PREFACE

Research investigating the production, acoustics and perception of laughter is very rare. This is striking because laughter occurs as an everyday and highly communicative phonetic activity in spontaneous discourse. This workshop aimed to bring researchers together from various disciplines to present their data, methods, findings, research questions, and ideas on the phonetics of laughter (and smiling). As a satellite event of the *16th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* we think Saarbrücken was the appropriate place for this workshop.

We have been invited to act as guest editors of a special issue of the international inter-disciplinary journal *Phonetica* where selected contributions of submitted long versions shall be published next year. In addition, we hope that a mailing list open to the workshop participants and all other interested researchers will continue the exchange and stimulate further discussion on the phonetic aspects of laughter.

We were happy that Michael Owren (Georgia State University, Atlanta) agreed to give an invited talk on *Understanding Acoustics and Function in Spontaneous Human Laughter*. The planned tutorial plenary lecture on *The Phonetics of Laughter – A Linguistic Approach* could unfortunately not presented by Wallace Chafe (University of California, Santa Barbara) himself but Neal Norrick acted as presenter. All three keynote speakers deserve our thanks.

We would also like to thank the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for their financial support and the publisher S. Karger for their cooperation. Furthermore we are grateful to the Institute of Phonetics at Saarland University for providing the infrastructure and manpower for the workshop.

On this occasion we would like to thank very much all reviewers for their support. Special thanks go to Wallace Chafe for discussing various important issues during the planning of the workshop.

Saarbrücken and Kyoto, August 2006   Jürgen Trouvain and Nick Campbell

Reviewing Committee