

Embargoed until Thu 5 Oct 2pm

Full Cast Announced for acclaimed stage adaptation of [Little Women](#) – coming to HOME this festive period



- Experienced cast featuring; **Daniel Francis-Swaby** (*Small Axe* (BBC), *On Fleek* (Royal Court) and *Les Blancs* (National Theatre)), **Kacey Ainsworth** (*EastEnders*, *Grantchester* and *Call the Midwife*), **Julia Brown** (BBC's *World on Fire*, *Shetland* and *The Last Kingdom*), and **Susan Twist** (*See No Evil: The Moors Murders*, *Coronation Street*, *The Archers*).
- Acclaimed stage adaptation of literary classic
- Directed by Brigid Larmour (previous acclaim for *The Merchant of Venice* 1936, now enjoying a sold out run at the RSC ahead of a national tour and return to HOME in November)
- **Fri 8 Dec – Sat 23 Dec 2023 Press Night: Tue 12 Dec, 19:30**

HOME are delighted to announce the full cast for *Little Women*, presented in association with Pitlochry Festival Theatre and by arrangement with Lee Dean, coming to HOME Manchester this festive period.

Adapted for stage by screenwriter, novelist and playwright Anne-Marie Casey from Louisa May Alcott's best loved novel of the same name, *Little Women* follows the story of the March family: mother Marmee (**Kacey Ainsworth – *EastEnders*, *Grantchester* and *Call the Midwife***) and her daughters, beautiful Meg (**Jessica Brydges – *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and *Sunshine on Leith* (Pitlochry Festival)**), tomboy Jo (**Rachael McAllister – *To the Bone*, *Brief Encounter*, *Gypsy*, *Noises Off*, and *A Christmas Carol* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre)**), sensitive Beth (**Meg Chaplin – *Sunshine on Leith* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre/Capital Theatres) and *Father Christmas at The Royal Albert Hall* (Goblin Theatre/Royal Albert Hall)**), and spoilt Amy (**Julia Brown – BBC's *World on Fire*, *Shetland*, and *The Last Kingdom* (Netflix)**), as they struggle to survive in New England during the American Civil War.

The family cast are joined by stage and screen actor **Daniel Francis-Swaby** (*Small Axe* (BBC), *Twelfth Night* (Royal Exchange); *On Fleeck* (Royal Court) and *Les Blancs* (National Theatre)) in the leading role of Laurie; TV, radio and stage actor **Susan Twist** (*See No Evil: The Moors Murders*, *Coronation Street* and *The Archers*) as the redoubtable Aunt March, and renowned stage actor **Tom Richardson** (*Abigail's Party* (Classic Theatre/UK Tour); *The Snow Queen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Julius Caesar* (Storyhouse, Chester)) in the contrasting roles of Professor Friedrich Bhaer and John Brooke.

Inspired by Alcott's own experiences of growing up with her three sisters, Casey's adaptation of this literary classic offers an exciting theatrical experience full of laughter, some tears, and a lifting of the spirits.

Little Women is directed by experienced director, producer and dramaturg **Brigid Larmour**, whose 'bold and moving' (WhatsOnStage) *The Merchant of Venice 1936* was a sell-out smash hit at HOME in 2022 and returns to our stage this November after a sell-out season at the RSC.

Reviews of *Little Women* at Pitlochry Festival Theatre, 2022:

The Guardian "Delight for fans of Louisa May Alcott's enduring novel"

The Telegraph "An atmospheric return to an American classic" ★★★★★

The Stage "Refreshes the classic tale" ★★★★★

Creative Team

Director - Brigid Larmour
Assistant Director - Sam Hardie
Set and Costume Designer - Ruari Murchison
Lighting Designer - Kate Bonney
Composer/Sound Designer - Niroshini Thambar
Movement Director - Lucy Glassbrook
Fight Director - Robin Hellier

Cast

Daniel Francis-Swaby as Theodore 'Laurie' Laurence
Jessica Brydges as Meg March
Julia Brown as Amy March
Kacey Ainsworth as Abigail Marmee March
Meg Chaplin as Beth March
Rachael McAllister as Jo March
Susan Twist as Aunt March
Tom Richardson as Professor Friedrich Bhaer and John Brooke.

Listings information

Fri 8 Dec – Sat 23 Dec 2023
Press Night Tue 12 Dec 2023
HOME Manchester
2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester M15 4FN
19:30, 14:00 matinees
Running time: 2 hours 20 minutes (including interval)
Tickets from £13.70
homemcr.org | 0161 200 1500

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For interviews and additional information, please contact Press & Communications Manager, Julia White on julia.white@homemcr.org

Daniel Francis-Swaby as Theodore 'Laurie' Laurence

Theatre credits include: *Going For Gold* (Chelsea Theatre); *Kanye The First* (Hightide); *Twelfth Night* (Royal Exchange); *On Fleek* (Royal Court); *Les Blancs* (National Theatre); *Milk Milk Lemonade* (Ovalhouse); *Der Rosenkavalier* (Glyndebourne); *The History Boys* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Custom/Practice); *White Meat, Dark Meat, Breast or Thigh?* (Off Cut Festival); *Three Little Pigs and Other Twisted Tails* (Tall Tales Theatre Company) and *DNA* (Hull Truck/UK Tour).

