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P R E F A C E

Continuing and confirming the young tradition established 1980 in Antwerpen and 1982 in Manchester, the Third General Conference of the Condensed Matter Division of the EPS was held 1983 in the new buildings of the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. The ever increasing numbers of the participants as well as of the scientific contributors and the quality of these contributions demonstrate convincingly that these conferences are the welcome answer to a long-felt need : to create a forum for the presentation and discussion of recent progress in the field of condensed matter physics and to offer to European condensed matter physicists a meeting place, which by rendering possible regular personal contacts invariably leads to a desirable crossfertilization of ideas. Leafing through the pages of the present proceedings - they constitute the first three issues of volume 56 of Helvetica Physica Acta - and reading the interesting ideas expounded in them I feel sure, that the Lausanne Conference has come up to the expectations of the initiators of the General Conferences.

The proceedings of the Conference contain most of the papers presented either in plenary sessions and symposia or as individual invited talks. In addition a number of selected contributed papers on recent advances are reproduced. The papers have been regrouped according to subjects, in order to increase the coherence and readability of the proceedings.

A glance at the list of contents shows that the contributions cover a rather wide range of subjects. They thus afford a good overview of areas of high current activity. It should, however, be noted that subjects treated in other international conferences in 1983 were purposely given less emphasis in the Lausanne meeting and are therefore underrepresented in the present proceedings. This is true e.g. for Ferroelectrics and Structural Phase Transitions, as well as for Amorphous Semiconductors.

I take this opportunity to thank all contributors for the celerity with which they produced their manuscripts and to congratulate them for their excellent work. My thanks also go to all those who, by their hard work

behind the scene, have made the Lausanne Conference the success it was. I am speaking of the members of the Local Organising Committee and of the Program and Advisory Committees. And last but not least I express my deepest gratitude to the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Swiss Society for Natural Sciences and the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. Without their generous financial and moral support the conference could not have been organised in Lausanne.

E. Mooser