

### *P.A.M. DIRAC (1902-1984)*

Paul Adrien Maurice Dirac was born in Bristol, England, on 8 August 1902. He studied engineering in his hometown, and obtained his degree in physics and mathematics at Cambridge University, where in 1932 he became professor of mathematics in the Lucasian Chair, which had been held by Sir Isaac Newton two centuries earlier. After his retirement, Professor Dirac went to live in Tallahassee, Florida, where he taught at Florida State University from 1971 until his death on 20 October 1984.

A member of the Royal Society since 1930, he won the Royal Medal in 1939 and the Copley Medal in 1952. Professor Dirac shared the Nobel Prize for Physics with Erwin Schrödinger in 1933. He invented the well-known relativistic wave equation predicting the existence of spin and of the positron when he was only 23 years old. His further work includes his formulations of quantum field theory, statistics of fields and particles, gravitational waves and the prediction of magnetic monopoles.

Dirac first came to Trieste in June 1968 on the occasion of the International Symposium on Contemporary Physics, at which he delivered a lecture on the methods of theoretical physics. After this symposium, Dirac was a guest of honour at the Centre for a month or so nearly every year. In 1972, at a symposium on The Physicists' Conception of Nature organized in honour of Dirac on the occasion of his 70th birthday, he gave a lecture on Fundamental Constants and their Development in Time. Dirac also attended the Marcel Grossman Meeting held at the Centre on the centennial of the birth of Albert Einstein in 1979.

Abdus Salam, who proposed the institution of the Dirac Medal, was Dirac's student at Cambridge and it was after having listened to Dirac's lectures that he decided to devote his life to research rather than becoming a civil servant in his country. He remained in touch with his master and became his friend.



The Abdus Salam  
International Centre  
for Theoretical Physics



**2011 DIRAC MEDAL CEREMONY**

**10 July 2012**

## THE DIRAC MEDAL

The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics awarded its first Dirac Medal in 1985. The Medal is given in honour of P.A.M. Dirac, one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century and a staunch friend of the Centre. It is awarded annually on Dirac's birthday, 8 August, to an individual or individuals who have made significant contributions to physics. An international committee of distinguished scientists selects the winners from a list of nominated candidates. Nominations are invited from scientists working in all areas of physics. The deadline for receipt of nominations is 15 April of the relevant year.

## THE 2011 DIRAC MEDAL AND PRIZE

The 2011 Dirac Medal is awarded to

- **Edouard Brézin** (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France)
- **John Cardy** (University of Oxford, UK) and
- **Alexander B. Zamolodchikov** (Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA)

in recognition of their independent pioneering work on field theoretical methods to the study of critical phenomena and phase transitions; in particular for their significant contributions to conformal field theories and integrable systems. Their research and the physical implications of their formal developments have had important consequences in classical and quantum condensed matter systems and in string theory.

## 2011 DIRAC MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY

10 July 2012

at 14:30 hrs.

Main Lecture Hall, Leonardo Building

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### Programme

14:30 Remarks by Fernando Quevedo

14:45 Presentation of the Medallists,  
Giuseppe Mussardo

15:00 Award of the Medals

15:15 Talks by the Medallists

Edouard Brézin

*Scale and conformal invariance: the early days*

John Cardy

*Boundary CFT from strings to percolation to quantum quenches*

Alexander B. Zamolodchikov

*Flowing with integrable quantum field theories: view from above and view from below*