



MEDIA RELEASE
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A GALAXY OF SOUND, SIGHTS AND SCIENCE

Music will line-up with the planets, stars, suns and moons tomorrow night as part of an arts meets science convergence to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy (IYA).

The *Music and the Cosmos* concert in the Great Hall, University of Sydney, will bring together leading University astronomers and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Brass Ensemble in a blend of celestially-inspired sound, images and discussion.

The concert will feature **Cliff Kerr's** piano and violin composition *Four Suns* – a work he wrote as a birthday gift for his mother, inspired by a series of artworks she painted as a gift to her mother, who, in turn, had been commissioned to produce a sculpture of the sun for her hometown.

Kerr, who holds a Diploma of Arts in Music from The Con, is currently studying how the brain processes sound as part of a Physics doctorate in the University of Sydney's Sydney Brain Dynamics Group.

The music, with **Vanessa Tammetta** on violin, imitates the moods of the Japanese Sun, Banded Sun, Cubist Sun and the Concentric Sun.

The other major performance will see leading international brass musician **Scott Kinmont** conduct The Con's Brass Ensemble in Gustav Holst's *The Planets* – a work that honours specific planets in our solar system.

The performances will be followed by a "journey across the cosmos" as some of Sydney's most talented astronomers – **Professor Bryan Gaensler**, **Professor Tim Bedding** and **Professor Geraint Lewis** – explore the latest in astronomy research.

Professor Gaensler, a former Young Australian of the Year, is heavily involved in the development of the Square Kilometre Array, a radio telescope which aims to answer fundamental questions about the origin and evolution of the Universe.

Astrophysicist Tim Bedding leads a group that, among other projects, is involved with NASA's Kepler mission, which will measure oscillations in thousands of stars using a dedicated space telescope.

Professor Lewis, who heads the University's Gravitational Astrophysics Group, is researching cosmology, gravitational lensing and galactic cannibalism.

The celebration of IYA – recognising Galileo's first use of the telescope to study the heavens in 1609 – has captured the imagination of scholars, students and citizens across the globe, with special events in more than 135 countries.

"We are very excited to be joining with the Faculty of Science for our part of the worldwide celebrations of the International Year of Astronomy with events here at the University of Sydney," said the Dean and Principal of The Con, **Professor Kim Walker**.

"Our participation in the IYA is just one of the many ways that the Conservatorium engages its students, faculty and community with the wonders of science and music.

"In the 400 years since Galileo first looked at the heavens with his telescope, and Pythagoras brought forward his 'harmonie of the spheres,' music has celebrated so many masterpieces. The IYA gives us a chance to celebrate the joy of new discoveries with everyone, young and young at heart whether through a telescope, or sound."

The *Music and the Cosmos* event, hosted by Radio National's **Robyn Williams**, has been co-convened by the Dean of the Faculty of Science, **Professor David Day**, and Kim Walker.

The music will be introduced by **Dr Alan Maddox**, who teaches music history and historical performance practice at The Con; is a respected music writer and public lecturer, and provides on-stage commentaries at concerts by the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

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