

Microsymposium

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Crystallography on Stage: Presenting the Concepts and History Dramatically

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From Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (1604) to Oxygen (2000) by Carl Djerassi and Roald Hoffmann, there is a long tradition of dramatic work related to science and scientist. More recently, the enormously successful Copenhagen (1998) by Michael Frayn's and a wave of new plays about scientific themes such as Arcadia, Wit, After Darwin and others have created new dramatic phenomenon. These works are not the conventional documentary-dramas about scientific discovery but engaging plays. A recent book entitled Science on Stage (1) reviews more than a hundred plays presenting scientific themes on stage. Beginning in 2005, a play was developed with the objective of conveying the concepts and history of crystallography to large audiences in a dramatic setting. The script centers on the mural drawn by Picasso in 1950 at the flat of the iconic crystallographer J.D. Bernal, during his historical meeting with the world-famous artist. The main characters discuss the concepts of crystallography and explore the interconnections between Science and Art. The script has had several readings in academic settings (University of Illinois at Chicago, 2007; Barcelona, Zaragoza, Spain, 2008). The première staged reading of the play was produced at Argonne National Laboratory on May 4th 2008. Details can be found at <http://www.aps.anl.gov/Users/Meeting/2008/Picasso/index.php>. The project has developed from an initial script entitled 'Picasso Meets Crystallography' emphasizing the concepts and history of crystallography to the more dramatically-rich version entitled 'Bernal's Picasso', which explores the relationships between Science and Art and is intended for wider theater audiences. The presentation will discuss the history of the project with vignettes of previous performances, its multiple facets and its future development as a novel way to convey crystallography to wider audiences, and to explore in a dramatic context the role of crystallography in today's society

[1] Sphepherd-Barr, K. *Science on Stage* by (Princeton University Press, 2006),



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