

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RRL/CEP CONFERENCE SERIES

The idea of organizing a small and focused workshop on the (in)famous Tseravskaya-Blazhko modulation Kurtz (2022, *ARA&A*, 60, 31) emerged at one of the regular weekly research group meetings at Konkoly Observatory around 2014. At that time we already had a great amount of space-based RR Lyrae data at our hands and we were all amazed on the large variety of shapes and modulation characteristics and the still unsolved mystery of this century-old discovery. We wanted to discuss our findings with experts from around the world. When we decided about organizing a workshop at Visegrád in 2015, I naively asked who was going to be the main organizer (i.e. the chair of the Local Organizing Committee)? All eyes were on me immediately, and the answer was unanimous: You. I thought OK, I have already organized a quite successful Kepler Asteroseismic Science Conference in Balatonalmádi, Hungary in 2012, but still I was deeply honored and frightened by the task at the same time.

Visegrád is a small historical city, famous about the meeting of the three kings (Hungarian, Bohemian, Polish) in the 14th century and the namesake of the alliance of the V4 countries in the European Union. The title of the 2015 RRLCEP conference was 'High-precision studies of RR Lyrae stars' and mainly focused on RR Lyrae stars turned out to be a great success. More than 70 people participated and it was a start of a great series, although we didn't know that at that time.

Enthusiasm was palpable. Our Polish colleagues immediately suggested to repeat this conference, this time extending the topics to Cepheids, as well. We certainly did not want to compete with the famous biennial Los Alamos pulsation meeting series, therefore we planned to organize the Visegrád meeting in alternating years with the prestigious series. The meeting took place in 2017 in Niepołomicze in South Poland, near Krakow. The title was 'Revival of the Classical Pulsators: from Galactic Structure to Stellar Interior Diagnostics'.

In 2019 we continued in Cloudcroft, New Mexico, this time with a location that was more accessible for our (both North and South) American astronomers. The last pre-COVID meeting had a title 'Frontiers in Classical Pulsators: Theory and Observations'. Despite switching continents and cultures, one thing has not changed: the venue so far was always located in a charming small town providing an ideal place for scientific discussions and interactions.

Because of COVID and later a volcano eruption the next conference in the RRLCEP series was organized in 2022 on the beautiful island of La Palma. Natural disasters were still not over in September 2022, since due to an unusually strong storm the conference had to be delayed by one day. For most participants it was a challenge and quite an adventure to get to the island. Nevertheless, we had a successful conference titled 'Large-scale surveys as bridges between spectroscopy and photometry' (these proceedings).

The RRLCEP Board

At the La Palma meeting during a nice dinner, a group of the past and present organizers started to chat about the future of this meeting series, and about how to proceed, and how to select between candidate locations. It turned out that in recent years we always had more than one bidders for hosting the next meeting, so we started to have a healthy and friendly competition.

We soon agreed that we should set up a Committee from the SOC chairs of the previous meetings, so a more formalized and official way can be envisioned for any of such decisions. Presently the RRLCEP Board consists of the SOC chairs of the previous meetings, that is currently:

1. Róbert Szabó (2015),
2. Pawel Moskalik (2017),

3. Katrien Kolenberg (2017),
4. Karen Kinemuchi (2019),
5. Matteo Monelli (2022)
6. (Ennio Poretti (2022), but Ennio delegated the task to Matteo Monelli)

We set up a set of rules for the operations of the Board.

1. The Board consists of the previous RRL/CEP SOC chairs.
2. The Board is chaired by the latest SOC chair.
3. In between the RRLCEP conferences the Board convenes whenever an issue is raised by the Chair or the members, which can be fully virtual or a hybrid meeting.
4. During the RRLCEP conferences the Board should have an in-person meeting to decide on the next host country/town/institute and to discuss any other issues. Bidders for future meetings should send their application material to the Board prior to the upcoming conference and they also should preferably present their application during the conference.
5. The Board decides with a simple majority. If there is a tie the vote of the Chair of the Board counts.

Summary

The RRLCEP Board has recently discussed the applications for the next RRLCEP meeting host country and voted online. The Board decided the 2024 RR Lyrae - Cepheids meeting would be in Marrakesh, Morocco. During writing this summary we learned that a devastating earthquake that hit Morocco. We have no information yet about the loss in astronomy, but we are deeply concerned about the possibly high number of victims, injuries and damages.

The RRLCEP meetings became an international biannual conference series attended by different communities (stellar astrophysicists, stellar population enthusiasts, spectroscopists, astrometrists, observers and theoreticians alike, data scientists, and astrophysicist working on the Local Group galaxies and the cosmic distance ladder.) The large interest from the colleagues to attend and even organize the RRLCEP meetings show that our community thrives, and our research topic witnesses a renaissance with large volume of available data from space missions and ground-based large surveys.

I sincerely hope that the series retains momentum and we can meet in person at the occasion of many-many RRLCEP meetings throughout the world. I am looking forward to helping a new generation of astronomers to become successful scientists by studying our favorite objects, the fascinating Cepheids and RR Lyrae stars.

Robert Szabó on behalf of the RRLCEP Board