



Described as a “Jungian astronomy extravaganza,” *Starball* combines live theatre, improvisation, original music, cosmological inquiry and the exploration of human consciousness into an entertaining performance that tosses our collective understanding of the universe high up into the air and waits anxiously to see where it all lands! Written and performed by veteran planetarians and actors John Kaufmann and Dan Dennis, *Starball* invites audience members of all ages and backgrounds to forge a visceral connection to the night sky using their own dreams as the vehicle for their journey.

**"Out of this World...a show of unassuming playfulness."**  
—Seattle Times

### THE SHOW ITSELF

Upon entering the planetarium, audience members take on the role of “Villagers” who have gathered for the night. A character known as The Proxy (played by Dan Dennis) welcomes them to a secret location called “The Clearing” and asks each Villager to write down a dream anonymously on a slip of paper. The Conductor (played by John Kaufmann) gathers the dreams in an antique box and the excursion through the cosmos begins.

As the lights go down, the stars emerge and The Proxy and The Conductor reintroduce the audience to the basic motion and mechanics of the night sky—the properties of its four quadrants and the history of popular constellations. This provides the audience with a shared background and vocabulary, enabling them to jump into the participatory portion of the show with confidence. The Conductor pulls slips of paper from the box and audience members read each others’ dreams aloud. Using these dreams as their map, The Conductor, The Proxy, and The Villagers together search for and name constellations based on images from the dreams. Guided by Kaufmann and Dennis, each *Starball* audience is given license to rewrite our collective history and have a hand in the genesis of an original mythic skyscape. Through this exciting process, audience members take ownership of the new myths they’ve created and they can begin to understand how previous societies looked to the sky for guidance and power.

Music plays a key role in this show. The charm of the performers and intimacy of the planetarium get the audience laughing and singing along. At the end of each show, The Conductor and The Proxy help the audience write an original song based on the mythology they’ve just invented—this is the final note of the evening and leaves everyone singing together as they leave the planetarium to go back into the world.

This show is designed specifically to be performed within a planetarium setting. The 90 minute performance has minimal technical requirements and superb portability. The performance is suitable for venues with seating capacities ranging from 30 to 300. With their backgrounds in improvisation, Kauffman and Dennis have the flexibility to mold each performance to meet the needs of targeted audiences (from child to teen to adult). Because the audience plays such an important and participatory role in this show, each performance of *Starball* is different from the ones that came before it.



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OVERVIEW



#### JOHN KAUFMANN (WRITER/PERFORMER)

John Kaufmann grew up in Iowa, then moved to Bar Harbor, Maine where he and his sister founded The Unusual Cabaret where he adapted and directed Aristophanes' *The Birds*, played Mrs. Peachum in *Threepenny Opera*, and wrote a musical adaptation of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* with composer Mark Hollmann. Since relocating to Seattle, John has performed with Jet City Improv and Village Theatre, and has played misguided crooner Tony Polar in Empty Space's *Valley of the Dolls*. His own theatrical creations have transcended the boundaries of more "traditional" theatre: in his solo show *linger*, he explored a life frozen every moment his pager beeped. In his recent ensemble show *Line One*, actors spoke only the lines that were communicated to them via the earpieces of their cell phones. John has taught Improvisation and Theatre to students of all ages, recently developing a program called "Improvisation for the Chaplain" for Harborview Medical Center. John loves games and was on the development team for *Cranium Cadoo*, *Hullabaloo*, and other games for kids. He supervised and developed programming for Seattle's Pacific Science Center. His experiences in PSC's planetarium inspired him to create *Starball* in collaboration with Dan Dennis. In 2003, John was shortlisted for *The Stranger* weekly's Annual Genius Award.

#### DAN DENNIS (WRITER/PERFORMER)

Dan Dennis is an actor, musician, designer, writer, and teacher, who has aroused wonder in planetarium audiences for the past nine years. He has performed onstage with Seattle Opera, Seattle Children's Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Tacoma Actors Guild, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, UMO Ensemble, and others. His original music and sound compositions include Book-It's stage adaptations of E.M.Forster's novel *Howards End* and Dicken's *Hard Times*, theatre simple's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Seattle Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear*, & *Othello*, and Living Voices' multimedia piece *La Causa*. Dan is a freelance educator and has taught with many organizations in Seattle including the Seattle Public School District, Seattle Opera, and Pacific Science Center. He performs *Journey from the Dust*, a one-man, multimedia show about the Great Depression throughout the United States, and has toured South Korea with friend and collaborator John Kaufmann, performing for children.

