

CORRESPONDENCE

BELATED NOBEL PRIZE FOR MAX BORN FRS

The authors have looked at Nobel archives, Swedish view of theoretical physics etc and produced something worth reading. They could however note the following points:

1932 Nobel recognised that a breakthrough was achieved by Heisenberg, in discovering Quantum mechanics [QM] in its matrix mechanics version. Matrix mechanics was further developed by Born and his asst. Jordan [BJ]. The final version was written by Born-Jordan with Heisenberg [BJH]. It was Born who noticed the matrix nature of new calculations and wrote the present form of the commutation relations. He thus fully expected to share the Nobel with Heisenberg. Dirac independently of Born and Jordan published a paper some five months after BJ paper but nine days before BJH paper which contained the same results (in fact more general as they were applicable to even when continuous spectrum was present). Dirac shared the 1933 Nobel for these developments with Schrodinger who had discovered wave mechanics version of Quantum mechanics. Born was unhappy for not being recognised for his contributions to QM by these Nobels. He felt that he should have shared the prize with Heisenberg. Besides he felt that he and Dirac had achieved the same results. They are right in pointing out the Swedish view of theoretical physics in non-recognition of Born. Another factor was Jordan being associated with Born in these papers. Jordan with his support of Nazis had become persona non-grata in physics community. Jordan was not likely to be nominated or share the Nobel with Born.

Luckily Born had made another important contribution, 'Probability interpretation of wave function', in which he was the sole author. Born was awarded Nobel for this work after a long delay in 1954.

It is not clear that Born-Raman controversy had any effect on the delay in award.

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