



Luca Santoni

# Symmetries of Black Hole Perturbation Theory

based on

arXiv: 2010.00593, 2105.01069, 2203.08832, 2304.03743

and other works in progress in collaboration with

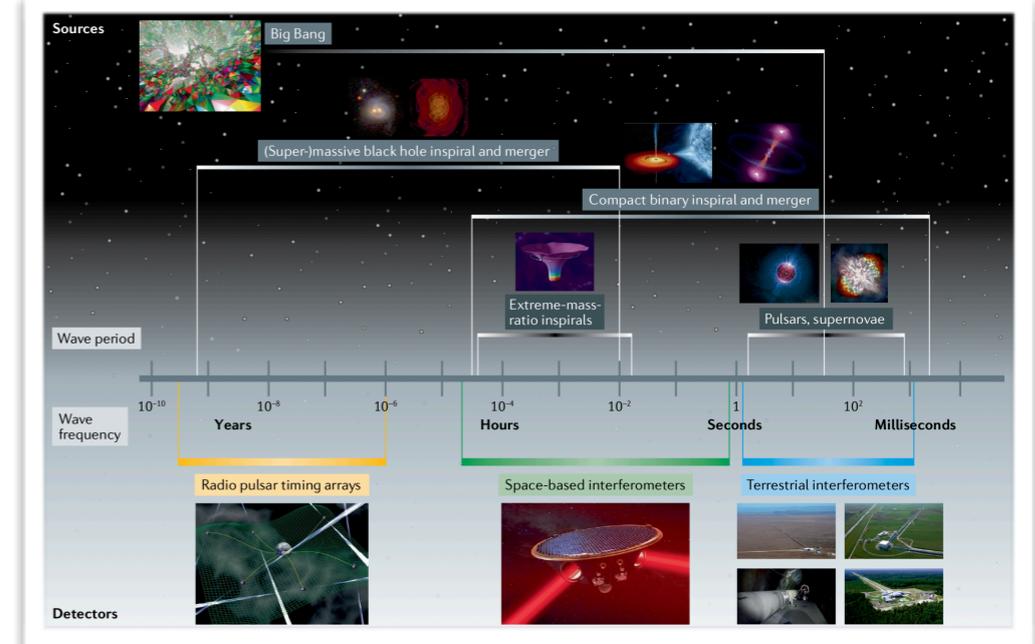
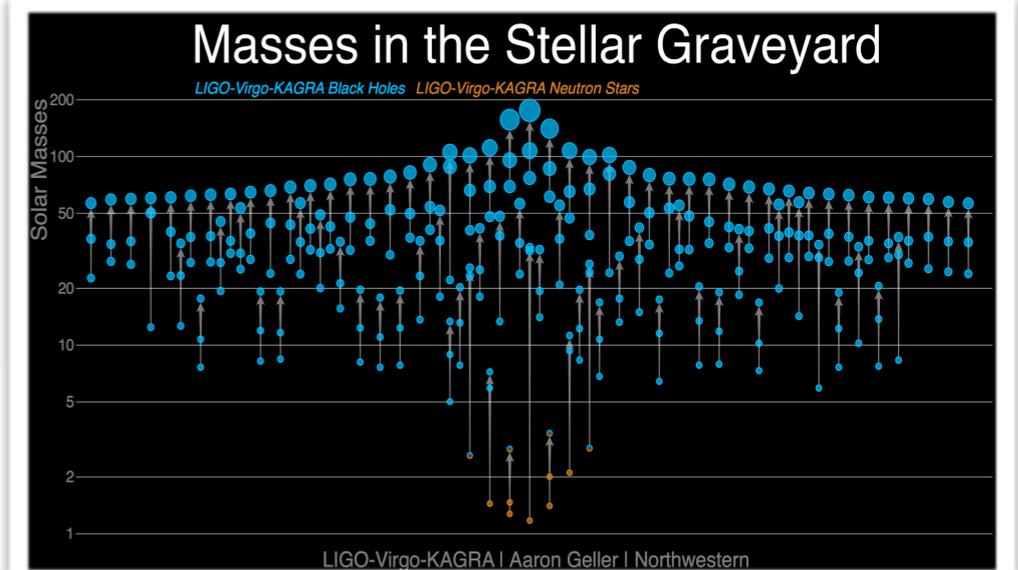
L. Hui, A. Joyce, R. Penco, M. J. Rodriguez, A. Solomon, L. F. Temoche

