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*Little
House
on the
Prairie*
The Musical
with
Melissa Gilbert
as "Ma"

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE
THE MUSICAL

WITH
MELISSA GILBERT
AS 'MA'

**WILL PLAY TAMPA'S STRAZ CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
MARCH 2-7**

March 2-7

Carol Morsani Hall at the Straz Center

Regularly priced tickets start at \$38.50

Tampa, Fla. – *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical*, a new musical based on the beloved Laura Ingalls Wilder series of classic American books, will play the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center) March 2-7. Melissa Gilbert, who rose to fame as a child playing 'Laura' in the hugely successful NBC television series "Little House on the Prairie" during the 1970s, now continues her legacy 'on the prairie' by taking on the role of Ma. *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical* will also star Steve Blanchard as 'Pa'. Tickets are on sale now.

Little House on the Prairie, The Musical with Gilbert and Blanchard, had its world premiere production in August, 2008 at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, where it shattered all box-office records and sold-out for 12 consecutive weeks. Initiated for the stage by Adrienne Lobel (*Frog and Toad*) and Francesca Zambello, the show is directed by Zambello (Disney's *The Little Mermaid*), with music by Academy Award®-winner Rachel Portman (*Emma*), lyrics by Donna di Novelli and a book

by Tony Award®-winner Rachel Sheinkin (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*). Michele Lynch is choreographer and Kevin Stites is musical supervisor.

The producers of *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical* are Ben Sprecher, Amy Sprecher, Louise Forlenza, Bob Boyett, Jay Harris, William Franzblau, Tony Fusco, Larry Feinman, Peter W. Bezemes, Friendly Theatrical LLC, Jon B. Platt, Wendy Federman, Michael Filerman, Marc Schwartz, Karl Sydow and Nelle Nugent, in association with Bob Reich and Sharon Carr.

The production includes scenic design by Adrienne Lobel, lighting design by Mark McCullough, costumes by Tony Award-winner Jess Goldstein, sound design by Carl Casella and wig/hair design by Charles LaPointe. Richard Carsey serves as music director, orchestrations are by Larry Hochman and dance and incidental music arrangements are by Michael Dansicker, with additional vocal and incidental music by Kevin Stites.

Little House on the Prairie, The Musical is the uplifting story of an American family forging a new life amidst the mighty challenges, heartbreaks, joys and triumphs that face them in the newly-settled heartland. It is also the story of young Laura Ingalls, as she begins her life as a young woman, finding purpose, and finding love. Above all, it is the celebration of the pioneering spirit and the core values on which this country was founded – a spirit that still resonates today.

Little House on the Prairie, The Musical is presented as part of the Bank of America Best of Broadway Tampa Bay series and will play Carol Morsani Hall at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts, March 2-7. Performances are Tuesday - Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 and 7:30 p.m. As part of Broadway Family Night, there will be pre-show family friendly activities on Wednesday, March 3 and a talkback in the theater following the performance. Regularly priced tickets start at \$38.50 and may be purchased by calling 813.229.STAR (7827) or 800.955.1045 outside Tampa Bay, in person at the Straz Center Ticket Office or online at www.strazcenter.org. For more information about the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts and its upcoming events, please visit www.strazcenter.org.

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MELISSA GILBERT (Caroline “Ma” Ingalls) Theatre: Off-Broadway: *A Shayna Maidel* (Outer Critics Circle and Theatre World Awards); Regional: *Love Letters* (Canon Theater, LA); *The Glass Menagerie* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *The Miracle Worker* (Royal Poinciana Playhouse, Palm Beach); *Bus Stop* and *Love Letters* (Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville); *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical* (Guthrie). Television: Series lead in “Little House on the Prairie,” starred in more than 40 movies for television, including Emmy Award-winning *The Miracle Worker*, and more than a dozen television series, including “Nip/Tuck,” and “Sweet Justice.” Ms. Gilbert served as President of the Screen Actors Guild from 2001–05, and is currently the Standing Board Chair and Spokesperson for the Children’s Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition. Ms. Gilbert is also a *New York Times* best-selling author with the recent publication of her autobiography, *Prairie Tale - A Memoir*, from Simon & Schuster.

STEVE BLANCHARD (Charles “Pa” Ingalls). Broadway: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Camelot*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Three Musketeers*; Off-Broadway: *Frankenstein*, *Johnny Guitar*, *An Oak Tree*; National tours: *Camelot*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; Repertory Theatre of St. Louis: *Esmeralda*; Baltimore’s CenterStage: *Sleep of Reason*; Charles Playhouse, Boston: *The Threepenny Opera*; Ford’s Theatre, Washington, D.C.: *Hot Mikado*, *Godspell*; Guthrie: *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical*; Paper Mill Playhouse: *Chess*; Theatre Under The Stars, Houston: *Chess*. Film/Television *Law at Randado*, *Rapmaser Ronnie*, *Warlords 3000*, “Third Watch,” “Law and Order,” “Ed,” “Police Story,” “Sunset Beat,” “One Life to Live,” “Guiding Light,” “Another World.” Original cast recordings *Johnny Guitar*, *Sundown*, *Frankenstein*; debut solo CD *Northbound Train*

FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO (Director). Theatre Broadway: Disney’s *The Little Mermaid*; London: Royal Albert Hall: *Showboat*; West End: *Napoleon*; Raimund Theater, Vienna: a new musical based on *Rebecca*; Seattle Children’s Theatre: *Tibet Through the Red Box*; Bregenz’s floating stage: *West Side Story*; Guthrie: *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical*.

