



# 400 YEARS *of the TELESCOPE*

A JOURNEY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND THOUGHT



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## CINEMATIC PBS DOCUMENTARY **400 YEARS OF THE TELESCOPE** CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY MAKES ITS PBS DEBUT

Medford, OR (9 February 2009) --- A sweeping film celebrating four centuries of astral discoveries will make its debut on PBS when **400 Years of the Telescope; A Journey of Science, Technology and Thought** airs in April (scheduled air date: April 10; 10pm Pacific/Eastern, 9pm Central, *check local listings*). In **400 Years of the Telescope**, viewers take a visually stunning journey from Galileo's first look at the cosmos in 1609, to today's thrilling quests to discover new worlds and glimpse the formation of the first 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 that presents the human quest of the past 400 years to understand the structure and nature of the universe. **400 Years of the Telescope** is narrated by astrophysicist **Neil deGrasse Tyson** (host of *NOVA ScienceNow*), features a lush 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 one part of a multifaceted set of experiences funded by a single National Science Foundation award, designed to reconnect society to the starry night. An extensive website will be launched on pbs.org and a planetarium program produced by the Buhl Planetarium, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center and Interstellar Studios titled "Two Small Pieces of Glass" will be distributed to planetariums across the nation. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific, NASA's Night Sky Network, and PBS affiliates will partner with regional science centers throughout the year to host star parties where PBS viewers can look through telescopes and experience what Galileo did four centuries ago.

From reenactments of Galileo's invention and early pen drawings of the moons of Jupiter, to vivid multi-colored nebulas captured by the Hubble Space Telescope, **400 Years of the Telescope** takes viewers from their armchairs into the wonders of space exploration. With warmth and humor, the

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planet's top astrophysicists enthusiastically discuss momentous discoveries, and define dark energy – a mysterious vacuum energy that is accelerating the expansion of the universe. Looking into the future, viewers will learn of emergent telescopes the size of stadiums, and a massive radio telescope array that will be perched on one of the highest plateaus on the planet - enormous new instruments that may detect life outside our solar system, and allow humans to view the initial moments of the Big Bang. Like Galileo's first telescopic observations, these new technologies will reshape our entire perception of the universe.

Beautifully photographed in 4k digital cinematography, ***400 Years of the Telescope*** is the first PBS documentary to be filmed on 35mm RED technology. Recorded at 4520 X 2540 pixels per frame, the output is RAW format, over five times the resolution of HD. To accompany these brilliant visuals, modern English composer **Mark Slater** was commissioned to create a vibrant musical score, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Slater created elements of the score based on the numbers 1,6,0,9 - the year Galileo made his discovery, with numbers correspond to pitch classes, in which 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, or 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 **Kris Koenig**. **Kris Koenig** is founder and director of one of the most successful community observatories and the nation'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 program is narrated by astrophysicist **Neil deGrasse Tyson** Ph.D., host of *NOVA ScienceNow*, author of eight books including the New York Times best-seller *Death By Black Hole and Other Cosmic Quandaries*, named one of Time's 100 Most Influential People of 2007, appointed to serve on two presidential advisory committees on aerospace, member of the NASA Advisory Council and recipient of the NASA Distinguished Service Medal. The script for ***400 Years of the Telescope*** was developed with a board of advisors composed of the leading astronomers, cosmologists, and astrophysicists in the world today. ***400 Years of the Telescope*** is presented by SOPTV (Southern Oregon Public Television). Further information can be found at [www.400years.org](http://www.400years.org).