"Dark Side of the Universe"

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# Gravitational-wave astronomy

- The past few years have witnessed a revolution in astronomy: direct detection of gravitational waves.
- Unique opportunity to test general relativity in the strong-field regime, shed light on the fundamental aspects of gravity and black holes, probe the fundamental nature of astrophysical compact objects.
- Extraordinary scientific potential of upgraded detectors and future facilities.



[Nature Reviews Physics, 3, 344–366 (2021)]

- We are witnessing the dawn of the era of precision physics with gravitational waves.

[Berti et al. '15], [Barack et al. '18], [Cardoso and Pani '19], [Baibhav et al. '19], [Barausse et al. '20], [Perkins, Yunes and Berti '20], [Bailes et al. '21], [Berti et al. '22]...

# Symmetries of black holes

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- Symmetries can help us shed light on the fundamental aspects of black holes and gravity, and constrain broad classes of theories beyond general relativity in a model-independent way.

# Symmetries of black holes

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- Black hole perturbation theory has a long history starting from the work of Regge and Wheeler, Zerilli, Teukolsky, Chandrasekhar...
- Interestingly, recent investigations suggest the subject has depths yet to be plumbed.

# Outline

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I will mostly focus on the static response and Love numbers of black holes.

# Symmetries of black holes

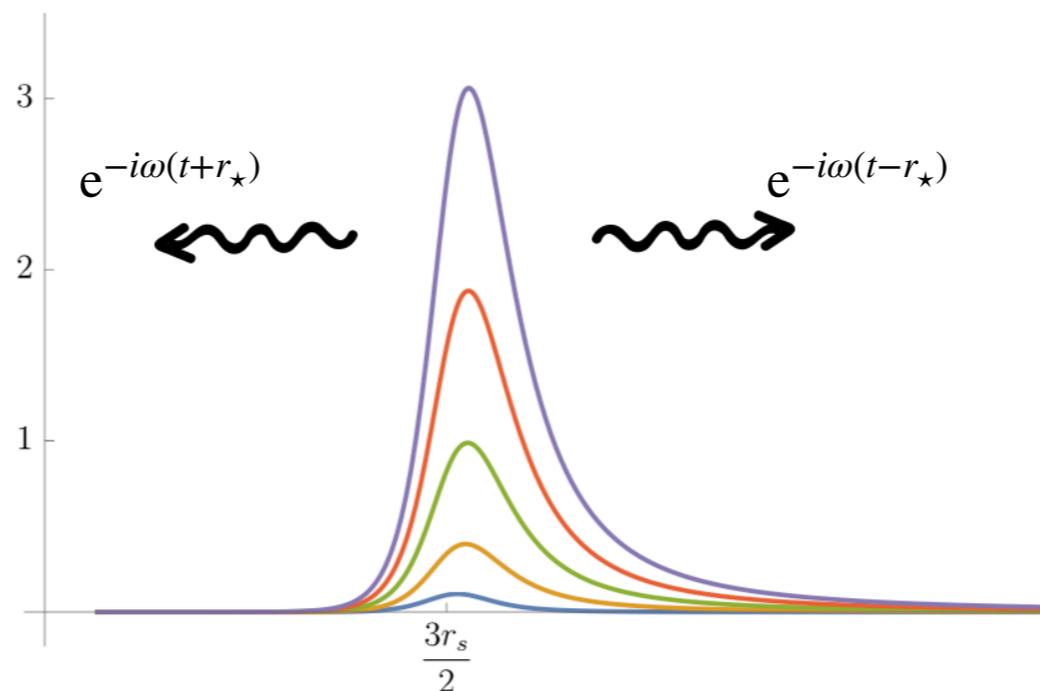
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- “The black holes of nature are the most perfect macroscopic objects there are in the universe: the only elements in their construction are our concepts of space and time.”  
(S. Chandrasekhar, “*The mathematical theory of black holes*”)
- Black holes are among the simplest and most robust objects in nature: uniquely determined by their mass and spin (and charge).
- This *simplicity* is inherited by the perturbations.
- Some aspects of this *simplicity* are well understood in terms of (hidden) symmetries of general relativity.

