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ATTENTION: News/Science/Education/Family Section Reporters

H.R. MACMILLAN SPACE CENTRE HOSTS NATIONAL PREMIERE OF FOUR-CITY PLANETARIUM PRODUCTION

Galileo Live! also heralds arrival of live theatre to Space Centre stage

Vancouver, BC, March 17, 2008 – In a challenging economy that calls for creative measures, the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre and three other Canadian planetariums have come together and pooled their talent and resources in the production of a unique planetarium show, *Galileo Live!*, which makes its national premiere in Vancouver this Saturday.

A blend of live theatre and 360-degree visuals, *Galileo Live!* was created to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of the telescope and the International Year of Astronomy 2009. It's the third joint production by the Canadian Planetarium Production Collaborative consisting of planetariums in Calgary, Winnipeg, Montreal and Vancouver.

The nationally-funded and produced planetarium show will take its audience back 400 years to meet the great Italian scientist – portrayed by an actor – who will guide them on a live tour through his discoveries with the telescope.

"By sharing resources and expertise with the other planetariums, we all get access to a show that is much higher quality than any of us could produce individually. The larger production budget lets us have higher-quality visuals, music and location shots, and the creative team has the best from each facility," said Rob Appleton, Space Centre executive director.

The Space Centre supplied animation for the production while the other Planetariums provided everything from script development to grant application to specialized dome theatre imagery. Funding for the production was provided by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Canadian Heritage and Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

With the Vancouver debut of *Galileo Live!* this Saturday, live theatre is also going where no theatre has gone before...to the Space Centre.

"We believe there is an audience we are missing. While the Space Centre continues to offer laser shows, there are still others who are interested in our solar system and beyond who want to see something outside of our current 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. Not only are we looking to provide more evening shows featuring astronomy, we would like to make more use of our venue, partnering with other arts organizations," said Appleton.

Galileo Live! launches Saturday, March 21 and runs every Saturday evening through to June 20. Performances start at 7 p.m. with doors open at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 604.738.7827 or visit www.spacecentre.ca.

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

Galileo Facts

- According to Stephen Hawking, Galileo probably bore more responsibility for the birth of modern science than anybody else.
- Albert Einstein called Galileo the father of modern science.
- Galileo did not invent the telescope but took the first device – designed by Hans Lippershey – and developed into a true scientific instrument.
- When first observing Saturn, Galileo thought the planet had ears or handles. It wasn't until after Galileo's death that Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens identified the rings of Saturn.
- Galileo's middle finger, the only remaining part of the 17th century astronomer's body, is on display in Florence, Italy as part of an exhibition entitled Galileo: Images of the Universe from Antiquity to the Telescope. It is mounted on a marble base and encased in a crystal jar.
- Galileo, who lived from 1564 to 1642, was condemned by the Catholic Church for teaching that the Earth revolves around the Sun. In 1633, he was tried and convicted of heresy by the Inquisition. He spent the last nine years of his life under house arrest. But the Church's position on Galileo has recently softened.
- In May, several Vatican officials will participate in an international conference to re-examine the Galileo affair, and top Vatican officials are now saying that Galileo should be named the "patron" of the dialogue between faith and reason.
- The narrator in Galileo Live! is his daughter, inspired by Dava Sobel's book, Galileo's Daughter. Born out of wedlock, Galileo's oldest daughter, Virginia, was cloistered at the age of 13 at which time she took the name Maria Celeste. For the rest of his life, Galileo remained in contact with his daughter through many letters and visits.

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