

Microscopy AND Microanalysis

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HUMOR



Dear Abbé

Dear Abbé,

We have a professor in our microscopy facility that claims a “watched ultramicrotome never sections.” If that isn’t enough, he only casts formvar films when there is a full moon the night before and spins around three times in the lab before starting. I believe he is just a superstitious old goat, but my lab mate thinks he is an EM Shaman. What is your opinion?

Skeptic in Syracuse, NY

Herr Skeptic,

Ach! The pitiful whining of the unversed and unwashed few. Obviously, you are unaware of the presence of EM mystical powers. These mystical forces were originally recognized by the Blessed Hildegard of Bingen, but have been acknowledged by other cultures as well. Most uninitiated scientists believe that these mystical musings involve spiritual explanations. In reality, they enlighten us about the metaphysical aspect of Electron Microscopy and related disciplines. Call it what you will – EM shamanism, mojo, voodoo, tao, druidism, Republican policy – it all adds up to unexplained forces at work that are ignored at your peril.

Dear Abbé

So, like, several of us musically inclined microscopists get together and play passable, but no where near perfect, versions of familiar songs, and our front man is a little guy who is rather adept at slide guitar. Our hit single, *It's my sample and I'll cry if I want to*, is about to go copper. If we were to call our group 'Microslide and the Coverslips' do you think that anybody would, like, you know, get it?

Anxious in Athens, GA

Dear Anxious,

Quit your whining. Of course they will get it and if they don't then they are not worthy to listen to your music in the first place. At the beginning of the set you should require everyone in the audience to write down Bragg's equation, anyone who cannot do so should immediately be asked to leave with no refund. Fine music and microscopy have a long history together. My good friend Richard Wagner was an accomplished microscopist. In fact his original name for *Tannhäuser* was "*Ich liebe Fresnel Franse*" but at the insistence of his publisher he capitulated and changed it. Don't make the same mistake!

Got a question for Herr Abbé? Please write to his personal assistant at jshields@cb.uga.edu. Abbé may not answer all the questions, only those he deems worthy.