#### AJ EPSTEIN (PRODUCER)

In 1995, AJ Epstein presaged the webcam revolution with the live broadcast of the world premiere production of Rich Howard's *Cowboys in Love: The Hank Plowplucker Story* live to the Internet. He produced and directed the West Coast premiere of Radha Bharadwaj's *Closet Land*. His company, The Ethereal Mutt - Limited, provides high end production, logistics, marketing, and media for live music and theatrical productions. AS PRODUCER: The Flying Karamazov Brothers': *L'Universe*; Interactive Media for the television pilot *Survival Skills*; Keri Healey's *Parrot Fever (Or, Lies I've Told in Chat Rooms)*; Scot Augustson's *Gilgamesh Iowa & Brent or Brenda* (Seattle Times Footlight Award); and *Roger Corman: A Beatnik Fantasia* (in development). AJ was recently named "Seattle's Best Lighting Designer" and his designs have been seen in theatres nationwide. AJ serves as a Trustee of The Lark Theatre in New York. He studied with Mabou Mines and has toured with AC/DC, Rod Stewart, and the Eagles.

#### RACHEL KATZ CAREY (DIRECTOR)

Rachel began her professional directing career in Minneapolis as the Associate Lab Director at the Playwrights' Center. Her Minneapolis credits include *Burn This*, *School For Wives*, *Orphans*, *The Caretaker* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. For theater simple she has directed award-winning productions of *The Master & Margarita*, *Escher's Hands* & *The Snow Queen*. Seattle credits include *Desdemona*, *Misalliance*, *Life Is A Dream*, *7 Stories*, *Winners*, *Smash*, *21A*; *Motorcade*, *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*, the world premiere of *The Visible Horse* by Mary Lathrop Recent productions include; Jeffrey Hatcher's *Three Viewings* and *Notes from Underground* by Dostoevsky, at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. Last year took her to her hometown of Duluth, Minnesota where she directed *The Philanthropist* by Christopher Hampton. Last spring she sent *Notes From Underground* and *The Big Time* (a musical by John Moe with songs by Chris Ballew-of The Presidents of the United States of America) to the Adelaide Fringe Theatre Festival where they played to rave reviews and excited crowds. This summer she brushed up her German for *Lohengrin* at the Seattle Opera as Stephen Wadsworth's Assistant Director. Her teaching credits include University of Minnesota-Duluth, Lewis and Clark College, University of Washington and Taproot Theatre in Seattle. She is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab West and the American Guild of Musical Artists.

"A wonderful use of the planetarium and an extraordinarily effective way to connect with the audience."

—JIM MANNING,  
PLANETARIAN



## PRICING AND PACKAGES

Prices for Starball and Workshops/Master Classes. All amounts in US Dollars

"A delightful evening.  
I enjoyed it very much."

—DAVE BECK, KUOW RADIO

### •STANDARD PACKAGE - \$5,500

This is 6 performances of Starball during a 7 day period.

In addition, we ask the that the presenter provide:

- Round trip travel from Seattle, WA for 3 persons
- Lodging for 3 Persons
- Per Diem of \$45/day for 3 Persons
- Performance Liability Insurance

We also are offering packages which include Master Classes and Workshops for Students, Performers and Planetarians. We have a variety to choose from.

### • PACKAGE 2 - \$6,000

6 performances (7 days) of Starball  
+ 3 Workshops or Classes

### • PACKAGE 3 - \$4,500

4 Performances (4 days) of Starball  
+ 2 Workshops or Classes

*Additional Performances of Starball (within the 7 day period) can be purchased for \$500/ performance.*

*Individual Workshops or Classes can be purchased for \$300 each during weeks of residency.*

## WORKSHOPS FOR ALL AGES

### THE SKY IN A NUTSHELL :

**Planets and Constellations in Your Classroom**

**One class period (approx. 30 – 40 minutes)**

**10-35 students**

**Great for ages 6-9**

Leave your-desks behind and take on the roles of planets, stars, and new constellations to discover the movements of the sky firsthand.- Understand why we see the Moon, the Sun, and the stars as we do, and learn why our view changes over time.- Explore the dance of the planets.- Create a living zodiac- Examine the phasing of the Moon. Use your imagination, expand your vocabulary, and move your body to give yourself a new cosmic understanding.