Film and TV credits include: *Rumplestiltskin*, *Alex Rider*, *Small Axe*, *4Stories: Tell Me*, *The Overcoat*, *Jus Soli*, *Waking Up*, *Disenchanted*, *The Days Inbetween*, *Loved One* and *Exposed*.

Theodore 'Laurie' Laurence

The rich boy who lives next door. Laurie, whose real name is Theodore Laurence, becomes like a son and brother to the Marches. He is charming, clever, and has a good heart.

Jessica Brydges as Meg March

Theatre credits include: *Little Women*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and *Sunshine on Leith* (Pitlochry Festival); *Thursford Christmas Spectacular* (Thursford Enterprises); *The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi* (Kenneth More Theatre); *Peter Pan* (Maltings Theatre); *Robin Hood* (Queen's Theatre Hornchurch); *Me and The Girls* (Regional Tour); and *Sonnet Walk* (Guilford Shakespeare Company).

Meg March

The oldest March sister. Responsible and kind, Meg mothers her younger sisters. She has a small weakness for luxury and leisure, but the greater part of her is gentle, loving, and morally vigorous.

Julia Brown as Amy March

Julia Brown is a Scottish actress and singer. She stars as Lois Bennett in the BBC series *World on Fire* (2019). She also appeared in the CBBC series *M.I. High* (2014) and the crime drama *Shetland* (2018–2021).

Theatre credits include: *The Philistines*, *Port* (ICATA) and *Footloose* (Edinburgh Playhouse).

Film and television credits include: *Daddy's Head*, *Payback*, *World on Fire*, *Foundation*, *Shetland*, *Jessie and the Elf Boy*, *The Last Kingdom*, *The Alienist: The Angel of Darkness*, *Anthony*, *Grasslands*, *Eve*, *Blue Peter*, *Studio 3* and *MI High*.

Amy March

The youngest March girl. Amy is an artist who adores visual beauty and has a weakness for pretty possessions. She is given to fits of temper, and vanity; but she strives to be more like her mother.

Kacey Ainsworth as Abigail Marmee March

Kacey Ainsworth is an English actress, known for her roles as Little Mo Mitchell in the BBC soap opera *EastEnders* and Cathy Keating in the ITV drama series *Grantchester*.

Theatre credits include *Sweeney Todd* (Liverpool Everyman); *Holes* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Feed the Beast* (Birmingham Rep/New Wolsey); *Laughton* (Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough); *Calendar Girls* (David Pugh Productions No 1 Tour); *Steel Magnolias* (David Ian Productions); *Carrie's War* (Novel Theatre Company), *The Exonerated* (Riverside Studios), *Lava* (Soho Theatre + Tour) and *Leaves of Glass* (The Park Theatre).

TV credits include; *Grantchester* (ITV); *Vicky*, *The Worst Witch*, *Call The Midwife*, *Casualty*, and *Tracy Beaker Returns* (BBC); *The Wright Way* (Phil McIntyre Productions for The BBC); *M.I.High* (Kudos for The BBC); *Midsomer Murders* (Bentley Productions); *Holby Blue 1&2*, *Hotel Babylon*, *Eastenders*, *Happy Birthday Shakespeare*, *The Beggar Bride*, *Moonstone*, *Sliced* (BBC Television); and *Touch & Go* (Arrowhead Productions/BBC).

Feature film credits include *Lynn and Lucy* (Fyzal Boulifa); *Topsy Turvey* (Thin Man Films directed by Mike Leigh) and *We the Kings* (Directed by Lauren Mackenzie/David Wade).

Abigail 'Marmee' March

The March girls' mother and role model, Marmee counsels them through all of their problems, and works tirelessly while her husband is at war.

Meg Chaplin as Beth March

Theatre credits include *Little Women* (Watford Palace Theatre/Pitlochry Festival Theatre); *Noises Off* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre) and *Sunshine of Leith* (Capital Theatres/Pitlochry Festival Theatre); *Father Christmas at The Royal Albert Hall* (Goblin Theatre/Royal Albert Hall) and *The Midnight Gang*.

Film credits include *In Wonderland* (directed by Christopher Haydon).

Site specific work include *Arrival* (imPOSSIBLE Producing). Improvisation credits include *Dash Arts Dacha East 15 Residency* (East 15/DASH Arts).

