

Oration for Professor Brian Cox, being awarded Hon DSc

To be delivered on, Friday, 18th January 2019, 3pm by Professor Pam

Thomas

We welcome as our honorary graduand this afternoon the eminent physicist and science communicator, PROFESSOR BRIAN COX.

Brian obtained his PhD in High Energy Particle Physics in 1998 at the University of Manchester, and continues his research links at Manchester where he is Professor of Particle Physics, and at the CERN facility in Geneva, where he works on the ATLAS experiment, one of the four major experiments at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, designed to exploit the full discovery potential and physics opportunities of. His pioneering research has produced a new sub-field of ‘boosted-particle’ studies which are now employed in Large Hadron Collider experiments. From 2006 to 2013, he also held a prestigious Royal Society University Fellowship.

Brian Cox combines his work as a research physicist with an active commitment to bring science to the public. He is one of our most influential scientific communicators, who through television and radio, live science shows, public lectures, books, newspaper articles and social media has pushed physics from a seemingly scary and strange science to something that captures people's imagination, making science both accessible and exciting for millions of people.

In BBC television programmes such as *The Big Bang Machine*, *Horizon*, *In Einstein's Shadow*, *Wonders of Life*, *The Science of Doctor Who* and many more, he has taken us through the fundamental science behind everything from stars and planets to atoms and microbiology; his best-selling books deal with topics that often perplex the non-scientist – one, co-authored with Jeff Forshaw, is entitled *Why Does E = mc²? (And Why Should We Care?)*. As an accomplished speaker, Brian is completely at ease with his audience because of his extensive knowledge of his subject. He understands how to hold people's interest, using a bit of comedy (co-hosting with comedian Robin Ince of the popular BBC radio programme, *The Infinite Monkey Cage*) or making a bit of a

spectacle: in his upcoming world lecture tour, he is having a black hole created on stage.

He is passionate about the need for the greater public understanding of science. In view of the UK's need for more scientists, we must inspire and excite more children to engage with STEM subjects and to study science at university. And science has now become a huge part of our lives: "Science is too important not to be a part of popular culture," he has repeatedly said. "What is popular culture anyway, if not popular – as in 'liked by many?'".

Brian believes that age is no barrier to scientific understanding: rather, it is vital to engage children from an early age. He has voiced an episode of the children's television programme, *Postman Pat*: a whole generation of youngsters will now grow up with an accurate knowledge of the surface of the moon.

Brian Cox has won many awards for his work in publicising science, including the Institute of Physics Kelvin Prize in 2010, and the Royal Society's Michael Faraday Prize in 2012. He received an OBE in 2010 for services to science and in 2016 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. We are delighted to be able to honour him here today.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, PROFESSOR BRIAN COX.

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