

## **MERCURY SYNOPSIS**

### **The Play:**

1 Act (approximately 75 minutes)  
12 scenes and 24 musical numbers (including all reprises)  
5 characters: 4 women and 1 man

### **The Set:**

Ideally, this piece is performed in the round, with an IMAX-inspired screen encapsulating the audience, making them feel as if they are in a planetarium. On this screen, most of the set and the mood is projected.

### **The Story:**

Jerrie Cobb, a young woman with great faith and a quiet passion, is staring at the Oklahoma night sky. She has cherished three things from a young age; her family, her God and her love for space (1. Starlight).

Jerrie snaps out of her daydream and finds herself in the U.S. Congress building. NASA has forbid her to enter into the astronaut program on account of her gender, and Jerrie is here to appeal against their decision. She finds help in this quest from three muses: the Activist, the Pope, and the Scientist (2. Voices). These muses only live in her mind.

Jerrie gets ready for her opening statement (3. Systems Check #1), bolded by the Activist, the Pope and the Scientist. She reveals to Congress that she'd like to be the first woman in space (4. Capitol Hill). Shy as Jerrie is, and recovering from a childhood speech impediment, she is very nervous to speak up. She haltingly tries to convince Congress of her qualifications (5. Maple Tits).

John Glenn takes the stand (6. John Glenn #1). He speaks out against Jerrie becoming an astronaut (7. John Glenn #2). He paints Jerrie's 'feminine emotions' as a major drawback, and we quickly flash back to 10 years ago, when Jerrie met the love of her life: Jack Ford.

Jerrie is pulled back to reality by the press (8. Press), who questions her roughly. Under pressure, Jerrie does admit her love for Jack (9. Half Windsor Knot). But she reasons that love doesn't disqualify her as an astronaut (10. Systems Check #2). She has passed numerous tests to prove that she scores better than any man in physical and logical stamina! (11. Lovelace's Tests)

Lyndon B. Johnson takes the stand (12. LBJ) . It is obvious he thinks very little of Jerrie. She has yet to find someone to support her cause, but this will hopefully change with the arrival of fellow women aviator Jacqueline Cochran (13. Jackie's Opening Statement). Jerrie desperately longs to have Jacqueline's strength, style and eloquence (14. Systems Check #3).

The Activist, the Pope and the Scientist push Jerrie to admit that her fear of failure is unnecessary, and that she doesn't need to put Jacqueline on a pedestal. However, they push her too far and Jerrie retreats into an inner realm instead, devoid of any muses. Here she finally faces her faith head on, as well as what truly happened to Jack Ford (15. Jack's Crash). Jerrie sets God an ultimatum: if she can't have love, she will have her journey into space (16. Prayer) (17. Systems Check #4).

With going to space back in focus, Jerrie pulls herself up by her bootstraps (18. I'm Ready), forces herself to speak up, and turns her hopes back to Jacqueline Cochran (19. Jacqueline).

Jacqueline, however, also speaks out against Jerrie, harsher than any man had done before her! Jerrie tries to reason with Jackie (20. Always Time), but to no avail. Jerrie prays for help, and realizes then that she will have to move forward by herself, without counting on anyone.

The verdict comes, and the answer is no. Jerrie will not go to space (21. Dark Side of the Moon). She is heartbroken, and yet this verdict lights another path; perhaps she is needed on earth, instead! Trying to find her new purpose, she finally lets go of the Activist, the Scientist and the Pope (22. Starlight Finale). She realigns her faith, her purpose and her knowledge in order to do something good in the world. The dream of having value to the planet, the sky and to her God never leave her (23. Systems Check #5).

Years later she listens to the radio reporting Neil putting his foot on the surface on the moon...and she rejoices (24. From Here).