

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS



Silent
SKY

BY

LAUREN GUNDERSON

SEPT. 29–OCT. 9, 2023 | DIRECTED BY DEBBIE SWANN

STUDIO THEATRE • UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

SEASON SPONSOR:



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival™ 50, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David and Alice Rubenstein.

Additional support is provided by The Honorable Stuart Bernstein and Wilma E. Bernstein; the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation; the Dr. Gerald and Paula McNichols Foundation; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; Hilton Worldwide; and Beatrice and Anthony Welters and the AnBryce Foundation.

Education and related artistic programs are made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.

This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

Silent SKY

BY LAUREN GUNDERSON

CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTOR Debbie Swann

SCENIC DESIGNER Roger Hanna

LIGHTING DESIGNER Katie Simonson

COSTUME DESIGNER Maddie Engeman

SOUND DESIGNER Vijay Saliakham

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSITION Isabella Knott

PROPS MASTERS Rachel Ross and Annie Hennen

REHEARSAL STAGE MANAGER Caitlin Wieland

CALLING STAGE MANAGER Annie Hennen

CAST

ANNIE CANNON Tiana Fuentes

WILLIAMINA FLEMING Courtney LaFontano

MARGARET LEAVITT Kelsey McKercher

HENRIETTA LEAVITT U/S Avi Miller

HENRIETTA LEAVITT Alaina Noble

PETER SHAW Jonathan Paul

PETER SHAW U/S Jack Slaughter

MARGARET LEAVITT U/S Rebecca Wilson

ANNIE CANNON U/S & WILLIAMINA FLEMING U/S Lori Vildibill

DIRECTOR NOTES

It is my honor to direct the opening production of CSU Theatre's 2023/24 season centered around the campus theme of democracy. In a thriving democracy, the arts have a vital role. As theatre artists we tell a variety of diverse stories, bringing our community together to share imaginative spaces where we can evaluate society, think critically, and become more empathetic as we encounter others in our world. *Silent Sky* accomplishes all these things by imagining the life of the astronomer Henrietta Swan Leavitt.

Over 100 years ago, participating in academia was a dream for our protagonist, but her perseverance made it a reality. Leavitt's accomplishments would have a resounding impact on the field of astronomy, though she would go widely unrecognized by the global community for decades. Like so many of Lauren Gunderson's plays, *Silent Sky* examines the ideas of legacy: how women contribute (and have always contributed) to culture, society, and discovery and the resounding impacts we leave long after we are gone. Undemocratic societies, or even struggling democracies, tend to limit both the kinds of narratives that are allowed and those who get to tell them. These limitations slow progress and the democratic process; but that doesn't mean change isn't possible. What would Leavitt think of this story—that stars a primarily female cast, is directed by a female faculty member, was written by a female playwright who is the most produced playwright in America, sharing that honor with Lynn Nottage, a Pulitzer Prize winning BIPOC playwright? And what should she think about the debilitating persistence of the gender pay gap, #MeToo, and the lack of female leadership in American government and industries?

We cannot say for certain, but we can bring her legacy to this imaginative space, and we can reflect on how we would like to shape our lives and legacies in this wide, expanding universe. Imagining new possibilities and new configurations of the world, is an important, ongoing step in the democratic process.

— Debbie Swann

DRAMATURG NOTES

When encountering *Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson, we were able to connect the fusions between art in science not only from the fact that this is a play about scientific discoveries, but because of Henrietta's discoveries. Lauren Gunderson is one of the most produced playwrights since 2015, and it is evident why with her poignant and precise thematic focuses.

Within the timeline of the play, the United States was constantly changing, especially with the most activity within the Women's Suffrage Movements, as women empowered themselves within the country. This story is one of those moments as astronomical research would have never been as advanced and accessible as it is without the voices and research of Henrietta Leavitt, Annie Jump Cannon, and Williamina Fleming. We wanted to recognize how the passage of time affects these women and how their research only became vaster as time went on.

This play also emphasizes the importance of art in any form of study. Patterns and creative recognition are such influential parts of Henrietta's journey in her discoveries within the play, and as we researched, the more we saw how these things intertwine. We connected our research of astronomy to the artistic nature of theatre and allowed our cast and crew to fuse each element with the reality of the research along with the creative elements that are presented within the show.

We're excited for you to see what our amazing performers, designers, and directors have done to bring this story to life.

