



## **Chabot Space & Science Center's Planetarium Goes Digital**

*—Most Technologically Advanced Planetarium in the United States  
Opens with New Shows on July 16, 2005—*

OAKLAND, CA (June 15, 2005) — Home to a brand-new sophisticated array of projection technology, digital effects, and advanced audiovisual capabilities, the Ask Jeeves Planetarium at Chabot Space & Science Center re-opens on July 16 with a slate of fully immersive shows. The new system is capable of projecting a brilliant seamless image over the entire 70-foot dome surface and can deliver jaw-dropping digital sound. The images surround the audience, extending beyond the peripheral vision, leading to an experience that is fully immersive and engaging. The new system was funded by a \$1.9 million dollar grant to Chabot from the United States Airforce and developed by SEOS, Inc.

“We’re excited about bringing a new level of immersion to our audiences, complimenting the reality already provided by our Zeiss star projector,” said Alex Barnett, Executive Director of Chabot Space & Science Center. “This new digital dome technology completely revolutionizes the presentation of planetarium content and allows us to be more flexible in our programming. We will be able to integrate real scientific data into the shows, and fly visitors to the surface of Mars, for example. We hope that these expanded planetarium capabilities will really take our visitors to where no one has gone before and inspire them to want to learn more about the Universe.”

The system uses six high-brightness, high-contrast DLP projectors driven by a powerful array of computers and software. As well as presenting pre-rendered shows, the planetarium can also display real-time data visualizations, utilizing a Digital Universe database. This enables Chabot to take audiences through the three dimensional Universe, across the surface of Earth and other planets, through nebulae and into star fields. The images in the database are not artistic interpretations of objects or phenomena, but visualizations based on the most recent scientific data, created by teams of scientists and computer and graphics specialists. The Digital Universe is the world’s most extensive and scientifically accurate three-dimensional interactive atlas of the observable Universe—scientists at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, with support from NASA, combined astronomical observations from around the world with state-of-the-art astrophysical computer models to create it.

The 240-seat theater planetarium will offer a variety of new shows: *SonicVision*, an alternative-rock music show; *The Search for Life: Are We Alone?*, narrated by Harrison Ford; and *The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, especially for ages 5 – 10. Continuing shows are *Sunshine*, for pre-schoolers; and *The Sky Tonight*, with live narration.

**New Shows in the Ask Jeeves Planetarium**

**Sonic Vision** — Sonic Vision is a trip out of this world and into the minds of the universe's most creative musical artists and digital animators, set to a soundtrack featuring today's coolest music. This mind-warping roller-coaster ride is mixed by Moby and features tracks from Radiohead, U2, David Bowie, Coldplay, Queens of the Stone Age, Prodigy, The Flaming Lips, Fischerspooner, Spiritualized, Audioslave, Stereolab, Boards of Canada, David Byrne and Brian Eno, Goldfrapp, Zwan, White Zombie, and Moby. The show uses next-generation digital technology to illuminate the Planetarium's dome with a dazzling morphing of colorful visions in this one-of-a-kind computer-generated musical and visual experience. *SonicVision was developed by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with Moby and in association with MTV2. SonicVision is made possible by generous sponsorship and technology support from Sun Microsystems.* (38 min) Portions of the show feature loud music and large fast moving images that may startle small children.

**Showtimes:** Friday & Saturday evenings, 7 & 9:15 pm.

**Admission** is \$8 Adult / \$7 Youth & Seniors.

**The Search for Life: Are We Alone?** — Narrated by Academy Award-nominated actor Harrison Ford, this engrossing immersive theater experience whisks you on an incredible journey in search of the answer to this most intriguing question. This exhilarating voyage from the depths of Earth's oceans to the outer reaches of the cosmos features breathtaking visualizations—many seen for the first time—such as a brilliant panorama of deep space, a walk on Mars and a dramatic visualization of the formation of our own fragile planet. *The Search for Life: Are We Alone? was developed by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA).*

**Showtimes:** Tues – Thurs at 12:30, 2:30 and 4:00 pm, Friday & Saturday at 12:30, 2:30, 4:00 and 6:00 pm, and Sundays at 12:30, 2:30 and 4:00 pm.

**Admission** is free with General Admission to the Science Center, which \$13 Adult / \$9 Youth & Seniors.

**Secret of the Cardboard Rocket** — Two young adventurers turn an old cardboard box into a rocket and with the help of a magical book and their vivid imaginations blast off on an awesome journey to the most amazing places in the Solar System. Gasp in amazement at the huge planet Jupiter, find out what Saturn's rings are made of and discover the secret of the cardboard rocket. The show has been upgraded for digital full-dome systems and provides an excellent introduction to the nine planets of our Solar System. Especially for ages 5 – 10.

**Showtimes:** Tues – Sunday at 11:30 & 12:30

**Admission** is free with General Admission to the Science Center, which \$13 Adult / \$9 Youth & Seniors.

*Media Previews:*

*Wednesday, July 13*

Secret of the Cardboard Rocket 11:30 & 1:30

Search for Life 12:30 & 2:30

SonicVision 7:00

*Thursday, July 14, 7 – 9 pm*

Technology Demo, Show Segments and Reception.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

SEOS is a global supplier of visual display systems, providing out-the-window views for flight, car, truck, ship, armour and air traffic control pilot/driver training. They also provide immersive displays that are used to visualize data in areas such as oil and gas exploration, planetariums, theme parks and science centers. [www.seos.com](http://www.seos.com)

**Chabot Space and Science Center** is nonprofit interactive science center focusing on astronomy and the inter-relationships of all the sciences. Its observatory, planetarium, exhibits, and natural park setting are a place where a diverse population of students, teachers, and the public can imagine, understand, and learn to shape their future

through science. The Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd. in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park. **Summer hours, July 5 – Sept 5:** Tues – Thurs, 10 am–5pm; Friday & Saturday, 10 am–10 pm; Sunday, 11am–5 pm. Closed Mon. General admission, including free parking and a daytime planetarium show, is \$13.00 for adults, \$9.00 youth and seniors. Children under 3 are admitted free. *SonicVision* and *The Sky Tonight* planetarium shows and large format movies in the MegaDome Theater are \$8.00 adult, and \$7.00 Youth & Senior. Telescopes are open for Free Public Viewing Fridays & Saturdays from dusk – 10 pm, weather permitting. Tickets may be purchased at the door, or by calling (510) 336-7373.

**For more information, call (510) 336-7300, or visit [www.chabotspace.org](http://www.chabotspace.org)**

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