

Silent Sky



THEATRE MEMPHIS presents **"SILENT SKY"**

Written by **LAUREN GUNDERSON** ■ Directed by **CECELIA WINGATE**

Sponsored in honor of **BERT AND CAROL BARNETT**

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Rosette Nebula photographed by Memphis Astronomical Society member Brent Ellis

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THEATRE MEMPHIS *in the* **NEXT STAGE**



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IN THE NEXT STAGE AT THEATRE MEMPHIS

Silent Sky

by **LAUREN GUNDERSON**

Directed by **CECELIA WINGATE**

Assistant Directed by **JARED JOHNSON**

Executive Producer **DEBBIE LITCH**

Production Manager/TD
MICHAEL COMPTON

Resident Costume Designer
AMIE EOFF

Resident Lighting Designer
NICOLE NORTINGTON

Resident Scenic Designer
JACK NETZEL-YATES

Resident Sound Designer
JASON ESCHHOFEN

Assistant Technical Director
MAGGIE JACKSON

Stage Manager, Outreach, and
Volunteer Engagement Manager
CHELSEA ROBINSON

Director of Stage Management,
Outreach & Volunteer Engagement
BECKY CASPERSEN

Costume Shop Manager
ASHLEY SELBERG

Stage Manager
JENNIFER TOWNSEND

Original music composed for the show by
JENNY GIERING and **JASON ESCHHOFEN**

CAST

Henrietta Leavitt	NATALIE JONES
Annie Jump Cannon	KIM JUSTIS
Williamina Fleming	EMILY F. CHATEAU
Margaret Leavitt	JULES CALDWELL
Peter Shaw	ERIC SCHULTZ

Stage Crew
LOUISE LEVIN, HANNAH PALLOTTA, NATALIE CHAMBLIN

TIME AND PLACE:

1900-1920

Star Field

The Harvard Observatory, 2nd Floor Offices

Leavitt home, Wisconsin

Henrietta's home, Cambridge, MA

SPECIAL THANKS

Buddy Hart, Memphis Astronomical Society, Dr. Natalie Person,
Dr. Ann Viano and the Rhodes College Physics Department,
Jimbo Lattimore, Olivia Mittag

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Before reading Lauren Gunderson's beautiful play *Silent Sky*, I had never heard of Henrietta Leavitt. She was one of three truly extraordinary lady scientists (also known as scientists) at the Harvard Observatory who made vast and important discoveries that changed the field of astronomy. In the early 1900s, the universe seemed to be a much smaller place. The overall belief was that the Milky Way galaxy was the only galaxy to exist and the idea of a larger universe was highly doubted and wasn't really explored much or even questioned. Henrietta Leavitt asked many, many questions of the universe. Her work paved the way for modern astronomy's understanding of the vastness, structure, and scale of our universe. *Silent Sky* is historical fiction. Most of the play is based on actual documents and records from the Harvard Observatory and beyond. Other elements are created by the playwright to represent the struggles with norms and family obligations that were the expectations of women during that time. Women generally didn't leave their families to pursue a passion, especially in science and astronomy. This story deals with the choices passion sometimes leads us to and the exploration of the fallout in our personal lives that can come with those choices. It also presents the idea that a spiritual life and one that recognizes science are not mutually exclusive. It puts at the forefront the idea that art and music can very often poke at us to look at things differently, which can lead us to more imaginative discovery. Please know that this play jumps in and out of realism to sometimes magical dream spaces or fantasy. It spans two decades and the use of the dream spaces allows us to see inside the heart and mind of Henrietta with her imagination, her desires, and her dreams. I hope you enjoy your experience with these fascinating characters and I hope that when you leave the show tonight you will look up at the universe and throw a big thank you their way.

AN ASTRONOMICAL GLOSSARY

Cepheids — Cepheid Variables are very large, luminous, yellow stars. They change in magnitude (brightness) regularly, with periods of 1 to 70 days between peaks. The stars are called Cepheids after the first star of this type to be discovered, Delta Cephei, a bright star in the constellation of Cepheus.

Declination and Right Ascension — Similar to geographic latitude and longitude but projected onto the celestial sphere: Declination is expressed in degrees north or south of the celestial equator, and right ascension measures an angle that increases toward the east as measured from a zero point (the place in the sky where the Sun crosses the celestial equator at the March equinox).

Draper Catalogue — Its first edition published in 1890, the Draper Catalogue of Stellar Spectra contained spectroscopic classifications for 10,351 stars. Most of the classification was done by Williamina Fleming at the Harvard Observatory. The catalogue is named after Henry Draper, an American doctor and amateur astronomer who pioneered the field of astrophotography.

Great Refractor Telescope — A 15-inch telescope installed at Cambridge in 1847. For 20 years it was the largest telescope in the United States, the most significant American astronomical instrument and equal to the finest in the world. It formed the nucleus for development of the Harvard College Observatory.

Light Year — The distance traveled by light in one year, equal to about 6 trillion miles.

Magellanic Clouds — Known to astronomers since the tenth century, the Large Magellanic Cloud and its neighboring Small Magellanic Cloud are irregular dwarf galaxies visible in the southern hemisphere. They orbit our own Milky Way galaxy, whose gravitational force has contributed to their distorted shape and cloudy appearance.