— Peter Manuel Young and Lori Vildibill

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

MADDIE JAMES (COSTUMES DESIGNER) – Maddie is a double major in Theater Tech and History completing her final year at CSU. Her previous titles include *She Kills Monsters* (2022), *Spring Awakening* (2022), and *The Tender Land* (2023). James has also worked at the Santa Fe Opera in New Mexico and Hangar Theater in New York as a costume crafts apprentice. This is her final show at Colorado State. ‘Sko rams!

ISABELLA KNOTT (COMPOSER/ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER) – Isabella is so excited to be a part of *Silent Sky*. This is her second year as a Sound Design major and her first time in a design role. Isabella’s first show at CSU was *Machinal* by Sophie Treadwell and she worked as a sound board operator. Isabella would like to thank her family, friends, and professors for their encouragement and support.

ROGER HANNA (SET DESIGNER) – Roger teaches design at Colorado State University. Regionally, his design for *Elephant’s Graveyard* at Bas Bleu won a Denver Center for the Arts True West Award. In NYC, his 150 designs have received three Drama Desk Nominations, four Hewes Design Award Nominations, and a Lortel Award. Noteworthy collaborators include Trazana Beverly, Nilo Cruz, Susan Marshall, and Tommy Tune, at venues including DTW, Jacob’s Pillow, Mint Theater, Provincetown Playhouse, Sarasota Opera, and most of Off-Broadway. Roger holds an MFA from NYU, and has designed in Japan, Israel, and across the US as a USA-829 member. In Spring 2022 served as one of four Global Teaching Scholars for Semester at Sea, which successfully completed its 14-country tour despite the many challenges of a cruise ship full of college students during the pandemic. Last fall he designed *Machinal* for CSU. This year in addition to *Silent Sky* and *Fairview*, he also designs three productions for Tennessee Shakespeare, as well as *Waiting for Godot* at Bas Bleu. For more about Roger, visit www.rogerhanna.com.

ANNIE HENNEN (CALLING STAGE MANAGER) – Annie is excited to be calling on *Silent Sky*. She is currently a 4th year theatre major with a concentration in Stage Management. They have previously worked on *The Normal Heart*, *Così fan tutte*, and the Fall ‘22 Dance Concerts along with spending this past summer at the Santa Fe Opera. He sends his thanks to his friends and family.

PRICE JOHNSTON (PROJECTION DESIGNER) – Has designed projections and lighting for over 300 productions worldwide, including work in theatre, dance, opera, nightclubs, and corporate events. Notable productions include the 2015 American Theatre Wings Hewes Design Award Nominated and 2015 Drama Desk Award Nominated - Best Projection Design - *Donogoo* (The Mint Theatre, Off-Broadway - New York), *Disney’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Union Colony Civic Center Theatre - Greeley, CO), the World Premieres of *Eh Joe and Beckett’s Women* (Happy Days Enniskillen International Beckett Festival - Enniskillen, Ireland), *The Pee-wee Herman Show* (Sondheim Theatre, Broadway), *Two Rooms* (Trilogy Theatre,

Off Broadway), *Guys and Dolls* (UK Tour, London), The World Premiere of Ntozake Shange's *Lavender Lizards Lilac Landmines: Layla's Dream* (14th Street Playhouse, Atlanta), Shapiro & Smith's *Never Enough* (Kennedy Center, Washington DC), *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Russian International Tour, Moscow/St. Petersburg), *Lysistrata* (Anargyrios Theatre, Greece), *Our Town* (Teatro Celena Queiroz Theatre, Brazil), *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (Paramount Theatre, VT), and the Jefferson Award winning *1776* (Chopin Theatre, Chicago). He would like to thank Matt Grevan for all his help and support.

VIJAY SAILAKHAM (SOUND DESIGNER) – Vijay is a fourth-year design/tech major concentrating in sound and is excited to make his debut as a designer. Some of the shows he has worked on in the past as a Sound Engineer at CSU include *Fall Dance Concert (2022)*, *Fall Dance Capstone (2022)*, and *The Tender Land*. Vijay would like to thank his parents, family, and friends for their support.

KATIE SIMONSON (LIGHTING DESIGNER) – Katie is very excited for you to see this production of *Silent Sky*. She is a third-year lighting designer and projections designer at CSU. This is her Third design at CSU and her other credits include assistant Lighting Designer for *Spring Awakening* and Lighting Designer for *The Tender Land*. She has also worked as a designer for live concerts at music festivals and hopes to do much more work like this in the future.

