Dr. Mario Livio

Dr. Mario Livio is a senior astrophysicist and Head of the Office of Public Outreach at the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI), the institute which conducts the scientific program of the Hubble Space Telescope. He received his Ph.D. in theoretical astrophysics from Tel Aviv University in Israel, was a professor in the Physics Dept. of the Technion-Israel Institute of technology from 1981 till 1991, and joined STScI in 1991. Dr. Livio has published over 400 scientific papers and received numerous awards for research, for excellence in teaching, and for his books.

His interests span a broad range of topics in astrophysics, from cosmology to the emergence of intelligent life. Dr. Livio has done much fundamental work on the topic of accretion of mass onto black holes, neutron stars, and white dwarfs, as well as on the formation of black holes and the possibility to extract energy from them.

During the past nine years, Dr. Livio's research focused on supernova explosions and their use in cosmology to determine the rate of expansion of the universe, and the nature of the "dark energy" that causes the cosmic expansion to accelerate.

In addition to his scientific interests, Dr. Livio is a self-proclaimed 'art fanatic', who owns thousands of art books. In the past few years, he combined his passions for science and art in three popular books: "The Accelerating Universe", which appeared in 2000, "The Golden Ratio", which appeared in 2002, and "The Equation that Couldn't Be Solved," that has appeared in September 2005.

The first book discusses 'beauty' as an essential ingredient in fundamental theories of the universe. The second tells the story of the amazing appearances of the peculiar number 1.618... in nature, the arts, and psychology. The third book explores the role of symmetries in human perception, in science, in visual arts and music, and even in the selection of mates.

Dr. Livio lectures very frequently to the public. He has given more than 20 full day seminars to the public at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., and just during the past few years has given public lectures at the Hayden Planetarium in New York, The Maryland Institute College of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Berlin Planetarium, the Edinburgh Planetarium, and many more. His book "The Golden Ratio" has won him the "Peano Prize" for 2003, and the "International Pythagoras Prize" for 2004, as the best popular book on mathematics.