



SONIC VISION: HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR MUSIC?

**—West Coast Premiere of Digitally Animated Alternative-Rock Music Show
Opens At Chabot Space & Science Center on July 16, 2005—**

OAKLAND, CA (June 17, 2005) — Rocketing laser light shows into the 21st Century, *SonicVision*, which opens July 16 at Chabot Space & Science Center in Oakland, takes audiences on a fantastic roller-coaster ride through mind-warping visuals that pulsate to the rhythms of high-energy music. Mixed by Moby, the show 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. *SonicVision* uses next-generation technology to blend today's popular music with the vibrant visual artistry of a diverse group of animators and video artists to create a spectacular show presented in an incomparable venue—the Ask Jeeves Planetarium, newly outfitted with a full-dome video projection system. The show's music virtually ignites this one-of-a-kind musical and visual experience, which uses the Planetarium's brand new digital dome technology to illuminate the 70-foot dome with a dazzling morphing of colorful visions. *SonicVision* was developed by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with Moby and in association with MTV2 and is made possible by generous sponsorship and technology support from Sun Microsystems. The new planetarium full-dome system was funded by a \$1.9 million dollar grant to Chabot from the United States Airforce.

“Our mission involves engaging and inspiring people,” said Alex Barnett, Executive Director of Chabot Space & Science Center. “*SonicVision* is a powerful, entertaining, and truly contemporary presentation that updates the popular laser show genre, just as the new digital dome technology revolutionizes the presentation of planetarium content. We hope that this alternative show will bring new audiences to Chabot who will want to learn about the Universe.”

SonicVision expands the boundaries of the 1970s and '80s laser shows featuring Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, leaving 20th-century technology and the old laser presentations far behind. The laser shows used single laser light beams to create a variety of slender geometric images, occasionally broken up by small stick figures that stretched, twisted, and spun among the “stars,” set to the popular music of the day. A worthy 21st-century successor to the Planetarium's laser shows, *SonicVision* revolutionizes the planetarium music show concept through its use of immersive digital technology to intertwine the sights and the sounds—the captivating visualizations and the mesmerizing music—giving meaning to the question: “How do you see your music?”

Moby and the Music

Long interested in space and astronomy, Moby used his legendary musical talents to develop the mix for *SonicVision*. The music mix 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, ranging from the soothing sound of Zwan’s “Honestly” to the wild spin of U2’s “Elevation” to the rhythmic beat of Moby’s own “Into the Blue” remix (*please see the accompanying playlist for a complete list of songs*). The music mix shifts from electronica to Britpop to grunge, blending the gritty sounds of grunge with the intensely insistent beats of rock to create a dynamic audioscape that carries audiences off on a roller-coaster ride, making hearts beat fast one moment and relax the next.

***SonicVision*’s Visual Artistry**

SonicVision was created by a multidisciplinary team of animators, experts in 2-D and 3-D design, editors, and media artists who combined their technical and artistic skills to develop this dazzling show whose music explodes to life on the Planetarium dome in an astounding fusion of digital images and animations. Former MTV Art Director Chris Harvey joined the production team as *SonicVision*’s Creative Director and collaborated with 19 artists and animators, including the commercial production company Curious Pictures—producer of television shows for the Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, and HBO—and artists Alex Grey, Perry Hall, and Darrel Anderson, and popular video jockeys (VJs) Bionic Dots, Benton-C, Madame Chao, Atmospherex, Vishwanath Bush, and others. An integral part of the rapidly growing video art movement, whose members use moving images and audio data to create artworks, VJs manipulate video and animations to music and have contributed to the making of *SonicVision*. Through the creative efforts of these artists and animators, the Planetarium dome becomes a digital art gallery, pulsating with hypnotic cutting-edge VJ art.

This extraordinary production team, which also included Paul Schneider as Producer, Benjamin Bernhardt as Director of Engineering, and Mark Bajuk as Lead Technical Director, has created a stunning music show in which each scene smoothly transforms into the next, blending separate artists’ renderings into one seamless ultra-high-resolution visual experience, in tandem with the shifting dynamics of the music. In a continuous journey, sometimes tranquil, sometimes turbulent, the show’s visuals seem to pull the viewer through tangled, seemingly impenetrable webs and impossibly winding, colorful mazes out into open, serene space. Dizzying animations launch audiences into fantasy space as Radiohead’s “Everything in Its Right Place” resonates; the Boards of Canada’s instrumental “Julie and Candy” brings viewers to an extraordinary space where cathedral-like structures are erected all around them; and Zwan’s “Honestly” spins the audience wildly up into the heavens.

Technology of the Ask Jeeves Planetarium

SonicVision's pulsating sounds and dazzling visuals meet in the Ask Jeeves Planetarium, home to a brand-new sophisticated array of projection technology, digital effects, and advanced audiovisual capabilities. 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. Developed by SEOS, 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. This enables Chabot to take audiences through the three dimensional Universe, across the surface of Earth and other planets, through nebulas and into star fields. The images surround the audience, extending beyond the peripheral vision, leading to an experience that is fully immersive and engaging.

In its 240-seat theater, the Planetarium offers a variety of shows besides *SonicVision*—*The Search for Life: Are We Alone?*, narrated by Harrison Ford; *The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket*, especially for ages 5 - 10; *Sunshine*, for pre-schoolers; and *The Sky Tonight*, with live narration.

Schedule and Ticketing Information

Beginning on Saturday, July 16, 2005, *SonicVision* will be presented on Friday and Saturday nights, with shows at 7:00 and 9:15 pm. Tickets are \$8 Adult / \$7 Youth & Seniors; and do not include General Admission to the Center. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 510-336-7373 or visit www.chabotspace.org

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

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

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