

Acknowledgements

It is my pleasure to acknowledge and thank those people who have contributed to this thesis.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the supervisor of my PhD work, Prof. Dr. Ludger Wöste for giving me more than the opportunity to work in a great lab, but also for showing to me what it means to be a scientist. His excitement about various projects inspired me in the most important moments.

I am also very grateful to Dr. Albrecht Lindinger for his patience, guidance in moments of doubt, and his continued encouragements.

Moreover, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Czesław Radzewicz for the long and inspiring discussions about various optical problems.

I am very much indebted to my colleagues for creating a stimulating environment and giving me their help whenever I needed it. In particular, I wish to thank my lab/LabVIEW mates, Stefan Weber and Fabian Weise. I have to admit that working in this group would not be the same without Franziska Sauer, Andrea Merli, Aldo Mirabal, Kamil Stelmaszczyk, Torsten Siebert, Frauke Eimer, and Sara Fontanella.

Completing this thesis would not be possible without the Freiburg crew, in particular Wenzel Salzmänn and Terry Mullins. Thank you.

I am grateful to the secretaries in the Physics Department for assisting me in many ways. Especially, I would like to mention here Inge Siegel, Brigitte Odeh, Siegrid Apelt, and Angelika Pasanec. I would also like to acknowledge the people from the workshop, particularly Michał Kregielski and Detlef Müller for helping me a number of times.

I would like to express my gratitude to Patrik Varadinek for his support concerning the patent application.

The Sonderforschungsbereich 450 and Graduiertenkolleg Nr. 788 provided funding which made my PhD research possible, for which I am very thankful.

My appreciation goes to my flatmates, Olli Gause and Stefan Weber. The experience of living in our flat is something I will always remember.

I wish to thank my parents and my sister for providing a loving and supporting environment for me.

Lastly, and most importantly, I wish to thank my wife, Dorota. Thank you for your love, patience and understanding.