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Public Info: Humanities West www.humanitieswest.org
Tickets: City Box Office 415/392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

HUMANITIES WEST PRESENTS
***Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler:
Redefining our Place in the Universe***
Friday & Saturday, October 2 & 3, 2009
Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (SAN FRANCISCO, 18 June 2009) Humanities West, a Bay Area non-profit, opens its 25th Anniversary Season with ***Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler: Redefining our Place in the Universe***, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, music and dance presentations celebrating the International Year of Astronomy in honor of the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of the telescope in 1609. The program takes place on Friday, October 2, from 8 pm to 10:15 pm and Saturday, October 3, from 10 am to 4 pm, at Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Tickets for ***Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler: Redefining our Place in the Universe*** are priced as follows: Single tickets for the Friday program are \$45 orchestra/grand tier and \$30 balcony; single tickets for the Saturday program are \$65 orchestra/grand tier and \$40 balcony, single tickets for both days are \$100 orchestra/grand tier and \$55 balcony. Special Student/Teacher tickets are available at \$20 balcony for single day admission. Season tickets are also available and offer a significant savings. Season tickets for all three two-day programs in the 2009-10 Season, including ***Alexander/Alexandria*** (Feb. 5-6) and ***The Florence of the Medici*** (April 30-May 1), are \$220 orchestra/grand tier and \$140 balcony. A Fridays-only series is \$115 orchestra/grand tier and \$75 balcony, and a Saturdays-only series is \$175 orchestra/grand tier and \$105 balcony. Order direct from City Box Office at 415/392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. For more information call Humanities West at 415/391-9700 or check the website at: www.humanitieswest.org.

Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler: Redefining our Place in the Universe brings together a panel of world-class scholars and astronomers, along with an acclaimed San Francisco dance troupe to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy. The presentations explore how these three 16th and 17th century visionaries, with courage, persistence, and dedication to new methods of scientific observation and measurement, changed how we look at our place in the universe. Instead of the long-held belief that man and his earthly home were at the center of the universe, the findings of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler provided a new understanding of our solar system and led to today's astronomical shifts in understanding an expanding universe that may contain millions of life-supporting planets in our galaxy alone.

Alexander Zwissler (Executive Director, Chabot Space & Science Center) will moderate the program on Friday night. **Roger Hahn** (History, UC Berkeley) will provide the keynote address on *The Copernican Revolution* explaining the bizarre confusion in 16th century Christian Europe caused by Copernicus' assertions that man may not be at the center of the universe. **Kip Cranna** (SF Opera) follows with a discussion on why stargazers, from Pythagoras to Kepler, believed that mathematical laws producing musical harmony on earth also determine the movements of heavenly bodies. The evening ends with a performance of *The Star Dances*, by **Kathryn Roszak's Danse Lumiere**, introduced by **Bethany Cobb** (NSF Fellow, UC Berkeley). **Hally Bellah-Guther, Rita Dantas Scott, Damon Mahoney**, and **Lissa Resnick** perform Roszak's original choreography inspired by Kepler's "Music of the Spheres" and by the latest star/planet mapping by astronomers at UC Berkeley. Music includes Holst's "The Planets" for two pianos.

On Saturday **Paula Findlen** (History, Stanford University) lectures on *Galileo and the Telescope*, revealing how, in 1609, this new instrument changed how we look at the heavens and made Galileo one of the most important and ultimately controversial astronomers of his time. **Geoff Marcy** (Astronomy, UC Berkeley) will take a look at our fascination with finding life in other parts of the universe and our search for other earth-like planets. A performance by **George Hammond** (San Francisco attorney and author) follows. Hammond will impersonate Copernicus, wryly commenting on the "hot ideas" of 21st Century cosmology. **Alex Filippenko** (Astronomy, UC Berkeley) completes the program with a presentation on how the observations of very distant exploding stars (supernovae) show that the expansion of the Universe is now speeding up, rather than slowing down as would be expected due to gravity. Fillippenko also discusses the nature of "dark energy," considered to be the most important unsolved problem in physics that may provide clues to a unified quantum theory of gravity.

For a complete program schedule and additional information about the presenters please visit www.humanitieswest.org.

Founded in 1983, Humanities West, a Bay Area non-profit, is dedicated to "exploring history to celebrate the mind and the arts." Designed to entertain and educate diverse audiences, these programs offer a lively combination of wide-ranging lectures and performances that encompass the fine and performing arts, social history, music, politics, and philosophy of the arts.

This program is supported in part by Grants for the Arts/ San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund; Bank of the West; Chabot Space & Science Center; Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford University; Institute of European Studies, UC Berkeley; Office of Resources for International Area Studies (ORIAS), UC Berkeley; Lawrence Hall of Science; Goethe-Institute; Mechanics' Institute; Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning; Symposium Great Books Institute; Humanities Department, San Francisco State University; Leonardo daVinci Society; Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; Theatre Bay Area; and Townsend Humanities Center, UC Berkeley.

CALENDAR LISTING: EVENT/LECTURES/ARTS & CULTURE

WHAT:

Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler: Redefining our Place in the Universe

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WHEN: **8pm to 10:15pm, Friday, October 2, 2009**
 10am to 12noon and 1:30pm to 4pm, Saturday, October 3, 2009

WHERE: **Herbst Theatre**
 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

TICKETS: **\$20 - \$100**
 Tickets are available through City Box Office at
 415/392-4400 or online at www.cityboxoffice.com
 Group tickets: info@humanitieswest.org

PUBLIC INFO: www.humanitieswest.org

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