

Physics strikes the right note with classical musicians

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The combination of physics and music might usually prompt images of Brian Cox playing keyboards for D:Ream, but a new trio, consisting of a professor of physics, an internationally renowned composer and an award-winning violinist, are bringing particle physics to life through a series of classical compositions.

An insight into their work, aptly named “Particle Partitas”, is revealed in an exclusive video report on physicsworld.com, where the trio show the creative processes at work and tentatively attempt to play a few bars for the first time.

Jack Liebeck, a Classical BRIT award winner, and Brian Foster, a particle physicist at the University of Oxford, are no strangers to the fusion of physics and [music](#): for the last six years they have been touring

a self-created "musical lecture" that explores Einstein's legacy to physics.

Their newly recruited composer, Edward Cowie, is also aware of the crossover between the two disciplines, having originally studied physics at Imperial College London.

"The music is shaped by the activity of [particle physics](#). In terms of the way subatomic particles are observable in their collisions, in their traces, in their impacts, music can do the same thing. You can make music that has a device into which it is forced to impact – fragments fly off it and they have behaviours, which can parallel," explains Cowie in the video.

This new series of 20 short musical pieces, documenting the history of particle physics from the late 19th century through to the present day, will be accompanied by short lectures on the topic given by Foster. It will debut in the UK in June 2012 and Foster also hopes to take the show abroad to particle physicists at CERN.

Provided by Institute of Physics

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