Beth March

The third March daughter. Beth is very quiet and tries always to be good. She adores music and plays the piano very well.

Rachael McAllister as Josephine (Jo) March

Theatre credits include *To the Bone*, *Brief Encounter*, *Gypsy*, *Noises Off*, *A Christmas Carol* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *Little Women* (Watford Palace Theatre and Pitlochry Festival), *Sunshine of Leith* (Capital Theatres and Pitlochry Festival Theatre), *Brilliance* (Farham Maltings), and *Son of a Preacher Man* (Dusty Touring Ltd).

Josephine (Jo) March

The protagonist of the novel, and the second-oldest March sister. Jo, who becomes a published author, shares many characteristics with Louisa May Alcott. Jo has a temper and a quick tongue, although she works hard to control both. She is energetic, fearless, a tomboy, and struggles with the many limitations placed on women and girls. She hates romance in her real life and wants nothing more than to keep her family together.

Susan Twist as Aunt March

Theatre credits include: *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Theatre by the Lake); *Home I'm Darling* (Stephen Joseph Theatre/Keswick); *Be My Baby*, *Hamlet*, *Airplays*, *Road*, *The Market*, *Coming Around Again*, *Rita*, *Sue and Bob Too* (Leeds Playhouse); *Tenant of Windfell Hall* (Bolton Octagon/York Theatre Royal); *Gaslight*, *Pygmalion*, *Brassed Off*, *April in Paris*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Beautiful Thing* (Oldham Coliseum); *Dancehall* (CAST, Doncaster); *History Boys* (UK Tour); *Hobson's Choice*, *Love on the Dole*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *And Did Those Feet*, *The Crucible*, *Second From Last in the Sack Race*, *All of You Mine* (Bolton Octagon); *Abandoned Places* (Piece of Work); *Ugly Duck* (Claybody Theatre); *Ballroom Blitz* (Hull Truck); *The Daughter-in-Law*, *The Good Soul of Szechuan*, *Measure For Measure* (Library Theatre, Manchester); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hercules* (Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre); *Everybody Loves A Winner*, *A Conversation*, *Pretend You Have Big Buildings*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Prize Night* (Royal Exchange); *Touched by Stephen Lowe* (Salisbury Playhouse Theatre); *Heartbreak House* (Watford Palace); *My Own Show*, *Miss Yesterday*, *Soap/Fields of Gold* (Stephen Joseph Theatre); *The Price* (New Wolsey); *Cinderella* (Stafford Theatre); *Summer Shorts* (Theatre in the Mill); *East Is East* (Stoke New Victoria); *The Snow Queen* (Chester Gateway Theatre); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Liverpool Playhouse) and *Jumping Jack Flash* (Liverpool Everyman Theatre).

Television credits include: *Confidential*, *Eric*, *Ernie & Me*, *Scott & Bailey*, *Being Eileen*, *In The Flesh*, *Doctors*, *See No Evil*, *The Royal*, *The Bill*, *Coronation Street*, *A Good Thief*, *Always and Everyone*, *Reckless*, *Brookside* and *Time Treasures*.

Aunt March

A rich widow and one of the March girls' aunts. Although crotchety and difficult, Aunt March loves her nieces and wants the best for them.

Tom Richardson as Professor Friedrich Bhaer and John Brooke

Theatre credits include: *Abigail's Party* (Classic Theatre/UK Tour); *The Snow Queen*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Julius Caesar* (Storyhouse, Chester); *Private Lives*, *Sherlock: A Study In Lipstick*, *Ketchup & Blood*, *Little Women* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre/Watford Palace Theatre); *She Stoops To Conquer/As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night/The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Guildford Shakespeare Company); *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Churchill Theatre, Bromley/UK Tour); *The Prince & the Pauper* (New Vic Theatre); *Jeeves & Wooster In Perfect Nonsense*, *Single Spies*, *Sense & Sensibility* (Theatre by the Lake, Keswick/York Theatre Royal); *Elton John's Glasses* (Watford Palace Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Wind in the Willows* (Creation Theatre); *Dial M for Murder*, *The Rivals* (Theatre by the Lake, Keswick); *Twelfth Night: A Gender Experiment* (The Rose Playhouse); *Romeo & Juliet*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Wind in the Willows*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth* (Chester Performs, Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre); *The White Carnation* (The Finborough/The Jermyn Street Theatre); *The Mousetrap* (60th Anniversary Asia Tour); *Roots* (Nottingham Playhouse/Hull Truck/New Vic Theatre); *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Mercury Theatre Company); *The Heir at Law* (Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds); *The Winter's Tale*, *The Rivals*, *The Grapes of Wrath* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester); *Dad's Army Marches On* (UK Tour); *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Vienna's English Theatre); *Dad's Army – The Lost Episodes* (UK Tour) and *The Mousetrap* (St Martin's Theatre – West End).

