2014 Darwin Day Seminar

Speaker: Walter Salzburger

Title: Evolution in Darwin's dream ponds: The cichlid fishes of the East African big lakes.  
Monday, Feb. 10, 7:00 p.m., Webber Music Hall.  
  
Abstract:  
Cichlid fishes are the most fascinating model organisms to me. These  
tropical freshwater-fishes show a Gondwanian distribution, with extant  
representatives in India, Madagascar, South- and Central America, and  
Africa. With more than 2'000 species that evolved in the last few  
million years only the species flocks of cichlids in the East African  
Great Lakes Tanganyika, Malawi and Victoria represent the most  
astounding examples of adaptive radiation and explosive speciation. I  
am interested in the evolution of the cichlids' unique biodiversity,  
in the intrinsic factors that underlie the cichlids' propensity for  
explosive speciation, and in the external (environmental) events that  
trigger their radiations. In particular, I am interested in the  
molecular genetic and genomic bases of the evolutionary success of  
cichlids.