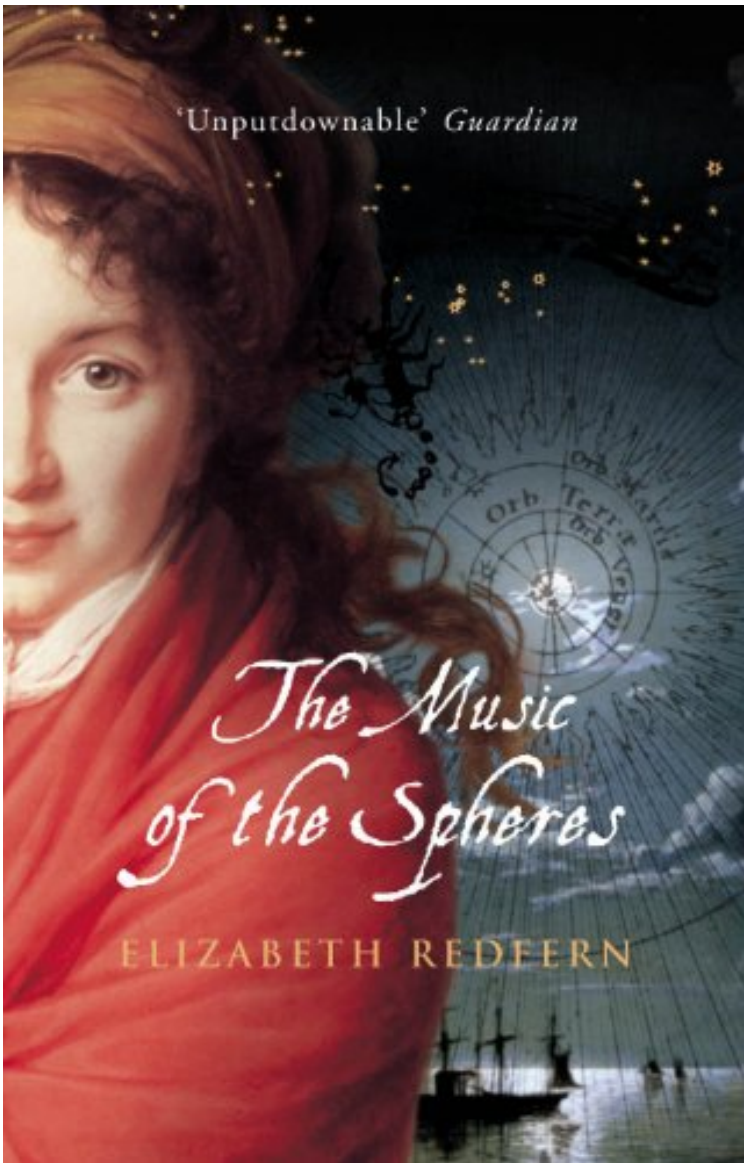


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# The Music Of The Spheres



Par Elizabeth Redfern  
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**Description :** Description du produit In the London of 1795, intrigue and death walk the dark streets. England is at war with its neighbor and nemesis, France, and espionage is rampant. It is the job of Jonathan Absey at the Home Office to catch these spies, but his mind is elsewhere, his dreams haunted by the still unsolved murder of his fifteen-year-old daughter on these same streets. Desperately pursuing both investigations, he stumbles across a strange society of astronomers called the Company of Titius who are on a furious search of their own: to discover a long-lost star in the wide black sky. As he digs into their arcane world, their quest begins to merge with his own, and Absey finds himself discovering more than he had ever imagined -- not only about spies and murderers but also about celestial numbers and the making of codes; about passions as unnatural as they are obsessive; and about the bonds of family...and the lengths we will go to preserve them. With *The Music of the Spheres*, Elizabeth Redfern emerges as an evocative and elegant

writer of startling power, her gifts for characterization, atmosphere, narrative, and rich moral drama marking her as a new star in her own right.

Prsentation de l'diteurLondon, the summer of 1795: a season of revolutionary fervour, scientific discovery and vicious murders. The British government is in disarray, unable to stem the flood of secrets to Paris; betrayals that doom her war efforts to failure. In rural Kensington a group of French emigr-s are pursuing a scientific dream, the discovery of a planet they call Selene. The group has fallen under the spell of a beautiful and amoral woman - Auguste de Montpellier who is at once their muse and dark angel. Meanwhile a killer lurks in the back streets of the capital: the victims are all prostitutes and have been paid in French Louis d'Or, the currency of France's spies. Jonathan Absey is a Home Office clerk whose official task is to smash the French spy ring. Privately however, he has become obsessed with the murders. These interests intersect when he finds himself drawn into the Montpellier circle, yet his pursuit for truth remains obscured through coded letters, opium and conspiracy. Absey must uncover the mystery before the summer dies; an invasion fleet is being prepared to set sail across the channel and the lives of those on board now rest on his discoveries.

From Publishers WeeklyThis British first novel is a historical thriller in the vein of Caleb Carr and Iain Pears, with maximum melodramatic coloring. All the characters, including the protagonist, Jonathan Absey, a civil servant whose daughter has been strangled by what seems to be a serial killer in late 18th-century London, are deeply flawed, and part of the problem with the book is that it is so unremittingly downbeat, with no glimmer of hope that anything will improve for its large cast. As the French Revolution is entering its second phase and its supporters are hoping to beat off an invading Royalist army backed by Britain, London has never seemed more dank and corrupt. Even the little group of French exiles and their hangers-on who are the heart of the story are mostly rotten to the core: the beautiful comtesse, Auguste; her half-mad and terminally ill brother, who may be the murderer; their hulking brute of a coachman; the enigmatic Dr. Raultier; and Auguste's handsome but apparently mute English lover. Then there is Jonathan's half-brother, amateur astronomer Alexander, a gay man at a time when it was desperately dangerous to be so, who is enlisted in the search for a then-unknown ninth planet by the glamorous French group. All this ties up with who is killing red-headed girls and robbing their corpses, and ends leaving only two principals alive, and them barely. There are vivid touches of atmosphere, some strong detail on contemporary astronomy, and some of the moral dilemmas are piercing, but the hectic windup is over the top. This is a good example of a book where less would have been more. 75,000 first printing; rights sold in France, Greece, Holland, Italy and the U.K. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

From Library JournalRedfern's first novel is a complex story of plot and counterplot surrounding the murders of red-haired young prostitutes, the French Revolution and all its political machinations, and the search for the missing planet that astronomers conjecture must lie between Mars and Jupiter. Jonathan Absey works for the Home Office in London, reading correspondence in search of spies. When his estranged daughter is found strangled, he sets out to find her killer. His half-brother, Alexander, who is an astronomer and mathematician of some reputation, is searching for the missing planet. The brothers' paths begin to intertwine when a group of ex-patriot French astronomers are suspected of sending information to the Revolutionary Party in France, along with their star lists and mathematical calculations. Alexander infiltrates the group on Jonathan's instructions and discovers evil, obsession, depravity, and death. Read with an exceptional number of well-done voices and accents by Tim Curry, this is recommended. Joanna M. Burkhardt, Coll. of Continuing Education Lib., Univ. of Rhode Island, ProvidenceCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.