

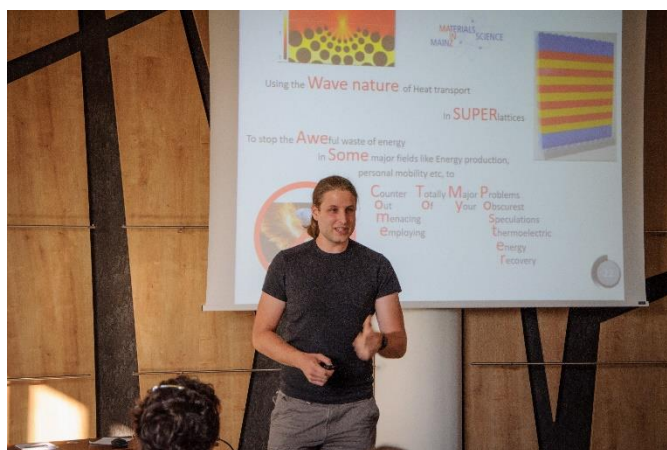
## MAINZ Student Seminar 2018 in Budapest

The MAINZ Student Seminar of 2018 took place in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. After meeting in Frankfurt Airport in the early morning of Thursday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, we arrived at the Danubius Hotel Helia, located only a few meters from the Danube, around noon. From there 9 groups set out to the traditional city rally on the first day of the Student Seminar to explore Budapest, while visiting several sights and characteristic places, each hidden behind a challenging riddle. The city rally started with very hot and sunny weather, but surprised all participants with a downpour shortly before its end. Never the less, the teams were successful in solving the riddles, finding places and taking selfies all around Budapest. After arriving at the Trófea grill restaurant mostly wet, we also enjoyed the grill buffet and local wines, while drying and warming up again.

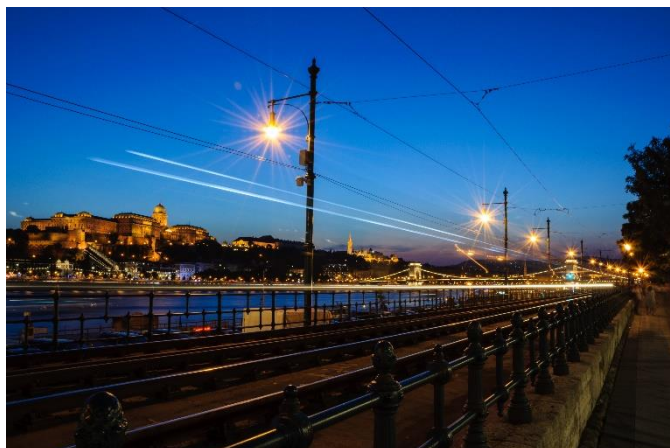


The following Friday was mainly dedicated to scientific contributions. MAINZ Students from polymer and inorganic chemistry, as well as spintronics research presented the results of their PhD work. The scientific program was further enriched by an introduction in catalysis in green chemistry by Prof. Kai Hultzsch from Vienna University. Besides this, we got an introduction to organizing summers schools with MAINZ and inviting undergrad students from abroad within the RISE

program. These talks were as entertaining as beneficial, since we could learn about these MAINZ extra activities from first hand experience by our peers. Another first hand experience was shared by MAINZ Alumni Stephan Köhler, who gave valuable insights into working at BASF SE as a computational physicist. Additionally, Friday was also the day of organization and information. This included, besides planning and general organizational questions, mainly the future of MAINZ. We discussed that status quo of planned merger of MAINZ and the MPG, addressed concerns and collected the opinion on the most important parts of a graduate school from all participants. It was good to experience, that many MAINZ Students wanted to be involved in the future discussion, even if it does not directly affect their time in MAINZ anymore. We were stunned by the input, concerns and contributions on this topic and are proud that MAINZ means more to the students than just personal benefits. Finally, the day finished with a poster session, which was kicked off by a poster pitch. In this pitch, nine of the PhD students presenting a poster, had one minute to introduce their poster with one presentation slide. We heard very funny analogies, well-conceived summaries of research topics and overall well prepared pitch talks.



Saturday continued with scientific talks by the PhD students on biology, simulations on polymer dynamics and spintronics. However, this day was also dedicated to extra activities within MAINZ. Thus, the mentMAINZ mentoring program and KODE competency profile, as well as the experiences with secondments and a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree besides your PhD studies were introduced. As on Friday, Saturday was not only shaped by current MAINZ students but also by two more MAINZ alumni, who kindly followed our invitation to Budapest. Gregor Kieslich, currently a junior group leader at TU Munich, talked about his way into academia and gave us insights into his philosophy on research and supervision as well as the unwritten rules of academia. Isabel Schick introduced working at Boston Consulting group to us and shared her personal experience and career steps and plans. Saturday afternoon and evening were scheduled as leisure time for all participants. Most of the students took the opportunity to further explore the historic building in Budapest or visit a museum. Additionally, the free time was used to network among each other and with the Alumni, which we had the pleasure to host even longer than for just their talks.



personal experience was evaluated during the game and combined fun, competition and personal reflection very smoothly. To recover from this high action game we went to the Jardinette Garden Restaurant for dinner. Here, we could share our experiences so far over a fancy dinner and a glass of local wine.

After a free morning on Sunday, which most of us used to recover from a longer night out on Saturday, we took our traditional group picture at the Danube (see below). We then went on to get into action in the group activity “The Trading Floor”, a trading simulation game, which required teamwork, effective communication, a strong focus to react fast to new information and empathy for the different team roles. This



Our last day in Budapest, Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of August, was again dedicated to scientific talks and activity reports. The MAINZ PhD students reported their results on various flavors of physical science, from



spintronics, to polymer physics, simulations and physical chemistry. Additionally, students reported on the student organized lecture series and buddy program within MAINZ as well as the Journal of Unsolved Questions (JUNQ), founded and led by MAINZ members. We were also pleased to welcome two professors from Hungary to give us an overview on their research. Prof. Ágnes Vibók from the university of Debrecen introduced her research in the field of computational chemistry to us, which mainly focuses on the photophysics of model



systems in the atto and femto seconds regime. Associate Prof. Csaba Fehér from the Budapest University of Economics and Technology gave us an introduction on biotechnology and process construction and calculation with a focus on sustainability and turning biomass, usually considered as waste from food production, into valuable fine chemicals. The huge amount of questions for all our invited speakers reflected the interest of the MAINZ students to learn about topics beyond the scope of their own research and for socially relevant problems. Before heading to the Budapest airport on our way back to Mainz, we were happy to announce the winners of the city rally and award the two MAINZ poster prizes. One for the best poster pitch to Sven Heinz for his contribution and the other for the scientifically best poster to Eva Prinz for her contribution. We also decided on location for the MAINZ student seminar of 2019, where we will go to the Italian capital *Rome*. Finally, after five great days in Budapest, with lots of fun, networking, discussion and scientific input all of us arrived back home safely around midnight.

