**Commanding Space National Tour Page**

**Tech Rider**

The following information is a description of the production requirements for Syracuse Stage’s production of *Commanding Space – The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket*. This rider should be used in discussion with Syracuse Stage and the Company Stage Manager.

*Commanding Space – The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket* is a one woman, small-scale show telling the story of Rocket Scientist Annie Easley and her journey to help launch the centaur rocket into space.

**Best for audiences ages 8 and up.**

**Synopsis**

In the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, young Annie Easley knows she can be something more. In a true story of dreams, hardships, and self-determination, Annie becomes one of the first African American human computers at NASA. Initially working on airplanes, she soon realizes her destiny is to be on the team of mathematicians that launch the Centaur Rocket into the Space Race. Commanding Space is an important story about a persistent and intelligent woman whose desire to succeed in science and technology proved stronger than the prejudice that would have denied her.

**Annie Easley Quote:**

“When people have their biases and prejudices, yes, I am aware. My head is not in the sand. But my thing is, if I can’t work with you, I will work around you. I was not about to be discouraged that I’d walk away. That may be a solution for some people, but it’s not mine.”

**Minimum Technical Requirements**

**Load In/ Load Out Requirements**

The load in will commence on the date and time as agree with the venue technical team and the company.

- **Load In:** 1 ½ hours, from arrival to house open. Sound check if using a system other than our own adds 30 minutes, for a total load in of 2 hours.
- **Load Out:** 1 hour
- **Crew Call:** Show requires one crew member for load in and load out and to cue performer if there is not a way for the performer and stage manager to communicate directly.

**Set Components**

We require a minimum stage space of roughly **20 feet wide by 25 feet deep**. We also require ceilings at least 10 ft high.

**Please inform Syracuse Stage immediately if the playing space will be smaller than this, special accommodations may be available.**

We travel with the following set components:

- Five wooden nesting blocks, the largest of which measures 18 in by 18 in
- Overhead projector
- Overhead projection screen

We need access to a power outlet within 50 ft of the center of the performance space to power the projector.

**Lighting**

No lighting plot, general wash of the stage is needed, no gels needed.

**Wardrobe**

We require a designated wardrobe area with washing and ironing facilities at no cost, and costume rails. Our touring staff will be responsible for the daily maintenance of the costumes at each venue.
Sound

- We travel with our own sound system, two Bose L1 Compact Systems. We require two separate electrical outlets within 50 ft of the stage to power these.
- If you have a sound system in place, we require a stereo input 3.5 mm connector cable to run into your console system.
- We use a Mac laptop running Qlab version 3. For venues over 500 seats, we require one wireless mic for the actress that can be used with your system.
- Sound is operated by Stage Manager
- We require coms to be supplied by the venue as a link between Stage Manager, front of house, and backstage.

The company consists of:

1 Actor
1 Stage Manager

Dressing Rooms:

A minimum of 1 dressing room with private access to washroom facilities & backstage is required. It should have easy access to the stage and be clean, well lit, lockable and ready for us upon our arrival. We request that we be provided with drinking water for the duration of their time in your venue.

Show Times

Performance running time is approximately 60 minutes with no intermission.
An interactive talkback is included which is 20 minutes in length, traditional style performance is 40 minutes.
On multiple show days there must be at least a half hour between end of performance (including talkback) and start of next performance.

Transport

Transport will be arranged by mutual agreement by presenter and company. Transport fee is not included in per performance price though housing is included.

Curriculum Connections

Study Guide
Visit https://www.syracusestage.org/study-guides.php

Who We Are

Syracuse Stage is the nonprofit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. We are nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York, and for our significant contribution to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where we are a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University’s Department of Drama.

Syracuse Stage Education

Syracuse Stage is committed to providing students with rich theatre experiences that connect to and reveal what it is to be human. Research shows that students who participate in or are exposed to the arts show higher academic achievement, stronger self-esteem, and better ability to plan and work toward a future goal. Live performance provides children and young adults with a unique sensory experience that enriches classroom study and promotes creative expression and cultural awareness. Each season, Syracuse Stage engages nearly 21,440 students from all across New York State with a variety of programs.

