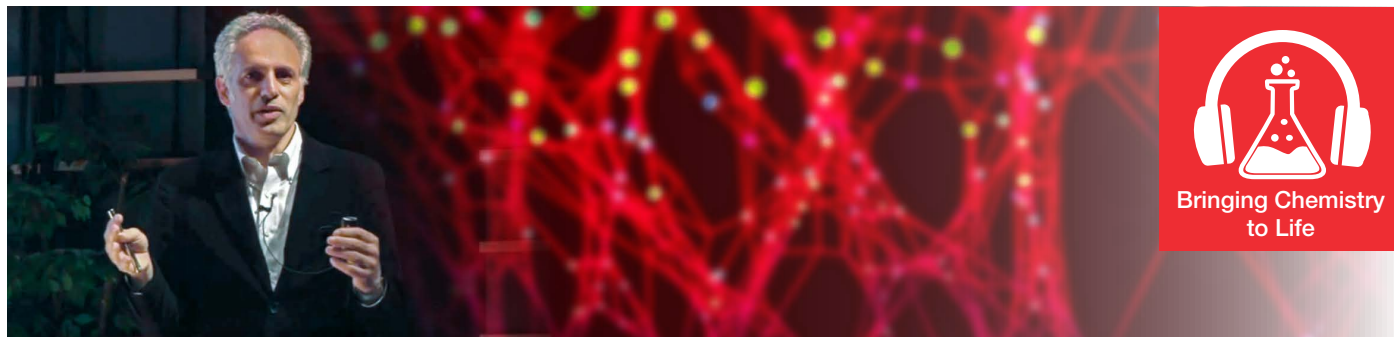


Bringing Chemistry to Life podcast series

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Season 4: Expanding Chemistry Perspectives Episode 10: The most famous unknown—the periodic table



Episode abstract

Chemistry is often perceived as inaccessible and challenging, but there is one fundamental chemical construct that everybody knows – the periodic table of the elements. The periodic table is a chemical icon, that has transcended the boundaries of the chemical sciences to somehow become familiar, almost a staple in several aspects of everyday life. It is the foundation of every chemist's knowledge, but not many understand its deeper meaning, let alone its history and philosophical significance.

This is an exciting and unusual episode with one of the biggest names in chemistry, Eric Scerri, historian and scientist and the biggest living expert of the periodic table of the elements.

The history and philosophy of chemistry are not common topics for Bringing Chemistry to Life, but this is an intriguing discussion that provides a deeper meaning and context to scientific research and chemistry in particular. In what may be our most thought-provoking episode yet we explore the relationship between chemistry and physics and revisit concepts that have been lost by modern scientists. We discuss what an element really is and the fundamental discoveries and progress that have been made over the years to influence chemical understanding and the periodic table. All this can explain how modern science really works and perhaps how we can teach it better.

Our greatest season finale yet!

About our guest

Dr. Eric Scerri

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of California – Los Angeles

Eric's website: www.ericscerri.com

Eric's Recent Publications:

- [The Periodic Table, Its Story and Its Significance](#), Oxford University Press, 2019
- [A Tale of Seven Elements](#), Oxford University Press, 2013
- [A Very Short Introduction to the Periodic Table, 2nd edition](#), Oxford University Press, 2020

Eric's Content Recommendations:

- [Eric Scerri plays the blues](#), video of Eric engaging in one of his hobbies
- [The Mystery of Matter](#), a NOVA docudrama that Eric was involved in
- [Plenary lecture at International Society for the Philosophy of Chemistry](#), a lecture that Eric gave in 2022
- [Elements of the Blues : A chemistry - blues guitar collaboration](#), a collaborative presentation of science and music with guitarist Ronnie Earl
- [The History & Philosophy of the Periodic Table](#), a lecture at McMaster University in 2023

This podcast series is available via the following links



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