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## INSTRUMENTS TUNING

## FANFARE

## APPLAUSE

Alex: Good evening, and welcome, on this 15th of October 2009, to the first annual Blueshift Awards Show, live from the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in beautiful downtown Greenbelt, Maryland! I'm your announcer, Alex!

## APPLAUSE

Alex: We have a fabulous show in store for you tonight! The nominees and their beautiful companions are making their way up the red carpet into the Isaac Newton Pavilion here at the Goddard Space Flight Center. Let's go down to the lovely Carrie Winter to get a red-carpet report...

Carrie: Thanks Alex! The crowd here at the red carpet entrance to the Isaac Newton Pavilion is going wild with excitement. The staggering talent of the scientific luminaries arriving here by limousine, helicopter, and space shuttle is truly incredible! Oh look, there's the fabulous Julie McEnery, project scientist for the Fermi mission! And right behind her is Deputy Project Scientist Elizabeth Hayes, and her husband Eric! And look! Stepping out of the limousine now is the amazing Neil Gehrels, of the Swift mission, and winner of last year's Bruno Rossi Prize! And not to be outdone by the gamma-ray astrophysics crowd, there's the famous podcast producer, Sara Mitchell! Sara is wearing a stunning jet-black, star-speckled Versace gown for the occasion, adorned with a beautiful brooch made from the fuselage of her father's balloon-borne cosmic ray detector, soon to be flying in Antarctica. And there - oh my God, it's really him! - it's JOHN MATHER!

Alex: Well it sounds like EVERYONE who's ANYONE is here tonight! This is award season, after all. It's the highlight of the year for the scientific elite! There are many awards in the world of astronomy, such as the Bruno Rossi Prize in high-energy astrophysics, the Annie Jump Cannon award for women in astronomy, and the Joseph Weber prize for advances in astronomical instrumentation. All of these awards carry great prestige and honor, and recipients are widely praised by their fellow astronomers.

But every astronomer, whether a freshly-minted PhD or a grizzled veteran, dreams of winning that pinnacle of scientific prizes - the Nobel Prize. And no one can describe how it feels to receive a Nobel Prize better than, well, someone who's won a Nobel Prize! Here's my co-host, the lovely and talented Maggie, swathed in an elegant strapless gown in fashionable ultraviolet. She and the famous podcast producer, Sara Mitchell, scored an EXCLUSIVE intimate interview with John Mather, one of the winners of the 2006 Nobel Prize in physics!

Here are some highlights of their conversation...

Maggie: John, thanks for sitting down with us. I think we all know that the Blueshift Awards are about glamour and science. I can only imagine the Nobel Prize ceremony must be similar. Can you tell us what it was like?

John Mather: Spectacular. It is way above and beyond any other awards ceremony I've ever seen for scientists and engineers. The ceremony of the presentation of the prizes starts off at the concert hall and it's full with thousands of people watching. And on the stage are the royal family, and the academy of sciences and the recipients, a number of honored guests. So it's quite startling for us to be up there with the royal family.

Maggie: Yes, sadly they were unable to make it here tonight! We're glad that you could be here though, and that you were able to spare some time before tonight's show for our interview. I imagine they kept you pretty busy before the Nobel Prize ceremony as well - what was that experience like?

John Mather: When you arrive at your hotel for the first time you stagger off the airplane and suddenly there are paparazzi and people seeking your autograph at the door of the hotel and you can't even get in to go to the bathroom before somebody wants your signature and your picture. So that's your introduction to the world of the famous people and it lasts for a few days and then you can go home again. But there are indeed banquets and parties and speeches. I had ten solid days of interviews, lectures, two banquets with the King of Sweden and his family. Lots of banquets with scientific groups. People come to the hotel room to sing to you. They come and sing the Italian folk song "Santa Lucia" to you. And it's Swedish singers and they come to your room in the morning and they serve you tea and cookies with their singing. So this is a pretty amazing thing. It does sort of remind you that this is THE most important scientific prize. The Nobel Foundation is very good at maintaining this. There are many other prizes now and some have even more money associated with them, but there's only one Nobel Prize.

Maggie: There's also only one Blueshift Awards Ceremony, but I'm not sure we can compete with having Swedish singers serenade our award recipients. It certainly sounds like your schedule in Sweden was packed with all kinds of events!

John Mather: So, yes, parties, speeches, banquets, everything to make you understand that what you did was important. And to make you ready to go off and tell the world about it. It's a special opportunity afterwards. Every day, practically, I get an invitation to go someplace and talk to people and tell them about the work that we did.

Maggie: What kind of buzz do you feel the Nobel Prize ceremony generated at home in the US? Unfortunately, I don't think it was televised here, which always makes planning one's Nobel Prize party difficult.

John Mather: We haven't really noticed in the United States, but in Europe, hundreds of

millions of people participate in this event by watching on television, by cooking the banquets that have been published from previous years. So people sit around and have the best possible food they could have at home, and they watch the event and they think about the glories of science.

Alex: Well that was just fabulous! Who wouldn't want Swedish folk singers singing Italian folk songs in the morning at their hotel, especially with tea and cookies! Scientists like John Mather just light up the astronomical world. Which reminds me of one of the most important questions in astronomy today.

How many astronomers does it take to change a light bulb?

(pause)

NONE! Astronomers aren't afraid of the dark!

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER

Alex: OK now, on with the show. The first award of the night, for best informal astronomical newspaper, goes to the staff of the Cosmic Times! Accepting on behalf of the team is the lovely and talented Barbara Mattson!

Barb: Oh, thanks Alex! You don't now how much this means to me, Jim, and the rest of the Cosmic Times team. We are deeply honored by this award, and we hope to...

Eric: Barb, I love you, and Cosmic Times is great, and I'ma let you finish, but the Blueshift podcast from the Astrophysics Science Division at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center is the best podcast ever! Go to [podcastawards.com](http://podcastawards.com) and nominate Blueshift in the Technology/Science category! Get your nominations in by Sunday October 18th!

Maggie: It looks like Alex has his hands full trying to wrestle the mic away from Eric. We're sorry Barb's speech got interrupted, but we do appreciate the shout-out. We'd love it if all you listeners out there would nominate us for the Podcast Awards. The deadline is in only a few days - but it'll only take you a few minutes. Just got to [podcastawards.com](http://podcastawards.com) and fill out the form. It's as easy as that. We'll also have the link up on our website at [universe.nasa.gov/blueshift](http://universe.nasa.gov/blueshift), along with more information on some of the science awards we mentioned.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this show so special - we'll see you next time. This is Maggie from the Blueshift Awards. Good night!

APPLAUSE

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