

British theatre company to perform at the 'Queen's' court



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The 'Queen' – Queen of Sciences – will hold court in Hyderabad, India in August this year – that would indeed be an apt description of the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM), a mega meeting of mathematicians from all over the world held once in four years. India is playing host to the Congress, where the finest mathematical minds will regale their peers with the most exciting intellectual fare. It is for the first time in the ICM's hundred year old history that the meeting is being held in India.

The queen's courtiers can look forward to some superb entertainment too at the Congress. Among the cultural programmes that will be offered during the Congress is a play with the tantalising title "A Disappearing Number". The brilliant play conceived and directed by Simon McBurney and created and produced by the British theatre company Complicite has for its back-drop what has been described as "one of the most romantic episodes in the history of mathematics" – the collaboration between Cambridge's ivory tower mathematician Godfrey Harold Hardy and the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan. The play premiered in the UK in 2007 and has subsequently toured the entire world with two sell-out seasons in London earning rave reviews and numerous awards. Performances will be open to the general public in Hyderabad as well.

It is particularly appropriate that this play should be performed at the ICM in Hyderabad on 21st and 22nd August at the Global Peace Auditorium. The central character is a (woman) mathematician; a lot of the action in the play takes place in India; the Hardy-Ramanujan collaboration is perhaps the first major instance of Indo-British interaction in science and the ICM is something of a model for international cooperation in science. This treat to the mathematical community has been made possible mainly through the efforts of Prithvi Theatre of Mumbai (which takes a keen interest in public outreach for science) and Complicite, and the munificence of many sponsors. The play on its 2-city tour of India will in fact open in Mumbai, home to Prithvi. Complicite's enthusiasm to perform in Ramanujan's home country is of course a key factor.

For more information on the Congress visit: <http://www.icm2010.org.in>