

Einstein: A Stage Portrait

So here I am, 'Relativity himself.' . . . I wonder if they called Sir Isaac Newton 'Gravity himself' or Louis Pasteur 'Rabies himself.' " Albert Einstein mutters this aloud one evening to a houseful of guests he's invited over so he can counter false stories about himself in the press and set the record straight. That's the premise of Willard Simms's 1984 *Einstein: A Stage Portrait*, a one-man show that actor Tom Schuch has been performing for four years. Not surprisingly, in 2005, the World Year of Physics, Schuch has been in heavy demand across North America in schools, physics departments, and professional society gatherings.

A chalkboard is covered with calculations on unified field theory. A violin lies on a table. A few family photos sit on shabby furniture. Letters are piled everywhere. A 67-year-old Einstein wears a suit but no socks. He finds an apple in his jacket pocket, takes a bite, and puts it back. He demonstrates his trick of taking off his vest without removing his jacket. And all the while he talks.

Einstein talks about having learned to talk late, having been a slow learner, and getting kicked out of school. He talks about the physics he was doing while working in a Swiss patent office. About his two wives, and how his love letters included references to parallelism, the kinetic energy of molecules, and Boltzmann's theory of gases. He talks about leaving his job in Berlin in the early 1930s because of the Nazis' persecution of Jews, and about coming to the US. He remembers going for ice cream with his son. He talks of the letter he wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraging the US to build an atomic bomb, and of his nightmares that mankind will destroy itself with the bomb. He tells of Israel's inviting him to be its first president, and says, "I am deeply committed to helping the cause of Israel in every way possible, and one of these ways is never to be its president."

The hour-and-a-half-long play is woven largely from actual quotes and facts from Einstein's life; for schoolchildren, Schuch performs a condensed version, minus the politics. "Einstein was such an icon. We all know his crazy hair and $E = mc^2$," Schuch says. "The play puts his feet on the ground and shows that he had to work hard at what he did. That he had a great sense of humor. That he loved his sailboat. He neglected his family. All of these elements coagulate and give a sense of Einstein as a person."

Besides playing Einstein, Schuch's main tie to physics is his birthplace: Los Alamos. Schuch's father worked as a technician at the New Mexico weapons lab; earlier he had made the carbon bricks for the first nuclear reactor, built by Enrico Fermi beneath the football stadium at the University of Chicago.

As a lifelong actor, Schuch says he had been perpetually seeking work. "I was looking for something I could grow into, and one day, in an industry rag, I happened on a list of one-man shows. I tracked down the author of *Einstein*, and I liked the script. Einstein found me."



LARRY GIBBONS



Actor Tom Schuch plays the violin in *Einstein: A Stage Portrait*.

Toni Feder

protection to ensure that the US is not at a disadvantage in investing in S&T manufacturing and marketing. It also calls for a stronger R&D tax credit to encourage more private investment.

Worrisome indicators

The report includes "worrisome indicators" intended to drive home the importance of the recommendations. "For the cost of one chemist or one engineer in the United States, a company can hire about five chemists in China or 11 engineers in India," the report says. "Chemical companies closed 70 facilities in the US in 2004 and have tagged 40 more for shutdown," the report continues. "Of 120 chemical plants being built around the world with price tags of \$1 billion or more, one is in the United States and 50 in China."

The concern on Capitol Hill is how to get the report's recommendations, which cut across the jurisdictions of many different House and Senate committees, included in funding bills. The debate in recent weeks has been whether to introduce the proposals in a single bill or to break them up, submit them to the appropriate commit-

tees, and hope some are funded. In an appendix near the end of the report, the authors give cost estimates for implementing all of the recommendations. The low estimate is \$500 million, the high more than \$5 billion.

"I've been worried about this [competitiveness] problem for 15 years or more," said Augustine, who chaired the report committee. "But given the budget problems, the report is sailing into a strong headwind."

Jim Dawson

Peace Prize Goes to ElBaradei and Nuclear Watchdog Agency

The phone didn't ring on 7 October for Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Instead, he found out with the rest of the world from a television announcement that he and the IAEA would equally share the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

Knowing the press was camped outside of ElBaradei's office in Vienna, Austria, the chair of the prize committee, Ole Danboly Mjopes, skipped the customary telephone call because he didn't want the news to get out prematurely. At 11:00am, Mjopes said in front of the cameras: "At a time when disarmament efforts appear deadlocked, when there is a danger

Combating nuclear proliferation and improving reactor safety are highlighted by this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

that nuclear arms will spread both to states and to terrorist groups, and when nuclear power again appears to be playing an increasingly significant role, the IAEA's work is of incalculable importance."

The news stunned ElBaradei, who said in a press conference that he had sat down to watch the announcement on television "fully aware that we would not [win] because I did not get the call. . . . And then I heard in Norwegian 'the International Atomic