

## Women from page B1

and it's accurate down to the corsets with the stays."

Jim McNiff is loving every minute of rehearsals and being surrounded by the 18 female actresses in the cast. McNiff, who was in *South Pacific* last season, plays Theodore "Laurie" Laurence, the male lead who falls in love with Jo but ends up marrying her sister Amy.

"Besides being surrounded by all these women, I love the story line," said McNiff, a graduate of West Bloomfield High School and a longtime Farmington Hills resident before recently moving to Warren. "It's about a family and how they all grow up. One girl dies and it draws everyone together. There's a lot of stair climbing and carrying Beth up and down the stairs. It's the most lines I've had to learn. Laurie is about 25 and lives with his grandfather. He's high spirited fun loving, never quite serious."

Mandy Pascas enjoys playing

Jo although she's had to memorize many lines for the lead female role and makes 10 costume changes during every performance. A graduate of Garden City High School, Pascas formerly acted with BRO Productions in Southfield. She's been interested in theater since age 15. She's now 21.

"It's fun being able to change your personality and run with it," said Pascas. "I'm in every scene but one. I know that this is what I enjoy doing. Jo doesn't really take anything from anybody. She's outspoken."

Emily Cundiff is not one of the meek March sisters either. The Garden City resident plays Amy.

"This is my first time and I thought it would be kind of fun," said Cundiff. "Amy's a brat and fun to play."

White made every effort to cast new talent like Cundiff for *Little Women*. The Plymouth

Theatre Guild production includes actors ranging in age from 9 to 50 something.

"I try to give people a chance because other people gave me a chance," said White. "They start with six or seven lines. It's nice to see how everybody gets along in spite of the age differences."

"I enjoy directing the children and watching Jo mature and grow into a woman as events unfold. It's poignant. It's what the whole play's about."

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## Dragon from page B1

*Dragon Tales Live* is the first major role DiPiazza has earned. It is also her first chance to go on tour. "It's very, very exciting," she said of the nine-month-long production which visits 45 cities. While she said she definitely misses her friends and family, she's "having way too much fun working with everyone."

DiPiazza looks forward to the Detroit-area performances, 10 in all, which begin Nov. 1. "I've seen shows there, but never personed them," she said.

The former student and instructor at Livonia's Broadway Bound Dance Academy hopes her mentor - owner and instructor Laura Bostic - and her students will catch the show. She credits Bostic for giving continuous support. "She has just done so much for me," said DiPiazza. "She's been so encouraging."

"I remember her first ballet class," said Bostic, sounding proud of the young dancer. "She had that passion. That's all she

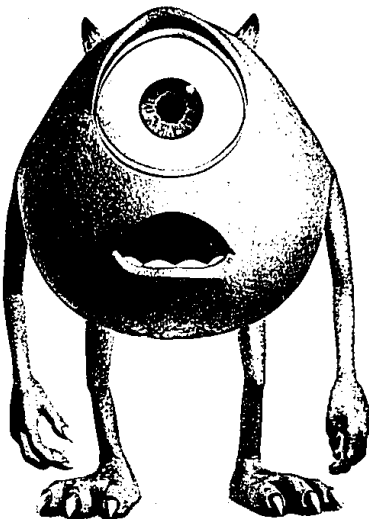
wanted to do."

Bostic said it isn't common for dance students to graduate high school and suddenly be cast in such a large production. "You just have one in a thousand. You know that's what they're destined for."

What's next? DiPiazza has a quick answer. "Eventually I would love to end up in New York, acting on Broadway. That's my dream." For now, she'll settle for a quick, colorful flight through *Dragon Land*.

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