

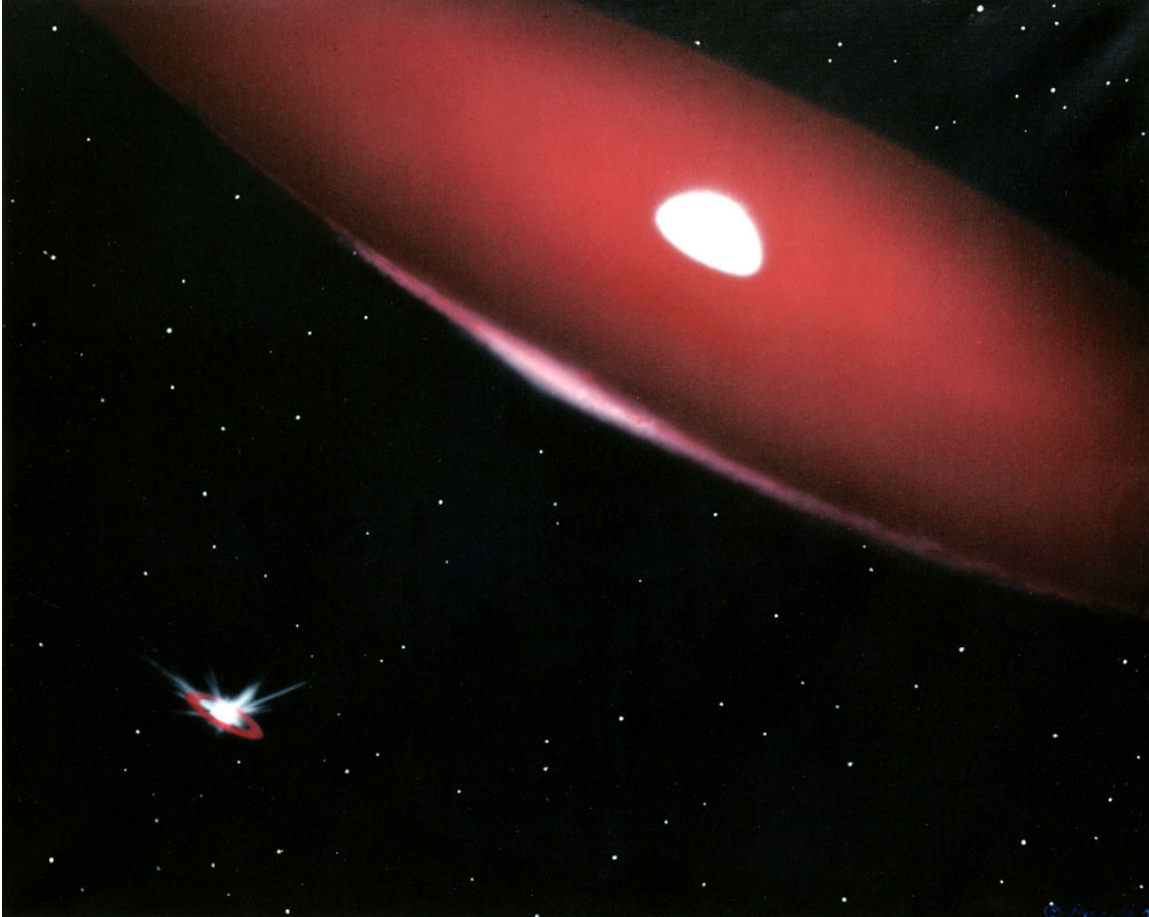
Physics & Astronomy Seminar

Virginia McSwain

Dept of Astronomy
Yale University

Monday, March 27, 2006, 4:30pm
Willet Science Center 101

The Evolution of Massive Binary Stars



(Artwork by Bill Pounds.)

Massive stars are a rare but important constituent of the Milky Way Galaxy and the Universe as a whole. Most massive stars are not solitary but instead form with a close companion, and these binaries evolve much differently than single stars. I will show how binary evolution contributes to two interesting phenomena observed in some massive stars: Be (pronounced B-E) stars have circumstellar disks caused by material escaping from the stellar surface, and microquasars have a star feeding an accretion disk around a neutron star or black hole companion to produce powerful X-ray emission and relativistic jets. Applying some simple physics to astronomical observations of these systems can answer many fundamental questions about the origins of these stars.

Please join us for light refreshments at 4:15pm outside WSC 109.