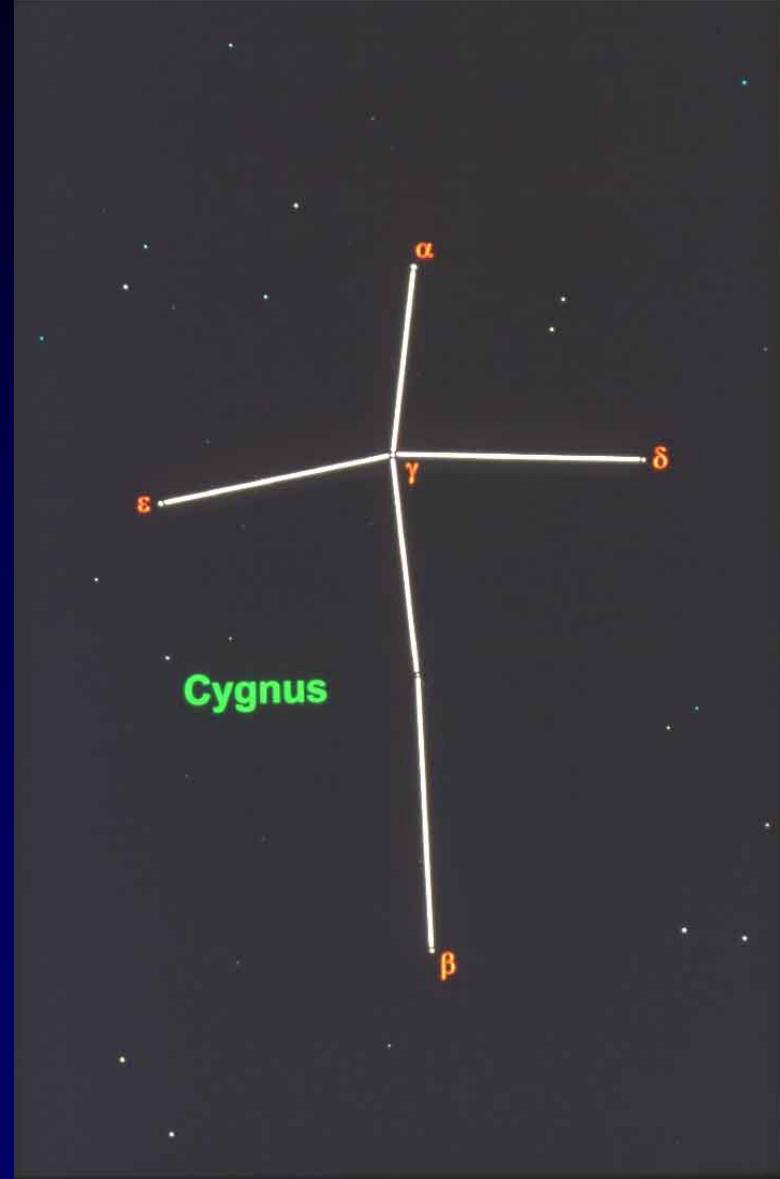


# September's Suggested Constellation - but which?



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A SERIES OF 50 No. 40

## OUT INTO SPACE

*Approved by A. Hunter, Ph.D.,  
Sec. Royal Astronomical Society*

### **CYGNUS (The Swan)**

A Northern Hemisphere constellation (known also as the Northern Cross) in the Milky Way, directly east of the Lyre, and nearly on the same meridian as the Dolphin. Seen from May to December. Its brightest star, Deneb, is in the tail of the Swan, and always above the horizon in England. One named 61 Cygni (a small variable star in this constellation and almost invisible to the naked eye), was the first to have its distance from the Earth determined—50 billion miles.

