



British Science Festival Star Events included in the Prize Draw

We have five pairs of FREE tickets available for University Staff for the Star Events listed below. To enter the prize draw for these tickets please email Francesca Peach at f.peach@bham.ac.uk stating which shows you would like to attend. Please send your entry by noon on Thursday 4 September and winners will be notified on Friday 5 September.

Maggie Aderin-Pocock: Three eras of space

Saturday 6 September 2014, 18.00 - 19.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

How far have our notions of space and what it means to humanity come in the last 70 years? Maggie Aderin-Pocock explores the history of space exploration by taking us through the three eras of space: firstly, confrontation born out of the Second World War; next, collaboration between nations across the world, united to establish a permanent habitat; and, lastly, commercialisation. Is this the key to getting us all out there?

Things that go pop

Saturday 6 September 2014, 19.00 - 23.00

Birmingham and Midland Institute

Enjoy an immersive evening of combustible vapours and fizzy drinks inspired by natural philosopher and theologian Joseph Priestley. As Joseph Priestley was in life, so we shall be in our part challenging, free thinking, and unafraid to stand up for what we believe in. Find out more about this fascinating local hero throughout an unforgettable evening of screenings, performances and experiments.

Science showoff

Saturday 6 September 2014, 20.00 - 22.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

Enjoy a chaotic cabaret night featuring scientists, science communicators, science teachers, historians and philosophers of science, students, science popularisers and anyone else with something to show off about science. Hosted by comedian Steve Cross, ten acts will take you into the weird and wonderful world of science. Expect jokes, demos, music, and some naughty words. And some of the best and most chaotic science on stage you've ever seen!

Alice Roberts: The incredible unlikeliness of being

Sunday 7 September 2014, 18.00 - 19.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

It is the closest we ever come to a transformation as profound as that from a caterpillar into a butterfly. In the first two months of our existence each of us changed from a single egg to something that looked recognisably human. In the course of that development there were echoes of earlier stages of evolution, harking back to very ancient ancestors we share with living insects, fish, amphibians and reptiles.

Are You Lonesome Tonight?

Sunday 7 September 2014, 19.30 - 20.30

Mac, Birmingham

Ellie Stamp was told that she is the secret love child of Elvis. Since then she has been trying to discover how and why delusional beliefs occur. Created by Ellie and neuroscientists and based on true events the performance examines current methodology used to define and measure 'madness'. Come and explore her lineage to 'The King' by playing with nine numbers that fascinated Sir Issac Newton, Pythagoras and Elvis. This show is followed by Q&A with Ellie Stamp and Paul Fletcher.

Richard Wiseman's Night School: Wake up to the power of sleep

Sunday 7 September 2014, 20.00 - 21.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

Psychologist Richard Wiseman is on a self-declared mission to put the world to sleep. For the past year he has explored the new science of sleep and dreaming, conducted experiments into sleep-learning, and assembled the world's largest archive of dream reports. Richard will be uncovering the power of the sleeping mind, revealing how you can get the perfect night's sleep, decode your dreams, and improve your life without moving a muscle.

Paul Nurse and Tim Hunt: Winning the Nobel Prize

Monday 8 September 2014, 18.00 - 19.00

Barber Concert Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

What does it take to become a world renowned researcher, with a Nobel Prize to your name? How does it feel to be the first to discover something new? Alice Roberts interviews Tim Hunt and Paul Nurse who share the excitement of their discovery and tell us whether winning the top accolade in science changed their lives and their research. Join us for this unique opportunity to find out more about the personalities behind the prize.

Festival of the Spoken Nerd

Monday 8 September 2014, 19.30 - 22.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

Stand-up mathematician Matt Parker and geek songstress Helen Arney bring a host of science demos, factually accurate songs and mathematical wonders - plus two special guests not seen before at the BSF: Sketch comedian Gemma Arrowsmith and stand-up Kent Valentine. Join us for an unforgettable night of comedy and curiosity. Be there and be square!

HeLa

Monday 8 September 2014, 19.30 -20.30

Mac, Birmingham

1951, Henrietta Lacks walks into the coloured section of a hospital in Baltimore with a pain in her abdomen. A cell sample taken without her permission was used as the raw material for some of the most important scientific discoveries of the past 100 years. This powerful performance spans race and poverty in 1950s America to current ethical debates about who owns our DNA.

