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PRESS RELEASE
Programming

Starting May 13, 2010, a new show at the Montréal Planetarium

Saturn Reveals Its Secrets

Montréal, April 29, 2010 - Montréal's Nature Museums invite everyone on an extraordinary interplanetary journey **starting May 13, 2010**, with ***Saturn, Beyond the Rings***, at the Montréal Planetarium. The fast-moving show treats audiences to some original views of the planet Saturn, its rings and its moons, thanks to spectacular images from the Cassini mission and the Huygens probe. Along with the multimedia presentation, a member of the Planetarium staff will conduct some experiments and demonstrations illustrating the concepts in the film. It's Saturn as you've never seen it before!

A fabulous gas giant

The presenter is a faithful on-board companion throughout this odyssey, adding comments and explanations and interacting with the audience. The journey begins with an introduction to Saturn, the sixth planet from the Sun in our solar system and the second largest in mass and volume, after Jupiter. Saturn is a planet of extremes and violent contrasts. Winds blasting at over 1,800 km/h create storms of an intensity unimaginable on Earth; its magnetic field is 8,000 times stronger than that of our planet, and it rotates twice as quickly on its axis. The surprising images taken by the Huygens probe reveal some of the secrets of this gas giant nine times larger than Earth: it is made up of hydrogen and helium, in gaseous form on the surface but liquefied at its core, where the temperature soars to 12,000°C! When Galileo saw Saturn through his telescope for the first time, in 1610, he couldn't imagine all its complexity and splendour.

Spinning rings

The journey continues to Saturn's famous rings, over 120,000 km wide but no more than 1 km thick! They are made up of billions of ice and dust particles, in an atmosphere composed of oxygen and hydrogen. Saturn's spectacular and mysterious rings are its trademark, immediately distinguishing it from the other planets in our solar system.

Saturn by moonlight

Next stop is Saturn's moons. How many, you ask? Would you believe 62? Some have hard, cratered surfaces while others are porous, and they vary widely in shape and size. The most remarkable one is certainly Titan, with its atmosphere of nitrogen, its lakes and rivers of liquid methane and blocks of frozen water. Titan's atmosphere is actually quite like the Earth's in its earliest days, and the show includes magnificent shots taken by the Huygens probe. There is also Enceladus, with its volcanoes spitting out huge plumes of icy particles, probably from an underground saltwater ocean whose water freezes instantly when it reaches the surface.

Our spectacular universe

Saturn, Beyond the Rings is an exciting interactive experience giving audiences a chance to enjoy themselves and learn as they marvel at the universe around us. The show was produced by the Montréal Planetarium using the latest scientific data and extraordinary images provided by the Cassini mission. It was written and directed by Louie Bernstein, with artistic direction by Sophie Desrosiers. The whole family is sure to enjoy this tremendous space odyssey – the first launch is on May 13, 2010. All aboard!

Target audience: ages 9 and up

Showtimes: Tuesday to Sunday, 1:15 and 3:45 p.m. (French); 2:30 p.m. (English)

Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium – helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.

General information: www.museumsnature.ca

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