

The Moving Dock Theatre Company

About UNSUNG STARS

UN Sung STARS brings to light a fascinating moment in history as women took their place in astronomy. Step back in time with us to the early part of the 20th century when, for the first time in history, a photograph could be made of what was viewed through a telescope. With this new technology, mankind - and womankind - could study more of what was possible to see in the sky. This produced an enormous amount of astronomical data. Stars could be identified - even discovered - and their brightness measured. Dr. Edward Pickering, Director of the Harvard College Observatory, hired women to do this work. They were called computers.

During her work at the Observatory Henrietta Leavitt discovered the Period-Luminosity Relationship - the important discovery that enabled astronomers to measure distance in space. She left so slight a human trail, though her discovery caused a significant shift in our perception of our universe. In UNSUNG STARS we set out to explore not only Henrietta Leavitt's story but the stories of the women who worked with her at the Harvard Observatory.

The UNSUNG STARS Project began two years ago in the Studio of The Moving Dock Theatre Company in Chicago's Fine Arts Building. In two different workshops, 28 women artists of The Moving Dock Theatre Company and several researchers - including Science Consultant Alan Lightman - contributed to the development and writing of this new play. Director Dawn Arnold, guided the actresses as they researched the biographical material available about the Harvard Computers and then explored the world, the aspirations, and the lives of these women through the empathetic art of the actor.

The Moving Dock Theatre Company received a prestigious grant for this theatre project by The Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science & Technology Project. The EST/Sloan Project supports new plays dealing with science. With the encouragement of the EST/Sloan grant, Moving Dock headed into the second developmental workshop of UNSUNG STARS which culminated in a Studio showing this last June. The Adler Planetarium then agreed to make their Universe Theatre the site of the unveiling of this theatrical docu-drama.

"We think UNSUNG STARS has a big future," said Dawn Arnold. "We are looking for ways to get this story to people who will be inspired and uplifted by it. In these times it is so necessary to place value on human achievement. People need to know that unacknowledged efforts do make a difference."

The women of The Moving Dock Theatre Company created Unsung Stars in honor of the dedicated lives, the unsung stars, of the Harvard Observatory - and all people who, like them, have namelessly changed our world.