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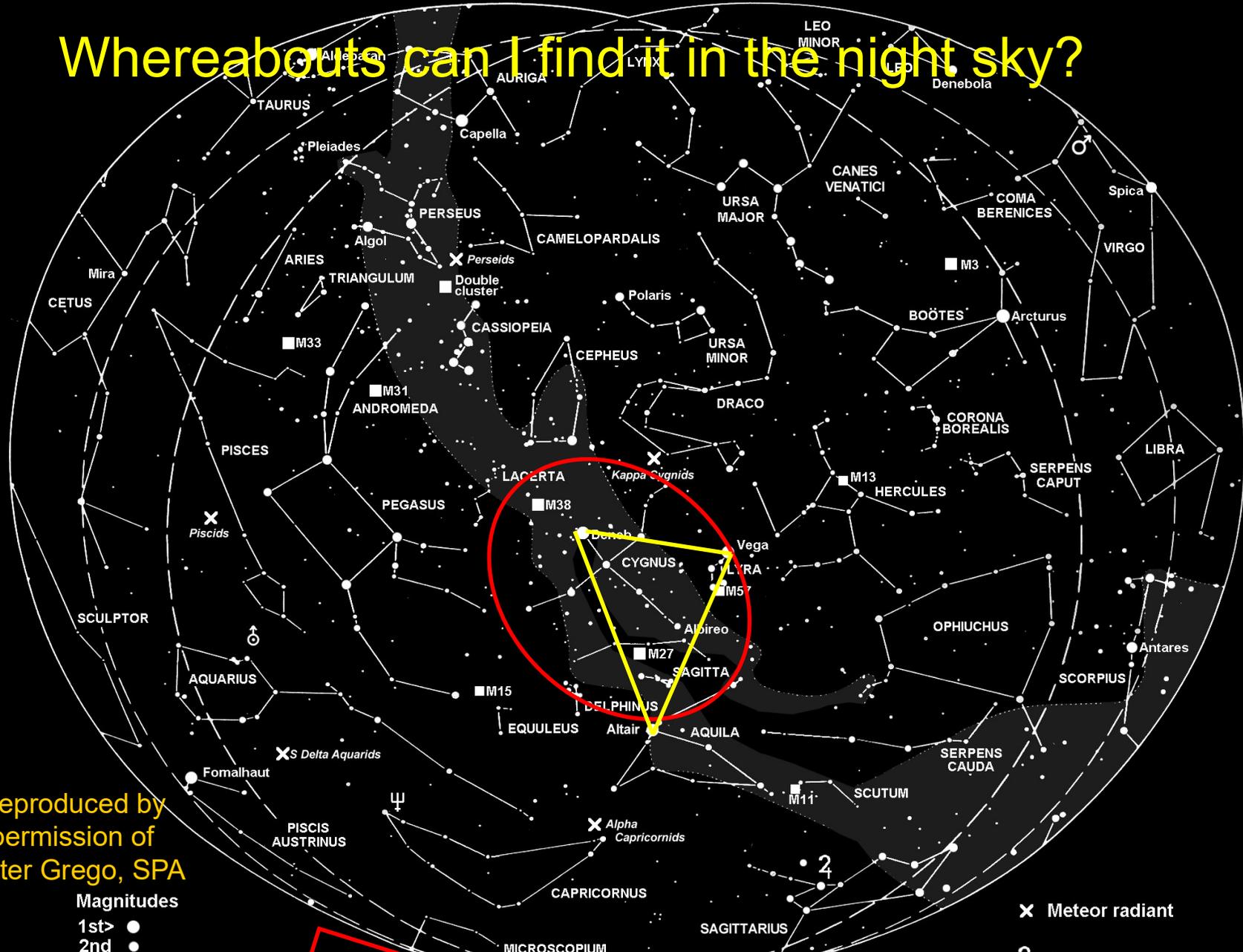
# Cygnus - The Mythology

- There are several differing accounts about Cygnus, however here's one popular one
- Zeus, the king of the gods, desired Leda who was the very beautiful wife of the King of Sparta
- He realised she wouldn't love him for what he really was, and so disguised himself as a swan and was successful. (Strange lady!)
- Their offspring included
  - Castor (twin of Pollux who's father was the Spartan King)
  - Helen of Troy
  - Clytemnestra (wife of Agammemnon)

# Cygnus - The Constellation

- Its main star is Deneb, a 1<sup>st</sup> magnitude star and one of the corners of the Summer Triangle
  - the constellation's other main stars are 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> magnitude.
- Two Messier objects lie within Cygnus
  - M29 & M39, both open clusters
  - M27, The Dumbbell planetary nebula lies close to Cygnus, but is actually just over the border in Vulpecula
- Its 2<sup>nd</sup> brightest star, Albireo, is one of the best known double stars
  - the primary star of Albireo is a lovely golden colour and the fainter companion a pale blue
  - and there are several more that can be found with binoculars

# Whereabouts can I find it in the night sky?



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- Magnitudes
- 1st > ●
  - 2nd ●
  - 3rd ●
  - 4th ●
  - 5th ●
  - Deep sky object ■

**SOUTH**  
10pm mid-September

**SOUTH**  
10.30pm mid-August

**SOUTH**  
11pm mid-July

- ✕ Meteor radiant
  - ♃ Jupiter
  - ♂ Mars
  - ♅ Uranus
  - ♆ Neptune
- Mid-August

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Messier M39  
Open Cluster

North American  
Nebula

Triple  
Star

Double  
Star

Messier M29  
Open Cluster

Double Star  
'Albireo'

Messier M27  
(planetary nebula  
'The Dumbbell')

$\alpha$  Cep  $\eta$  Cep

$\zeta$  Cep

33

$\gamma$  Dra

$\pi^1$   $\pi^2$  M 39

20

16.