# Symmetries of black holes

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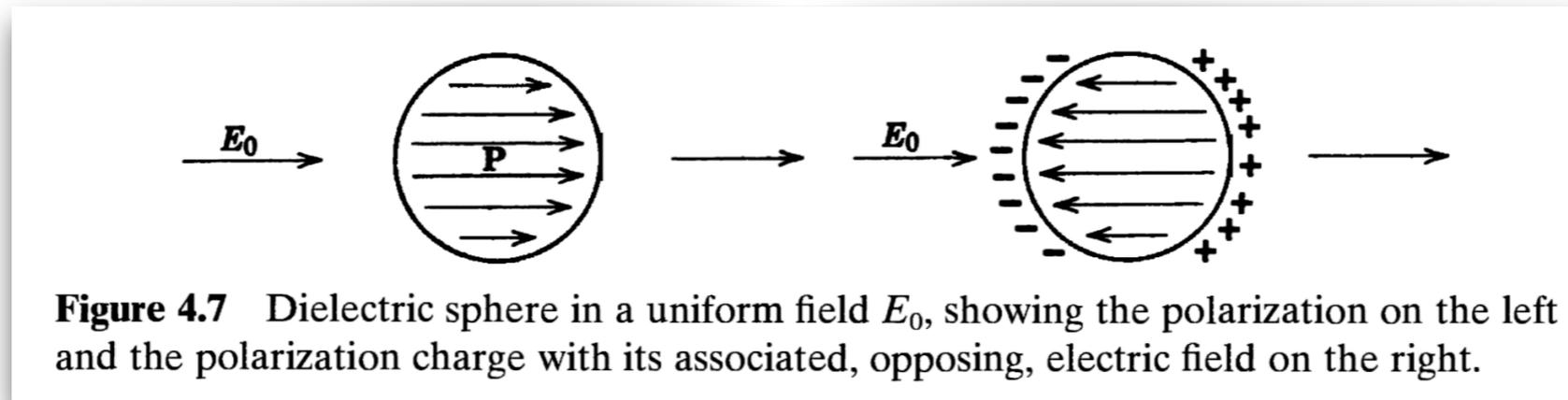
- In general relativity, the two d.o.f. in the gravitational wave emitted by a perturbed black hole have the same characteristic frequencies, i.e. are *isospectral*.
- Isospectrality has been known to follow from a duality of the linearized equations of motion (a.k.a. Chandrasekhar relation) since the 1970s. [Chandrasekhar '75]



- True for massless (spin-0, 1, 2) fields on Schwarzschild/Kerr(-de Sitter) spacetime, as well as for partially-massless spin-2 fields. [Brito, Cardoso and Pani '13], [Rosen and LS '20]
- Symmetry behind the vanishing of the Love numbers unclear until very recently.

# Static response and tidal deformability

- The Love numbers are the coefficients encoding the (static) tidal deformability of a compact object (analogous to the electric and magnetic susceptibilities in EM).



- In EM we solve  $\vec{\nabla}^2 \Phi = 0$ :

$$\Phi_{\text{ext}} = \sum_{\ell} A_{\ell} \left[ r^{\ell} + k_{\ell} r^{-\ell-1} \right] P_{\ell}(\cos \theta), \quad \Phi_{\text{int}} = \sum_{\ell} B_{\ell} r^{\ell} P_{\ell}(\cos \theta).$$

- The boundary condition at  $r = +\infty$  fixes  $A_{\ell}$ , while  $k_{\ell}$  and  $B_{\ell}$  are determined by regularity conditions across the surface (continuity of  $\vec{E}_{\parallel}$  and  $\vec{D}_{\perp}$ ).

