

TAFELMUSIK

Galileo Project: Music of the Spheres

Tafelmusik's *Galileo Project: Music of the Spheres* was launched at the suggestion of University of Toronto Astronomy Professor and Tafelmusik patron John Percy, who proposed a concert to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Galileo Galilei's development of the telescope to coincide with the International Year of Astronomy in 2009.

This inspired Tafelmusik's Alison Mackay to develop a program for a narrated concert with the added theatrical components of set and lighting design, dramatic image projection and stage movement. *Music of the Spheres* received its premiere performance in Banff on January 9, 2009, after a seven day residency, with musical direction by Jeanne Lamon, narration by actor Shaun Smyth, set and lighting design by Glenn Davidson, stage direction by Marshall Pynkoski, and projections by Ben Chaisson.

Ancient civilizations depended on an awareness of the natural world for their livelihood and survival, and enjoyed an intimate relationship with the daily, monthly and yearly patterns of the night sky.

In late 16th-century Florence, the house of lutenist and composer Vincenzo Galilei was a fertile breeding ground for important innovations in the realms of music and science. Later in the year 1609, two exciting events took place in the city of Venice: the publication of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and Galileo Galilei's first public demonstration of the telescope. The worlds of astronomy and music were often intertwined throughout the baroque period.

In *Music of the Spheres*, Tafelmusik has created an event which uses music, words and images to explore the artistic, cultural and scientific world in which 17th- and 18th-century astronomers lived and did their work.

The orchestra performs from memory surrounding a 12-foot high round screen on which images are projected, including photos by astronomy writer and photographer Alan Dyer, animated films about Galileo's writings made by the Calgary Planetarium, and images and video from the Hubble Space Telescope.

Upon the completion of their residency at The Banff Centre, Tafelmusik brought the Galileo concert program back to Toronto audiences, then launched an Ontario tour in February and March, 2009. Tafelmusik is currently developing international tours for *The Galileo Project* in the USA, Mexico and Asia in 2009 and 2010-2011.