

Compiled by Jessika Walsten



With Classic Show's Return, The Sky's the Limit

Fox picks up where Carl Sagan's iconic PBS series *Cosmos* left off, debuting a 13-part successor March 9. The network may seem an unlikely home for a documentary science series, but there are powerful forces behind it.



Original *Cosmos* host Sagan

◀RWD

◀ **CARL SAGAN**'s groundbreaking *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage* debuted on **PBS** on Sept. 28, 1980. It remains one of television's most-watched series with an estimated 750 million viewers worldwide and was PBS' biggest hit until *The Civil War* in 1990. In all, *Cosmos* aired only 13 episodes.

◀ The show, hosted and cowritten by Sagan, featured state-of-the-art special effects and lilting narration by Sagan that

spawned "billions and billions" of affectionate parodies. It cost its producer, Los Angeles station **KCET**, nearly \$8 million to make.

◀ Though the U.S. political and technological landscape looked very different in 1980, Sagan's message still rings true. "Lost somewhere between immensity and eternity is our tiny planetary home, the Earth," Sagan said in the series' opening monologue. "For the first time, we have the power to decide the fate of our planet and ourselves."

◀ With his hypnotic delivery and poetic phrasing, the Cornell professor of astronomy and space science,

who died in 1996, made science accessible. "Carl believed that science belongs to all of us," said **ANN DRUYAN**, Sagan's widow and cowriter of *Voyage* and the upcoming Fox reboot, *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey*.

"He wanted to convey the thrill of its cosmic perspective to the widest possible audience." —Ann Druyan

◀ The series got more commercial exposure in 1989 when **Turner Home Entertainment** bought it from **KCET** and made it available on VHS.

◀ When *Voyage* turned 25 in 2005, the **Science Channel** rebroadcast a digitally enhanced version of the series that featured improved computer graphics and audio. Five years later, the **Discovery**-owned network produced its own successor to *Cosmos* called *Through the Wormhole With Morgan Freeman*. "I'm a big fan of science," Freeman told the *Los Angeles Times*. "All the questions about the cosmos. Carl Sagan was fascinating to me."



Family Guy's Carl Sagan

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▶ *Family Guy* creator **SETH MACFARLANE**, though synonymous with raunchy comedy, is sincerely passionate about science. When he found out a new take on *Cosmos* was being considered, he jumped onboard as a producer. His quote when

Fox announced the new version in 2011 was a surprising call to action. "Never more than at this moment in the modern era have we needed a profound reminder of the colossally important and exciting role that science, space exploration and the human quest for knowledge must continue to play in our development as a species," he said.

▶ New host **NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON** will take viewers on this reimagined journey into "how human beings began to comprehend the laws of nature and find our place in space and time." The astrophysicist has helped the public understand science as host of **PBS' Nova** and *Nova ScienceNow*. Tyson also frequently guests on *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart* and *Real Time With Bill Maher* and has **nearly 1.7 million Twitter followers**.

▶ **Fox** is mobilizing considerable promotional support for *Odyssey*, simulcasting the **Cosmos Studios/Fuzzy Door Productions** series across 10 U.S. networks and 200-plus international channels. In total, the series will be available in 181 countries, reaching more than a half-billion homes.

▶ "This is a golden opportunity to introduce *Cosmos* to a new generation," said **KEVIN REILLY**, Fox Broadcasting president of entertainment.

"While admittedly on the periphery of our brand, we believe this can have the same massive cultural impact that the original series delivered." —Kevin Reilly



Fox's *Cosmos*



Tyson



Druyan



Through the Wormhole With Morgan Freeman



Reilly