

Woman From Mars

A new play by Nicola Baldwin

Directed by Cat Robey

Online scratch performance of extracts plus Q&A

Hosted by UCL Centre for Outer Space Studies (COSS)

Introduced by Dr. David Jeevendrampillai, COSS Director

BECKY SIMON as Helen Sharman

PETER CLEMENTS as Sergei Krikalev

LYNDA ROOKE as Stella Shaw

Composer & sound designer **Louis Milner**

Russian language coaching **Shishkina Eugenia**

Thanks to Lucy Stagg, Albert Brenchat Aguilar.

In 1991, chemist Helen Sharman became the first British astronaut, when she joined the crew of Soyuz TM-12 to conduct experiments on Mir space station.

Dubbed ‘The Girl From Mars’ by British tabloids, Sharman was an industrial chemist at Mars Confectionary when she answered the call to space. She launched on 18 May 1991 with cosmonauts Sergei Krikalev and Anatoly Artsebarsky and returned to earth on 26 May with Viktor Afanasyey and Musa Manarov. While Krikalev and Artsebarsky remained on Mir the second Russian revolution happened, the Soviet Union, and its government-run space programme, ceased to exist.

Set on Helen Sharman’s last day aboard Mir, reflecting upon her journey to get there, and the risks of returning home, the play is both a tribute to Sharman’s achievements and a story about personal and global transformation, the chemistry of human life.

Since returning to Earth, Helen Sharman has directed her pioneering efforts towards education. In addition to numerous awards, she was recognised in the 2018 New Year Honours for services to Science and Technology Outreach.

In recognition of her encouragement of young children to study STEM, an online children’s drama will be created, with supporting activities in Science, PSHE and Drama.

Nicola has been supported by an MGCfutures bursary and Hospitalfield Interdisciplinary Residency to write the first draft, which has received ACE funding for R&D. We hope to work with producers /a theatre, towards a fully-fledged production in 2021 to coincide with 30th anniversary of Sharman's mission to Mir. We are very open to ideas around live/online/streamed production models.

First written as a short for Miniaturists at Arcola in April 2019.

Read Nicola’s COSS blog about [writing the first draft under lockdown](#).

The Company



Becky Simon ‘HELEN SHARMAN’ Since graduating from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Becky has played unlucky-in-love Marla in *Fighting Mr Right*, kind-hearted Stella in *All Saints* (The Kings Head) and restless millennial Bee in *Willie* (Southwark Playhouse). Becky also works on developing comedy from improvisation as well as writing screenplays and is currently working on the production of her first film.



Peter Clements ‘SERGEI KRIKALEV’
Trained at Drama Centre London. Associate artist at Hackney Showroom. Recent theatre includes New Diorama, Theatr Clwyd, Watford Palace, RSC, NT Studio. **TV:** *Summer Lane Drive, Pennyworth, Escape from Sobibor*. **Film:** *Femme, Ballet of the Nations*. Peter writes and performs as Frau Welt, self-styled Grande Dame of Theatre and "cantankerous old bag" (Exeunt). *Frau Welt* (Hackney Showroom/Edinburgh Festival) was nominated for 3 Off-West Awards: Best Male, Director, TBC Award.



Lynda Rooke ‘STELLA SHAW’
Theatre includes The Lovely Bones tour, Jane Eyre NT tour, Bolton Octagon, Hull Truck, Salisbury, Sherman Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Leicester Haymarket, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Liverpool Playhouse and Everyman, RSC, Royal Court, 7:84 Theatre Co. Television includes *Lewis, Coronation Street, Endeavour, Identity, Waking the Dead, Silent Witness, Foyle's War, Doctors, Von Trapped, Heartbeat, Casualty, Hollyoaks, The Hunt For The Yorkshire Ripper, Pat & Margaret, The Sculptress, Berkeley Square*. Film includes *The Arbor, Naked and Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Louis Milner COMPOSER

Louis Milner is a composer from south London. He has worked previously with Nicola Baldwin on *Nosocomial* (2018) & *Seven Scenes* (2011). Louis has also composed work for contemporary dance, working with Jamila Johnson-Small (Palais de Tokyo, Dance Umbrella), Gery Georgieva (Block Universe) & Fernanda Muñoz-Newsome (Goldsmiths CCA). Louis releases solo music as Junior XL and as a member of the duo Lol K. Lol K recently released a new EP titled *The Breeze* with the label Halcyon Veil.

