“Gunderson’s play juxtaposes some familiar conflicts: career versus romance, career versus family obligations, scientific inquiry versus holy mystery.” – Chicago Tribune, Kerry Reid

“… sheer magic [is] in Lauren Gunderson’s SILENT SKY. … Gunderson [writes] economically and with bursts of smart, infectious humor” -San Francisco Chronicle

“… SILENT SKY could act as a simple reminder of what a pleasant, thought-provoking evening as the theatre ought to look like. It’s a lively, funny, accessible play that’s alive with interesting ideas.” -ArtsAtl.com

“[SILENT SKY] is a startling, entertaining true story of a brilliant, history-making woman ---hitherto unknown to many of us.” -AtlantaInTown.com

“Lauren Gunderson’s luminously beautiful play SILENT SKY is an intellectual epic told on an intimate scale. Bottom line: Heavenly.” -Atlanta Journal Constitution
Rehearsals for *Silent Sky* began virtually on Zoom in December at the end of the previous semester. On January 19, rehearsals began with five student actors, two student stage managers and the director attending face-to-face rehearsals in the PLT which has a physical distance capacity of forty-three. One weekly rehearsal has taken place on Zoom to minimize our time together. The production plan is to stream live performances. There is one scheduled live post-show talkback on Thursday, Feb. 18.

Additional face-to-face protocols cover all of the following:

- Use of the Lewis App for health screening.
- QR code scanning for contact tracing in production spaces.
- Reduced contact between students and staff via physical distancing.
- Hand washing protocols.
- Sanitization of high touch surfaces including props and stage furniture.
- Sanitization of shared equipment such as in makeup room, costume shop and the tech booth.
- Reduced physical contact in close shared spaces, such as dressing rooms, and tech booth.
- Everyone in the performance space is masked, and physically distant both on and off the stage.
- Performers will use body microphones for the filming of the production.
- At no time will a performer physically touch another performer unless they are wearing gloves.
- Production staff are masked and physically distancing at all times when attending rehearsals, dress rehearsals and filming.
- Taking temperatures twice during the face-to-face time spent together.
- Rehearsal notes are given electronically through a private Facebook group for the cast and crew to reduce time spent together.
- Actors will have staggered call times for use of the makeup room. The space has been measured, and current social distancing allows for six performers in Makeup 1 and three performers in Makeup 2.
- The tech booth and crew will follow the same physical distancing, and sanitization protocols as the performers.
SILENT SKY PLOT SUMMARY

• In the early 1900s, Henrietta Leavitt begins working at the Harvard Observatory.
• She joins a group of women called “computers” charting the stars.
• Henrietta and her cohorts attempt to measure the light and distance of stars.
• She also takes measure of her life on Earth.
• Attempts to find balance between her passion for science, and her dedication to family, and the possibility of love and romance.
• It is a dramatization of the historical 19th-century astronomer Henrietta Leavitt explores a woman’s place in society during a time of immense scientific discoveries and social change.
• The ‘hidden figures’ of the Harvard Observatory believed in scientific discovery and social change. Their ‘silent’ contributions to both changed the way we understand both the heavens and Earth.

SETTINGS
The play takes place between 1900-1920 in the following locations:
• Leavitt family home, Wisconsin
• The Harvard Observatory
• Atlantic Ocean Liner
• Henrietta’s home, Cambridge, MA

PLAYWRIGHT LAUREN GUNDERSON’S CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS
• HENRIETTA LEAVITT 30s, brilliant, meticulous, excited - almost always wearing a period hearing-aid.
• MARGARET LEAVITT 30s, homebody, creative, sweet, sister.
• ANNIE CANNON 40s, the leader, terse and sure, grows into a firebrand.
• WILLIAMINA FLEMING 50s, smart as a whip and fun. Scottish.
• PETER SHAW 30s, the head astronomer’s apprentice... and the man.

