



# A Survey of Radial Velocities in the Zodiacal Dust Cloud

*By Brian May*

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## A Survey of Radial Velocities in the Zodiacal Dust Cloud By Brian May

In the summer and autumn of 2006 I read several interviews with Brian May in which he mentioned his desire to complete the PhD that he had abandoned in 1974. I looked up the papers he had published while a PhD student, which were on spectroscopic studies of the motion of the dust responsible for the zodiacal light, and felt that there was a basis for a thesis. Since he had been a student at Imperial, I knew, as Head of the Astrophysics Group at Imperial, that it would be good for the Group if he came and worked with us. I got in touch with him by email and suggested he come and talk about it. He replied enthusiastically and said that he was working on typing up what he had completed by 1974. I gradually realized that I was the only staff member at Imperial who had previously worked on zodiacal dust, so that I would have to act as his supervisor. Eventually we met and I tried to assess whether he would be able to find time for the huge amount of work that finishing off a thesis involves, particularly if it has not been touched for over 30 years. Since some of Brian's emails were coming from the recording studio I knew there was strong competition for his time.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

From the reviews:

"The Queen guitarist Brian May has achieved a new milestone: he has published his PhD thesis in astronomy. ... Entitled A Survey of Radial Velocities in the Zodiacal Dust Cloud, his thesis analyses what happens to the dust particles left over from the formation of the solar system about 4.6 billion years ago. ... Mike Lockwood, a physics professor at Southampton University, said May's work was timely ... . Brian Cox, a physics professor at Manchester University, applauded May's tenacity. ... That's hugely impressive." (Jonathan Leake and Robert Watts, Times Online, August, 2008)

#### **From the Back Cover**

The Zodiacal Light, that misty diffuse cone of light seen in the West after Sunset and the East before Sunrise, is a beautiful and intriguing phenomenon. Even though everyone can enjoy the sight from a suitably dark location, it is poorly understood, and has been the subject of relatively little research. Brian May began his research into the subject in 1970, and was finally awarded his PhD in 2007, after a hiatus of more than 30 years pursuing his other career as guitarist with his rock band Queen. This book is Brian's thesis, and as such presents the results of his research for astronomers.

#### **About the Author**

Brian May CBE, PhD, ARCS, FRAS

Is a founding member of Queen, a world-renowned guitarist, songwriter, producer and performer. Brian was forced to abandon his PhD studies at Imperial College London in 1974 when Queen's popularity first exploded. He always retained a keen interest in astronomy and has been a regular contributor to The Sky at Night, BBC TV's monthly astronomy programme hosted by Sir Patrick Moore. Returning to astrophysical research in 2006, he was awarded his PhD in 2007. He is Chancellor of John Moores University, and a patron to a number of charities, including the Mercury Phoenix Trust and the British Bone Marrow Donor Association. To contact Brian and enjoy updates on astronomy and his thoughts on various subjects from relativity to rock, visit his interactive website at [www.brianmay.com](http://www.brianmay.com).

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

##### **Brian Grant:**

The actual book A Survey of Radial Velocities in the Zodiacal Dust Cloud will bring someone to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to elucidate the idea is very unique. In case you try to find

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