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Natural History Museum Series Explores Links Between Science, Music and Communication

**The popular discussion and live music series *First Fridays* returns with
Discovery in the Age of Mammals: Building Brains and Making Minds
January 4 through June 6, 2008**



Aaron Behrans of Ghostland Observatory performs in the North American Mammal Hall at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County as part of the 2007 *First Fridays* programming.

Photo by Ryan Miller/Capture Imaging

LOS ANGELES—Bringing together leading scientists and emerging artists, the highly successful forum and concert series *First Fridays* returns to the Natural History Museum **January 4 through June 6, 2008** with a dynamic exploration of the power of the brain.

This year's series, titled *Discovery in the*

Age of Mammals: Building Brains and Making Minds, focuses on one hallmark of mammals — the evolution of a highly developed brain capable of orchestrating amazingly complex behaviors. From the surprising ways that elephants communicate to the psychobiology of love to the creative practices of some of Southern California's edgiest musicians, the series celebrates the complexities of the brain, how it allows mammals to express themselves, and what its evolution can teach us.

Each evening begins with a curator-guided gallery tour illuminating the NHM's renowned collections. Following the tour, guests are able to participate in a forum led by

distinguished scientists, conservationists, and authors. Neuroscientist Michael W. Quick, who also organized the discussions, will moderate these forums.

After delving into the science of the mind, the series shows creative expression in action with live performances by musicians and deejays at the end of each event. The NHM and Silverlake's Spaceland Productions have partnered to curate the series' concerts, inviting visitors to discover emerging artists and experience their music in the Museum's iconic diorama halls. Cultivated locally, the musicians range from alt-pop to turntable spinning to acoustic acts.

"Now in its fourth season, *First Fridays* at NHM has become a unique presence in the cultural landscape of Los Angeles," said Dr. Jane G. Pisano, President and Director of the Museum. "This dynamic series fuses eclectic music with a provocative public forum for contemporary ideas, intersecting the natural and the cultural worlds."

Advanced tickets for *First Fridays* will be sold via Ticketweb.com. Admission is free for NHM members. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$6.50 for children. Curator-led tours, films, discussions and performances are available on a first-come, first-serve basis and early purchase is recommended. For more information, the public may visit the NHM's website at www.nhm.org or call (213) 763-DINO.

First Fridays events include:

Friday, January 4, 2008 (extended Museum hours to 10 p.m.)

Conscious Minds and the Minds of Others

Margaret Hardin, NHM's Curator of Anthropology will lead guests through the exhibition *Treasures from the Vault*, where many of the Museum's most rare and delicate objects are on temporary display. Guest speaker **Antonio Damasio**, Director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California and best-selling author of *Descartes' Error*, *The Feeling of What Happens*, and *Looking for Spinoza*, will discuss his award-winning contributions to our understanding of how the brain processes

memory, language, emotions and decisions in a moderated public forum. Throughout the night **DJs Allen and Hoseh** will spin in the African Mammal Hall. The evening will conclude with performances by the alternative pop groups **Sea Wolf** and **afternoons**.

- Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.):** *Treasures from the Vault* led by Margaret Hardin, Ph. D. (Curator of Anthropology)
- Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Antonio Damasio, M.D., Ph.D. (David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience and Director of the Brain and Creativity Institute, University of Southern California)
Michael W. Quick, Ph. D., moderator (University of Southern California, see bio below)
- Performances (8 p.m.):** Sea Wolf
afternoons
- DJs (throughout the night):** Allen & Hoseh (dublabb.com)

Friday, February 1, 2008 (extended hours to 10 p.m.)

The Elephant's Secret Sense

Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell, is an Assistant Professor (Consulting) at Stanford University, in the Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery and will discuss her ground-breaking research exploring the capacity of elephants to detect seismic cues and the potential of vibration therapy for treating the hearing impaired.

- Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.):** The Discovery Center led by Carl Selkin, Ph. D. (Vice President, Education)
- Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell, Ph. D. (Department of Otolaryngology, Stanford University)
Michael W. Quick, moderator
- Performances (8 p.m.):** TBA
- DJs (throughout the night):** frosty & Take (dublabb.com)

Friday, March 7, 2008 (extended Museum hours to 10 p.m.)

