

PREFACE

by **Francesco Becattini**

The 3rd edition of the conference *Critical Point and the Onset of Deconfinement* was held in Florence, at the Galileo Galilei Institute for theoretical physics from July 3rd to 6th 2006. It was followed by the 2nd edition of the workshop *Correlations and Fluctuations in Relativistic Nuclear Collisions* from July 7th to 9th.

The goal of the conference was to get together experimental and theoretical physicists active in the field to discuss most relevant theoretical and phenomenological issues in the physics of ultrarelativistic heavy ion collisions, with special emphasis on the subjects mentioned in the title of the workshops themselves. The conference was attended by about 80 physicists. All of them contributed significantly to lively discussions and to create an enjoyable atmosphere for informal discussions, as well as giving very interesting presentations which are reported in this web site. A significant fraction of participants were Ph.D. students and young researchers at post-doc level. Indeed, one of the main purposes of holding these serial conferences in Italy was to allow young italian physicists to approach this quickly developing branch of Nuclear Physics, according to INFN directives.

It is my pleasure to express here my gratitude to all who contributed to the success of these meetings. To our host institution Galileo Galilei Institute (GGI) and its Coordinators Proff. G. Marchesini and R. Casalbuoni; to the funding agencies Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, INFN and the Department of Physics of University of Florence for the financial support; to the members of the advisory board who suggested and selected many high quality presentations ensuring the success of the meeting; to the INFN and GGI administrative staff for their invaluable help in all steps of the logistics; to the GGI and Department of Astronomy technical staff for arranging the network connections. A very special thank to my co-organizers Prof. A. Barducci and Dr. L. Ferroni for their prodigious abnegation, without which these conferences would not have been possible.

Arrivederci a Darmstadt!

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