

Press release, 1 February 2018

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STARMUS Festival to come to Bern, for the 50 year anniversary of the moon landing, in 2019

In summer 2019, the first moon landing will celebrate its 50th anniversary. The successful Apollo 11 mission is closely linked with the University of Bern. Due to this anniversary, the renowned STARMUS Festival will take place in Bern from 24 to 29 June 2019. It is a festival which brings together science – primarily astronomy and space exploration – , music and art, and wants to bring research to a wider audience, and make it tangible.

On 16 July 1969, the Apollo 11 Mission started its successful flight to the moon. As an important and the only non-American experiment, the Solar Wind Composition Experiment (SWC) was on board, which was primarily planned and evaluated at the Physical Institute of the University of Bern by Prof. Dr. Johannes Geiss. This solar wind sail was rolled out on the moon even before the American flag. Due to this close link with the moon landing, Garik Israelian, Director of STARMUS, approached the University of Bern with the idea of hosting the fifth edition of the international festival in Bern. Those responsible for STARMUS are announcing this today at a press conference in London, in the presence of the University of Bern and Bern Welcome.

Make science tangible

The STARMUS Festival has been held every two years since 2009, and has the aim of making science and research tangible to a wider audience, especially in the area of astronomy and space exploration, but also in related disciplines such as particle physics. Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann, Rector of the University of Bern, is delighted that the festival is going to take place in Bern: "The University of Bern has been an international leader in space exploration for many years. On the one hand, the STARMUS Festival gives us the opportunity to present our accomplishments in this area internationally, and on the other hand, give a wider audience the opportunity to experience current research, and the most important people in space exploration and other research areas at close quarters." At past festivals, Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong, Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Alexei Leonov and Jim Lovell, amongst others, gave lectures. Concerts and other events will round off the program, as in other years, when for example Brian May, Sarah Brightman and Brian Eno appeared.

The festival will be hosted by the University of Bern and Bern Welcome. Events will take place throughout the whole canton. The city and canton of Bern will support the festival with a financial contribution. "With STARMUS, Bern will be able to present itself as a research location to the

whole world. With a varied programme, a wider audience should be filled with enthusiasm for science", says Mayor Alec von Graffenried.

The financing of the festival has not yet been secured. In the coming months, it will be a case of contacting potential local, national and international partners. "The anniversary of the moon landing is associated with very positive emotions, and the University of Bern was very closely involved. We are optimistic that we can raise the necessary funds", says Martin Bachofner, CEO of Bern Welcome. The decision as to whether the festival can be held will be made in summer 2018.

Official website of the STARMUS festival: www.starmus.com

Information:

Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann, Rector: +41 31 631 84 44 (between 14.00 - 16.00 and from 18.00)

Alec von Graffenried, Mayor: +41 31 321 65 21