close my eyes or cover my ears if anything becomes too bright or loud.

If I need to, I can leave and go to the lobby or one of the quiet rooms on the second floor where I can take a break. A volunteer will help me leave the theatre and come back in when I am ready.

Partway through the play, there will be an intermission. An intermission is a 20-minute break. I can stretch my legs and talk to my friends. I can also use the bathroom in the lobby or sit in a quiet room, if I need to.

I will know the play is starting again when I hear an announcement. I will go to back my seat. The lights will dim, I will stop talking and the play will begin again.

When the play is over, the actors will come on stage as themselves again. Everyone will clap their hands. If the noise is too loud, it is okay to cover my ears. Everyone will leave the theatre at the end of the play in the same way they came in. If I want, I can wait in my seat until the crowd is gone.

The play is a total of 2 hours 45 minutes long including the intermission break.

**Some things I need to know about this *Little Women*:**

There will be some yelling between some of the actors. It is only pretend. I can cover my ears if that makes me feel better.

The lights shining on the stage will change colour throughout the play. They will get brighter and darker. There will always be some lights on in the audience, so I will always be able to see.

There are candles and a fireplace on the stage. They are a special effect, there is no real fire.

Sometimes the characters are in danger, but the actors are always safe. For example:

- When the actors are pretending to go skating, Amy “falls through the ice” which is shown by the actor going through a hole in the stage floor. The actor is actually standing on a small elevator. There might be a loud sound to make us think the ice is breaking, but this is not real.
- Beth gets scarlet fever. In Act 1 the character is very sick, but she gets better. In Act 2 Beth dies. This is all pretend. Scarlet fever was a dangerous disease long ago, but nowadays antibiotics have made it much less threatening. Nobody in the play is really sick, and you will see that the actor playing Beth comes out to take a bow at the end.
- Meg has two babies in the play. You will hear her yelling like she is in pain, but it is all pretend. The babies in the play are actually dolls.

If I have any questions or comments about the play, I can talk with my friends after the play is over.

If I want to learn more about the play, I can look at the [Enrichment Guide](#).

If I have questions, I can contact Ksenia, Royal MTC’s Education and Enrichment Manager by phone at 204 954 6413 or by email at [kbrodamilian@royalmtc.ca](mailto:kbrodamilian@royalmtc.ca).

**Credits:**

These are the people responsible for what you see in the photos in this booklet.

Photos by Leif Norman.

Director: Katie German

Choreographer: Rachel McLaren

Set Designer: Jawon Kang

Costume Designer: Joseph Abetria

Lighting Designer: Hugh Conacher

Meg March: Ava Darrach-Gagnon

Jo March: Bailey Chin

Beth March: Julia Davis

Amy March: Megan Fry

Marmee: Jan Skene

Mr March (Father): Rodrigo Beilfuss

Theodore "Laurie" Laurence: Matthew Fletcher

Mr Laurence: Alex Poch-Golden

John Brooke: Simon Miron

Aunt March: Tracey Nepinak

Professor Freidrich Bhaer: Rodrigo Beilfuss

Sallie Gardiner: Melissa Langdon

Annie Moffat: Calla Adubofour-Poku

Mrs Kirke: Melanie Whyte

Other characters: Tom Keenan

This guide was created by Ksenia Broda-Milian based on past work for Royal MTC by Elena Anciro and Angela Chalmers.