SILENT SKY
by Lauren Gunderson

Directed by
David Cesarini

Scenic Design
Rick Rasmussen

Costume Design
Jason Orlenko

Original Music
Jenny Giering

Lighting & Video Design
Aaron Sherkow

Sound Design
David Cesarini

Properties Design
Heidi Salter &
Shannon Sloan-Spice

Stage Manager
Jessica Connelly*

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association

September 28 – October 22, 2017

SILENT SKY is sponsored by Jan & Vince Martin
and co-sponsored by The dental offices of Dr. David Paris

Next Act Theatre’s 2017-18 Season is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Commissioned and first produced by South Coast Repertory
with support from the Elizabeth George Foundation.
Original Music by Jenny Giering

SILENT SKY is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.
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Next Act Theatre | 255 S. Water Street | Milwaukee, WI 53204

SILENT SKY
THE CAST

Henrietta Leavitt ........................................................................................................Deborah Staples*
Margaret Leavitt .......................................................................................................Karen Estrada
Peter Shaw ............................................................................................................Reese Madigan*
Annie Jump Cannon .................................................................................................Carrie Hitchcock*
Williamina Fleming .................................................................................................Kelly Doherty
U/S Henrietta/Margaret ............................................................................................Grace DeWolff

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TIME:
About 1900 to present

PLACE:
Wisconsin, Harvard Observatory, an ocean liner

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**SILENT SKY GLOSSARY**

**Cepheids** – Pulsating stars, blinking from dim to bright with regular cycles.

**Nebula** – An interstellar cloud of dust, hydrogen, helium and other ionized gases, which may become the material for new stars.

**Luminosity** – The total amount of energy emitted by a star, galaxy, or other astronomical object per unit time.

**Apparent Brightness of a Star vs. Actual Brightness of a Star** – Apparent brightness is how bright the star appears to a detector here on Earth. It will vary by location, size and distance. Actual brightness is also called luminosity, an intrinsic property of the star.

**The Inverse Square Law** – If a star is twice as far away, it appears one fourth as bright. If it’s three times as far away, it looks 1/9th as bright, and so on.

**The Magellanic Clouds (Souther Hemisphere)** – Large and distant star formations appearing in the Southern hemisphere sky.

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**SOME WORDS FROM CARL SAGAN, AUTHOR OF COSMOS**

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

If you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe.

We’re made of star stuff. We are a way for the cosmos to know itself.

For small creatures such as we the vastness is bearable only through love.

Every one of us is, in the cosmic perspective, precious. If a human disagrees with you, let him live. In a hundred billion galaxies, you will not find another.

For me, it is far better to grasp the Universe as it really is than to persist in delusion, however satisfying and reassuring.

Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge.

Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere.

We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology.

We are like butterflies who flutter for a day and think it is forever.
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**LAUREN GUNDERSON (Playwright)**

Lauren M. Gunderson is the most produced living playwright in America of 2016, the winner of the Lanford Wilson Award and the Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and John Gassner Award for Playwriting, and a recipient of the Mellon Foundation’s 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She studied Southern Literature and Drama at Emory University, and Dramatic Writing at NYU’s Tisch School where she was a Reynolds Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship. Her work has been commissioned, produced and developed at companies across the U.S. including South Coast Rep (EMILIE, SILENT SKY), The Kennedy Center (THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF DR. WONDERFUL AND HER DOG!), The O’Neill, Denver Center, San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre, Synchronicity, Olney Theatre, Berkeley Rep, Shotgun Players, TheatreWorks, Crowded Fire and more. She co-authored MISS BENNET: CHRISTMAS AT PEMBERLEY with Margot Melcon. Her work is published at Playscripts (I AND YOU, EXIT PURSUED BY A BEAR, THE TAMING and TOIL AND TROUBLE), Dramatists (SILENT SKY, BAUER, MISS BENNET) and Samuel French (EMILIE). Her picture book DR. WONDERFUL: BLAST OFF TO THE MOON will be released from Two Lions / Amazon in May 2017. LaurenGunderson.com and @LalaTellsAStory