DEBBIE SWANN (DIRECTOR) – graduated from Kansas State University with a B.A. in Theatre and English. From there, she earned her Master's in Theatre from Texas State University and trained in England at The Shakespeare Center, The Academy of Dramatic Art and The Royal Shakespeare Company. Before moving to Colorado, she taught, designed and directed theatre at Central Community College in Columbus, Nebraska. Debbie joined CSU in 2013 and teaches various acting courses as well as Introduction to Theatre, for which her publication, *The Art of Entertainment*, has been used since 2018. Debbie also teaches in the Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts program, teaching classes about global history and cultures as expressed through the arts. As an avid artist herself, Debbie can be found making theatre at both CSU and within the Fort Collins community. Some of her favorite CSU projects include *Lysistrata*, *Machinal* and performing alongside her students in last fall's *Spring Awakening*. Debbie is a company member with OpenStage Theatre & Company with credits including *Steel Magnolias* (director), *Natural Shocks* (director), and performing in *Spring Awakening* (OPUS Award), the Henry Award-nominated *Don't Dress for Dinner*, and *Avenue Q*. Debbie is also the director of SMTD's summer theatre program for children, Kids Do It All.

CAITLIN WIELAND (STAGE MANAGER) – Caitlin is in her senior year as a Stage Management focus Theatrical Design and Technology major. She's worked previously on *Lysistrata*, *She Kills Monsters*, *The Wolves*, and *Spring Dance Concert (2023)*. She is excited to graduate and discover what her future holds. To Mom and Dad, thank you for everything. To Rodrigo, te quiero mucho.

CAST BIOS

TIANA FUENTES (ANNIE CANNON) – Tiana is a 4th year pursuing a double major in Theatre Performance and Business Marketing. She is so excited to perform in this beautiful show! Some of her past credits include #8 in *The Wolves* (CSU), Mrs. White in *Clue* (RMHS), and Lucy in *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* (Arts Reach Center). Tiana would like to thank her family and friends for always supporting her in her creative adventures!

COURTNEY LAFONTANO (WILLIAMINA FLEMING) – Courtney is thrilled to have the opportunity to expand her acting range by playing Williamina. You may remember her from last spring's production of *Machinal* where she played Helen Jones. She would love to thank her friends and family for continuing their love and support. She would also like to remind those watching that women's rights are still an ongoing battle and would like to take this time to bring awareness!

KELSEY MCKERCHER (MARGARET LEAVITT) – Kelsey is beyond grateful to be a part of this beautiful CSU theatre production! She is proud to be a senior Musical Theatre major with a minor in Creative Writing. Her past performing credits with CSU theatre include playing Janet in *Rocky Horror Show* and the Telephone Girl and Helen u/s in *Machinal*. Some of her favorite past roles outside of CSU include Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Molly in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Eponine in *Les Misérables*, and Annie Sullivan in *the Miracle Worker*. In addition to theatre, Kelsey adores her job as a princess performer for kids' parties and events through the company Princess Ever After. She'd like to thank all the talented creative artists who brought this wonderful story to our stage as well as her family and friends for their endless love and support!

AVI MILLER (HENRIETTA U/S) – Avi is overjoyed to be a part of *Silent Sky*! They are currently a 4th year theatre major with a general theatre concentration and a minor in American Sign Language. Most recently, they were the Prop Master for *The Normal Heart*. Their past credits include working in the prop shop for *Machinal*, *Spring Awakening*, *The Wolves*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Così fan tutte*, and *She Kills Monsters* (CSU). They would like to thank their family, friends, and their cat.

ALAINA NOBLE (HENRIETTA LEAVITT) – Alaina is thrilled to be in *Silent Sky* at CSU! This is her final year and she is studying Music Theatre. Alaina is so grateful to be a part of such an amazing cast of people. Not only does Alaina perform at CSU she also performs in the community theatre productions in Loveland Colorado. Her favorites have been *RENT* (Mimi), *Bonnie and Clyde* (Bonnie), *American Idiot The Musical* (Whattersname) all at Harrington Arts Alliance. She is forever grateful to her family for being very supportive and compassionate about her pursuing her dreams.

JONATHAN PAUL (PETER SHAW) – Jonathan is incredibly excited to be performing for CSU once again. He is a second-year performance and computer science major. His past credits include Mr. Jones in *Machinal* (CSU), The Narrator in *The Love of Three Oranges* (Skyline High School), and The Grinch in *Seussical: The Musical* (Skyline High School). He is honored to be able to help portray such a hopeful, personal story, and is incredibly lucky to be working with so many talented people. He hopes to make it to KCACTF this year. He'd like to thank his family, friends, and partner for their incredible support.

