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## audience reviews

### *Little Women the Musical*, Runaway Stage Productions (Broadway Stage)

**Review:** I just attended opening night and WOW, what a delightful show! The small theater provided the perfect intimate setting that this type of show requires. The acting was superb! The young lady who played Joe March gave an outstanding performance. Her portrayal of the character was second to none. The music was a delight throughout. I especially enjoyed "Take A Chance on Me" (probably the best performance of this song I have ever seen - sung by a true tenor with the chops to actually do it right!), "Astonishing", "The Most Amazing Thing", and "The Fire Within Me". Other top notch performances that stood out were given by the actors playing Aunt March, Amy, and Meg. I have heard some criticism of this musical in the past saying that it leaves out too much of the original story, and does not portray the deep bond of the march family that we all know and love. If you just read the script, I would probably have to agree. However, the actors in this production have moved beyond just the mere words on the page and have done an amazing job of telling the unspoken aspects of the story. What lacks in the script is more than made up for in every characters wonderful nuanced performance. The spirit and bond these characters develop comes shining through and as a result, the play, in my opinion, rings true to the original story. Some minor criticisms - I didn't like the lighting in some scenes. There were several places where the characters were singing major parts of a song completely in the dark. The program calls the song "How I Am" "Here I Am", and there were some minor sound issues as well. The actor playing professor Bhaer did a great job projecting as his mic was not working throughout his entire song. From where I was sitting around the fourth row, the music conductor was blocking quite a bit of the stage. I'm not sure if much could be done about it though. Finally, I thought the orchestra did an admirable job considering the difficulty of the score. The opening overture needs a little work still, the violins were out of tune in a few areas, as well has the french horn in "Some Things Are Meant to Be". All in all I thought they did a fine job. In summary, I would highly recommend this show to anyone. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening filled with many top caliber performances. Well done!

**Review:** I am not a fan of the music written for this show. This production is filled with beautiful voices. Kelly Daniels is a clear stand out! She has a very strong voice and exceptional acting skills. Other stand outs were Tevye Ditter, Tristan Rumery, Katie Robberecht, Christina Day, Karen Day. Well done Runaway Stage!!!!

**Review:** I knew from the cast list this would be a fantastic show and I was right. Kudos to Bob & Josh for

keeping things moving. The actresses portraying the March family are equally fantastic, but Kelly Daniels gets the best material as Jo. She is, as her song title says, 'Astonishing'. One of my favorite moments occurred between her and the excellent young actress playing Beth, 'Some Things Are Meant To Be.' Without spoiling the plot, it was a wonderful combination of great writing, direction, and performance. Bring a hanky. If Karen from 'Will & Grace' were alive back then she's have been Aunt March. AUNT MARCH: "I don't like that dress." JO: "It was one of yours." AUNT MARCH: "It looked better on me." Claudia Wrazel makes the most of this role without going over the top. She was a constant joy on stage, as were the 3 young tenors. Finally, Lilian Baxter's costumes are a lush as one would expect from her uniformly high quality design. Of course the hoop skirts & hats are fantastic, but equal detail has been given to the collars and coats worn by the dashing gentlemen. THIS MUSICAL DESERVES AN AUDIENCE.

**Review:** The play itself is wonderfully entertaining. It's sweet, surprisingly funny, touching, well-paced and the music is beautiful. This particular production is extremely well cast, and the best all-around production I've seen at Runaway. 'Meg' looks striking, is very natural in her acting and has a great voice. She takes us back to graceful yet difficult time. 'Joe' is the right amount of feisty without over-doing it and delivers her numbers with great conviction. Amy is adorable and really funny. She and 'Joe' showed great timing, emotion and natural flow in a scene that has them in heated argument. 'Beth' is convincingly frail and sweet. The male leads were just as talented, with a special nod to 'Lorie'. This show is a steal at \$20.00! Great evening out, and my new standard for community theater.

**Review:** Saw this March 27 and felt like I was getting a steal! \$20 a ticket for this quality of performers and production is amazing. The leads were very well cast, sounding much like the original Broadway cast... wonderful orchestra (are they paid?!), excellent direction, lighting, costumes, sets... really pretty flawless. Runaway Stage is clearly a standout "community theatre" in Sacramento and may as well be ranked with the professionals, since so many professional-level performers and others are involved. Kelly Daniells is a wonderfully energetic, fiery Jo March with the voice and acting abilities to boot. Her performance is captivating! She gets well-deserved hoots and hollers after the Act I closer, "Astonishing." Kate Robberecht is right up there with Daniells in capturing the character and soothing voice of beautiful Meg. Abbey Williams-Campbell, at a surprising 13, is perfectly suited for the very sweet Beth-- and unbelievable performance abilities for such a young age! I had tears streaming down my face for about four scenes-- before and after Beth's big number with Jo. Christina Day is appropriately annoying as young Amy, and does well maturing her character over the course of the show. Good, strong performer. Karen Day has a beautiful voice and is a wonderful, motherly Marmee who has good chemistry with her on-stage (and one of them real-life) daughters. Tevye Ditter is also captivating in his performance as Professor Bhaer - a wonderful voice and actor, although his (German?) accent could use some work. Tristan Rumery is an endearing, believable Laurie and sounds very much like the Broadway performer. Scott Woodard is a great fit for the also endearing, slightly insecure John Brooke who falls in love with Meg. Their love is believable and sweet. Claudia Warzel may not be the strongest singer in the cast (although she's not bad!), but is a very strong actress who plays her roles with sincerity, humor and energy... also a great fit. This is an extremely gifted and experienced cast... and I only noticed one or two minor line mistakes the whole night, which is incredible for an amateur company. Runaway raises the bar for community theatre in Sacramento... sky high! GO SEE IT BEFORE IT CLOSSES THIS WEEKEND!!!!

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