A. GALVES

G. JONA-LASINIO

Introduction

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This issue of the *Annales de l'Institut Henri Poincaré* contains some extended versions of contributions to the Workshop on Multiscale Phenomena, which was held at the Instituto de Matemática e Estatística of the University of São-Paulo-I.M.E.-U.S.P. (Brazil), on August 16-17, 1990.

The main emphasis of the meeting was on multiscale phenomena in stochastic dynamical systems with a large number of degrees of freedom. These include phenomena related to metastability, dynamical phase transitions, shock waves and in general to fluctuations in irreversible processes. Most of these problems can be formulated in the language of large deviations which provides a unifying point of view.

The meeting included also lectures by J. F. Perez and W. Wreszinsky, which do not appear in this issue.

The workshop was sponsored by B.I.D.-U.S.P. program. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to I.M.E.-U.S.P. and his dean, Prof. P. A. Morettin, for the warm hospitality. We thank also Sara Muller for the beautiful poster.

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The organizers
A. GALVES,
G. JONA-LASINIO.

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