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The Nora Theatre Company presents the World Premiere of Joyce Van Dyke's *The Women Who Mapped the Stars*

April 19 – May 20, 2018

Five Women: A whole new universe

CAMBRIDGE, MA – The Nora Theatre Company is proud to present the World Premiere of **Joyce Van Dyke's *The Women Who Mapped the Stars*** from **April 19 to May 20, 2018**. The production is directed by **Jessica Ernst**. The press performance is **Tuesday, April 24 at 7:30PM**. *The Women Who Mapped the Stars* is the inaugural production in **The Brit d'Arbeloff Women in Science Production Series. A Catalyst Collaborative@MIT Production**.

Late 1800s, Harvard College Observatory. “Computers” – women employed for half a man’s salary to analyze astronomic data — show us that the universe is larger than we ever dreamed. The thrilling story of five women who changed the way astronomers saw the universe – from scientist to scientist and generation to generation. ***The Women Who Mapped the Stars***, a world premiere by **Joyce Van Dyke**, is the untold story of brave women in science who paved the way for previously impossible advances in astronomy.

The Women Who Mapped the Stars plays at Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge from April 19 to May 20, 2018. Tickets may be purchased by calling 617.576.9278 x1, at the Central Square Theater box office, or online at CentralSquareTheater.org

About Joyce Van Dyke

Joyce Van Dyke (Playwright) ***The Women Who Mapped the Stars***, commissioned by Central Square Theater with early script development assistance from The Poets’ Theatre and Jessica Ernst, is the inaugural play in the Brit D’Arbeloff Women in Science Production Series. Running simultaneously with this premiere is the off-Broadway premiere of *Daybreak*, about two women survivors of the Armenian genocide. *Daybreak* is produced by Pan Asian Repertory Theatre with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts (April 21-May 13). It was previously produced in 2015 at Tufts; an earlier version had a workshop production in 2012 by Boston Playwrights’ Theatre under the title *Deported / a dream play*. Joyce’s other plays include *The Oil Thief*, commissioned by the Ensemble Studio Theatre / Sloan Project, produced by Boston Playwrights’ Theatre and winner of the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script (2009). *A Girl’s War*, produced by Golden Thread Productions (2009), New Repertory Theatre (2003), and Boston Playwrights’ Theatre (2001), won the Gassner Award and the *Boston Globe*’s “Top Ten” plays of 2001. Joyce has been awarded residencies from the MacDowell Colony, the Huntington Theatre Playwriting Fellows program, and Central Square Theater’s PlayPen. She teaches playwriting and Shakespeare at Northeastern and Harvard. JoyceVanDyke.com

About Jessica Ernst

Jessica Ernst (*Director*) has been collaborating with Joyce Van Dyke to develop *The Women Who Mapped The Stars* through four workshops over two years, and is looking forward to bringing the world premiere to the Central Square Theater stage. Her directing credits include *Daughter of Venus* (Artists' Theatre of Boston), *The Love of the Nightingale* (Open Theatre Project), *The Weaver of Raveloe* (Oberon, world premiere), and *Hedda Gabler* (The Longwood Players), as well as various short plays and staged readings. In the past, she has worked as an assistant director and artistic intern with several Boston area companies, including the Huntington Theatre Company, New Repertory Theatre, and Actors' Shakespeare Project. With The Poets' Theatre, she produced, curated, and directed The Ghostlight Series from 2015-2016 - a monthly performance series exploring poetry in performance, new plays, and more. Jessica is a graduate of Gettysburg College, where her work included classics, contemporary work, and new plays and adaptations. This summer, she will be directing *Henry IV* with Praxis Stage, performing in multiple parks in Cambridge and Brookline.