- For instance, if  $\vec{E}_0 = A_1 \hat{z}$ , one finds  $k_{\ell=1} = -\frac{\epsilon/\epsilon_0 - 1}{\epsilon/\epsilon_0 + 2} r_0^3$  ( $\epsilon_0$  and  $\epsilon$  are the vacuum and dielectric permittivities).

- $k_{\ell}$  are the coefficients of the induced response.

# Tidal Love numbers

- Tidal deformability affects the dynamics during the inspiral.
- An alteration in the phase of the gravitational-wave signal can be used to constrain the tidal deformability of the objects.
- Love numbers not only provide valuable insights into the properties of known objects, but also potentially indicate the existence of BSM exotic compact objects.  
(See [\[Chia, Edwards, Wadekar, Zimmerman, Olsen, Roulet, Venumadhav, Zackay and Zaldarriaga '23\]](#) for the first matched-filtering search in the O1–O3 LIGO/Virgo data.)
- An explicit calculation in general relativity shows that  $k_\ell = 0$  for black holes in  $D=4$ , as opposed to other types of compact objects and black holes in generic  $D$ .

[\[Fang and Lovelace '05\]](#)

[\[Binnington and Poisson '09\]](#)

[\[Damour and Nagar '09\]](#)

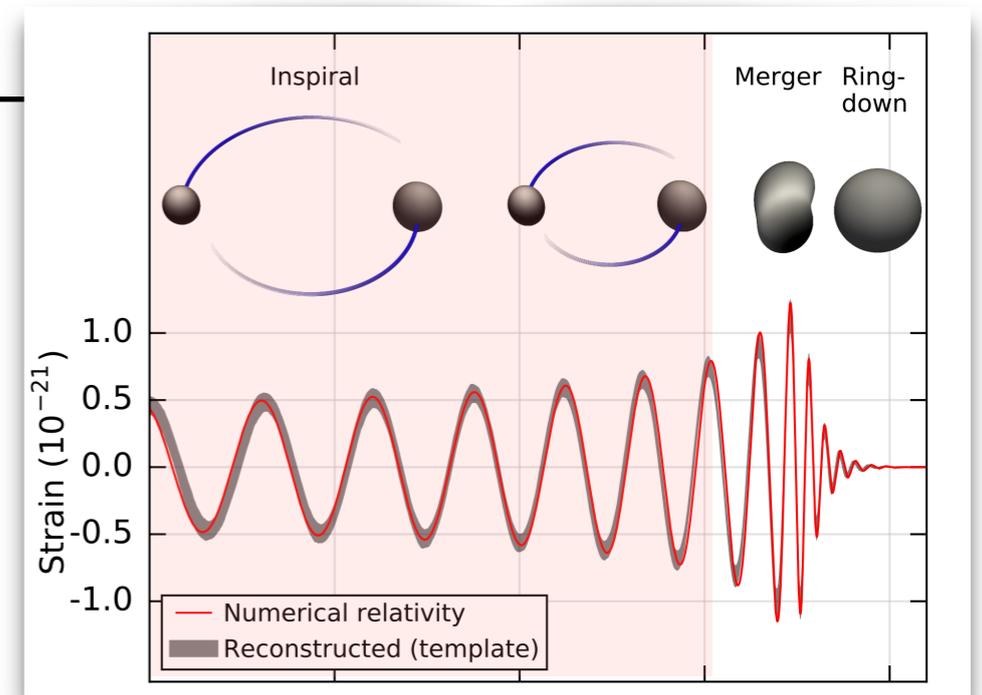
[\[Kol and Smolkin '11\]](#)

[\[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21\]](#)

[\[Charalambous, Dubovsky and Ivanov '21\]](#)

[\[Rodriguez, LS, Solomon and Temoche '23\]](#)

[...]



# Love numbers for rotating black holes in higher dimensions

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- To understand why the vanishing of black hole Love numbers in general relativity is special and *not generic*, consider a higher-dimensional rotating black hole.

