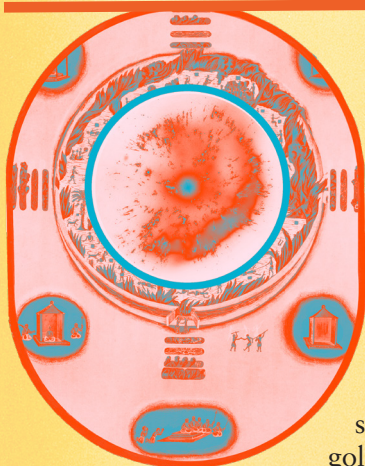


# THE EASTERN WINDOW

by Penny Farrow



## The X Factor

If the five true planets (*tara grahas* in Vedic parlance) tried out for *The X Factor* reality show, Venus would get golden tickets from all four judges, go straight to the live

show, blow away the competition, and be crowned the winner. From the vantage point of planet Earth, Venus has “star power” and razzle-dazzle — that X factor.

The only sources of light in the cosmos are the self-luminous stars. All other heavenly bodies catch and reflect the streaming starlight. It is all too easy to think of our Sun as a planet, as it has that moniker, but it is a star, shining on its “own merits.” The planets in our solar system “catch” or “grab” its light and hence the name *graha*, which means “to seize or grab.” Each reflects the light of our magnificent Sun in its own way. The Sun will always be the brightest, most dominant sky object from our perspective on Earth. It is the King. It is the organizing power of our solar system.

The Moon is the next most noticeable celestial object. It is the undisputed Queen of the night, but does a disappearing act at regular intervals.

Among the *tara grahas*, however, Venus outshines them all because it is the next brightest object in our sky after the Moon.<sup>1</sup> Who hasn’t repeated the charming rhyme, “Starlight, star-bright, first star I see tonight” to a child? Is everyone aware that the glorious evening star is not a star at all? It is the planet Venus. (See Figure 1.) Not so many people are up before dawn to appreciate the other magnificent appearance of Venus as the morning star when it leads the Sun — i.e., comes up over the eastern horizon ahead of that great luminary.

The measure for the brightness of a *graha* or star

*Editor’s Note: Cross ventilation produces a breath of fresh air. It is desirable in a house and even in a magazine! In this spirit, we are featuring a series of short articles designed to make some of the basic building blocks and ideas of Vedic astrology more accessible to all. We anticipate that opening the Eastern Window can clarify the complementarity between great astrological traditions.*

for our purposes is its apparent magnitude. This value is derived from a reverse logarithmic scale whereby the larger the negative number, the brighter the object.<sup>2</sup> The brightest star in the sky is Sirius, the Dog Star, in the constellation of Canis Major. It has an apparent magnitude of  $-1.47$ . Venus can reach a maximum brightness of  $-4.92$  and is often around  $-4$ , making it vastly brighter than Sirius.

Jupiter is the fourth brightest object in the sky (after the Sun, Moon, and Venus), with its maximum apparent magnitude at  $-2.94$  — a significant difference from Venus but totally brilliant and outstanding compared to everything else.<sup>3</sup>

Our language reflects (pun intended) the value we place on light. To describe something as exceptional, we refer to it as blazing, shining, starry-eyed, glittering, brilliant, dazzling ... on and on. Ever stop to think why, among the *tara grahas*, Venus and Jupiter are the all-time natural benefics? It might well be because they are brighter as well as steadier in their movement patterns (*gati*)<sup>4</sup> than Mars and Saturn. Rahu and Ketu are total outliers. They are not *tara grahas*, not visible, and they move backwards.

Astrology has quite a job discerning why natives with seemingly similar charts have very different lives. A productive tool to consider is the brightness of a *graha* and, even for a consistently bright *graha* like Venus, the timing of its greatest brightness, when it has that extra X factor brilliance. A good clue in exploring this is to note the distance between Venus and the Sun; the greater the distance, the brighter Venus will appear, to the point of being breathtakingly beautiful.

The ancients observed the heavens at sunrise and sunset, so if Venus was shining brightly and observable before sunrise or after sunset within hours of the birth, that was sufficient evidence that it would impact the native. If, however, at the actual time of birth Venus was visible, brilliant, and unafflicted, such a Venus on its own was enough to indicate significant charisma.

How might this consideration of brightness add to chart interpretation? If Venus is involved in auspicious combinations in a chart such as *Rāja yogas*,<sup>5</sup> the person might be even more conspicuous and outshine others.