About the Cast of *The Women Who Mapped the Stars*

Amanda Collins (*Cecilia Payne*) Amanda previously appeared at CST in Underground Railway Theater's *The Life of Galileo*. Regional theatre: *Old Money* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company); *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Totalitarians*, *Out of Sterno* (IRNE Nomination, Best Actress), *This Is Our Youth*, *9 Circles* (Gloucester Stage); *Back the Night*, *Elemeno Pea* (Boston Playwrights'); *The Seagull* (Harbor Stage/Modern Theatre); *A Behanding in Spokane*, *The Bald Soprano*, *Speech and Debate*, *Shortstack*, *Colorado*, *What Then* (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater); *When The World Was Green*, *An Ideal Husband* (American Stage in Florida); *Taste of Sunrise* (Wheelock Family Theater); *9 Circles* (Publick Theatre Boston); *Men on Boats* and *My Name is Asher Lev* (Cape Rep); *The Weird* (Off The Grid); and *Jester's Dead* (The Outfit in NYC). Amanda is a graduate of Regis College where she earned a BA in History and Theatre. Television: *Olive Kitteridge* (HBO), *Castle Rock* (Hulu) and *Boston's Finest* (ABC Pilot). Film: *Sea of Trees*.

Becca A. Lewis (*Williamina Fleming*) is pleased to have her Central Square Theater debut with The Nora after *The Women Who Mapped the Stars* workshop performance last spring. Becca co-created and performs in *The Pineapple Project* with Queer Soup, an original piece for kids celebrating gender diversity (PineappleProject.org). Additional credits include: *Charlotte's Web* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *Revolt. She said. Revolt again* (Dig Boston's Best Performance), *Splendor*, *GRIMM* (IRNE Award Best Supporting Actress), *Voyeurs de Venus* (Company One), *The Big Meal* (Elliot Norton nomination Outstanding Actress, Ensemble), *Tigers Be Still* (Elliot Norton nomination Outstanding Actress), *My Wonderful Day*, *Enron* (Zeitgeist Stage), *Three Sisters*, *Informed Consent*, *The Sonic Life of a Giant Tortoise*, *Detroit*, (Apollinaire Theatre Company), *A Behanding in Spokane* (Theatre on Fire), *Far Away*, *Vinegar Tom*, *Fen* (Whistler in the Dark). It is rare that one gets the opportunity to inhabit a soul whose life's work took place in such close proximity and whose bones are at rest down the road in Mount Auburn Cemetery. Becca is grateful to be trusted with the task of honoring the legacy of Williamina Fleming as well as the legacies of all of these brilliant women. Thank you for listening to their story.

Sarah Oakes Muirhead (*Henrietta Swan Leavitt*) is a Brooklyn-based actor, singer & director. She previously appeared at CST in the Nora's production of *Arcadia*. Other area credits include: *Tartuffe*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *A Little Night Music* (Huntington Theatre Company); *Fiddler On The Roof* (New Rep, dir. Austin Pendleton); *Show Boat* (Reagle); *4000 Miles*, *Spring Awakening* (Gloucester Stage Company); *A Little Night Music* (Barnstormers). Ms. Muirhead trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and is a proud graduate of Boston University's BFA Acting program. She is also a coach for Boston-based "My College Audition," helping the next generation of theatre artists to pursue

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their passions. Love and heartfelt thanks to J & J for the incredible opportunity to share in building, telling & learning from the stories of these phenomenal female pioneers. For P. SarahOakesMuirhead.com

Sarah Newhouse (*Annie Jump Cannon*) is delighted to be working with such a stellar group of women here at The Nora. She is a founding company member of Actors' Shakespeare Project; some ASP favorites include *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *The School for Scandal*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and most recently, *Exit the King*. Other local appearances include A.R.T., Boston Playwrights', Charles Playhouse, Gloucester Stage, Lyric Stage Company, New Repertory Theatre, and Stoneham Theatre. She has performed regionally in a variety of venues, and has been very fortunate to have travelled as far and wide as Belfast, Moscow and Taiwan. Her NYC credits include the Kraine Theatre, Manhattan Punch Line, Theatre for a New City, and LaMama Etc. Sarah's recent film credits include *The Legend of Lucy Keyes*, *Beneath Contempt*, *Bleed For This*, and the upcoming *I Feel Pretty*, with Amy Schumer. She currently serves on the board of the Theatre Community Benevolent Fund, and lives in Watertown, MA with her husband and son.

