PREFACE

The idea of having a conference in honor of John Dyson's 60th birthday was hatched by Tom Hartquist and Pepe Franco during a visit by Pepe to the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Leeds. Since so many of John's ex graduate students, postdocs, and colleagues now live and work in Mexico, it seemed natural to hold the event here. As a change from Mexico City or the beach we decided to hold the conference in the small lakeside town of Pátzcuaro in the state of Michoacán in the west of Mexico. This venue is close to the newest branch of the Instituto de Astronomía of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Morelia, Michoacán, which is due to become the independent Centro de Radioastronomía y Astrofísica of the UNAM early in 2003. The conference thus had the additional role of introducing this "new" astronomy institute to the international community.

The theme of the conference, Winds, Bubbles, and Explosions, was chosen by John Dyson and reflects many of his main astrophysical interests over the years, from star-formation environments, through the stellar winds of main-sequence and post-main-sequence stars, to the bubbles formed by supernova remnants in our Galaxy and in external galaxies. Of particular interest was the way in which stars shape their environment and energize the interstellar medium. Recent observational advances, not least with the X-ray satellites *Chandra* and *XMM-Newton*, mean that at last we are beginning to see what theory has been predicting for years, with not a few surprises. This theme proved very popular and the response was far greater than expected. Many intrepid astronomers made their way by plane, bus and, not least, taxi, to the Hotel Posada de Don Vasco in Pátzcuaro, where the event took place. The weather was not very kind to us but the talks and discussions created an atmosphere of warmth and anticipation.

During the week of the conference participants were able to experience a little of the culture and history of Pátzcuaro and surroundings, with a visit to the ruins of Tzintzuntzan, capital of the Purépecha kingdom at the time of the Spanish conquest. The quiet cobbled streets and leafy plazas of the town of Pátzcuaro provided a break from the talks. In the evenings the Ex Colegio Jesuita (dating from the 16th century) hosted a series of astronomy talks for the general public that we organized and which were well received.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved with the organization and smooth running of the conference:

- The Scientific Organizing committee: Jane Arthur, Jorge Cantó, Paola Caselli, Pepe Franco, Tom Hartquist, Will Henney, Bob O'Dell, Alex Raga, Tom Ray, and John Raymond, who put together such an interesting program.
- The event would not have been successful without the efforts of the Local Organizing Committee: Jane Arthur, Javier Ballesteros, Paola D'Alessio, Pepe Franco, Alfonso Ginori, Will Henney, Reynaldo Hernández, and Stan Kurtz.
- We would also like to thank all the students who helped out with technical support: Teresa García, Marna Albarran, Eduardo de la Fuente, Carolina Durán, Laura Flores, Fulgencio García, Arturo Godínez, Dulce González, Mauricio González, Fabiola Ibañez, Jorge Lugo, Mónica Rodríguez, and Luis Zapata.
- The staff of the Hotel Posada de Don Vasco for attending to every organizational whim, in particular Nora Buitrón and Jorge Villalón.
- The speakers who contributed to the series of astronomy talks for the general public: Susana Biro, Jesús Galindo, Hugo Schwarz, Alberto López, and Julia Espresate.
- And not least, the participants, whose oral and poster contributions, questions, and comments made the event so scientifically interesting.

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Jane Arthur and William Henney