

Preface

Published online: 6 January 2007 – © Springer-Verlag / Società Italiana di Fisica 2007

The 2006 edition of the Hot Quarks workshop on the physics of ultra-relativistic nucleus–nucleus collisions took place in Villasimius, Sardinia (Italy) from 15 to 20 May. This was the second edition of the workshop, following the one which had been held in Taos, New Mexico (USA) in July 2004. This series is particular in that it is especially aimed at the younger members of the ultra-relativistic heavy ion physics community. In Villasimius there were in total 74 participants, most of them young postdocs, including both theorists and experimentalists, representing a wide spectrum of ultra-relativistic heavy ion experiments from GSI, Brookhaven and CERN. Except for the organizers, every single participant was also a speaker: everybody had 15 minutes for a presentation on the subject he/she is currently working on. Such a time limitation pushed the speakers to make choices, and concentrate on the main message they wanted to bring across. This led to remarkably sharp and focussed presentations.

A defining feature of the Hot Quarks concept is the prominent place that is reserved for discussion. Discussions are actively stimulated and encouraged, both following each presentation and in dedicated discussion forums at the end of each half-day session. In order to overcome the uneasiness that sometimes prevents young physicists from raising their hands, question boxes were circulated during the sessions, so that questions could be posted anonymously. This led to very rich and lively discussion forums. As had happened already for the first edition of the workshop, the overall feedback from the participants regarding the workshop was enthusiastic. As in the first edition, a (symbolic) prize was awarded for the best presentation. The award is dedicated to the memory of Klaus Kinder-Geiger, one of the most promising young theorists in the field at the time of his tragic death in the crash of Swissair flight 111 from New York to Geneva on the night of 3 September 1998. The 2006 Klaus Kinder-Geiger award went to Andre Peshier's beautiful presentation on collisional QCD energy loss in a quark–gluon plasma.

All the participants were asked to provide a write-up of their presentation, which would be refereed according to the usual EPJ C standards. The present issue of EPJ C is dedicated to the publication of these contributions. These presentations provide, in compact form, an insightful overview of the latest advances in the field, from the fresh and lively perspective of young scientists at the forefront of this research.

December 2006

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