Report of the British Society for the History of Radiology annual lecture on 'Albert Einstein'

By

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The name Albert Einstein (1879-1955) is universally associated with the term scientific genius and as a scientist he needs little in the way of an introduction.

Born in 1879 in Germany, he did not show early signs of his genius and in 1900 completed his teaching diploma in maths and physics at the Zurich Polytechnic. He struggled to get a job and ended up working in a patent office. In 1905 he completed his PhD thesis from Zurich University entitled 'A New Determination of Molecular dimensions'. That was his *annus mirabilis*, publishing four important papers each itself worthy of a Nobel Prize aged only26 years. They were on the subject of Brownian motion, photoelectric effect (important for radiology), relativity and mass energy equivalence known more popularly as $E=MC^2$. He instantly became famous, became a lecturer in Berne , then a Professor in Prague, returning to Zurich in 1912 as Professor of Theoretical Physics. Einstein emigrated to USA and worked in Princeton. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. Einstein was feted the world over and became friends with people as diverse as Charles Chaplin the film-maker and the Indian writer and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

This year's British Society for the History of Radiology's annual lecture on 20 Feb 2017 was a theatrical presentation entitled 'Albert Einstein – Relativively speaking' (pardon the pun!). It was presented by John Hinton and Jo Eagle of the Tangram Theatre Company (a company conceived by graduates of the Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris, a school of physical theatre whose alumni include Stephen Berkoff and Yasmin Reza the playright).

John Hinton delivered the presentation in the guise of Einstein and the evening included reminiscences of Einstein's childhood, his mother's love of music, his first wife and her scientific contributions, his equivalence theory set to rap, his Princeton lecture, explanation of some of his ideas with audience participation. His description of Arthur Eddington, the British astronomer helping prove his theory of relativity during the solar eclipse of 1919, his relationship with his second wife Elsa and more seriously his great upset that his discoveries had led to the atom bomb – Einstein was a pacifist.

The evening was a fascinating, unique presentation of Einstein the man interspersed with music and song and had the audience captivated in the Governor's Hall at St Thomas's Hospital, London on the 20th of February.

All who attended were enthralled and enlightened by the unique performance re-telling the story of Einstein, a man universally acknowledged as the brightest scientific star in the human intellectual firmament.

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