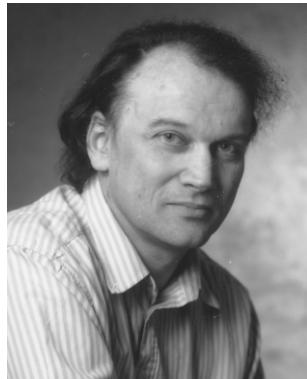

Gert Due Billing (1946–2002)



Professor dr.scient. Gert Due Billing of the University of Copenhagen died on December 4th at the age of 56, after a year of serious illness. With his death, Denmark and Europe lost a remarkable talent in the field of theoretical chemistry. Gert Billing graduated from the University of Copenhagen in 1970, and in 1978 he was awarded a Dr.Scient. degree by the same university. He served his university for a number of years as Associate Professor and later as Research Professor. In 1994, he became a full Professor and director of the Centre for Molecular Dynamics and Laser Chemistry at the H.C. Ørsted Institute, a part of the University of Copenhagen. Under his leadership the Centre attracted talented theoretical chemists from many parts of the world. All those who worked with Professor Billing greatly valued and admired his fine personal qualities, his modesty, generosity, and sense of humour, and his intellectual gifts as a teacher, colleague and research director.

Among Gert Billing's pioneering contributions to theoretical chemistry are the methods that he developed for calculating

reaction rates in the gas phase and on catalyst surfaces, methods that have led to an improved understanding of the mechanism of catalysis. He especially pioneered the development of calculational techniques in which some degrees of freedom are treated classically, while others are treated with the help of quantum mechanics. He was the author or co-author of more than 340 scientific articles in international journals, 175 invited or contributed papers at conferences, and four monographs. His most recent book 'The Quantum Classical Theory' (Oxford University Press) deals with methods for treating large systems using a mixture of classical trajectories and quantum theory.

Over the years, Gert Billing has served as Guest Professor at many European and American Universities, for example, Bari, Perugia, Göttingen, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, McGill and Cal. Tech., and he has served on the editorial boards of numerous scientific journals. In particular, his absence will be felt by his friends and colleagues in the biennial MOLEC Meetings (European Conference on Dynamics of Molecular Collisions), where he served on the Steering Committee, organized in 1996 an excellent meeting in Denmark, and lectured several times as an invited speaker.

In 2000 he was awarded the NKT prize, offered yearly by the Nordic Cable and Wire Corporation for the most outstanding scientific research performed in Denmark. He was a member of the Danish Scientific Academy and also of the Royal Danish Society of Sciences and Letters. During the last year of his life, despite his serious illness, Professor Billing remained scientifically active up to the limits of his strength.

Gert Billing served for more than three years on the Editorial Board of *Chemical Society Reviews* and he will be greatly missed both by his colleagues on the Board and by the Editorial Staff members of the journal.

John Avery and Zdenek Herman