

# 2018 Joint Policy Board for Mathematics Communications Awards

The JPBM Communications Awards of the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics were presented for public outreach at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego, California, in January 2018 to VI HART and MATT PARKER.



**Vi Hart**

## Citation for Vi Hart

The 2018 JPBM Communications Award is presented to Victoria (Vi) Hart for her entertaining, thought-provoking mathematics and music videos on YouTube that explain mathematical concepts through doodles. She is well known among the younger generation and her videos, which include the series “Doodling in Math Class,” have an audience of millions. She has also authored publications in computational

geometry, mathematics and music, mathematical art, and mathematics education.

## Biographical Sketch

Vi Hart is a mathemusician and philosopher known primarily for work in mathematical understanding, musical structure, and social justice. Vi has publications in computational geometry, symmetry, mathematics and music, mathematical art, and math education and is the principal investigator of eleVR, a research group focused on understanding how virtual and augmented reality technology can impact how humans think, see, and feel. After receiving a BA in music from Stony Brook University, Vi traveled the world researching mathematics, writing music, and doing performance art, which eventually led to the creation of the “Doodling in Math Class” series and other videos, which have together gathered over 100 million views. Hart’s work has been supported by Khan Academy, culminating in the creation of “Twelve Tones,” one of Hart’s best-known works in mathematics, music, and philosophy. Afterward, Vi shifted to working with virtual and augmented reality technologies, with support from SAP and Y Combinator Research. Vi is also known as cocreator of “Parable of the Polygons,” an explorable explanation of systemic bias that has been played over 5 million times.

## Response from Vi Hart

I am honored to join the distinguished company of recipients of this award, which has been around just about as long as I have! The list of previous recipients is halfway to being a bibliography of my own influences in mathematics. I was extremely lucky to grow up surrounded by those who have shown me the beauty, meaning—and sheer pleasure—to be found in mathematical thought. I feel strongly that this beauty must be shared and have found my own particular way of reaching out to the millions of people who need more math in their lives (including many who didn’t know it before). I appreciate the JPBM’s openness in recognizing new media and Internet media’s role in mathematics communication, and I look forward to continuing to share my love of mathematics!



**Matt Parker**

## Citation for Matt Parker

The 2018 JPBM Communications Award is presented to Matt Parker for communicating the excitement of mathematics to a worldwide audience through YouTube videos, TV and radio appearances, book and newspaper writings, and stand-up comedy. In 2008 he started Maths-Jam as an informal gathering of people who enjoy talking about mathematics in the pub, and it

has gone on to become a global phenomenon with its own annual conference.

## Biographical Sketch

Matt Parker is a stand-up comedian and mathematics communicator. He appears regularly on TV and online: as well as being a presenter on the Discovery Channel, his YouTube videos have been viewed over 50 million times. Matt originally trained as a high school math teacher in Perth, Australia, before moving to the United Kingdom. Having left the classroom, he now visits schools around

## FROM THE AMS SECRETARY

the world to talk to students about mathematics as part of the Think Maths organization he started. Matt is also a founder of MathsJam events in pubs; Maths Busking, taking math to the street; and Maths Gear, manufacturing and selling nerdy math toys.

In his remaining free time, Matt is the Public Engagement in Mathematics Fellow at Queen Mary University of London.

Matt lives in the achingly quaint English village of Godalming with his physicist wife, Lucie Green. He once organized an event that broke the world record for “most people simultaneously solving Rubik’s Cube®.”

### Response from Matt Parker

I am extremely humbled to be selected for this prize. With so much amazing mathematics communication going on around the world, it is an honor to be selected by the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics. My career would not be possible without the community of mathematics enthusiasts around me.

At the completion of my mathematics degree, I realized that I enjoyed talking about the subject as much as I did doing it. So a move into teaching seemed like an obvious choice, and I quickly discovered that I enjoyed being a high school math teacher immensely. Obviously there was a set curriculum I needed to get the students through, but I considered my real job was to actively engage the pupils in mathematics and try to spark a love of the subject. Everything I have done since then has been to try and share that same love of math with a wider and wider audience.

I could now easily fill the rest of this book with names of people who deserved to be named as part of this prize as much as I do, but reading such a list can be so tedious as to be meaningless. So instead here is a rundown of the general communities those names would be pulled from:

Thanks to the recreational mathematicians everywhere who celebrate the fun side of the subject: I appreciate everyone involved in MathsJams and math gathering of all types. Thanks to math teachers who do a difficult job and everyone who works with me to provide support for schools, including Think Maths and Maths Inspiration. Cheers to everyone who helps get my books published; it’s a shame such a team effort ends with a single name on the cover. Thank you to all my fellow YouTube channels, including the incredible Numberphile. Much appreciation to all my stand-up comedy colleagues who tolerate my need to overmath everything (with special mention to Festival of the Spoken Nerd). I’m in debt to every radio and TV station who have given me a mainstream platform, including the BBC and Discovery. And a final thanks to all the people out there who use math in their lives and give back by donating their time and effort to help me with projects and their money to crowd-fund my more ridiculous ideas.

And final thanks to my wife, Lucie Green, who does deserve to be named specifically because she enables all of the above and more.

### About the Award

The JPBM Communications Award is presented annually to reward and encourage journalists and other communicators who, on a sustained basis, bring mathematical ideas and information to non-mathematical audiences. JPBM represents the American Mathematical Society, the American Statistical Association, the Mathematical Association of America, and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. The award carries a cash prize of US\$1,000.

A list of previous recipients of the JPBM Communications Award may be found on the AMS website at [www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?pur1=jpbm-comm-award](http://www.ams.org/profession/prizes-awards/pabrowse?pur1=jpbm-comm-award).

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