Period-Luminosity Relation — The relationship between a variable star's luminosity (the total amount of radiation it gives off in one second) and the period of its pulsation (the length of time between successive peaks in its brightness). In Cepheids this relationship is well defined, a discovery made by Henrietta Leavitt.

Photometry — The branch of astronomy that deals with the accurate measurement of the brightness, color and temperature of stars and the changes in their brightness over time.

Spectral Class — One of seven classes designated by the letters O, B, A, F, G, K and M; the hottest stars (O and B) are blue-white in color, while the coolest (M) are red. Each of the letter classes has subdivisions indicated by numerals 0 through 9.

WHO'S WHO IN THE COMPANY



JULES CALDWELL (Margaret Leavitt) *Silent Sky* marks Jules' first production with Theatre Memphis! Jules studied at the Maggie Flanigan Studio in NYC and

performed in LoneTree Live's 24-Hour Plays Festival. She dedicates this performance to her boyfriend, Rob, and her best friend, Meredith. Jules thanks her family and friends for their love and support.



EMILY F. CHATEAU (Williamina Fleming) a native of Michigan, has been in Memphis for the last fifteen years and has spent the majority of that time performing at Theatre Memphis in

over twenty productions. Some of her favorites include *Our Town*, *Falsettos*, *The Music Man*, *The Boy From Oz*, *The Addams Family*, and *Mamma Mia!* She is eternally grateful to Cecelia Wingate for constantly pushing her to be better and offering her such wonderful opportunities; and to Debbie Litch who provides the best place to play in an actor could wish for.



JARED THOMAS JOHNSON (Assistant Director) is very proud to call Wingate a mentor, champion, and friend. He thanks Cecelia for teaching excellence, details, and how to encour-

age brilliance. Jared made his directorial debut with *American Son*. His Playhouse on the Square credits are

Passover, *The Scottsboro Boys*, and *Fat Ham*. Up next, Jared returns to TM to direct *A Raisin In The Sun*. He thanks the cast and crew for letting him bear witness to the power of strong women who build others and cultivate change both in the rehearsal room and on stage. Love to Josh for encouraging his dreams.



NATALIE JONES (Henrietta Leavitt) is grateful for the chance to work on such a poignant script. Also at Theatre Memphis, credits include *Lady Macbeth* (Ostrander award), *Georgie*

opposite Jerry Chipman in *Heisenberg*, Tracy in *The Philadelphia Story*, Tourvel in *Dangerous Liaisons*, and Gwen in *The Royal Family*; Blanche in *Streetcar Named Desire* (Ostrander) at GCT & Emily in *Disgraced* at Circuit. She worked with Ellen Geer as a company member at Theatricum Botanicum playing Juliet, Phoebe, Imogen, Hippolyta, and Anna in *The Cherry Orchard* while also appearing in their productions of *The Tempest* and *Dracula*. She holds a BFA in Theatre from the U of M and is a founding member of Lost In Found. This one's for you, Dad.



KIM JUSTIS (Annie Cannon) is honored to soar with this constellation of stars in the *Silent Sky* team and explore the magnificence of the universe under the direction of Cecelia.

The Ostrander Award-winner has appeared on most of the stages in town over many years and looks forward to continuing to do so.

Poster/Cover Design by Missy McClendon
Production Photos by Carla McDonald
Program Layout by Michael Gravois

WHO'S WHO IN THE COMPANY (cont.)



ERIC SCHULTZ (Peter Shaw) has Greg Boller to thank for telling him about *August: Osage County* auditions at TM back in Fall, 2017. Little did he know, they both

would be cast in that show. Eric's been a fan since and counting his lucky stars (Bad/Dad-pun intended) over working with Cecelia, Jared, JJ, and this strong-witted female cast. Eric thanks his loved ones for their support and you for watching live theatre still.

JENNIFER TOWNSEND (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back in the Next Stage at Theatre Memphis! She's been involved here at Theatre Memphis for two decades. Thanks to Cecelia for asking me to come along on this journey into space!



CECELIA WINGATE (Director) is an award winning actor and director from Memphis, TN. She holds numerous Best Direction and Best Production Ostrander Awards including

those for her work on *Young Frankenstein*, *The Addams Family*, and *The Producers*, all at Theatre Memphis. Most recently she was seen onstage at TM as LaNora in *Cicada*. Cecelia has directed many productions at TM, including *Guys & Dolls*, *Mamma Mia*, *1776*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Shrek*. As an actor, Cecelia holds two Chicago theatre Joseph Jefferson nominations and won the JEFF for Best Supporting Actress in a drama for *Byhalia, Mississippi*. She also holds Best Supporting Actress Ostrandere for her work in *Distance* and *Cicada* and was nominated as Best Supporting Actress for her work as Mama Morton in *Chicago* at Theatre Memphis. In 2019, Cecelia had the great honor of performing at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC in a successful run of *Byhalia, Mississippi*. "Special thanks to all those who make me look good. It takes a village, and I have the best and brightest tribe! Special love and thanks to Jared Johnson."



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