NOTE: This is a first attempt at a list of plays and films about astronomers. No claim is made for completeness and additional suggestions are most welcome. (A list of astronomy operas is included in my topical listing of music inspired by astronomy at: http://dx.doi.org/10.3847/AER2012043)

PLAYS ABOUT (OR FEATURING) ASTRONOMERS:

◊ Gabridge, Patrick: Reading the Mind of God (a play about Johannes Kepler and Tycho Brahe). The text can be found at: http://webswoffordedu/zidessb/Theatrefiles/reading%20the%20mind%20of%20god.pdf
A synopsis and history of productions is at: http://www.gabridge.com/full-length-plays/reading-the-mind-of-god/

◊ Goldhaber, Judith & Pennypacker, Carl: Falling through a Hole in the Air (a musical play about Stephen Hawking): http://www.pyclops.com/hawking/ccsf_play/falling.shtml
(A song from the play is performed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXjwZIqJwos)


For more about the dramatist: http://laurengunderson.com/
Gunderson, Lauren: *Background* (about Ralph Alpher and getting credit for the prediction of the cosmic microwave background radiation.) The text of the play is available in the author’s compilation *Deepen the Mystery: Science and the South Onstage* (2005, I Universe), which also includes a short comic play about Isaac Newton.


Nicholas, Siobhán: *Stella* (another play about Caroline Herschel): [http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/blog/2012/may/14/play-astronomer-caroline-herschel](http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/blog/2012/may/14/play-astronomer-caroline-herschel) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nzf1wZNQhY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nzf1wZNQhY)


Sobel, Dava (author of *Longitude* and *Galileo’s Daughter*) has written a play about Copernicus called “And the Sun Stood Still”, which she discusses and includes in her book, *A More Perfect Heaven* (2011, Walker Books.) For her discussion of how she came to write the play, see: http://astrosociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ab2011-83.pdf

Sparks, John & Alben, Russ *The Smartest Man in the World* (a musical about Albert Einstein, performed briefly in Los Angeles). See: http://www.curtainup.com/smartestmanla.html

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A FEW OLDER PLAYS:

Bertold Brecht’s *Life of Galileo* (1994, Grove Press reprint English edition), a 1938 play about Galileo’s discoveries and how they upended the establishment views of nature and our place in it. See also the 1974 DVD of the filmed version directed by Joseph Losey, and starring Topol as Galileo, available on King Video (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073029/)

For more about the play, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_of_Galileo

Barrie Stavis’s *The Lamp at Midnight* (1947 play about Galileo and his conflict with the Church): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamp_At_Midnight

For a video of the revival, see : http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0197613/

*Good News* -- a 1927 musical, book: Laurence Schwab and B.G. DeSylva, lyrics: DeSylva and Lew Brown, and music by Ray Henderson. In the 1920s at Tait College, football player Tom Marlowe falls in love with Connie Lane, who is tutoring him so he can pass astronomy and be eligible to play in the big game. The astronomy professor has a role in the madcap plot as well.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_News_(musical)

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SOME MOVIES ABOUT (OR FEATURING) ASTRONOMERS (a very incomplete list):

*Addicted to Love.* (Matthew Broderick plays an astronomer in this 1997 romantic comedy from the U.S., but the astronomy is completely incidental): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0118556/plotsummary


*Corpos Celestes* (The Sky We Were Born Under) (A Brazilian film about an unhappy astronomer with a complex past): http://www.barrio-latino.info/2011/05/27/metaphysical-brazil/#more-732

*Deep Impact* (a 1998 disaster movie about a comet on collision course with Earth, with Elijah Wood playing a teenage amateur astronomer, and Charles Martin Smith playing a professional astronomer.)


*Thor* (2011 film from the Marvel comic book series, in which Natalie Portman plays an astrophysicist who is Thor’s love interest. The film mixes Nordic mythology with science (including wormholes).

*Top Gun* (1986 film in which Kelly McGillis plays an astrophysicist who is also an Air Force pilot trainer)

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**SOME RELEVANT ARTICLES:**


For lists of plays about science in general, see such web sites as:

- [http://www.curtainup.com/scienceplays.html](http://www.curtainup.com/scienceplays.html)
- [https://sciart.commons.gc.cuny.edu/staging-science/four-centuries-of-science-plays/](https://sciart.commons.gc.cuny.edu/staging-science/four-centuries-of-science-plays/)
- [http://scienceplays.org/](http://scienceplays.org/)