LORI VILDBILL (DRAMATURG/ANNIE & WILLIAMINA U/S) — Lori is a 4th year Performance student and member of On the Brink here on campus. She has previously served as an Ensemble member and Understudy for CSU's production of *She Kills Monsters* and has participated in a student led one act adaptation of *Melancholy Play* as Lorenzo. A comedian and entertainer at heart, she has been acting her whole life and is honored to help support her classmates as a dramaturg and understudy for *Silent Sky*.

REBECCA WILSON (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MARGRET UNDERSTUDY) – This is Rebecca's first directorial position for the CSU theater department. She is excited to produce a show of the collegian level, especially one of such depth and beauty! She is currently a senior studying Theater Performance and Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts. Some of her past directing and performance credits include Kids Do it All *directing middle school aged shows*, Belphragial/Spartan Ensemble in *Lysistrata* (CSU Theater), Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* (BMHS Theater), Mrs. Peacock in *Clue* (BMHS Theater), and Mrs. Van Daan in *The Diary of Anne Frank* (BMHS Theater). She wants to thank her friend Ella for bringing her to the beauty of the stars!

CSU THEATRE PRODUCTION STAFF

PRODUCER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Dr. Megan Lewis

PRODUCTION MANAGER/TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Steven Workman

COSTUME SHOP MANAGER Elise Kulovany

CUTTER/DRAPER Rebecca Evans

MASTER ELECTRICIAN Wes Halloran

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER Matt Grevan

SCENIC CHARGE ARTIST Karl Hermanson

HEAD OF PROPS Melissa Centgraf

MASTER CARPENTER Johnnie Rankin

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS Rebecca Wilson, Eric Zertuche

DRAMATURGS Lori Vildbill, Peter Young

ASSOCIATE SCENIC DESIGNER Jessica Bilevich

ASSISTANT SCENIC DESIGNER Josie Karet

ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER Libby Williams

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER Cooper Cox

ASSISTANT SOUND DESIGNER Isabella Knott

ASSOCIATE PROJECTION DESIGNER Jake Mosier

WARDROBE HEAD Annecy Wood

HAIR AND MAKE UP HEAD Britney Juarez

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Annie Hennen, Tyler Worden

ELECTRICS SHOP TEAM Spencer Ammon, Katherine Barr, Carlos Gutierrez,

Caelum Janski, Danae Johnson, Jessie King, Katie Simonson

PAINT SHOP TEAM Ruby Duka, Peyton Farnum, Josie Karet, Courtney LaFontano,

Dani Ranisate, Kelsey McKercher

COSTUME SHOP TEAM Ethan Bowman, Jasper Day, Charlotte Daysh, Maddie Engeman,

Sherri Garrett, Callie Hartell, Helen Jewert, Nyssa Justis, Ethan Strong, Adie Sutherland

SCENIC SHOP TEAM Ethan Bowen, Terran Flynn, Savannah Jackson, Robert Longo,

Ashley Moore, Alaina Noble, Thomas Ray, Ayanna Reshawn

PROPS TEAM Amber Campbell, Kaleb Chaney, Annie Hennen, Avi Miller, Libby William

AUDIO TEAM Rei Belmont, Lana Greeness, Patrick Middlebrook, Joshua Moore, Alex Pruitt,