**KAREN ESTRADA (Margaret Leavitt)**

Karen Estrada is making her debut on Next Act’s stage. She is no stranger to the company, however, having been lead teacher for the Next Actors: Summer Theatre for Teens program for eleven years. She has had the pleasure of performing at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, In Tandem Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, First Stage Milwaukee, Milwaukee Opera Theatre, Splinter Group, and numerous shows with Sunset Playhouse’s Bug in a Rug Children’s Theatre, Musical Mainstage with Bunny Gumbo’s Combat Theatre, and a collaboration with her sketch comedy troupe The Show and Danceworks Performance Company. Karen is a proud three-time alumna of Disney on Classic in Japan. Besides working with the Next Actors, she has taught at many schools of theater including First Stage, MITY, and Waukesha Civic.

**CARRIE HITCHCOCK (Annie Jump Cannon)**

Carrie Hitchcock is delighted to return to Next Act for this production of SILENT SKY. Carrie is a native of Milwaukee and a graduate of the historic Professional Theatre Training Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her recent theatre credits include OUTSIDE MULLINGAR (Aoife) and SILENT SKY (Williamina Fleming) with Forward Theatre, VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE (Masha) and DEAR ELIZABETH (Elizabeth Bishop) with Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, LETTICE AND LOVAGE (Lotte Schoen) with Renaissance Theaterworks and BLOOMSDAY (Cait) with Next Act. Later this season, Carrie will tackle the role of Miss Hannigan in ANNIE at Skylight Music Theatre.
**REES MADIGAN**  
*Peter Shaw*  
Reese is thrilled to be back at Next Act, having appeared previously as Paul Hornung/JFK in LOMBARDI: THE ONLY THING. Other recent Milwaukee credits include a whole bunch of characters in AMELIA at Renaissance Theaterworks and Bob Cratchit in Milwaukee Rep’s A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Reese is very proud to be an associate artist with Milwaukee Rep where he has appeared many times. Some of his favorite roles at the Rep include Brick in CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, Biff in DEATH OF A SALESMAN, Paul Hornung in LOMBARDI, and Thomas in VENUS IN FUR. Recent TV credits include THE BLACKLIST and HOUSE OF CARDS. Many thanks to David for inviting me back to Next Act.

**DEBORAH STAPLES**  
*Henrietta Leavitt*  
Deborah is thrilled to be back at Next Act Theatre where she appeared in THE OTHER PLACE, MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD, TEN QUESTIONS, and directed WELCOME HOME, JENNY SUTTER. Deborah spent last summer at Door Shakespeare and shooting the independent feature film COMING UP FOR AIR, which she also co-wrote. Some past favorites include the one-woman shows THE BLONDE, THE BRUNETTE AND THE VENGEFUL REDHEAD (Joseph Jefferson Award nominated) and THE AMISH PROJECT; and the title roles in HAMLET, MARY STUART, ANNA KARENINA, MIRANDOLINA, PHEDRE, ANNA CHRISTIE, and ELIZABETH REX. She also has been in over 65 productions at the Milwaukee Rep where she is an Associate Artist. Deborah is a voiceover artist, the mother of two fabulous girls and proud wife to the ever-amazing David Cescarini. Next up: more filming, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, and ANIMAL FARM at Milwaukee Carol and Center Stage. DeborahStaples.com

**GRACE DEWOLFF**  
*U/S Henrietta/Margaret*  
Grace has been in Next Act’s orbit since their Off-Broadway Theatre Center days in 2006. Recent acting credits include Laura in THE GLASS MENAGERIE at In Tandem, and Juliet with Bard and Bourbon. Next year you can catch her in Renaissance Theaterworks’ TOP GIRLS. Grace is thrilled and honored to be in Next Act’s rehearsal room learning from such incredible talent. Thanks to the whole Next Act team for their support.

