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EFFICACIOUS DUALITY - THE SPACE RENAISSANCE,

BRIAN MAY & ROCK'S INNOVATIVE EDUCATORS



[PR-INSIDE](#)

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by Stephanie Lynne Thorburn.

Dr. Brian May, Stephanie Lynne Thorburn and photo historian Elena Vidal. Quarterhouse, Folkestone, 10th November 2010. Brian contemplates, 'The Astrosociological Imagination'. Photo credit: Derry Thorburn.

The Space Renaissance Initiative (SRI) is a diverse working group of astro-humanists attracting both academic and corporate interest, with an agenda aimed at improvements in scientific education, space exploration, cultural development and the establishment of humanitarian goals such as global peace. The SRI is best characterised as an ambitious and pragmatic volunteer association, now comprising some 85 space-related organisations including the Moon Society (USA), Advanced Technology Working Group (USA), Space Future (UK, Japan) and Technologies of the Frontier, (Italy). Space Renaissance recently became incorporated as Space Renaissance International prior to the organisation's first International Congress in 2011.

A Social History of the SRI.

Essentially, the SRI's diverse epistemological roots can be traced back to the cultural evolution of the Renaissance in the 1500s towards the subsequent Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. The SRI cites the influential writings of Descartes and constitutional thinkers Voltaire and Jefferson as important landmarks that inform their own egalitarian principles. The philosophies of the nascent Space Renaissance

Initiative represent a radical departure from conventional approaches to a diversity of contemporary ecological and economic issues characterising the current post modern political agenda. The SpaceRenaissance forwards an 'open world' view that extends our current physical and philosophical limitations as a civilisation. Space travel, space development and the utilisation of monetary and human investment in space are advocated to secure the realisation of a 'new Renaissance'. Avant-garde scientific theorists drawn upon by the SRI include Prof. Gerard O'Neill, Tsiolkovsky and Ehrlicke in the formation of the concept of 'Astronautic Humanism' a philosophical perspective that places inherent value on progress in science and technology as important components in the creation of a transformational unifying vision applicable to the modern world. 'Astro-humanism' focuses on the importance of human life and is essentially a post-Copernican concept defined by Bernasconi (1) as based on a "scientific view of the Universe" that is fundamentally a "system-orientated evolutionary approach". The SRI's humanistic tendencies are articulated further through an altruistic faith in the wisdom of both human intelligence and new technological developments to facilitate better living conditions here on Earth and ultimately within the Solar System. This form of 'New-Humanism' is therefore expansionist, exo-sociologic, exo-economic and exo-ethical.

'The Astrosociological Imagination' and the Role of Rock's Innovative Educators.

In 'The Astrosociological Imagination and the Space Renaissance Initiative' freelance writer and academic researcher Stephanie Lynne Thorburn has addressed key elements of the SRI manifesto and discourse in relation to modern environmental political theory. - The above text is a précis summary of her first paper as published in Los Angeles Chronicle, November 2010 and developed as source material for the SRI's 2011 Congress. Stephanie's dissertation highlights the role of the Space Renaissance Initiative in challenging our thinking with respect to human scientific, technological evolution and links the SRI's work to both environmental and socio-cultural developmental issues. In particular, the dissertation addresses questions of rationalisation as posed by the work of social theorist Max Weber.

Having completed an MA in Sociology at Goldsmiths College, Stephanie Lynne returned to the academic sphere following a significant hiatus working in media and freelancing as a music journalist. This interconnection is certainly a significant one and increasingly has a bearing in relation to the formation of SRI public relations strategy- undoubtedly the efficacious duality shared between the music and space industry is in fact quite extensive. The 'space age' has certainly shaped western popular music culture in a time of global communications. The enigmatic themes of both space technology and exploration suffuse the spheres of popular music and cinematic history; classic examples include David Bowie's avant-garde 'Space Oddity' in 1969, 'The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars' in 1972, Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon' in 1973 and Queen's album/ soundtrack 'Flash Gordon' in 1980. As observed by writers such as Patrick Collins (1989), the development of global popular music is literally, satirically and allegorically synonymous with the space-age at significant points of juncture.

Fundamentally the Space Renaissance Initiative equates the question of humanity's uncertain future to a need for further research on the possibilities of deep-space living and colonisation, space-based solar power, lunar astronomic observatories and a decrease in our inherent vulnerability to natural disasters. The SRI manifesto and strategic thesis is fruitful, inspiring reading not only for space enthusiasts with an interest in contemporary politics therefore, but potentially for philanthropic celebrities and musicians keen to engage with the "greatest economic revolution of all time" via entertaining the philosophical and cultural goals of the SRI space utilisation programme. The actualisation of the organisation's strategic agenda would in prospect be more realistic with the assistance of those possessing a degree of incisive vision in the public eye- especially innovative, divergent thinkers who would not view their manifesto as merely utopian or idealistic. In a recent series of strategic thesis papers 'Three Theses for the Space Renaissance' (2011), authored by SRI President Adriano Autino, Collins and Cavallo, the organisation has in fact illustrated the necessity of diverse outreach work to identify sincere astro-humanists within creative media spheres such as actors, musicians, writers and movie directors. In addition to liaising with humanist and humanitarian rights organisations, Autino et al. are therefore working towards the incorporation of appropriate public figures into advocacy campaign work, in view of attaining their diverse strategic goals between 2011 and 2015.

One Unified Vision.

From archetypal rock musician to Astrophysicist and animal welfare philanthropist- Dr. Brian May.

At the inception of Queen's 40th Anniversary year in 2011, there are undoubtedly few enduring, talented musicians and Astrophysicists more distinguished than Dr. Brian May. Certainly Brian possesses a higher degree of education in relation to Astrophysics than most successful rock musicians, having achieved a PhD from Imperial College in 2007. Brian May has also been expressing a healthy social conscience and his interests are increasingly diversifying beyond the remit of music and the academic sphere. Brian's work the past few years in relation to animal welfare is testament to an informed awareness of both environmental and humanitarian issues that challenge the limiting orthodoxy of traditional anthropocentric assumptions- an ethos that

indeed complements that of the SRI. Dr. May is not only a humane animal rights advocate and conservationist but a sincere 'astro-humanist' at heart.

Stephanie Lynne Thorburn is pictured above discussing the Space Renaissance Initiative in November 2010 with Dr. May, regarding a suggested invitation to collaborate on an academic paper as a logical corollary to 'The Astrosociological Imagination'. The potential merits of such a paper are an evocative concept. One can only hope that the proposed collaboration would offer scope for a mutually beneficial, efficacious integration of ethical social theory and constructive scientific thought. Without a doubt the SRI now represents a potent aggregation of intellectual and business minded protagonists, utilising 'one unified vision' to ignite the global space economy and transform the parameters of our current physical and philosophical limitations for future generations.

Footnote:

1. Dr. Marco Bernasconi (1998), definition of 'Astronautic Humanism' quoted from 'The Greater Earth Manifesto- Concepts of a New Humanistic vision of the World Issue No.3. Updated 2003.

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