



# Ripples on a Cosmic Sea: The Search for Gravitational Waves

*David Blair, Geoff McNamara*

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Most people live and work entirely oblivious to the fact that a myriad of ghostly ripples are passing through them all the time. Generated in the depths of space by colliding stars and black holes, exploding supernovas and quasars, these so-called gravitational waves are literally ripples in the fabric of space itself. Sweeping across the cosmos at the speed of light, they encode vital clues about the exotic systems that produced them. Predicted by Einstein over eighty years ago, but never detected in the laboratory, gravitational waves have proven elusive to scientists. In the first book for a general reader on these amazing waves, Blair and McNamara weave a thrilling tale about the race to build the first gravitational wave antenna—a challenge that has prompted physicists and astronomers to devise some of the most breathtaking technology the world has ever seen. What these scientists find will allow us to listen to the explosion of stars, the creation of black holes, even the sound of the Big Bang itself, and will undoubtedly chart a new course for astronomy in the coming millennium.

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