**DAVID CEC SARINI**  
*Director/Sound Designer*  
The 2017-2018 season marks David’s 39th year as a theatre professional, having debuted with the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis as a journeyman actor in 1978. He has proudly served as Producing Artistic Director for Milwaukee’s Next Act Theatre for 25 years and counting. David’s first directing assignment was the musical PERSONALS, for Theatre Tessaract, in 1989. He has since directed many Next Act productions; favorites include THE PAVILION, THE REAL THING, RED HERRING, SOMEONE WHO’LL WATCH OVER ME, THE DRESSER, ROOM SERVICE, SIDE MAN and TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992. While directing, he usually doubles as Sound Designer; he has created sound effects and scores for over 100 professional productions. Favorites include LAST OF THE BOYS, MICROCRISIS, THE VOICE OF THE PRAIRIE, THE DRESSER, MARY’S WEDDING and THE BRIDGE AT MORDUC.
JESSICA CONNELLY (Resident Stage Manager)
Since 2006 Jessica has been the Resident Stage Manager for Next Act Theatre, SILENT SKY being her 50th production here. A few of Jessica’s favorite projects include: DEAR ESTHER, MASTER HAROLD and the BOYS, LAST OF THE BOYS, MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP, FAITH HEALER, PURGATORIO, GOING TO ST. IVES, VIGIL, THREE VIEWS OF THE SAME OBJECT, TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992, and BLOOMSDAY (Next Act Theatre), A RISING WIND (John Michael Kohler Arts Center), CHESAPEAKE, TROJAN WOMEN, THE SHAPE OF THINGS, and the US premiere of SKIN TIGHT (Renaissance Theaterworks), FENCES (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), SANTALAND DIARIES (Marcus Center for the Performing Arts). Jessica is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

RICK RASMUSSEN (Scenic Designer)
Calling Seattle, WA home, this former resident of Milwaukee travels the Midwest designing for various theatre companies. Rick has worked with the theatre artists at Next Act for 28 years and always finds their work stimulating and rewarding. Most recent design projects include BACK OF THE THROAT, BRAVO, CARUSO!, THE TAMING, UnSILENT NIGHT, BLOOMSDAY (Next Act Theatre); TINTYPES, DAMES AT SEA and GERSHWIN AND FRIENDS (Skylight Music Theatre); WEST SIDE STORY, 9 TO 5 and LEGALLY BLONDE (Fireside Dinner Theatre). He has also worked locally with Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and In Tandem Theatre.

AARON SHERKOW (Lighting & Video Designer)
Aaron Sherkow received his MFA from Boston University in 2011. He is thrilled to be back in Wisconsin and delighted to continue to work with Next Act Theatre. In addition to his freelance design, he is also the Technical Director and Lecturer at Lawrence University. Recent shows with Next Act include TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES, 1992, BACK OF THE THROAT and RACE. His work has also contributed to WHO WOULD BE KING? with Liars & Believers, JULIUS CAESAR and MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM with Door Shakespeare, ROMEO ET JULIETTE with the Boston Opera Institute and ROAD TO MECCA with Boston Center for American Performance.

JASON ORLENKO (Costume Designer)
Jason is delighted to return to Next Act where he previously designed THE TAMING. A Milwaukee based designer, favorite work includes SWEENEY TODD at Skylight Music Theatre, GREAT EXPECTATIONS at Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, THE VIOLET HOUR at Renaissance Theaterworks, and THE STORY OF MY LIFE at Milwaukee Opera Theatre. His designs have also been seen at the Milwaukee Rep, the Rep of St. Louis, In Tandem Theatre, Indiana Festival Theatre, Children’s Theatre of Madison, University of Alaska-Anchorage, Marquette University and UW-Milwaukee where he has also served as an adjunct lecturer. Other professional credits include American Players Theatre, the Florentine Opera, the Hangar Theatre, and the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Current and upcoming work includes SOUVENIR at the Milwaukee Rep and ANNIE at Skylight. Jason holds an MFA in Costume Design from Indiana University. www.jasonorlenko.com
HEIDI SALTER (Properties Co-Designer)
Heidi Salter has been co-props designer for the past three seasons and is so happy to be back again this season working with her friends at Next Act. Heidi is also a freelance director and is the founder of Imagination Theatre in Germantown where she has directed some of her favorite shows (INTO THE WOODS, DEATH OF A SALESMAN, RUN FOR YOUR WIFE, and BAREFOOT IN THE PARK). When not doing theatre, Heidi enjoys watching her three daughters perform and grow into the next generation of amazing theatre artists.

