



400 YEARS of the TELESCOPE

A JOURNEY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND THOUGHT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cinematic documentary *400 Years of the Telescope*, celebrating the International Year of Astronomy, makes its French debut

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A sweeping film, celebrating four centuries of astral discoveries, *400 Years of the Telescope; A Journey of Science, Technology and Thought* will make its foreign-language debut at the Pariscience Film Festival, in Paris, on Saturday, October 10, 2009. *400 Years of the Telescope* takes viewers on a visually stunning journey from Galileo's first telescopic look at the cosmos in 1609, to today's thrilling quests to discover new worlds and to glimpse the formation of the first galaxies and stars after the Big Bang.

Emmy® award-winning writer and producer Kris Koenig and the Interstellar Studios production team traveled the globe, interviewing leading astronomers and cosmologists against a backdrop of the world's greatest observatories, to create a vivid film presenting the human quest to understand the structure and nature of the universe over the past four centuries. *400 Years of the Telescope*, narrated by French-Canadian voice talent Michel Keable, features an opulent score performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, and is an official product of the International Year of Astronomy 2009.

400 Years of the Telescope is but one piece in a multifaceted set of experiences funded by a single National Science Foundation award, designed to reconnect humanity with its all-too-forgotten starry nights. A broad and informative website complements the film at www.400years.org, and a planetarium program produced by the Buhl Planetarium, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center and Interstellar Studios, entitled *Two Small Pieces of Glass* has been distributed to planetariums around the world, free of charge. Donald Goldsmith, Ph.D, has written a companion book to the documentary by the same title.

From reenactments of Galileo's invention and animation of his early pen drawings of the moons of Jupiter, to vivid multi-colored nebulas captured by the Hubble Space Telescope, *400 Years of the Telescope* lifts viewers from their armchairs and carries them through the wonders of the cosmos. With warmth and humor, the planet's top astrophysicists enthusiastically contemplate momentous discoveries such as dark energy – a mysterious energy in empty space that is accelerating the expansion of the universe. Peering into the future, viewers learn of emergent telescopes the size of stadiums, of a massive array of radio telescopes perched on one of the highest plateaus on the planet, and of gigantic innovative instruments that one day may detect life outside our solar system and enable humans to view the initial moments of the Big Bang. Like Galileo's first telescopic

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observations, these new technologies will recast our perception of the universe.

Beautifully photographed in 4K digital cinematography, *400 Years of the Telescope* is one of the first documentaries to be filmed with 35mm RED technology. Recorded at 4520 X 2540 pixels per frame, the RAW format output offers more than five times the resolution of high-definition (HD). To accompany the film's brilliant visuals, Interstellar Studios commissioned modern English composer Mark Slater to create a vibrant musical score which was performed and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Slater composed the elements of the score based on the numbers one, six, zero and nine, (1609, the year Galileo made his pivotal discovery), in which the numbers correspond to pitch classes and numerical values are assigned to tones.

400 Years of the Telescope was produced and directed by Kris Koenig, written by Donald Goldsmith, Ph.D. (author, co-author, and editor of more than two-dozen books on astronomy), Albert van Helden, Ph.D. (President Emeritus of the History of Science Society and author of several books including *The Invention of the Telescope* and *Measuring the Universe*) and Mr. Koenig. Mr. Koenig is founder and director of one of the most successful community observatories in North America and the world's only outdoor planetarium, as well as creator of the Emmy award-winning, ten-hour PBS telecourse "Astronomy: Observations and Theories." His astrophotography is featured on the covers of nationally-acclaimed astronomical textbooks, and in numerous publications and videos.

The French-dubbed version of the documentary has been produced with the assistance of DBcom Media of Montreal, Canada. Mr. Keable's voice was joined by those of Jacques Lavallee, Luciano Zema, Claude Prefontaine, Jean-Rene Ouellet and Valerie Gagne. Scientific translations were provided by Franck Marchis, Ph.D., and Donald Goldsmith.

The script for 400 Years of the Telescope was developed in collaboration with a board of advisors some of the world's leading astronomers, cosmologists, including the immediate past president of the International Astronomical Union, Catherine Cesarsky, Ph.D. Dr. Cesarsky, together with Dr. Goldsmith and Kris Koenig, will attend the Pariscience screening. Furthermore, Dutch actress Irma Hartog, who appears in the one of the documentary's reenactments, will also be present. Further information can be found at www.400years.org.

Hi-resolution photos are available at: http://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/400_years_of_the_telescope/gallery

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