Mr. Brooke

Laurie's tutor. Mr. Brooke is a kind and intelligent man, who has promised Laurie's family he will guide him into college, before enlisting in the army himself.

Prof Bhaer

Friedrich Bhaer has come to New York from Germany to escape the sorrows of his past. He works as a teacher in a Boarding House in the city, where he meets Jo and realises that there may be a second chance of happiness for him.

Brigid Larmour – Director

Brigid Larmour is an experienced director of Shakespeare, comedy and new plays, and is Associate Artistic Director of Patsy Rodenburg Associates. A producer, director, dramaturg, teacher and cultural leader with extensive experience in the subsidised and commercial theatre and television, she recently stepped down after 17 years as Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Watford Palace Theatre. This production of *LITTLE WOMEN* was a coproduction between Pitlochry Festival Theatre and Watford Palace in 2022. At Watford, Brigid invited Rifco Theatre, tiata fahodzi and other companies and freelancers to become Creative Associates, coproducing their work, and produced or directed new plays by Timberlake Wertenbaker, Arinze Kene, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Mike Bartlett, Pravesh Kumar, Tom Wells, Zodwa Nyoni, Charlotte Keatley, Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti and Marks and Gran, among others. From 1998 to 2006 she was Artistic Director of West End company Act Productions, including commissioning Kevin Elyot's adaptation of Agatha Christie's *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*, and transferring plays from the Gate, Dublin including John Hurt in *KRAPP'S LAST TAPE*. She was also adviser to the BBC4 Plays strand. From 1993 to 98 she directed a series of promenade Shakespeares, *Shakespeare Unplugged*, for RNT Education, including Virginia Radcliffe and later Shona Morris as a female Prospero, and David Carr as the first Black Henry V. From 1989 to 1994 she was Artistic Director of Contact Theatre, Manchester, commissioning the first British plays responding to the rave scene (*Excess/XS*), and the implications of virtual reality (*Strange Attractors*, a multimedia promenade production in association with Granada TV, by Manchester poet Kevin Fegan) and directing African American actor Joseph Mydell in Brecht's *GALILEO*. As Associate Director at Contact she directed Mustapha Matura's *PLAYBOY OF THE WEST INDIES*, the first play with a full cast of Black actors (including Sharon D Clarke) produced outside London. She championed and directed at Contact Charlotte Keatley's game-changing all-female *MY MOTHER SAID I NEVER SHOULD*: having been rejected by all the major new writing theatres, it was produced around the world - making Keatley the most performed woman playwright after Agatha Christie! – and became a GCSE set text. Her 1980 Edinburgh Fringe production of *THE ROARING GIRL*, featuring Annabel Arden, Simon McBurney and Stephen Fry, brought this Jacobean comedy back into the UK repertoire: it has since been produced twice by the RSC. She trained at the RSC under Terry Hands, and as a studio director at Granada TV. Her groundbreaking and critically acclaimed *MERCHANT OF VENICE* 1936 with Tracy Ann Oberman as a female Shylock, coproduced by Watford Palace Theatre and HOME, has played to sell-out audiences at the RSC's Swan Theatre ahead of a national tour, including a return to HOME, and will return to the RSC in January 2024.

HOME

HOME is Manchester's centre for international contemporary culture. Since opening in May 2015, HOME has welcomed over four million visitors to its two theatres, five cinemas, art gallery, book shop and restaurants. HOME works with international and UK artists to produce extraordinary theatrical experiences, producing an exciting mix of thought-provoking drama, dance and festivals, with a strong focus on international work, new commissions and talent development. HOME's ambition is to push the boundaries of form and technology, to experiment, have fun, take risks and share great new art with the widest possible audience. The patrons of HOME are Danny Boyle, actress Suranne Jones, playwright and poet Jackie Kay CBE, artists Rosa Barba and Phil Collins, filmmaker Asif Kapadia, and actress and author Meera Syal CBE. www.homemcr.org | @HOME_mcr | Facebook HOME_mcr



Pitlochry Festival Theatre. A Theatre for Everyone. A Theatre for a Lifetime.

Since 1951, Pitlochry Festival Theatre has been the artistic heart and soul of Highland Perthshire. Attracting over 100,000 visitors every year, we are more than simply a place to see a show – we are Scotland's leading producer of musical theatre, a champion of ensemble practice and the country's only rurally-located, major arts organisation. Our vision is to improve lives by sharing Pitlochry with the world and the world with Pitlochry, and our aim is to create life-enhancing experiences in our Theatre its and environment – a glorious eleven-acre campus that encompasses the magical Explorers Garden. In everything we do, we are committed to nurturing an exciting creative and cultural future for Scotland.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre is supported by funding from Creative Scotland and Perth & Kinross Council. It is also grateful to the many individual donors, trusts and foundations who continue to support the Theatre in its vision.

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