- Scalar field on Myers–Perry spacetime (single plane of rotation) in 5 dimensions:

$$ds^2 = - dt^2 + \frac{\Sigma}{\Delta} dr^2 + \Sigma d\theta^2 + (r^2 + a^2) \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2 + \frac{\mu}{\Sigma} (dt - a \sin^2 \theta d\varphi)^2 + r^2 \cos^2 \theta d\psi^2 ,$$
$$\Delta = r^2 + a^2 - \mu , \quad \Sigma = r^2 + a^2 \cos^2 \theta .$$

- Given the symmetries of the metric, we shall decompose:

$$\Phi(t, r, \theta, \varphi, \psi) = e^{-i\omega t} e^{im_\varphi \varphi} e^{im_\psi \psi} \phi(r) Y(\theta) .$$

- Radial equation in the static limit:

$$\frac{1}{r} \frac{d}{dr} \left( r \Delta \frac{d\phi}{dr} \right) + \left[ \frac{m_\varphi^2 a^2}{\Delta} - \frac{m_\psi^2 a^2}{r^2} - \ell(\ell + 2) \right] \phi = 0 .$$

# Love numbers for rotating black holes in higher dimensions

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- The equation can be solved analytically.
- Expanding the solution that is regular at the horizon  $r = \sqrt{\mu - a^2}$  at large radii,  $\phi \sim r^\ell + \lambda_\ell r^{-\ell-2}$ :

$$\lambda_\ell = (-1)^\ell \frac{2\Gamma(\mathbf{a})\Gamma(\mathbf{b})}{\ell! \Gamma(\ell + 2)\Gamma(\mathbf{a} - \ell - 1)\Gamma(\mathbf{b} - \ell - 1)} \log\left(\frac{r_0}{r}\right),$$

where

$$\mathbf{a} = 1 + \frac{\ell}{2} + \frac{ia(m_\phi - m_\psi)}{2\sqrt{\mu - a^2}}, \quad \mathbf{b} = 1 + \frac{\ell}{2} + \frac{ia(m_\phi + m_\psi)}{2\sqrt{\mu - a^2}}, \quad \mathbf{c} = \ell + 2.$$

- The Love numbers are non-vanishing and have log running.

[Rodriguez, LS, Solomon and Temoche '23]

[Charalambous and Ivanov '23]

# Vanishing Love Numbers

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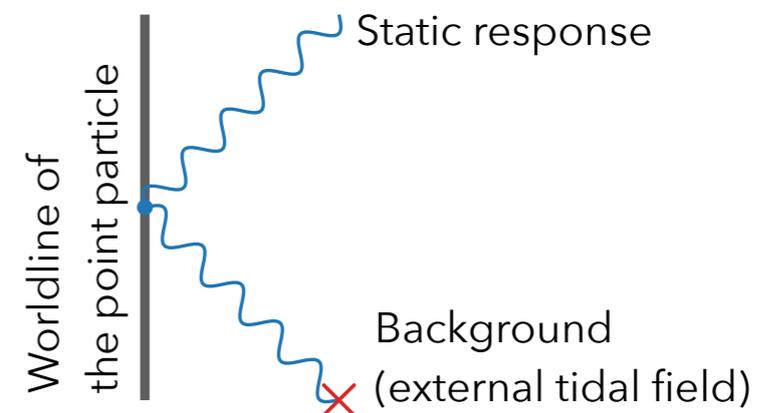
- A conceptually clean way to define the (conservative) Love numbers is in terms of the worldline effective action [Goldberger and Rothstein '04, '05, ...], [Kol and Smolkin '11], [Porto '16].
- At distances large compared to the characteristic size of an object, there is an effective description where the object is modeled as a point particle. Corrections due to the object's finite size and its internal structure are encoded in higher-derivative operators in the effective theory.

- Let's consider e.g. a scalar field around a black hole:

$$S = -\frac{1}{2} \int d^4x (\partial\phi)^2 - M \int d\tau + \int d\tau \left[ -g\phi + \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \frac{\lambda_{\ell}}{2\ell!} \left( \partial_{(a_1} \cdots \partial_{a_{\ell})} \phi \right)^2 \right].$$

- $\lambda_{\ell}$  are the LN coefficients.
- One generically expects:  $\lambda_{\ell} \sim \mathcal{O}(1)r_s^{2\ell-1}$  and to find (classical) RG running.
- After matching with the UV result:  $\lambda_{\ell} = 0$  in D=4 and no running.
- Generically non-zero in D>4.

