

Scientific theater: teaching physics without teaching

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In the past two decades, the initiatives aimed at promoting physics among people have enormously increased. Scientists have realized how urgent it was to move on from a communication oriented to the public understanding of science (basically unattainable) to one oriented to the public awareness of science.

We have observed a significant growth in the number of science popular magazines, science festivals science centers, science cafés, interactive exhibitions, but also TV shows and theatre performances related to physics and physicists.

The scenario now is much different with respect to that of 15-20 years ago. In this talk I will report the results and the evolution in time of “The show of Physics” a project of the University of Milan that since 2004 has given birth to seven theatre shows attended by more than 140,000 people. The project’s aim is to awake people curiosity and to give birth to fondness and fascination for physics and physicists, without teaching and never becoming a lesson.

We have realized, however, that theatre can support formal education, and we are presently developing an educational path for high schools where theatre plays an important role.