Cat Robey DIRECTOR

Cat is Deputy Director at Jermyn Street Theatre. For Jermyn Street Theatre: *15 Heroines* (with Digital Theatre +); *In Praise of Love* (online); *The Tempest, Beckett Triple Bill, For Services Rendered* (associate director). Other directing includes: *Estimated Waiting Time* (Love Parks Wandsworth); *On Arriving* (VAULT Festival); *We The Young Strong* (Bloomsbury); *The Shy Manifesto* (Live Theatre Newcastle & national tour); *The Good Landlord* (VAULT Festival & King's Head); *Beauty and the Beast: A Musical Parody* (King's Head & national tour); *After Party* (Pleasance); *Enveloped in Velvet* (Arts Theatre); *Buzz: A New Musical* (Edinburgh & national tour); *Yerma* (Fourth Monkey); *Hatch* (Park); *Freedom, Books, Flowers, and the Moon* (Waterloo East); *Ondine* (White Bear), OffWestEnd nominated Best Director. Associate/assistant directing includes: *Othello* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Emperor* (Young Vic & Theatre for a New Audience NYC); *Chamaco, Inkheart & The Oresteia* (all at HOME). Cat is a graduate of, teaches at & is on the interview panel for, the Birkbeck MFA in Theatre Directing. She was Resident Trainee Director at HOME 2015-16.

Nicola Baldwin WRITER

Nicola is a playwright, scriptwriter and film-maker. She won the George Devine award, Time Out award, was twice shortlisted for Susan Smith Blackburn and BBC Audio Awards, and is first playwright to win CSO award (with Dr Elaine Cloutman-Green) from Chief Scientific Officer of NHS England. She was inaugural UCL Creative Fellow 2019-2020 at UCL Urban Lab and IAS. Theatre commissions include: Royal Court, Royal Exchange, Sheffield Crucible and Bath Theatres. Radio includes: *Seven Scenes*; *Poppy Q* (BBC Radio 3); *Tony & Rose*; *Euston to Whitechapel*; *Abdication: The Crisis of Wallis Simpson*, and 5-part drama *Have Your Cake* (BBC Radio 4); live broadcast *Chalkie Cobb* (Resonance FM). Television includes; *Where The Heart Is*, *Night And Day*, *Holby*, an adaptation of her play *The Gift*. Current work includes: feature script *Milo 11*; *Nosocomial*, a collaboration with NHS Healthcare Scientists; immersive drama /short film *Duchess*, *Revolt!* and *Camberwell Green*, a 2-part crime thriller for Radio 4 (2021). Nicola is a 2019-2020 MGCfutures bursary recipient for *Woman From Mars* and Interdisciplinary Resident at Hospitalfield Arts Centre. She is a UCL Visiting Fellow at IAS, continuing cross-disciplinary collaboration, and will be working with UCL Division of Infection and Immunity on their Precision AMR research initiative, coordinating 'Rise of the Resistance' a festival of AMR and healthcare science related performance for May 2021. [Visit website.](#)

The Centre for Outer Space Studies (COSS) was founded in 2019 to promote research and teaching related to the social study of Outer Space and our relationship to the cosmos and the planet. The Centre aims to act as a catalyst for serious debate, via talks, exhibitions, film screenings and other events that help us explore the socio-political impact of space science and the wider human relationship to outer space. [Find out more and subscribe to mailing list.](#)

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