Awarded

J. S. Johnson

M. J. Gaunt

R. Berger

Novartis Early Career Awards to J. S. Johnson and M. J. Gaunt

The Novartis Early Career Award is awarded annually to two young scientists who began their independent research no more than ten years ago. One recipient is chosen from Europe and one from North America. The choices for 2008 were Jeffrey S. Johnson (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA) and Matthew J. Gaunt (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom).

J. S. Johnson completed his PhD in 1999 at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA, USA) under D. Evans. He worked as a postdoctoral fellow in R. Bergman's group at the University of California in Berkeley. In 2001 he took up a position as Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill (USA); he has been Associate Professor there since 2006. He has made significant contributions to asymmetric catalysis with acyl silanes, to Lewis acid catalyzed dipolar cycloadditions, and to metal-catalyzed electrophilic aminations; these contributions were often accompanied by mechanistic studies. He recently reported in *Advanced Synthesis & Catalysis* on cyanide-catalyzed additions of acyl phosphonates to aldehydes[2a] and in *Angewandte Chemie* on metallophosphite-induced nucleophilic acylations of α,β-unsaturated amides.[2b,c]

M. J. Gaunt completed his doctorate in 1999 at the University of Cambridge under the supervision of J. B. Spencer and then carried out research as a postdoctoral fellow in the group of A. B. Smith III at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2001 he returned to Cambridge and worked as a young academic in S. V. Ley's group. He began his independent career in 2003. Gaunt's research focuses on palladium-catalyzed C–H functionalizations and on the development of enantioselective organocatalytic reactions and their application to the synthesis of compounds with challenging molecular structures. He recently reported in *Angewandte Chemie* on the synthesis of rhazinicine by a metal-catalyzed C–H functionalization[1a] and on an enantioselective catalytic intramolecular cyclopropanation with a modified alkaloid as organocatalyst.[1b]

Hellmann Prize to R. Berger

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft Theoretische Chemie (Theoretical Chemistry Community) has awarded Robert Berger (Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies (FIAS), University of Frankfurt) the Hans G. A. Hellmann Prize for Theoretical Chemistry for his formative work on electroweak interactions in molecular chemistry and on the fundamental properties of chiral molecules. He is thus recognized for establishing an approach, which can be improved systematically, to take into account weak interactions in quantum chemistry. He has applied this method to chiral molecules in the prediction of parity-violating effects in spectroscopy. He reported on the ab initio calculation of parity-violating chemical shifts in the NMR spectra of chiral molecules in a contribution that was featured on the cover of *ChemPhysChem*;[3a] in *Angewandte Chemie* he described isotope effects by parity violation in chiral molecules.[3b]

Berger studied chemistry at the Technical University of Berlin and the University of Münster, where he completed his doctorate in 1997 under the supervision of M. Klessinger on the theoretical description of vibrational spectra and their temperature dependence. He then worked as a postdoctoral fellow under M. Quack at the ETH Zurich. In 2000 he moved to the Technical University of Berlin as a Liebig scholar and was made leader of a young academics group in 2003. He has been carrying out research at FIAS since 2005, where he heads the theoretical chemistry group.

[1] a) E. M. Beck, R. Hatley, M. J. Gaunt, *Angew. Chem.* **2008**, *120*, 3046; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2008**, *47*, 3004; b) C. C. C. Johansson, N. Bremeyer, S. V. Ley, D. R. Owen, S. C. Smith, M. J. Gaunt, *Angew. Chem.* **2006**, *118*, 6170; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2006**, *45*, 6024.

[2] a) C. C. Bausch, J. S. Johnson, *Adv. Synth. Catal.* **2005**, *347*, 1207; b) M. R. Nahm, X. Linghu, J. R. Potnick, C. M. Yates, P. S. White, J. S. Johnson, *Angew. Chem.* **2005**, *117*, 2429; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2005**, *44*, 2377; c) M. R. Nahm, X. Linghu, J. R. Potnick, C. M. Yates, P. S. White, J. S. Johnson, *Angew. Chem.* **2005**, *117*, 4735; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2005**, *44*, 4660.

[3] a) G. Laubender, R. Berger, *ChemPhysChem* **2003**, *4*, 395; b) R. Berger, G. Laubender, M. Quack, A. Sieben, J. Stohner, M. Willeke, *Angew. Chem.* **2005**, *117*, 3689; *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2005**, *44*, 3623.

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