



## SRINIVASA RAMANUJAN AND NIELS HENRIK ABEL

Abel and Ramanujan were born 85 years apart in time and a world apart in space: Abel in 1802 in Frindø (near Stavanger), Norway, and Ramanujan in 1887 in Erode, Tamil Nadu, India. Both died young—Abel at 27 and Ramanujan at 32. They both grew up in poverty and hardship. The lives of these two mathematicians are at once romantic, tragic, and heroic. Of the two, perhaps Ramanujan may have been the more fortunate. He found a sympathetic mentor in G.H. Hardy, a mathematician of towering stature at Cambridge, who was responsible for making Ramanujan's work known to the world during the latter's own lifetime. Abel had the misfortune that his best work was mislaid at the Paris Academy, and was recognized only posthumously.

Abel was a pioneer in the development of several branches of modern mathematics, especially group theory and elliptic functions. He showed, while still 19 years old, that there exist no general algebraic solutions for the roots of polynomials with degree equal to or greater than 5, thus resolving a problem that had intrigued mathematicians for centuries. Ramanujan was a genius in pure mathematics and made spectacular contributions to elliptic functions, continued fractions, infinite series, and analytical theory of numbers. He was essentially self-taught from a single textbook that was available to him. They both possessed extraordinary mathematical power and inspiration.



**2008 RAMANUJAN PRIZE CEREMONY**  
**20 May 2009**

## **THE RAMANUJAN PRIZE**

The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) has established the Srinivasa Ramanujan Prize in honour of the mathematics genius from India. The Prize is awarded annually to a mathematician under 45 years of age. Since the mandate of ICTP is to strengthen science in developing countries, the Ramanujan Prize has been created for mathematicians from those regions of the world. Srinivasa Ramanujan is the quintessential symbol of the best in mathematics from the developing world, and naming the Prize after him seemed entirely appropriate.

The Ramanujan Prize is funded by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters through the Niels Henrik Abel Memorial Fund, with the cooperation of the International Mathematical Union. The Abel Fund is named in honor of the great Norwegian mathematician, Niels Henrik Abel. It is enchanting that the names of these two extraordinary mathematicians should be linked through this Prize.

## **THE 2008 RAMANUJAN PRIZE CEREMONY**

This year's Ramanujan Prize is awarded to Enrique R. Pujals, Instituto Nacional de Matemática Pura e Aplicada (IMPA), Brazil, in recognition of "his outstanding contributions to dynamical systems, especially the characterisation of robust dynamics for flows and transformations and the development of a theory of generic systems."

## **2008 RAMANUJAN PRIZE CEREMONY**

**Wednesday, 20 May 2009**

19:00

Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters  
Drammensveien 78, Oslo

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### **Programme**

Opening remarks by Øyvind Østerud, President,  
Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters

Welcome remarks by K.R. Sreenivasan, Director,  
Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics

Presentation of the Ramanujan Prize by Abel Laureate Mikhail  
L. Gromov to Enrique R. Pujals, Instituto Nacional de  
Matemática Pura e Aplicada

Acceptance speech by Enrique R. Pujals

Congratulatory remarks by Brazilian Ambassador Sergio  
Eduardo Moreira Lima