

Meet Prof. Robert J. Mayer, Thieme Chemistry Journals Awardee 2026!



Prof. Robert J. Mayer obtained his PhD in 2020 from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Germany) and went on to carry out postdoctoral research at the Université de Strasbourg (France) before becoming an independent junior group leader at the Technical University of Munich (Germany) in 2024. Since December 2025, he is a Rudolf-Mößbauer assistant professor at the Technical University of Munich.

Thieme: Which field of organic chemistry are you interested in the most and why?

Prof. Mayer: I am most interested in physical organic chemistry because this field allows us to understand why organic molecules react the way they do and provides a rational framework for exploring chemical reactivity.

Thieme: Following that, what is the focus of your current research activity?

Prof. Mayer: In our research, we combine automation and high-throughput experimentation with physical organic chemistry to generate large datasets on chemical reactivity. These datasets form the basis for developing predictive models using tools from data science and computational chemistry, which we use to explore fundamental questions, e.g., to predict catalytic reactions or to explore the chemistry of Life.

Thieme: What do you think about the modern role and prospects of organic chemistry?

Prof. Mayer: Organic molecules are central to many areas, from understanding biological systems to developing pharmaceuticals and the materials that surround us. Looking ahead, organic chemistry will continue to play a key role in chemical research. At the same time, it will become increasingly interdisciplinary, extending beyond traditional synthesis into areas such as biosciences, materials science, and data science.

Thieme: Which difficulties are there for young upcoming chemists in your field? Do you have any tips?

Prof. Mayer: Every generation has faced challenges when progressing to the next career stage. However, I believe that developing a unique perspective on organic chemistry – one that also has impact beyond the field itself – can help build a successful scientific career.

Thieme: What is your most important scientific achievement to date and why?

Prof. Mayer: One of my most important achievements has been integrating the principles of mechanistic physical organic chemistry to study molecular reactivity in the context of prebiotic chemistry. This work demonstrates how connecting different research questions and disciplines can provide unique perspectives and drive progress in the field.

Thieme: Could you tell us something about yourself outside the lab, such as your hobbies or extra-work interests?

Prof. Mayer: Outside the lab, I enjoy exploring new places around the world, cooking, and experimenting with ways to make the perfect cup of coffee.