[Kol and Smolkin '11], [Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21],  
 [Charalambous and Ivanov '23], [Rodriguez, LS, Solomon and Temoche '23]



# Vanishing Love Numbers

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- Following 't Hooft's naturalness principle, the vanishing of the Love numbers is a naturalness puzzle from an EFT perspective. [\[Rothstein '14\]](#), [\[Porto '16\]](#)

$$S = -\frac{1}{2} \int d^4x (\partial\phi)^2 - M \int d\tau + \int d\tau \left[ -g\phi + \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \frac{\lambda_{\ell}}{2\ell!} \left( \partial_{(a_1} \cdots \partial_{a_{\ell})T} \phi \right)^2 \right]$$

- Looks like something that can very likely follow from a symmetry in the theory.

# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

- In [2105.01069] we showed that the vanishing of the Love numbers is the consequence of linearly realized symmetries governing static perturbations around black holes.

- Let's start from the Teukolsky equation with  $\omega = 0$  (static limit):

$$\partial_r \left( \Delta \partial_r \phi_\ell^{(s)} \right) + s(2r - r_s) \partial_r \phi_\ell^{(s)} + \left( \frac{a^2 m^2 + is(2r - r_s)am}{\Delta} - (\ell - s)(\ell + s + 1) \right) \phi_\ell^{(s)} = 0$$

- We can set  $s = 0$  by virtue of ladder operators in  $s$  (which generalize the Teukolsky-Starobinsky identities).
- In fact we can also set  $\ell = 0$  – ladder operators allow to extend the argument to any  $\ell$ .
- I'll set for simplicity  $a = 0$  – the generalization to Kerr is straightforward.

The equation is simply:

$$\partial_r \left( \Delta \partial_r \phi_0 \right) = 0, \quad \Delta = r(r - r_s),$$

which is  $\square \phi = 0$  on Schwarzschild with  $\omega = 0 = \ell$ .

- $P_0 \equiv \Delta \partial_r \phi_0$  is the conserved charge associated with a symmetry of the (static) scalar action.
- It is useful because it allows to connect asymptotics:

$$\begin{array}{l} \phi_0 \sim r^0 \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow +\infty \quad \rightarrow \quad P_0 = 0 \quad \rightarrow \quad \phi_0 \sim \text{const.} \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow r_s \\ \phi_0 \sim r^{-1} \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow +\infty \quad \rightarrow \quad P_0 \neq 0 \quad \rightarrow \quad \phi_0 \sim \log(r - r_s) \quad \text{as } r \rightarrow r_s \end{array}$$

# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21]

- Generalization to all  $\ell$ s through ladder operators:  $\phi_{\ell\pm 1} \propto D_{\ell}^{\pm} \phi_{\ell}$

$$D_{\ell}^{+} \equiv -\Delta \partial_r + \frac{\ell+1}{2}(r_s - 2r), \quad D_{\ell}^{-} \equiv \Delta \partial_r + \frac{\ell}{2}(r_s - 2r)$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \phi_{\ell} \sim r^{\ell} & \text{as } r \rightarrow +\infty & \rightarrow & P_{\ell} = 0 & \rightarrow & \phi_{\ell} \sim \text{const.} & \text{as } r \rightarrow r_s \\ \phi_{\ell} \sim r^{-(\ell+1)} & \text{as } r \rightarrow +\infty & \rightarrow & P_{\ell} \neq 0 & \rightarrow & \phi_{\ell} \sim \log(r - r_s) & \text{as } r \rightarrow r_s \end{array}$$

- The vanishing of the Love numbers follows from two facts: (1) the purely decaying solution ( $\sim 1/r^{\ell+1}$  at large  $r$ ) is divergent at the horizon, and (2) the solution that is regular at the horizon is a finite polynomial going as  $\sim 1 + r + \dots + r^{\ell}$ .
- The growing branch respects the symmetry, while the decaying branch spontaneously breaks the symmetry.  
(See also [Achour, Livine, Mukohyama, Uzan '22])
- Fact (1) is consistent with the no-hair theorem (a black hole cannot sustain static, scalar profile that decays at infinity [Bekenstein '72]).