ASTRONOMY 101: STAR SPANKER
• Invented by Henrietta Leavitt
• A tool used to help standardize brightness measurements
• Previously, brightness had been measured by observers ranking it by eye which was too subjective for an accurate measurement
• Designed with a piece of photographic plate and a wire handle attached to it
• The “fly spanker” so named because it resembled a fly swatter but was “too small to do a fly much damage”
• Had stars of well-established brightnesses on it
• Moved around in front of a glass plate with stars of unknown brightness
• Helped standardize the measurements
• Helped to determine if the brightness of a star had changed
PLAYWRIGHT LAUREN GUNDERSON

Lauren was awarded the 2016 Lanford Wilson Award from the Dramatist Guild, the 2016 Otis Gurnsey Award for Emerging Writer, and was awarded the prestigious 2014 and 2018 Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award for her plays I and You (also a Susan Smith Blackburn Blackburn and John Gassner Award finalist) and The Book of Will. She is also a recipient of the Mellon Foundation’s 3-Year Residency with Marin Theatre Company. She co-authored the play Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley with Margot Melcon. It was also one of the most produced plays in America for the 2017-2018 season.

Her 2011 3-city rolling world premiere of Exit, Pursued By A Bear, was featured in American Theatre Magazine and The Week, and has reached over 20 communities across the US winning “Best Comedy” accolades. Bear is now published by Playscripts, as is her comedy, Toil and Trouble and The Taming, which the San Francisco Chronicle called “a laugh riot with timely food for thought.”

Her first musical, The Amazing Adventures of Dr. Wonderful and Her Dog!, commissioned by The Kennedy Center, opened in DC to rave reviews and continues its life in state-wide tours. Her first children’s book based on Dr. Wonderful was released by Two Lions Publishing in 2017. Emilie: La Marquise Du Chatelet Defends Her Tonight was commissioned and premiered at South Coast Rep in 2009. By and By premiered at Shotgun Players in Berkeley. Fire Work was developed at The O’Neill National Playwrights Conference, is a 2011 winner for Aurora Theatre’s Global Age Project, and premiered at Theatre First in 2014.

She has spoken nationally and internationally on the intersection of science and theatre and Arts Activism, and teaches playwriting in San Francisco. She is a Playwright in Residence at The Playwrights Foundation, a Dramatists Guild member, and was a member of Just Theatre’s New Play Lab. She writes for The Huffington Post, The Wall Street Journal and tweets @LalaTellsAStory.

WATCH THE SHOW FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME!

Purchase streaming links from the PLT Website: lewisu.edu/plt

Click on the “Buy Tickets” link on the left-hand-side. An email address is required to send the purchasing patron a link to the streaming production. Purchase tickets for the number of people watching the live stream, please.

Purchases must be made geographically within a reasonable range of the PLT community and is not available nationally.

Twenty four hours prior to the event, patrons will receive an email from the box office with a streaming link and password to the performance. Thirty minutes prior to showtime, click on and open the Vimeo link from your email and enter the password.

The link will open in your internet browser, we recommend using Google Chrome or Firefox. Alternatively, you may have to copy/paste the link from your email to an internet browser.

Please do not share the link.

A stable internet connection is REQUIRED. It is recommended to avoid using WiFi. Connect directly to your network with a cable, if possible.

Please know that streaming productions is imperfect. The possibility exists for the audio to drop out or the image to freeze. We’ll do our best to minimize the possibilities in this brave new theatre world!

Questions?
Email: boxoffice@lewisu.edu
Theatre Major Julia Egizio Advances to the National Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival

Lewis University junior theatre major Julia Egizio of Plainfield has been selected to be one of 125 students to compete in the Kennedy Center American College Theater National Festival. The virtual event is scheduled to be held in April.

During the KCACTF Regional Festival, Egizio was named the 2021 KCACTF Management Fellowship Recipient in Stage Management for her exceptional leadership and organization on the February 2020 PLT production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

“I am very grateful for the opportunity to share and receive feedback on my work. Everyone at the regional festival was extremely supportive and helpful. I was lucky to have such an amazing show to present my work and I learned so much from the experience,” Egizio stated.

Egizio also attended the theatre festival last year and advanced to the regional finals in Stage Management with her work on the 2019 PLT production, “Mamma Mia!”

The Lewis University Philip Lynch Theatre (PLT) Department annually participates in the festival. For the first time, this year’s 53rd KCACTF was held virtually and showcased streaming university productions and offered a variety of online activities, including workshops, symposia, and recognition of student artists’ individual work through awards and scholarships in playwriting, acting, directing, management, technology and design.

The KCACTF experience offers student artists the opportunity to showcase their work and receive outside collegiate-level assessment. Lewis University student achievements and festival participation were also represented in the areas of acting, sound, lighting and properties design.