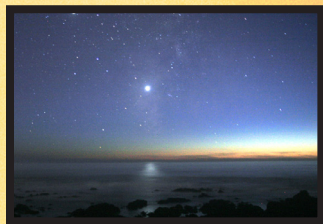


Figure 1:  
*Venus as the evening star.*



Let's look at a couple of examples.

Gavin Newsom, the Governor of California, recently defeated the attempt to recall him (i.e., remove him from office). He won the vote to keep him in office by a landslide. Students of his chart might well have predicted that result, but could have missed how clear the outcome was, as indicated by the visibility tool. (See below.)

Sa 15°1'		Ra 4°57'		mc 26°42'	
8 Pis	9 Ari	10 Tau	11 Gem		
7 Aqu	<b>Chart 1:</b> <b>Gavin Newsom</b>				12 Can
6 Cap					Jp 5°3' As 27°49'
5 Sag	4 Sco	3 Lib	2 Virg	1 Leo	Su 23°5'
Mo 23°7'	Ma 27°29'	Me 18°15'	Ke 4°57'		

*Charts are in the South Indian format, using the Lahiri ayanamsha and the Mean Node.*

Venus was located in his Ascendant at the time of birth, shining at a magnitude of  $-4.8$ , which is close to its maximum magnitude. Note that Venus is almost  $44^\circ$  from the Sun. In addition, Jupiter is also in the Ascendant and, though not at its maximum brightness, still very visible at  $-1.8$ .

And that is not all. The royal star of Regulus (called Magha *nakshatra* in the Vedic tradition) is located in Leo at  $5^\circ 59'$  of ecliptic longitude, with an ecliptic latitude of  $0^\circ N 27'$ , meaning that it is right on the ecliptic. It is one of the brightest of the zodiacal stars, and at Newsom's birth, it was seen very close to Jupiter and between it and Venus. (See Figure 2.) An observer shortly before sunrise on the morning of his birth would have been treated to the exquisite sight of two "large" morning stars (Venus and Jupiter) plus the twinkling true star Regulus well up over the horizon as the rays of the Sun start to become visible.



**Figure 2:**  
The sky at Newsom's birth.

(See Figure 3.) This configuration would have made a deep impression on a sky-watcher of old. Regulus means "little king," and the symbol for Magha in the Indian tradition is a throne room, signifying the seat of power — meanings that will add confluence to the auspicious combinations made by Jupiter and Venus in Newsom's chart.

Venus and Jupiter form a significant Raja Yoga through their close association (*yuti*) in the 1st *bhava* (house). Venus is the ruler of the 10th *bhava*, the zenith of the horoscope, indicating power, authority, and kingship. Jupiter is the ruler of the 5th *bhava*, which includes formation of government, among its other meanings. These themes will accrue to the native by linking up the 5th, 10th, and 1st *bhava* indications.

A notable charisma combination known as *Camara Yoga*<sup>6</sup> is made by the same two grahas being together in the Ascendant. This yoga is further elevated by the fact that there is no affliction whatsoever to the 1st *bhava* or to the two grahas. Adding the X factor of brightness makes it all the more shimmery. There are several other yogas made by this same association of Jupiter and Venus, likewise enhanced by all the factors mentioned above.

Newsom announced his candidacy for governor in February 2015, well in advance of the 2018 election.

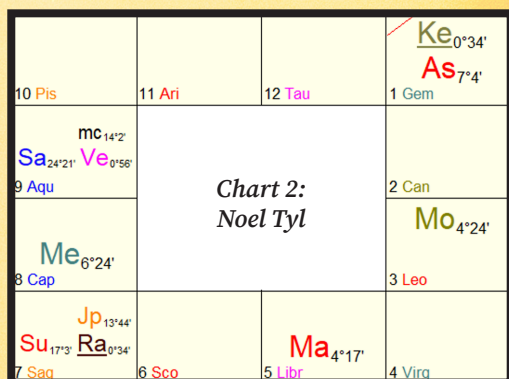


**Figure 3:**  
The sky shortly before sunrise at Newsom's birth.

It was just as he went into his Jupiter *dasha*.<sup>7</sup> He won the election November 6, 2018 and assumed office January 7, 2019. That he was almost immediately beset by a confluence of incredible obstacles and tragedies, ranging from COVID-19 to three out-of-control destructive wildfires, is indicated by the affliction to the 10th *bhava*

by both *swa* Mars and retrograde Saturn. There is no stabilization by a natural benefic. His *lagna* (Ascendant) lord, the Sun, is afflicted by a strong Saturn, ruler of the 6th and 7th *bhavas* and placed in the 8th, showing the strength of his enemies. However, Newsom's Jupiter *dasha* is hugely yogic. At the time of the recall election, he was running the *bhukti* of





Ketu, which is in Libra natively and therefore will act like its dispositor, Venus. As he was heading into a Jupiter/Venus dasha/bhukti period in December 2021, it was hard to imagine that he would not continue in a position of power.