Christine Power (*Antonia Maury*) is pleased to be making her debut with The Nora. Recent local credits include *Lost Girls* (Take Your Pick Productions), *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (SpeakEasy Stage), *Barbecue* (Lyric Stage), *Faithless* (Boston Playwrights' Theater), *Good; Three Viewings* (New Rep), *A Great Wilderness; Good Television* (Zeitgeist Stage), *Six Degrees of Separation* (Bad Habit Productions), *Equus* (Off the Grid), *Greenland* (Apollinaire - IRNE nomination Best Supporting Actress), *Chalk* (Fresh Ink Theater), *In the Summer House* (Fort Point Theater Channel), *The Miracle Worker* (Wheelock Family Theater), *Neighbors* (Company One - Norton nomination Outstanding Actress). New work development with Speakeasy's Boston Project; New Rep Next Voices; Boston Playwrights' Theater; The Nora; Fresh Ink's Ink Spots; Rhombus Playwrights' Group; Grub Street.

The artistic and design team includes **James F. Rotondo III** (*Scenic Designer*), **Chelsea Kerl** (*Costume Designer*), **John Malinowski** (*Lighting Designer*), **Lee Schuna** (*Sound Design*), **SeifAllah Salotto-Cristobal** (*Projection Designer*), **Ian Thorsell** (*Properties Designer*), **Naomi Ibasitas** (*Assistant Director*), and **Dean Marchant** (*Dramaturg*). **Maura Neff** is the Production Stage Manager. **Sara Hutchins** is the Assistant Stage Manager.

Central Square Theater (CST) opened in 2008 through a groundbreaking partnership between **The Nora Theatre Company** (The Nora) and **Underground Railway Theater (URT)**. This collaboration has been called a model for the arts community (The Boston Foundation, Culture is our Commonwealth, and The National Collaboration Prize), as it has paired two like-minded performing arts organizations in a strategic alliance with the City of Cambridge and MIT, resulting in the development of a state-of-the-art performing arts center in the heart of Central Square. CST has a mission to support its two theaters-in-residence while maintaining a shared vision of artists and audiences creating theater vital to their communities. The Nora and URT have a combined track record of over 50 years producing award-winning theater. Located in Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and steeped in its multiracial, intergenerational, ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods, the CST theater experience exudes a democratic energy where classes, races and age groups come together to be inspired, entertained and energized.

Press inquiries should be directed to Central Square Theater's Director of Marketing, Nicholas Peterson, phone: 617.576.9278 x205 or via email ndp@centralsquaretheater.org.

Central Square Theater is accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating. For further information please call 617.576.9278 or visit CentralSquareTheater.org

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CALENDAR AND RELATED FACTS AT A GLANCE

THE WOMEN WHO MAPPED THE STARS

By **Joyce Van Dyke**

Directed by **Jessica Ernst**

April 19 – May 20, 2018

Late 1800s, Harvard College Observatory. “Computers” – women employed for half a man’s salary to analyze astronomic data — show us that the universe is larger than we ever dreamed. The thrilling story of five women who changed the way astronomers saw the universe – from scientist to scientist and generation to generation. **The Women Who Mapped the Stars**, a world premiere by **Joyce Van Dyke**, is the untold story of brave women in science who paved the way for previously impossible advances in astronomy.

Produced by: **The Nora Theatre Company**

Cast: **Amanda Collins** (*Cecilia Payne*), **Becca A. Lewis** (*Williamina Fleming*), **Sarah Oakes Muirhead** (*Henrietta Swan Leavitt*), **Sarah Newhouse** (*Annie Jump Cannon*), **Christine Power** (*Antonia Maury*)

Director: **Jessica Ernst**

Stage Manager: **Maura Neff**

Design Team: **James F. Rotondo III** (*Scenic Designer*), **Chelsea Kerl** (*Costume Designer*), **John Malinowski** (*Lighting Designer*), **Lee Schuna** (*Sound Design*), **SeifAllah Salotto-Cristobal** (*Projection Designer*), **Ian Thorsell** (*Properties Designer*), **Naomi Ibasitas** (*Assistant Director*), and **Dean Marchant** (*Dramaturg*)

Performing at: Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge 02139

Run Time: 90 minutes with no intermission

Press Performance: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 at 7:30PM

Ticket Prices: Tickets begin at \$25. Seniors Save \$5, Students (with Univ. ID): \$20. Under 18: \$15. Discounts for Groups.

Box Office: 617.576.9278 x1, CentralSquareTheater.org

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