Contact Details

Producer
Syracuse Stage
Contact: Kate Laissle
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Design Team
Director Joann Yarrow
Sound Designer Kevin O’Connor
Props & Costume Designer Kate Laissle
Production History

World Premiere: Syracuse, NY February 2019
Director: Joann Yarrow
Scenic and Costume Designer: Kate Laissle
Sound Designer: Kevin O’Connor
Production Stage Manager: Lia Chapman
Touring Manager: MiKayla Hawkinson
Photographs: Brenna Merritt
Cast: Daisha Abdillahi playing Annie Easley

Media (press/testimony)

http://www.tyausa.org/tya-today/demanding-a-place/

We invited Commanding Space to perform for our fourth and fifth grade students from two schools in the Ithaca City School district in February. The crew came through a snowstorm to arrive in Ithaca in time for a 9 am performance! We all felt so lucky to see the play: Commanding Space – The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket, written by Stephanie Leary, directed by Joann Yarrow and acted by Daisha Abdillahi. The acting was superb and the set and direction were top quality.

Our 150 students were totally engaged during the entire one-hour performance and had so many questions and comments after that the teachers had to ask the Backstory actor and director to stop taking questions because the students needed to return to class!

I feel very strongly that all elementary students should have the opportunity to see this very important play that fills one of the many gaps that we have about African American women’s role in history.
-Maureen Gilroy

• Thank you so much for bringing to play to us. It was amazing. The students were drawn into the story--and remembered a lot of detail. We had a fun conversation about JFK afterwards. They were also impressed with the idea of a one-person performance, especially as we're starting Running to Places rehearsals. They had comments and questions about her stage presence, her costume, the design of the set...lots of fun!
-Anne Kolodji

• Yes, it was wonderful!!! The students really enjoyed it and learned a lot about an incredible change maker.
-Christine Chernikoff

We were so fortunate to have Syracuse Stage Backstory Production, Commanding Space - The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket visit our middle school this past March. This production not only met our criteria goals for our grant, Other People Matter: Engaging Westhill Students with Our Diverse Community but surpassed our expectations. We are continually searching for activities, experiences, and lessons that broaden our student's abilities to embrace diverse ideas. This production assisted our students and staff in gaining a better understanding of the gender and race discrimination experienced by Annie Easley. The determination, tenacity, perseverance and hard work she displayed throughout her life are the same characteristics we want to instill in our student's own lives.

This unique interactive performance really sparked our student's curiosity and following the performance, they were able to ask questions about Annie Easley. Many of our staff personally thanked me for bringing this production to our school; they loved the format of the production and the historical content.

We highly recommend Syracuse Stage Backstory Production, Commanding Space - The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket. It is a production that will benefit all students and staffs understanding of this period of time in American history.
-Penny L. Feeney
**Playwright**

**Stephanie Leary**
Stephanie Leary was born and raised in Rochester, New York, where she still lives. She is a graduate of Monroe Community College and SUNY Brockport and recently obtained her M.F.A. in playwriting from Goddard College. Her plays include *A Polished Slavery, Unleavened, An Apple a Day, Relay* and *Commanding Space: The Rise of Annie Easley and the Centaur Rocket*. Her favorite playwright is August Wilson and she plans, in the near future, to make a pilgrimage to his childhood home and grave in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her greatest love is writing, and photography is a very close second.

**Director**

**Joann Yarrow**
Joann Maria Yarrow is the Director of Community Engagement and Education at Syracuse Stage. She began her work and training with Double Edge Theatre in Boston and Odin Teatret in Denmark. Joann co-founded A Laboratory for Actor Training with Vernice Miller while working with Richard Schechner’s company East Coast Artists. She spent three years with Broadway director, Harold Prince on the productions of *Parade, Whistle down the Wind, Candide, Show Boat, Kiss of the Spiderwoman* and *Phantom of the Opera*. With over 30 years of experience, she has directed and produced productions in Denmark, London, Madrid, Boston, NY, Los Angeles, Texas, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. For twelve years, she was the Artistic Director of Teatro Prometeo, a Spanish-language theatre repertory and conservatory in Miami where she worked on over 80 productions, translated, adapted and commissioned new works that have toured nationally and internationally. There she translated Oliver Mayer’s *Blade to the Heat* and developed workshops and readings for a Spanish translation of his play *Dark Matters* (winner of the Alfred P Sloan Initiative Award for Plays about Science) She is a member of the Latinx Theater Commons and the Director’s Lab West in Los Angeles. Joann received her BFA from Boston University and an MFA in Directing from UC Irvine. She is a featured director in the book *“The art and practice of directing in Latin America: Central America and United States.”*

For more information contact:

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