From Animal to Person: How Cultural Evolution Furnishes Our Minds With Thinking Tools

Daniel C. Dennett, Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy and Co-Director of the Center for Cognitive Studies, Tufts University, is one of the world's leading philosophers of mind and author of the books *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, *Kinds of Minds: Toward an Understanding of Consciousness*, and *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*. He will discuss what his research reveals about evolutionary biology and cognitive science.

- Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.):** TBA

- Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Daniel Clement Dennett, D. Phil. (Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy and Co-Director of the Center for Cognitive Studies, Tufts University)
Michael W. Quick, moderator
- Performances (8 p.m.):** TBA
- DJs (throughout the night):** Ale & matthewdavid (dublab.com)

Friday, April 4, 2008 (extended Museum hours to 10 p.m.)

Love and Feeling in the Age of Mammals

NHM Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology and Director of the Dinosaur Institute **Luis Chiappe** will guide visitors through the *Thomas the T. Rex Lab* (opening in March 2008). **Thomas B. Lewis**, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California San Francisco, and professor at the Fromm Institute at the University of San Francisco will discuss his popular work on the psychobiology of love.

- Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.):** *Thomas the T. rex Lab*, Luis Chiappe, Ph. D., Director, (Dinosaur Institute, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology)
- Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Thomas B. Lewis, M.D. (Department of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco)
Michael W. Quick, moderator
- Performances (8 p.m.):** TBA
- DJ (throughout the night):** Small Town Talk (dublab.com)

Friday, May 2, 2008 (extended Museum hours to 10 p.m.)

How Does Evolution Build a Complex Brain?

Leah Krubitzer will discuss her work examining the evolution of mammalian brains, and how the evolution in brain complexity is reflected in an increase in complex sensory, perceptual, and cognitive behaviors.

- Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.):** TBA
- Discussion (6:30 p.m.):** Leah Krubitzer, Ph.D (Department of Psychology and the Center for Neuroscience, University of California, Davis)
Michael W. Quick, moderator
- Performances (8 p.m.):** TBA
- DJ (throughout the night):** Morpho & Carlos Niño (dublab.com)

Friday, June 6, 2008 (extended Museum hours to 10 p.m.)

Beautiful Minds: the Parallel Evolution of Apes and Dolphins and What It Means for Human Origins

University of Southern California Professor of Anthropology & Biological Sciences and Co-Director of the Jane Goodall Research Center **Craig Stanford** is best known for his

groundbreaking work on the meat-eating behavior of chimpanzees, conducted in collaboration with Dr. Jane Goodall. He is currently focusing on gorilla and chimpanzee studies and conservation efforts in Uganda.

Guided Tour (5:30 p.m.): TBA

Discussion (6:30 p.m.): Craig Stanford, Ph.D. (University of Southern California)
Michael W. Quick, moderator

Performances (8 p.m.): TBA

DJs (throughout the night): Kutmah & Nobody (dublab.com)

About Michael W. Quick

Michael W. Quick, *First Fridays* forum moderator, organized the monthly discussions for *Discovery in the Age of Mammals*. Dr. Quick is a professor of Biological Sciences and Executive Vice Dean of University of Southern California College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. He holds a Ph.D in Neuroscience and his research uses the tools of modern molecular neurobiology to examine the processes that underlie neural communication and which are responsible for drug abuse and addiction.

Museum Admission and Hours

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles. It is open weekdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and weekends and holidays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$6.50 for children. For more information, visit the museum's website at www.nhm.org or call (213) 763-DINO.

About the Museum

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County serves more than one million families and visitors annually, and is a national leader in research, exhibitions and education. The Museum is L.A.'s second oldest cultural institution, the first to open its doors to the public in 1913, and has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history – more than 35 million objects, some as old as 4.5 billion years. Its mission is to inspire wonder, discovery and responsibility for our natural and cultural worlds.

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