Grateful and honored to be ESOF grantee, I arrived at Carlsberg city in Copenhagen on June 21 2014 to participate in a very unique and imperative conference ESOF 2014. In today’s world, where lines between different factions of science and technology is becoming ever so undistinguished, where in multidisciplinary research is the calling of future, there is a need for researchers of different factions to interact, discuss and challenge each other. ESOF 2014 was such an avenue where I met researchers pursuing interests very different from mine, yet left an impact on me.

ESOF 2014 had an incredible list of speakers who were such a delight to be heard. The opening ceremony started off by the very charismatic Danish Minister for Higher education and sciences, Sofie Carsten Nielsen and then a very brief appearance, of her majesty Queen Margarethe. Which was followed by a truly spectacular opening Panel debate by Fabiola Gianotti and Rolf-Dieter Heuer about Higgs boson discovery. I attended talks by most of the plenary speakers, and the most memorable ones were the talks by Hans-Rosling, Brian Schmidt and Prof. Cedric Villani.

Different perspective of Science: I was especially inspired by the talk given by Peter Vuust, who talked about how music affects our brain and therefore happiness. He is a world class musician and scientist who combines both his passion to understand humans and nature. That inspired me to think out of my narrow
mindset of research which is what ESOF 2014 was all about. I met variety of researchers from different backgrounds and thought process and views. The issues that were discussed in the several panels were very relevant problems of our time. I attended few panel discussion about the role of women in STEM fields and what hurdles they come across. Another one that I attended was the environmental impact of nanotechnology.

Fig 2: Peter Vuust performing after his talk “Why do we have music”

Cultural exchange: Being from a diverse background, an Indian national living in California, meeting myriad nationals at ESOF 2014 was fascinating. I made some very good friends from Copenhagen who showed me around this wonderful city. All thanks to all the social events at Vega and various other gatherings throughout the conference.

The conference was held at Carlsberg city which is a brewery district. I got many opportunities to taste the in-house beer but also get a detailed account of how the empire was formed.

I loved the concept of bringing Science in the city, having little science talks and science outreach to the young and general population. It is a very noble way to foster scientific curiosity amongst the young generation. One of such outreach events which I thoroughly enjoyed was the Ignoble awards presentation. What is a better way to make Science interesting than making it humorous?
Copenhagen as a city, with its great urban planning and transportation system, the lack of dependence on cars is very motivating. The cycling culture made me inspired to follow such a lifestyle in southern California where public transport lacks.

Career development: ESOF 2014 did a wonderful job for providing various avenues for networking. As a student, I was able to dine with Ingrid Wünning Tschol, Senior-Vice-President Health and Science, Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH. It was indeed a very fruitful experience, having a person of such caliber recount how they went about their career development. Not to mention, I got a taste of the highly acclaimed Danish cuisine with salmon as main course and Carlsberg beer.

And on the last day, I got to meet two professors who were interested in my work. We expressed our mutual interests and exchanged contact information, for which I am eternally grateful to ESOF 2014. Even though I still have a few years to go before I defend my thesis, it definitely provided me with a platform to present myself to the professional world.

Acknowledgements: ESOF 2014 broadened my thinking about research. I am motivated to look at every problem with a bigger picture in mind. To not be afraid of collaborations with distinct disciplines to solve common problems. And rekindled my love for science and research. Young researchers need platforms such as ESOF 2014 for motivation and networking. And I am very grateful to be given that platform and discover this fine city of Copenhagen. Last but not the least, I would like to thank Marie Suchanova for all her help and ESOF 2014 committee for a successful conference.