Baron Ochs) delivers superb singing and acting. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, in particular, gives a stunning, nuanced performance as the Marschallin. At 191 minutes, the production makes the standard cuts to the score, and the DVD offers no additional features beyond English subtitles and a list of scenes. Although this Rosenkavalier may not satisfy some contemporary tastes, fans of older operatic practices will not want to be without this recording.

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Mark Adamo’s *Little Women,* based on the Louisa May Alcott novel of the same name, has enjoyed enormous success, both domestically and internationally, since its premiere in 1998. This video helps those who have not seen a live production understand why. This production, recorded in 2000 specifically for television broadcast, offers excellent sound and image; shot in widescreen and well-engineered, it is ideal for classroom or even small theater use.

In adapting the novel and writing his own libretto, Adamo creates multiple opportunities to compose in various styles and genres. Ensemble pieces include folk elements and chorales, playful catches, and fantasies. Throughout, Adamo presents a sophisticated musical soundscape that is at times reminiscent of Thomson and Barber while preserving the composer’s own highly evolved sense of pacing and melody. The opera moves swiftly from scene to scene, frequently changing tempo, orchestration, and style. The harmonic language is accessible and provides an excellent example of late twentieth-century tonality for students and newcomers to recent American opera. The orchestra generally supports the singers: textures might embellish the vocal line, but there are few instances in which either the score or the orchestra’s playing compete in any way with the primacy of the voice.

Adamo’s opera focuses Alcott’s novel even more around Jo, sung here with outstanding control and expressivity by Stephanie Novacek. Of the role, Adamo writes in the program notes that, “Jo’s wild imagination, her haunting memories, would free me musically to range between abstract and tonal, poetic and vernacular, song and symphonic forms.” Novacek proves herself sure and able in all of these forms and approaches, and does a marvelous job of vocally depicting Jo’s changing moods which move her rapidly from declamation to lyricism and back again. Joyce DiDonato lends her talents as Meg, and her Act I aria, “Things change, Jo,” is a beautiful and lyrical work that shows off her abilities of vocal nuance and flexibility. The aria “Do you know the land?” in which Bhaer expresses his love for Jo is perhaps one of the sublime moments of the entire work, and is beautifully sung here by baritone Chen-Ye Yuan, a performer whom I cannot wait to hear again. Beth’s deathbed aria, “Have peace, Jo,” is another moment that stands alone in the opera, stopping time for the listener with its simplicity and performer Stacey Tappan’s unforced and clear voice.

The video is beautifully shot in a cinematic style. The focus on character’s faces is ideal, neither so far away that the entire stage is in view when the action centers on one person, nor the dreaded tonsil intimacy that mars many opera videos. The staging and set and costume design is outstanding, and a treat to see in detail. The video concludes with a brief selection of comments by Adamo on his experience reading the Alcott book and composing the opera.

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