

SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference



Knowledge is on the move...
...in the International Year of Astronomy 2009

Information

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What is *SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference*?

SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference is a theatre performance about the scientific insights and discoveries of Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), who presented a dynamical view of the processes of motion and thereby helped to lay the foundations of modern science. The production is conceived to be understood by the layman and is also suitable for school audiences. A supplementary education programme especially for school children is also in preparation. The premiere is due to take place in Nuremberg in the spring of the International Year of Astronomy 2009.



Conference of IAU, Prague 2006

The 62nd. General Assembly of the United Nation on the 20th December 2005 designated the year 2009 the International Year of Astronomy thereby fulfilling a resolution of the 33rd. UNESCO General Conference of 2005. This proclamation is the result of an Italian initiative that was supported from the very beginning by the International Astronomical Union (IAU).

The theme of the International Year “The Universe: You live in it – discover it!” should awaken a spirit of discovery and stimulate understanding of fundamental interconnection in the universe as well as comprehension of our place within it.

What is *SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference*?

The Telescope and “Astronomia Nova”

400 years ago Galileo Galilei and other astronomers observed the stars for the very first time through the recently invented telescope. Johannes Kepler’s “Astronomia Nova” was published in the same year.

SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference is to be considered as a cultural contribution to this anniversary, as a bridge between art, science and education. Johannes Kepler’s astronomical insights and their consequences are translated by performing artists into words, pictures and movement and transmitted to the theatre audience. The illusion of a “totally normal conference in the here and now” is created within the performance space.

Financing and Sponsoring Concept

However, it is not only through the content that a connection is created to the scientific establishment but also through the financing of the project. The aim is equal contributions to funding from the public purse, private foundations and sponsors. The sponsoring concept is based on a constructive relationship between science and the business world. Through the award of “research fellowships”, the installing of “honorary professorships” and the offer of “scientific awards” the interested supporters can take an active role in the configuration of the production. (Details of the sponsoring concept are available on request).

SCIENCE-Fiction

At a scientific conference, scientists present their work and their results and discuss them with each other. A science-fiction conference is a performance in which knowledge is set in scene. The performers on the stage “play” conference and involve the audience as guest participants.

Experts

Experts from Johannes Kepler’s various areas of research will be invited to the *KeplerConference*. He occupied himself with the six sidedness of the snowflake so his “Favourite Snowflake” will lecture on how it was to be investigated by him. Kepler spent many years solving the secrets of planetary movement through the study of the planet Mars. Therefore a representative of the Planet Mars will speak at the conference. In connection with the discovery of the moons of Jupiter a representative of the Planet Jupiter will talk from his perspective about its time in Kepler’s Focus. The moderation of the conference will be carried out by the “Interstellar Spirit” from Kepler’s “Somnium” (“The dream, or posthumous work on lunar astronomy”). The format of the Science-Fiction-Conference has been specifically conceived for the presentation of Johannes Kepler’s life and work.



Conception

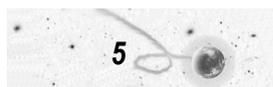
Knowledge moves! 2009 is the 400th anniversary of the publication of Johannes Kepler's work "Astronomia Nova". Thereby he completed the Copernican system of the world and with the discovery of the laws of planetary motion laid the foundations for a dynamical development of modern theoretical astronomy.

He achieved all of this although he neither possessed a pocket calculator nor did he have access to his own telescope and he didn't even have a sensible pair of spectacles perched on his nose. The Thirty Year War stormed around him, his family had to be fed and his mother had been charged with witchcraft. On top of this were financial problems, job dismissals, being banned from practicing his profession as well as difficult and dangerous journeys and relocations. There were no planes, trains, cars or removal vans. To make matters worse, for health reasons, Kepler wasn't even able to ride and so he took "quick trips" by foot from Prague to Graz or from Linz to Tübingen.

How was it possible for a human being under these adverse conditions to effectively dedicate himself to his challenging scientific researches? How could Kepler complete kilometre long calculations, observe the heavens, argue with his church, bury his children, successfully defend his mother in court and casually deliver up the theory of the telescope for Senor Galileo Galilei, develop a method to determine the volume of barrels and as well as all that develop the geared pump an essential element of the modern motor? Why did he ruminate on the six sidedness of the snowflake of all things?

With his "Somnium" Kepler wrote one of the earliest science fiction novels and thereby executed a, for his times, totally unusual change of perspective, in that he describe the earth as seen from the moon. As improbable as it was then for people to ever conceive of leaving the earth and to land on a heavenly body so it is for us today to conceive of meeting other beings from the universe. It is even more improbable that we should discuss Kepler's researches with scientists from other worlds. But wouldn't we burn with curiosity to know what they had to say?

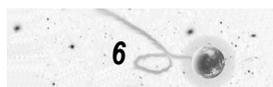
That is why extra-terrestrial researchers have been invited to the performance *SCIENCE-Fiction: The KeplerConference*, experts for the objects of Kepler's desire for knowledge who might just possibly remember how it was that the genial mathematician and astronomer discovered the secrets of the night skies.



Production

Johannes Kepler's astronomical insights and their consequences are translated by performing artists into words, pictures and movement and transmitted to the theatre audience.

