

ODE TO THE LASER

The laser turns fifty this week,
An important event in history!
But who developed this amazing technique?
That's still kind of a mystery...



Was it Ted Maiman
who built the first laser?
Or was it Townes and Schawlow
who wrote the seminal paper?

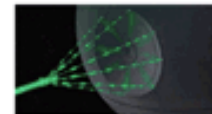


Was it Basov and Prokhorov
who toiled in academic obscurity?
or was it Gordon Gould
who won the patents (eventually)?



Perhaps we should credit Einstein
who had the key precognition
"A splendid light has dawned on me" he wrote
when he discovered stimulated emission.

Beautiful beams of light
coherent in frequency and phase.
The public expected your biggest impact
to be Star Wars-like Death Rays.



Instead you're in our everyday lives
from bar codes to pointers to DVD drives
They say in Science is your biggest contribution
shining a light on stars and molecular distributions.



But as all things cyber
connect through optical fibers
Let us not forget:
Without the laser, there'd be no Internet!



FOR CREDIBLE
LASERS SEE
INSIDE