### THE SKY FROM SCRATCH

**40 minutes,**

**Dome Show**

**Great for ages 7 – 14**

You become one of “the greatest minds of the village” as you are brought together with your fellow classmates to serve on a special council gathered to re-invent the sky. The Village leader orders you to forget all the old sky myths and constellation names you’ve learned in order to start rebuilding the universe from scratch. To succeed, you must combine your skills of observation and creativity to create a new mythology that is consistent with the realities of celestial mechanics.

### LIFESTYLES OF THE STARS

**One class period (approx. 30-40 minutes)**

**Assembly for 300 maximum**

**Sound system required**

**Great for ages 7 – 14**

The stars are just like us — or are they? This-fast and fun-live astronomy demonstration puts you onstage as the star of the show as you learn all about the life cycle of these luminous celestial bodies.--Discover the differences between various stars-as you journey from-birth to life to death in this role-playing free-for-all.



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PACKAGES



## WORKSHOPS FOR ADULTS/EDUCATORS/PLANETARIUM STAFF

### ON YOUR TOES: OR, IMPROV 101

90 min Master Class  
5-25 Attendees

What scares most rational adults more than anything else? No, not the monster hiding under the bed. Spontaneous presentation!! The idea of improvisation can be frightening even for experienced actors and public speakers and yet nothing engages a live audience more than a confident extemporaneous performer. Learn how to leave the script behind without losing your sanity in this workshop which focuses on the basics of improvisational performance. Through games and coaching, this workshop will get you on your feet and give you the courage to step off the pages of your script!

### A HOW-TO FOR SHINY, HAPPY VOLUNTEERS

60 minute Master Class  
5 - 25 Attendees

Often the success of a museum or planetarium experience lies squarely in the hands of your volunteers. Volunteers can be smart, funny, and do all the right things, or they can be awkward, dull, and move a performance backward instead of forward. Interactive learning experiences are all about the quality of the interaction. How can you put your volunteers at ease and give them every opportunity to succeed? How can you remove their fears of personal interaction and help them take ownership of their experience? How can you guide them in injecting the performances with life and humor? Good volunteer training is an art in itself. Prepare to volunteer yourself as we role play best and worst case volunteer scenarios in this interactive workshop.-

### STUPID PLANETARIAN TRICKS

Up to 30 Planetarians

They say planetariums can't compete with all the high tech wizardry of the local multiplex. We say nay to that! All it takes are few simple tricks. How do you keep your live planetarium show from becoming a stultifying lecture?- How do you thrill audience members without all those lasers and fast-moving rollercoaster video sequences?- How do you use a laser pointer without causing fear and inducing headaches in your audience?- This fun workshop will raise the bar of performance for planetarians seeking to take the next step from 40-minute nap under the stars to a sublime walk through the universe.

### USING MUSIC IN YOUR SHOW

90 min Master Class  
5-25 Attendees

All the people want is a catchy tune and beat they can dance to! Music, especially music performed live, opens minds and hearts and creates profound bonds between listeners and performers. Whether you sing onstage or only in the shower, you can use music to create a transformative experience for your audiences. This class will expand your abilities to listen, to distill a moment into a captivating lyric, and to create rhythm, melody, and harmony in order to engage your audience more fully in their experience.

### MAKING SCIENCE THEATRE: A JOINT WORKSHOP FOR UNIVERSITY ARTS/DRAMA AND SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS

90 min Master Class  
5-25 Attendees

Making "Science Theatre" is a unique art. John Kaufmann and Dan Dennis have performed and developed numerous presentations, planetarium programming, and live performances at Pacific Science Center for more than a decade. In their planetarium show, **Starball**, they created an environment in which participants invent original constellations and sky mythology based on other audience members' dreams. In, **Raptor Rapture**, they guided visitors through the entire Raptors exhibit, using actors to step out of the group to enliven and elucidate the crowd. Kaufmann and Dennis have merged their theatre experience with their love of science to develop innovative programs and an inclusive teaching philosophy that combines humor, science, and human interaction. With this workshop, Kaufmann and Dennis will show you how to develop your own home-grown programs that make use of childlike imagination to capture the minds and hearts of your audiences.



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