

M13, The Great Globular Cluster in Hercules

This is my image of M13, The Great Globular Cluster in Hercules, captured on my setup at PixelSkies in Castellójar, Spain. This is a spectacular object - easily seen in small telescopes and one of my favorite objects to show people at public observing events. M13 is located about 25,000 light years away in the Hercules constellation. It is a tight ball of several hundred thousand stars about 150 light years across. Globular clusters are fascinating because they are so old - nearly the age of our galaxy. Some theories hold that they are the cores of ancient galaxies captured by the Milky Way. I've seen other theories as well, so there is some uncertainty about their origins. Most of them can be found on the outer edges of our galaxy but there are some toward the center as well. Globular clusters have been found in other galaxies too - they have identified around 400 in the Andromeda galaxy.

This particular image presented some challenges to me. After integrating all the sub, the background was extremely bright and colorful. Possibly my subs were too long (180 seconds) but I managed to get things under control with what is called Histogram Transfer in Pixinsight. The typical challenge with imaging in M13 is its extremely bright core. I was able to split out some of the individual stars with HDMRT (High Dynamic Range Multiscale Transform). Pixinsight likes complicated names. I used this process to bring out the stars in my luminance image and then combined that with my RGB image. That seemed to work pretty well in bringing out the individual stars. I am particularly pleased with my framing because I got two galaxies in there - NGC 6207 in the bottom left and a very tiny one C4617 nearer the cluster on the left. If you zoom in you can see considerable detail in NGC 6207. The exposures are as follows:

L 168 x 180
R 140 x 180
G 155 x 180
B 151 x 180

My astrobin page for this object is: <https://astrob.in/ovu5zo/0/>

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