- Symposium** The audience will at the same time be participants in a staged symposium of the life, work and methods of Johannes Kepler. Equipped with a folder of important documentation including an agenda, they are, following a brief introduction by the Interstellar Spirit, invited to listen to the expert lectures of the extra-terrestrial researchers, to take part in workshops and finally to participate, as experts, in the podium discussion.
- Moderation** The Interstellar Spirit will moderate the Kepler Conference. Alongside Johannes Kepler's Favourite Snowflake representatives of the planets Mars and Jupiter have been invited as speakers.
- Expert Lectures** The speakers each have 9 minutes to present their experiences and knowledge of Johannes Kepler. So for example his Favourite Snowflake will report, amongst other things, how it came about that Johannes Kepler in Prague was seduced into an excursion into chemistry where he occupied himself with the six sidedness of the snowflake and so out of nowhere conjured a New Years gift for his friend Wackher von Wackenfels.
- Laws of Planetary Motion** The representative of the planet Mars will lecture on the laws of planetary motion; describe how Kepler was hard on his heels and why Kepler's three laws were so groundbreaking for the development of modern astronomy.
- The Moons of Jupiter** The representative of the planet Jupiter will reveal why he wasn't thrilled about the discovery of his moons, explain what it means to be a moon and disclose intimate details of the phases of Venus.
- Workshops** During the workshops the extra-terrestrial speakers will competently explain to the participants the basics of Kepler's theory of the heavens. They will also have the choice of learning about Copernicus' astronomy, Tycho Brahe's observations as well as Gilbert's theory of magnetism.
- Presentation** The presentation and evaluation of the results follow in the subsequent podium discussion. Beyond this the speakers will present whatever else they can think of concerning Johannes Kepler.
At the end of the 90 minute performance the audience will have been informed about the significant points of Johannes Kepler's biography, his methods of working and his publications as well as developments that first resulted on the basis of the knowledge won by the consummate mathematician.



Course of Events

Admittance	Each member of the audience will be personally greeted upon arrival and will receive his or her own Conference folder containing the conference agenda and the conference documentation.
Agenda	Greeting Greetings of the Conference sponsors Introduction (Interstellar Spirit) 1 st . Lecture (Kepler's favourite snowflake) 2 nd . Lecture (Representative from Mars) 3 rd . Lecture (Representative from Jupiter) Workshops Presentation Podium discussion (Moderation: Interstellar Spirit) Conclusion
Performance Time	Approx. 90 minutes

Company

Conception and Realisation	Chriska Wagner
Choreography	Ingo Schweiger
Assistant	TBA
Scientific Advisor	Pierre Leich
Actors/Dancers	Chriska Wagner: Interstellar Spirit Sigi Wekerle: Kepler's Favourite Snowflake Stephan Bach: Representative of the planet Mars Duke Meyer: Representative of the planet Jupiter
Light/Technique	Stephan Scheiderer, Marco Nelkenbrecher, Andreas Sperber
Wardrobe	TBA
Makeup	TBA

Media/Technical Realisation

Projection on various surfaces and costumes
Pre-recorded sequences
Interstellar Sound
Lighting Design/Starry Heavens



Production Team

Chriska Wagner



Born in Weiden 1976

University Diploma in Education, Theatre Pedagogue (BuT), Human Resources Manager.

2002 Journalistic and publicity activities in Prague

Since 2002 freelance actress. Performed in various productions as Gretchen, Roxane, Hermia etc.

Since 2005 active as stage author and producer of the following productions:

2005 "HutMemoiren - Hommage an Joseph Beuys"

2006 "Briefe an den 100-prozentigen Mann"

2005 -2008 Moderation of various private viewing, company events, theatre pedagogic productions.

www.kepler-konferenz.de

Ingo Schweiger



Born in Munich 1975

Choreographer, dancer, dance pedagogue, artistic director of the "Werkstatt für Tanz", Member of the Deutsche Berufsverband für Tanzpädagogik e.V.

1998-2004 Co-operative work with various choreographers and international appearances.

2005 founding of the dance company, M.D.T.G. (myosotis-dance-theatre-group) together with dancer and choreographer Mey Sefan.

2006 wrote and produced "con-sequences for the Opera Damascus, Syria.

2007 wrote and produced "con-tract", premiere Fertigungshalle, Nuremberg; performances in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Groningen, Damascus.

2008 Choreographer and dancer in the regional festival "Tanzen!08" in Nuremberg. ("Tanzpalast", Simultantanz, Le Bal Modern).

www.m-dtg.com

Pierre Leich



Born in Nuremberg 1960

1981-1989 student of philosophy at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg with an emphasis on the history and philosophy of science. He was chairman of the art fair 'ART Nuremberg' for ten years, was editor of a small art journal for six years, was for many years responsible for the art award 'Ecology' of the AEG Household Appliances and for the 1000 year anniversary of the town of Erlangen as well as being, for four years, manager of the Theatre Sport World Cup in the Art and Culture Programme of the FIFA World Cup 2006. Since 2003 he is project manager of the Long Night of Science in Nuremberg/Fürth/Erlangen and of the Science Symposium of the Nuremberg Metropolis Region.

www.pl-visit.net