The second example — featuring Venus this time as the evening star — is the charismatic Noel Tyl. He was larger than life both in personality and physicality, and shone brightly in all of his diverse ventures. He was a highly successful opera singer, worked as an executive in opera company management and public relations, and at the same time pursued astrology. Eventually, he retired from all but astrology and went on to be an acclaimed author, lecturer, and teacher, melding astrology with his interest in psychology, which dated back to his undergraduate days at Harvard. He received the Regulus award from the United Astrology Congress in 1998.

In Tyl's chart, we see Venus following the Sun; therefore, it is the beautiful evening star. (See Chart 2.) It is about 44° from the Sun and shining at a magnitude of -4.2. (See Figure 4.) His Venus and Saturn are making an outstanding Raja Yoga for good fortune in life as well as travel and interest in esoteric subjects. There are also good combinations for finances, due to the *sambandha* (mutual relationship) between Saturn, Venus, and the Moon. And the icing on the cake? His auspicious Moon sits right on the star of Regulus. I wonder if that was mentioned when he received his award? Can't make these things up.

## Chart Data and Sources

Gavin Newsom, October 10, 1967; 5:14 a.m. PST; San Francisco, CA, USA (37°N47', 122°W25'); AA: quoted BC/BR (birth certificate/birth record); Astrodatabank.com.

Noel Tyl, December 31, 1936; 3:57 p.m. EST; West Chester, PA, USA (39°N58', 75°W36'); A: data given in Noel Tyl, *Solar Arcs: Astrology's Most Successful Predictive System*, Llewellyn, 2001, p. 55.

## References and Notes

(All URLs accessed in November 2021.)

1. When Venus is close to its superior and inferior conjunction, it is not visible to an observer on Earth.
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apparent\\_magnitude](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apparent_magnitude)
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jupiter#:~:text=The%20mean%20apparent%20magnitude%20is%20%E2%88%922.20%20with%20a,perihelion%2C%20an%20event%20that%20occurs%20once%20per%20orbit>
4. Penny Farrow, "The Eastern Window: The Ecliptic Highway: Hares, Tortoises, and Contrarians," in *The Mountain Astrologer*, Aug./Sept. 2021, pp. 14–15.
5. Penny Farrow, "The Eastern Window: Elevator Going Up," in *The Mountain Astrologer*, Feb./March 2018, pp. 20–21.
6. *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra*, Chapter 36, verse 11–12, Ranjan Publications.
7. Penny Farrow, "The Eastern Window: Timing Is Everything," in *The Mountain Astrologer*, April/May 2018, pp. 14–15.

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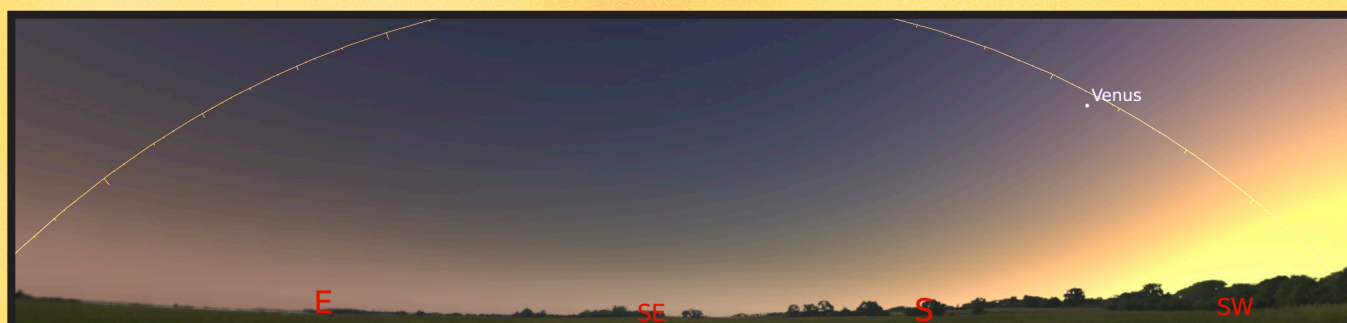


Figure 4: Venus as the evening star at Tyl's birth.