SHANNON SLOAN-SPICE, Ph.D (Properties Co-Designer)
Shannon Sloan-Spice is pleased to be returning to Next Act Theatre as Props Master with her great partner-in-crime, Heidi Salter for their fourth season! Shannon is best known as a theatre educator and directs many spring musicals around Greater Milwaukee. She was head-master and Lead Teacher at First Stage this summer. In 2015, she directed In Tandem’s first summer arts conservatory program. She splits her time between Milwaukee and Chicago and teaches World Mythologies at Oakton Community College, IL where she is part of the new Environmental Studies Concentration.

ANNE LEHMER (Development Director)
A nonprofit fundraising professional since 2005, Anne became Development Director of Next Act in January of 2016. Previously, she held development positions at San Francisco State University in CA, and, the Nordic Heritage Museum, United Indians for All Tribes Foundation and the YWCA in Seattle, WA. She was an active member, advocate and volunteer in the Northwest Development Officers Association and the WA Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, eventually serving on the Board of Directors. She also served a teen mentoring organization, the Service Board, as a Board member and as Board Chair. Anne holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Mills College and a M.A. in Museum Studies, Fundraising and Administration, from San Francisco State University. Currently, Anne enjoys exploring our many local museums, historic architecture and green spaces, and the bounty of festivals, music, dance, ethnic and cultural events. That is, when she’s not puttering in her vegetable garden.

REBECCA MODER (Marketing Director)
Becky has been with Next Act Theatre since 2012. Before that she ran the marketing department at the South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center. She holds a B.A. in Arts Management with a Business minor from UW-Stevens Point. When not at Next Act, Becky is spending time with family up north in Three Lakes, WI or working on home renovation projects with her husband, Tim.

MICHAEL VAN DRESER (Technical Director)
Mike has served as Next Act Theatre’s Technical Director since the 2011-12 season, taking on the additional roles of Facility Manager and Rental Coordinator in the 2014-15 season. Previously, Mike was the resident Master Electrician and Light Board Operator, beginning in 2005-06. Mike studied with renowned Lighting Designers Jason Fassl and Andrew Meyers and has done Lighting Design for NEXT ACTORS SUMMER THEATRE FOR TEENS, UnSILENT NIGHT, BRAVO, CARUSO!, IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE LIVE RADIO SHOW, PERFECT MENDACITY (Next Act Theatre), WHEN THE CURTAIN FALLS, and KISS ME KATE (Greendale High School).
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One per check. Dine in only. Food Only. Not combined with any other offer.
FOOD AND BEVERAGES – Food is not permitted in the theatre, but drinks may be taken in.

ENTERING AND EXITING THE THEATRE SPACE – Please use walkways to access the seating areas and refrain from crossing over the stage.

CANCELLATION POLICY – Next Act does not cancel or reschedule performances due to inclement weather or sporting events, nor do we offer refunds.

LATECOMER POLICY – Latecomers will not be seated until an appropriate time in the performance. This may be at the intermission. Seating may not be permitted 30 minutes after the start of a performance. If you are running late, please call the Ticket Office at 414-278-0765.

LISTENING AUGMENTATION DEVICES – Please ask the House Manager on duty for assistance.

LOST PROPERTY – Items left at the theatre are kept in Lost & Found for 30 days. Call the Ticket Office at 414-278-0765 if you have lost an item.

TICKET EXCHANGES – Subscribers may exchange their tickets, without fee, up to 48 hours prior to the performance (price adjustments may apply). Single ticket buyers may exchange their tickets for a fee of $5 per ticket up to 48 hours prior. Exchanges are based strictly on availability. Patrons are strongly urged to request exchanges well in advance.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES – To avoid disturbing the performance, NO cameras or recording devices of any kind are allowed in the theatre. Please turn off all electronic equipment including pagers and cell phones.

SMOKING – The Next Act Theatre facility is a smoke-free environment.

STUDENT AND SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNTS – Seniors and students receive a $5 discount per ticket on advance sales. Students may also purchase half-price rush tickets with a valid student I.D. one half-hour prior to curtain, based on availability. Discounts are not available on performance run extensions.

GROUP DISCOUNTS – Groups of 10 or more receive a discount of 20%. To book groups, contact Becky at 414-278-7780. Discounts are not available on performance run extensions.
SEX WITH STRANGERS
By Laura Eason

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