Junior education major Katie Szymkiewicz of Chicago advanced to the regional finals with her sound design from the November 2020 PLT production, *These Shining Lives*. Junior theatre major Katie Horn of Sturgis, Mich., participated in the VOICES OUT LOUD Workshop writing and performing an original monologue, the Irene Ryan acting competition, and her sound design for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Junior theatre major John Kladis of Palos Hills auditioned for the New Playwrights Program and was cast and performed the role of Jim in the original work *Bev Playing Bev*. Junior criminal justice and psychology major Kelsey Papineau of Mazon presented her properties fabrication for the dog, Wellington, in the PLT production, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Junior theatre major Austin Jones of Steger participated in the Design Storm Competition with a lighting design project.

Ten Lewis students in total--along with three theatre professors, Kevin Trudeau of Beverly, Andrew Nelsen and Jo Slowik both of Joliet--attended the festival. Nelsen assisted with the operations of the Tech Olympics and Slowik assisted in the Irene Ryan acting competition feedback sessions. Other students who also attended KCACTF were Haley Marchewka of Plainfield, Kyra Savage of Romeoville, Saenovia Poole of Chicago, Alexander Schedel and Brianna Knutsen, both of Plainfield.
Congratulations to Lewis University students: Kyra Savage and John Kladis on their KCAC TF Region 3 Irene Ryan acting nominations for their performances in the streaming production of These Shining Lives by Melanie Marnich.

WFG WADSWORTH FAMILY GALLERY LEWIS UNIVERSITY

Rebecca Banasiak, Peggy MacNamara and Adrienne Stroup are a Specimen Preparator, an Artist in Residence and a Collections Assistant, respectively, at the Field Museum. With the influence of the Field Museum’s exhibits and collections, their work shows their love for the natural world and how art and science are intertwining together. Join these Women in Art and Science in celebration of STEAM during Women’s History Month this March, 2021.

The show is on view and open to the public every day from 9am-5pm. A Gallery Talk with the artists will take place in a virtual format on March 18, 7-8pm. More details about how to access the talk will be forthcoming. Please note that face coverings and social distancing will be required in the gallery for your safety.

On View February 8 - March 19
Adam Peck ’95 recently returned to Illinois after 13 years as Assistant Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. While Adam’s career has taken him away from the arts and theatre, he was deeply involved with theatre and music at SFA, supporting student productions, teaching classes in improv comedy and even appearing in an opera production. Adam will serve as Assistant Vice President at Illinois State University. Adam and his family is thrilled to be back home - and within a short drive of the Philip Lynch Theatre, and hopes to see productions at the PLT soon.

John Culik (2/24/1926 - 9/29/2020, age 94) was a gifted artist born in Joliet and remained a lifelong resident of the city. He received his education from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Lewis alum, John Lordan ’72 said “Culik was polite, caring giving and loved to make people laugh.” He was known for his printmaking, much of which was devoted to natural subjects. The emphasis in his work was depictions of local scenes and farms of the Joliet area. For many years he traveled throughout the Midwest participating in local art shows, events through which he made not only his living and his reputation, but also countless friends in the artistic community. He explored art museums around the world and found great satisfaction sharing his knowledge of art as a teacher at Lewis University. One type of Culik’s etching styles stands out to assistant technical director, Dave Pomatto ’71, a Culik friend for 55 years. “He took found object and he would ink them and press them into paper. He’d end up with different shapes and different colors that are printed all individually. I’ve never seen anybody else do something like that.” Lewis alum, Bill Bartelt ’70 said, “he saw beauty of the simple things, and I wouldn’t be the artist I am without John Culik.” John life will remain a treasured memory for his family, friends and the local art community.
"...straight-from-the-gut beautifully written two-hander that attracted Sigourney Weaver and Bill Murray to the premiere production..."

-New York, CurtainUp

Streaming Shows
March 19 & 20

Performance Showtimes:
Friday @ 7:30 pm
Fri. Post-Show Talkback @ 8:30 pm
Saturday @ 7:30 pm
General Admission $10
Lewis Students $3

Box Office:
W-F 1:00-4:30 pm
(815) 836-5500
Credit Card Purchases thru
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2021 Theatre Milestones
Philip Lynch Theatre 45 years old!
Heritage Theatre Company 25 years old!
#PLT45HTC25 #LewisUPLT45
Streaming Productions Online!