Tessa Snyder, David Walters, Chandler Webb,

SOUND BOARD OPERATOR Ryan Terry

A2 Peter Seuffert

LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR Dale Kaiser

PROJECTIONS OPERATOR Jasper VanHavel

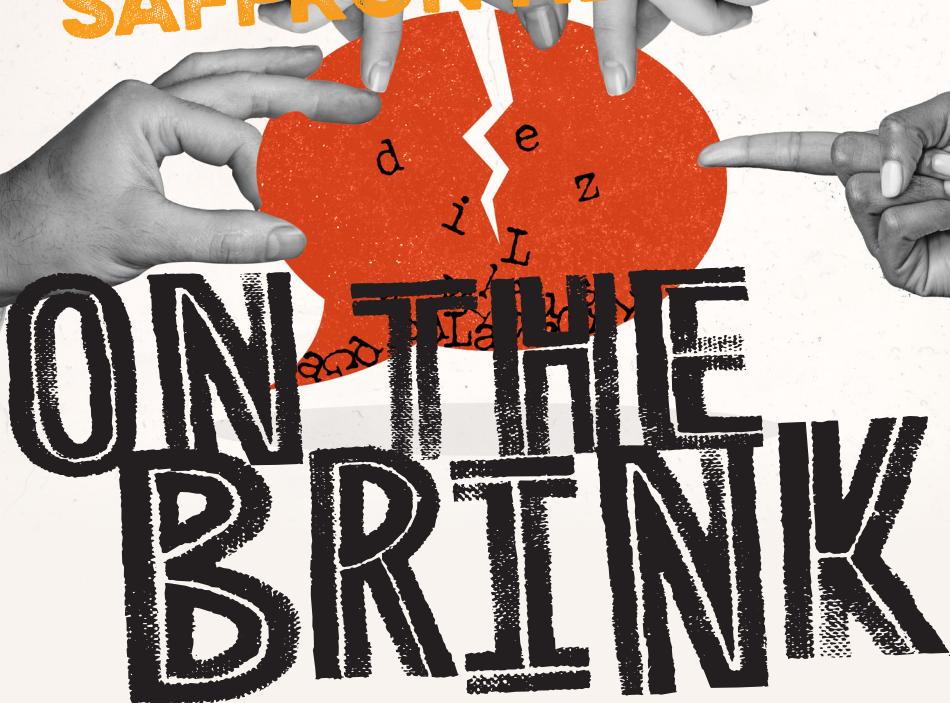
WARDROBE CREW Eliza Domingos, Theo Kuhen, Daneen Smith

DECK CREW Nicole Bell, Jordan Pena

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

CSU THEATRE
FALL 2023 READING SERIES

CURATED BY
SAFFRON HENKE



THE ON-THE-BRINK READING SERIES IS AIMED AT AMPLIFYING MARGINALIZED VOICES
AND EXPOSING STUDENTS TO A DIVERSE ARRAY OF BIPOC, QUEER, AND WOMEN
ARTISTS FROM AROUND THE NATION AND THE WORLD

JOIN DIRECTORS SAFFRON HENKE, JAVIER HURTADO, AND SPECIAL GUESTS
FOR THREE EXCITING PRODUCTIONS

OCTOBER 4 | FEBRUARY 7 | MARCH 6 | 7:30 P.M.

LARGE ACTING LAB / FREE



**"LADY-CLOTHES, DANCING, AND GAMBLING – ALL BAKED IN ONE
BIG CLOVE-FOOT CASSEROLE!"**

ACTA
Lady
BY JORDAN HARRISON

**DIRECTED BY
STEVE KEIM**

NOVEMBER 24 – DECEMBER 17, 2023

**A SWEET, SLY, AND SUBVERSIVE MIDWESTERN FABLE
ACCOMPANIED BY ACCORDION**

PERFORMANCE TIMES/DATES:

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24: PAY-WHAT-YOU-WILL PREVIEW PERFORMANCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25: OPENING NIGHT

FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS: 7:30PM SUNDAY MATINEES: 2:30PM

**BASBLEU.ORG / BOX OFFICE 970.498.8949
401 PINE ST. FORT COLLINS, CO 80524**

DESIGN BY MIKE SOLO / HELLO IMAGE ART / 2023

City of
Fort Collins
Fort Fund

BasBleu
theatre

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE



Nov. 3
OPENING

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
WILLIAM FINN
BOOK BY
RACHEL SHEINKIN

SIX AWKWARD SPELLING CHAMPIONS LEARN THAT
WINNING (AND LOSING) ISN'T EVERYTHING.

SEASON SPONSOR:



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

NOV.

3

through

NOV.

12

THURS 11/9

FRIDAYS

SATURDAYS

AT

7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY MATINEES

11/5 AND 11/12

AT

2:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY THEATRE / UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE ARTS
1400 REMINGTON STREET, FORT COLLINS, CO

DIRECTED BY

NOAH RACEY

FOR TICKET AND STREAMING INFORMATION

CSUARTSTICKETS.COM

NO CHARGE FOR CSU STUDENTS!



SHOW YOUR CSU RAMS PRIDE.



Your Pride Should Go Where You Do.

Show your pride year-round with our exclusive CSU Visa®

Debit Cards, free with any FNBO Checking Account.

Visit us online, or stop by a branch to open your account today.



The Bank
of CSU

fnbo.com/csu