Old Globe: *First Wives Club*, Skylight Music Theater: artistic director, 1984-91; Opera: Metropolitan Opera: *An American Tragedy* (world premiere), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (with Placido Domingo), *Les Troyens*; Teatro alla Scala: *Cyrano*; Washington National and San Francisco Operas: *The Ring*, San Francisco Opera: artistic advisor; Royal Albert Hall: *La Bohème*; The Bolshoi: *Fiery Angel*; Chicago Lyric Opera: *Salome*; Royal Opera House: *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*; Paris Opera: *Boris Godunov*, *War and Peace*, *Billy Budd*, *William Tell*; Film *War and Peace* (ORF), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (BBC), *The Little Prince* (BBC/PBS). Awards: Three Olivier Awards; two Evening Standard Awards for best musical and best opera; two French Grand Prix des Critiques; Japanese Golden Prize; Helpmann Award; Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres; Russian Federation's medal for Service to Culture; the Palme d'Or in Germany; the Golden Mask in Russia. Education: Colgate University; Moscow University. www.francescazambello.com

RACHEL PORTMAN (Music). Theatre: *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Musical*. Film: *Grey Gardens*, *The Duchess*, *Emma*, *The Cider House Rules*, *Chocolat*, *Infamous*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Lake House*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Hart's War*, *The Human Stain*, *Life is Sweet*, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, *Beloved*, *Home Fries*, *Addicted to Love*, *Marvin's Room*, *Only You*, *The Road to Wellville*, *Sirens*, *Benny & Joon*, *The Joy Luck Club*, *Used People*, *Smoke*, *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything*, *Julie Newmar*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Opera/concert: *The Little Prince*, *The Water Diviner's Tale*. Awards: Academy Award for Best Original Score for *Emma*; Academy Award nominations for *The Cider House Rules* and *Chocolat*; British Film Institute's Young Composer of the Year Award.

DONNA DI NOVELLI (Lyrics). Musical Theater/Opera: *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Musical* (lyrics); *Florida* (book and lyrics) Lyric Opera Cleveland, Public Theater's New Work Now, New York City Opera's VOX; *No God but Yearning* (book and lyrics) Public Theater's New Work Now, Joe's Pub. Theater: *The First Eff* (stage play) Mark Taper Forum, Duende Arts. Dance: *Twelve Dancing Princesses* (text) Los Angeles Modern Dance and Ballet. Commissions: San Francisco Opera; Chanticleer; BBC. Publications *New Monologues For Women by Women* (Heinemann Press), *NuMuse*, Brown University. Awards: Manhattan Theatre Club Fellowship, Rockefeller Foundation residency in Bellagio, Italy; National Musical Theater Conference residency, the Mac Dowell Colony and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Professional Affiliations: ASCAP, Dramatists Guild. Teaching: Bookwriting, Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program at NYU Tisch School of the Arts; Playwriting, National Theater Institute, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; Visiting professor, Brown University. Training: M.F.A., Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program at NYU Tisch School of the Arts (Ira Gershwin Fellow); A.M., Brown University.

RACHEL SHEINKIN (Book) Recent work includes Broadway: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Tony, Drama Desk awards); Off Broadway: *Striking 12* (Lucille Lortel nomination), off-off: *Serenade*. Regional: Guthrie, *Little House on the Prairie*, *The Musical*; Center Theater Group, *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* (Los Angeles Ovation Award); London: *Blood Drive*. Residencies, fellowships, commissions include: Eugene O'Neill National Theater Center, Baryshnikov Dance Foundation, MacDowell Colony, Manhattan Theatre Club, Deaf West, McCarter Theatre, Playwrights Horizons. Rachel is a volunteer mentor for TDF's Open Doors program, a visiting instructor at Yale School of Drama, and adjunct faculty member of NYU's Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program.

MICHELE LYNCH (Choreographer). Paper Mill Playhouse: *Happy Days*. Broadway: *The Coast of Utopia* (Choreographer), *Hairspray* and *The Full Monty* (Associate Choreographer), *Urinetown* (Asst. Choreographer). Off-Broadway: *Everyday Rapture* (Second Stage), NYMF: *Idaho*; Yale Rep: *Rough Crossing*; Guthrie: *Little House on the Prairie*; Asolo Theatre: *Pride & Prejudice*; Mark Taper Forum: *13*; St Louis MUNY: *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; Stanford Center for the Arts: *Empire*; North Carolina Theatre: *South Pacific*; Ford Center: *Leading Ladies*; has traveled around the world setting companies of *Hairspray* and *The Full Monty*. Film: *CAMP*. Awards: Connecticut Critics Circle Award for *Happy Days* at Goodspeed Opera House; Garland Award for *13*.

KEVIN STITES (Music Supervision, Additional Vocals, Incidental Music). Broadway: *Tale of Two Cities*, *Color Purple*, *Titanic*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Pamela's First Musical*, *Children and Art*, *Les Misérables*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Fiddler, Nine*, *Oklahoma!*, *On the Town*. National tours: *Color Purple*, *Martin Guerre*, *Miss Saigon*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, *Titanic*. Guest conductor: Grant Park Symphony, *Guys and Dolls* and *Les Misérables* at Hollywood Bowl. TV/Film: "Rosie Live," *Reefer Madness* and others.

Biographies provided by production company.

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Events, days, dates, times, performers and prices are subject to change without notice.

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