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There is no one better equipped to introduce the reader to string theory than Joseph Polchinski. This is in part because he has played a significant role in the development of this theory. To mention just one recent example, he discovered the "Dirichlet brane," which has been an important object in the exciting progress of the last few years in uncovering the relation between various dimensions of string theories.

Of equal importance, Polchinski has a rare talent for seeing what is of physical significance in a complicated mathematical formalism, and explaining it to others. In looking over the proofs of this book, I was reminded of the many times while Polchinski was a member of the Theory Group of the University of Texas at Austin, when I had the benefit of his patient, clear explanations of points that had puzzled me in string theory. I recommend this book to any physicist who wants to master this exciting subject.

Steven Weinberg
Series Editor

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