Photoshop Tutorial - 'Making Stars'

We start with no photos; this is all done within Photoshop.

Method 1 (Easy)

Start
Open a new document, make it 1920 x 1080 at 300 dpi.
Make a copy of this layer by pressing 'Ctrl+j'.

Noise
Select the 'Bucket Fill' tool from the left toolbar and fill the layer with black.
Filter>Noise>Add Noise - about 20% should do - make sure Gaussian and Monochromatic are both ticked.
Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur - 0.5 pixels

Stars
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' at the bottom of the 'Layers Window' and select 'Levels' - move the black pointer to the end of the 'bump' on the histogram and the white pointer towards the black pointer until stars appear.
Layers>Flatten Image - Save it as a .jpg so you can import it into any future document.

Method 2 (Advanced)

Start
Open a new document, make it 1920 x 1080 at 300 dpi,
Make a copy of this layer by pressing 'Ctrl+j'.

Noise
Select the 'Bucket Fill' tool from the left toolbar and fill the layer with black.
Filter>Noise>Add Noise - crank it up to its full extent of 400% - make sure 'Gaussian' and 'Monochromatic' are both ticked.
Copy this layer by pressing 'Ctrl+j'.

Stars
Turn off the top layer by clicking its eye icon and select the second layer
Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur - 0.5 pixels
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' at the bottom of the 'Layers Window' and select 'Levels' - move the black pointer to the end of the 'bump' on the histogram and the white pointer towards the black pointer until stars appear.
Layers>Merge Down

Brighter Stars
Turn back on the top layer by clicking its eye icon and select it.
Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur - 2.0 pixels (to make bigger stars)
Click the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer' at the bottom of the 'Layers Window' and select 'Levels' - move the black pointer to the end of the 'bump' on the histogram and the white pointer towards the black pointer until stars appear.
Layers>Merge Down
Select the 'Magic Want Tool' from the left toolbar (make sure 'Contiguous' is unticked) and select the stars.

Copy the selection to it's own layer by pressing 'Ctrl+j'.
Delete the layer we just copied from by dragging it down to the 'waste bin' at the bottom of the 'Layers Window'.
Double click the top layer to bring up the 'Layers Style' menu
Tick and select 'Outer Glow' - set Blending Mode to Normal, Spread:4 and Size:9 (or until you get a very slight halo around the bright stars).

Nebulas
Create a new layer by clicking the 'Create new layer' icon at the bottom of the layers window.
Move this layer to the top of the 'Layers Stack'.
Filter>Render>Clouds - change the 'Blending Mode' to 'Colour Dodge'.
Create a new layer by clicking the 'Create new layer' icon at the bottom of the layers window and move it below the 'clouds' layer.
With a big soft brush paint in some blotches of varying colours (I used red, blue and yellow)
Adjust opacity to suit.
Layers>Flatten Image - Save it as a .jpg so you can import it into any future document.

Milky Way
We later imported the 'advanced stars' into the 'Groyne at Night' photo to replaced the 'simple stars' layer. Then copied the 'simple stars' layer three times, changed all four layer's 'Blending Mode' to 'Screen', moved all four layers into different positions and erased away both sides to leave a milky way effect in the middle.