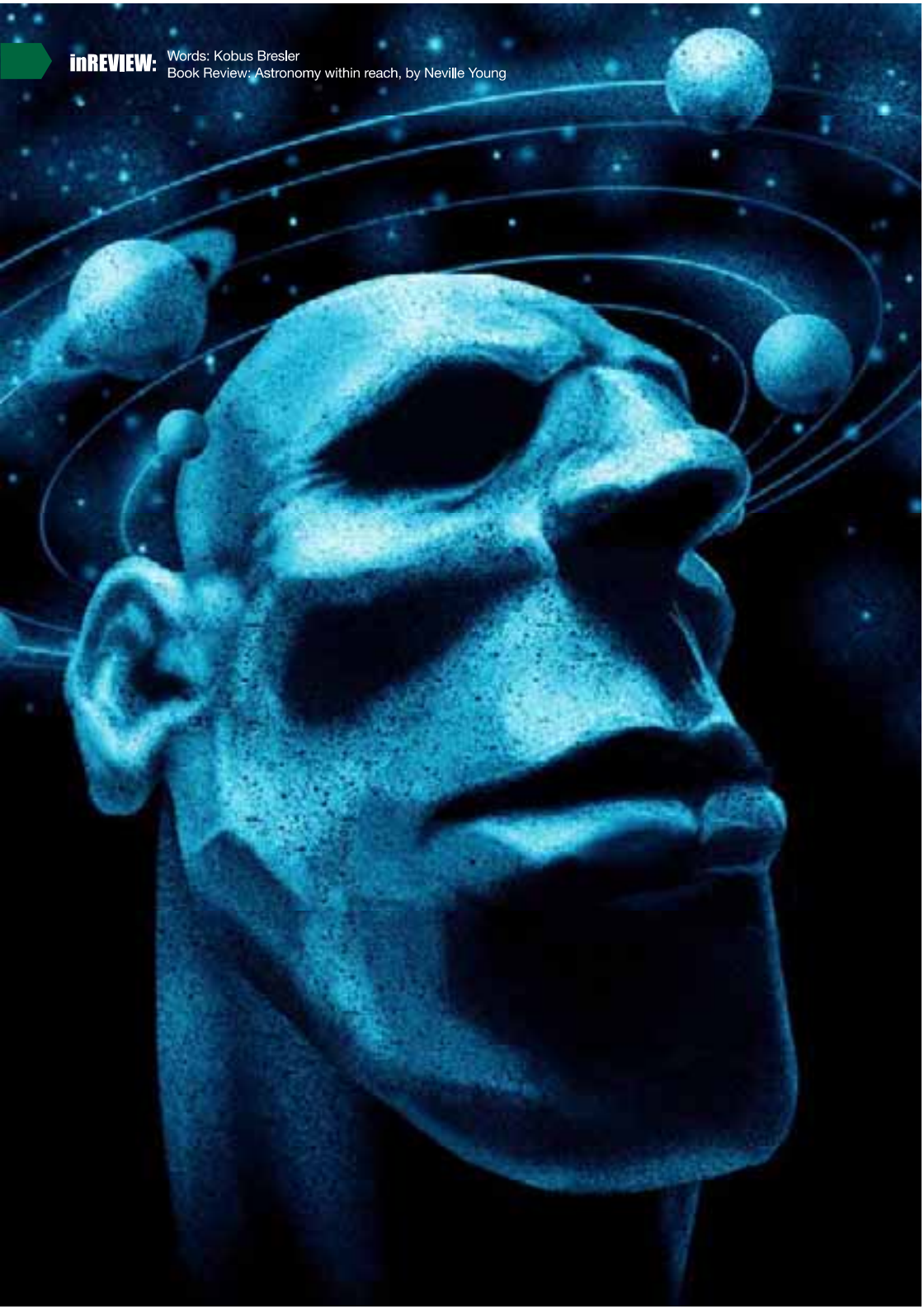


inREVIEW:

Words: Kobus Bresler

Book Review: Astronomy within reach, by Neville Young





Finally astronomy is explained in a way that we can all understand. This title is not only a good read with explanations of things we normally cannot comprehend, but it makes for a great textbook. Having a keen interest in navigation I immediately made use of the detailed Table of Contents and paged to 158, Star Charts. As I started reading I recognised many known terms and definitions but kept on reading. After every page I felt like I learnt something because the explanations finally made sense and the pieces of the puzzle started to fit together. I also soon realised that I needed to understand certain terms first before I could fully comprehend what this chapter had to offer, so I paged back to page one. ▶





The reader is pulled into the world of astronomy as the author explains the importance of perspective. It became clear to me why we often find it hard to comprehend what happens in the night sky, but through a few simple explanations my perspective started to change. The book has a few 3D illustrations to help you understand this better and the bonus is that you get a pair of supercool 3D glasses in the back cover.

In part four, the author turns the world upside down. He continues by taking the reader through a journey of the celestial unknown and you emerge at the end with a wealth of knowledge and a much better understanding. This is exactly what appealed to me the most, as the book was written in a relaxed style with easy to understand explanations. At the end of every chapter is a summary of the most important bits and a few references for further study. A great addition is the section on internet resources, which can easily be used with the book to illustrate much of what you are reading.

Comprehensive illustrations adds value to the text, and with an emphasis on southern Africa, Astronomy within reach is a fascinating and enlightening read for anyone with even a passing interest in the subject.

About the author

Neville Young's interest in space and the stars was sparked by the Gemini and Apollo space missions in the 1960s. He spent a lot of time lying on the roof of his parent's house in the hope of seeing satellites pass overhead.

Neville is a technical writer and amateur astronomer. Since 1985 he has been an active member of the Pretoria Branch of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa, serving on the society's committee in various portfolios, including writing the monthly newsletter and as chairman. Neville was awarded the Jack Bennett Award in 2004 in recognition of his services to the club and astronomy. After matriculating in 1971 he went on to study electronics. He has worked at the CSIR, the University of Pretoria and various electronics and hi-tech companies. Over the years Neville has developed numerous techniques and teaching aids to help simplify concepts and facts that are often difficult for a novice to understand. The desire to write an astronomy book for the general public was born out of years of answering questions and the enjoyment seeing eyes light up as a better understanding of the mysteries of the universe dawn.

In this, his first book title, Neville brings astronomy and all its complexities within reach of anyone who wants to learn what happens above and around us.

The book has also been translated into Afrikaans with the title, Sterrekunde binne bereik and both, together with many learning aids and tools, can be obtained from his website, www.starwaders.com, from leading bookstores or directly from the publisher, LAPA Publishers, or visit their website: www.lapa.co.za.

Related articles:

- Basic Navigation Skills - Part 2 (Issue 19, p. 78)
- Basic Navigation Skills - Part 1 (Issue 18, p. 72)

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