$\kappa$

$\psi$

$\iota$

$\theta$

$\rho$

NGC 7000

$\alpha$

(Deneb)

$\omega^1$

$\omega^2$

$\delta$

14

$\alpha$  Lyr  
(Vega)

1 Lac

$\sigma$

$\tau$

70

61

$\lambda$

M. 29

$\gamma$

Cygnus A

Messier M29  
Open Cluster

$\pi^2$  Peg

$\nu$

$\epsilon$

35

$\eta$

Double Star  
'Albireo'

$\mu^1,2$

$\zeta$

52

41

$\chi$

Messier M27  
(planetary nebula  
'The Dumbbell')

Veil Nebula

The Veil

31 Vul

(Albireo)

$\kappa$  Peg

$\alpha$  Vul



M29



M39



M27

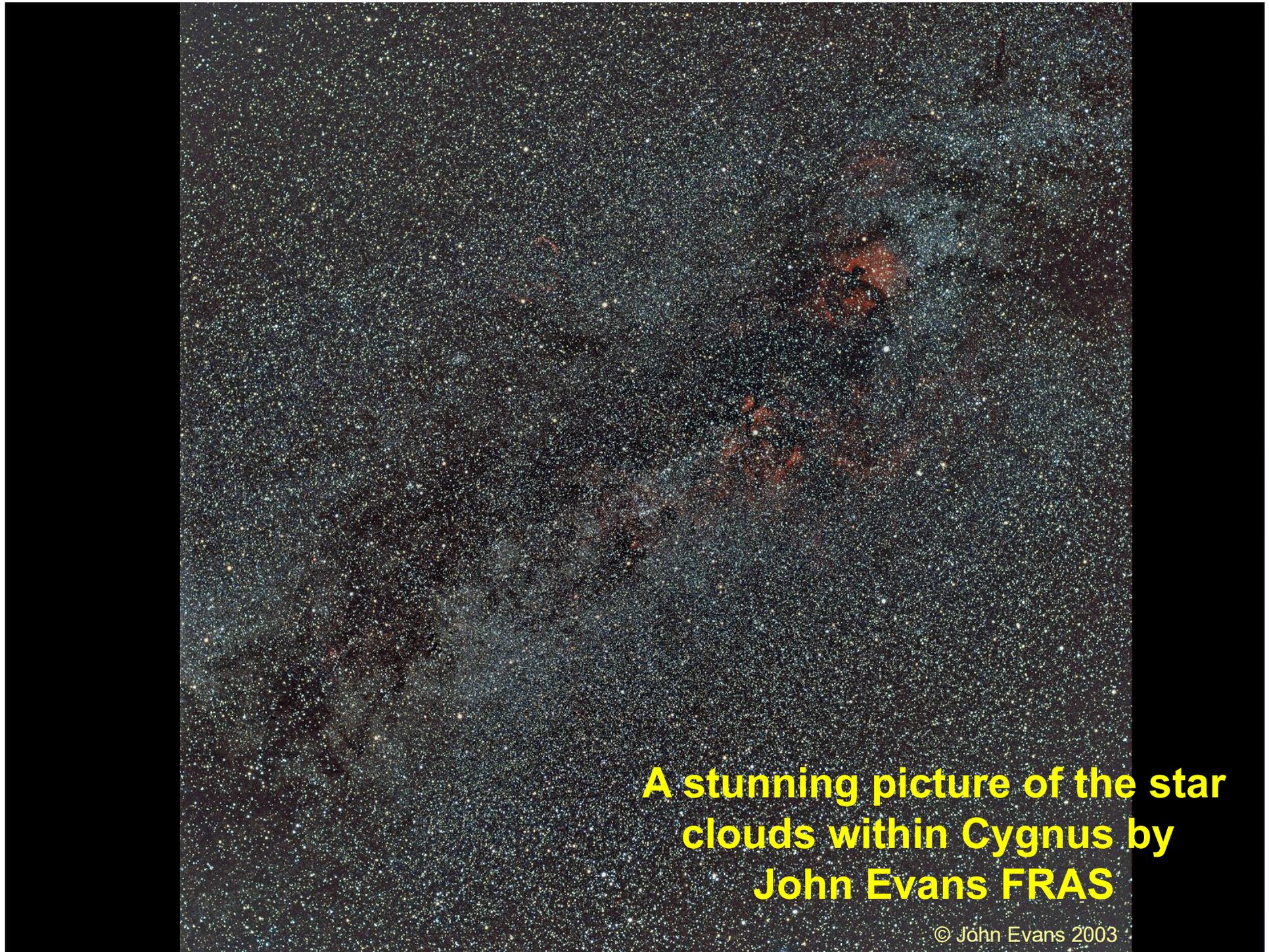


NGC 7000 : North American Nebula

plus IC 5070 : Pelican Nebula



The Veil Nebula



**A stunning picture of the star  
clouds within Cygnus by  
John Evans FRAS**

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