Women in Science on TV

Monday 8 September 2014, 20.00 - 21.00

Barber Concert Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Join prominent television industry stakeholders and presenters Elizabeth McIntyre, Alice Roberts, Lucy Pilkington and Gia Milinovich to debate the position of women scientists on TV. What are the particular challenges? Has the rise of social media made things worse? Caroline Van den Brul chairs this debate on the challenges women scientists face in the media and tries to discover what solutions the industry can offer.

Helen Czerski: Carnival of the animal senses

Tuesday 9 September 2014, 18.00 - 19.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

We tend to assume that our way of seeing the world is the only way there is, and that our perception defines reality. But plenty of animals detect more of their physical environment than we do. Join Helen Czerski to find out how and discuss why evolution still has its limits when it comes to sensing. Helen will co-present (with Patrick Ayree) the BBC Two series *Beyond Human*, looking at the science of animal senses.

Hypnosis: Therapy or quackery?

Tuesday 9 September 2014, 19.00 - 20.00

Barber Concert Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

An in-depth look at what goes on in the brain during hypnosis, and the implications for therapy and how it really would save a hard-pressed NHS lots of money if it were practised more regularly. The talk will be full of demos and interaction, with a chance to try hypnosis for yourself at the end.

A Cure for Ageing

Tuesday 9 September 2014, 19.30 - 20.30

Mac, Birmingham

A performance about being young and foolish, and becoming old and wise. Or about being young and wise, and becoming old and foolish. It asks how we can talk more honestly about ageing, through personal accounts and shameless speculation in a celebration of life and an attempt to fall in love with our own decline. Join Ira Brand to consider numbers, years, the passing of time, and the fact that we have all, already, started dying.

David Nutt: UK drugs and alcohol policy - time to put science in charge?

Tuesday 9 September 2014, 20.00 - 21.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

Current UK policy on alcohol and other drugs is a mess, with little evidential basis and so is doing more harm than good. Moreover they massively impair research and treatment innovations. The origins of the current laws are archaic traditions, outmoded UN conventions and cynical party political machinations. David Nutt explains where we are, how we got into this mess and how, with a simple scientific evidence-based approach, marked improvements can easily be made.

The Huxley debate: I, Simulation

Wednesday 10 September 2014, 18.00 - 19.00

Barber Concert Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

Orwell would never have predicted that corporations would be scrutinising our every move; nor would he have foretold that we would blindly trade our freedom for access to modern life. Aral Balkan explores notions of our digital selves, our 'simulations', how they undergo much more scrutiny than our corporeal selves and what that means for our fundamental freedoms and democracy. He has a solution and we want you to form the counter-argument, so come prepared.

People vs. Larry Chimp

Wednesday 10 September 2014, 19.00 - 20.00

Barber Lecture Theatre, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

You are summoned for jury service. Larry and his gang killed a member of another gang. He is now on trial for murder. But this trial has a difference - Larry is a chimpanzee. Does Larry understand that others are like him? Can he predict what will happen when he attacks another chimp? You will hear the arguments from both sides, quiz the expert witnesses and help decide: can a chimp do human wrongs?

Simon Watt's frogs and friends

Wednesday 10 September 2014, 19.30 - 21.00

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham

The Ugly Animal Preservation Society's professor of comedy, Simon Watt, returns to the Festival with his new show, for adults only. Frogs are brilliant, but they are dying out. In this comedic lecture Simon explores why frogs are better than most people he knows and how studying them has changed the world. Featuring guest performances by Iszi Lawrence and Helen Arney.

Chronicles of a memory foretold: Remember the good times

Wednesday 10 September 2014, 19.30 -21.00

Mac, Birmingham

Join award-winning theatre company "Jugular: Joining The Head and The Heart" as we explore the role of memory for our perceived individual identities. This darkly comic play on the disastrous consequences of forgetting in relationships is interspersed with live lectures and audience experiments with psychologist Dr Peter Naish.

Jim Al-Khalili: Life on the edge: the coming of age of quantum biology

Wednesday 10 September 2014, 20.00 - 21.00

Barber Concert Hall, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

What is the link between the way plants make use of sunlight, the migration of the European robin, our sense of smell, and mutations in DNA? Quantum biology may provide the answers. Jim Al-Khalili explains how he is using quantum mechanics to describe the workings of the wet warm biological world. Join him in a heady mix of the weirdness of quantum mechanics and its still speculative applications in biology.