

Acknowledgments

Since this book emerged from a course in theoretical astrophysics, many students were exposed to it. I am most grateful to the very many comments and suggestions and the constructive criticism I received, which helped to clarify and sharpen the arguments, to prune derivations of unnecessary loops and details, and to remove errors. In particular, I want to name Santiago Casas, Carsten Littek, Martina Schwind, Elena Sellentin and Benjamin Wallisch, who read and commented on large parts or all of the first edition of this book before it was published.

The perpetual discussions with the members of our cosmology group, first at the Institut für Theoretische Astrophysik, now at the Institut für Theoretische Physik of Heidelberg University were extremely helpful and clarifying. I wish to thank you all, guys, for your great help and support! In particular, I should mention Christian Angrick, Matteo Maturi, Philipp Merkel, and Christophe Pixius for designing many problems, working out solutions, unflinchingly criticising weaknesses and improving the line of reasoning.

The idea for a course like this dates back to discussions with my friend and colleague Achim Weiß, now almost two decades ago. I profited greatly and over many years from his unconventional and stimulating view on our common field of research. Many colleagues inspired and impressed me with their broad and comprehensive view of physics, their clarity of thinking, and their attitude both towards research and teaching. I wish to expressly name Jürgen Ehlers, Wolfgang Hillebrandt, Jens Niemeyer, Manfred Salmhofer, Björn Schäfer, Peter Schneider, Norbert Straumann, Christof Wetterich and Simon White, who shaped and influenced this book in many ways, mostly without knowing it.

Large parts of the first edition of this book were written at personally difficult times. For the support and encouragement I received during this time, I am deeply grateful to a fine group of friends and colleagues: Thank you all for kindness and attention and for precious, lovely hours!