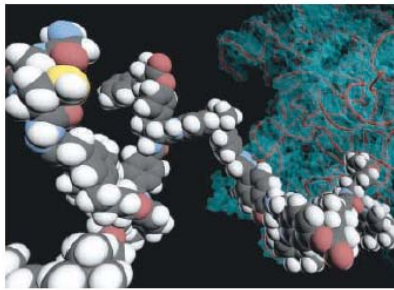


Ribosome Robot

In January, one of the world's first nanofactories made its debut. Researchers built a molecular machine that mimics the cell's protein-building factory, the ribosome, but is one-tenth the size. This ribosome robot includes a molecu-



lar axle track with a ring around it. When heated, the ring's sulfur-containing amino acid sequentially grabs each of three amino acids from the track to build a short peptide chain. The machine has been hailed as ingenious, but it won't replace ribosomes anytime soon. It takes days to do what the real ribosome can do in tenths of a second.