# From Schwarzschild to AdS, with Love

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21]

- The symmetry has a geometric origin: it arises from the (E)AdS isometries of a dimensionally reduced black hole spacetime.

Let's consider a static scalar  $\phi$  in a Schwarzschild background,

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \int d\theta d\varphi dr \sqrt{g} \phi \square \phi, \quad ds^2 = dr^2 + \Delta (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2).$$

After a Weyl rescaling, the metric becomes EAdS<sub>3</sub> with

$$\tilde{g}_{ij} = \Omega^2 g_{ij}, \quad \tilde{\phi} = \Omega^{-\frac{1}{2}} \phi, \quad \text{where} \quad \Omega \equiv L^2 / \Delta,$$

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \int d^3x \sqrt{\tilde{g}} \left( \tilde{\phi} \tilde{\square} \tilde{\phi} + \frac{r_s^2}{4L^4} \tilde{\phi}^2 \right), \quad d\tilde{s}^2 = dr_\star^2 + \frac{4L^4}{r_s^2} \sinh^2 \left( \frac{r_\star r_s}{2L^2} \right) (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2)$$

where  $dr_\star = (L^2/\Delta)dr$ . The space has 6 Killing vectors: 3 rotations and 3 translations (or "boosts"). The translation that mixes  $r_\star$  and  $\theta$  acts on the original  $\phi$  as

$$\delta\phi = -2\Delta \cos \theta \partial_r \phi + (r_s - 2r) \partial_\theta (\sin \theta \phi)$$

or, equivalently,

$$\delta\phi_\ell = c_{\ell+1} D_{\ell+1}^- \phi_{\ell+1} - c_\ell D_{\ell-1}^+ \phi_{\ell-1}.$$

# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

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[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21]

- At large  $r$ ,  $\delta\phi$  reduces to a SCT,  $\delta\phi = c_i(x^i - \vec{x}^2\partial^i + 2x^i\vec{x} \cdot \vec{\partial})\phi$ .
- We claim that this is the sought-after infrared symmetry that forbids Love number (and hair) couplings in the point-particle effective action.

# Ladder in Kerr: static limit

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21]

- The previous algebraic ladder structure has a direct analog in a Kerr background:

$$ds^2 = -\frac{\rho^2 - r_s r}{\rho^2} dt^2 - \frac{2ar_s r \sin^2 \theta}{\rho^2} dt d\varphi + \frac{\rho^2}{\Delta} dr^2 + \rho^2 d\theta^2 + \frac{(r^2 + a^2)^2 - a^2 \Delta \sin^2 \theta}{\rho^2} \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2$$

where  $\rho^2 \equiv r^2 + a^2 \cos^2 \theta$  and  $\Delta \equiv r^2 - rr_s + a^2$ .

- The static Klein-Gordon equation, has both *ladder* and *horizontal* symmetries,

$$D_\ell^\pm = \mp \Delta \partial_r + \frac{1 + 2\ell \pm 1}{4} (r_s - 2r) \mp iam.$$

- The ladder symmetries  $D_\ell^\pm$  descend from a CKV of the 3D-static metric:

$$ds_K^2 = \frac{\rho^2 - rr_s}{\Delta} \left( dr^2 + \Delta d\theta^2 + \frac{\Delta^2 \sin^2 \theta}{\rho^2 - rr_s} d\varphi^2 \right).$$

- The conserved charges  $P_\ell$  associated with the horizontal symmetries, evaluated for the “growing branch”, are non-zero (and imaginary), unlike in the Schwarzschild case:

$$P_\ell \propto iq \prod_{k=1}^{\ell} (k^2 + 4q^2), \quad q \equiv \frac{am}{r_+ - r_-},$$

which reproduces the dissipative response [Le Tiec and Casals '20].

# Ladder in Spin: From Scalar to Vector and Tensor

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '21, '22]

- Ladder operators in the spin,  $E_s^\pm$ , raise and lower  $s$  in the Teukolsky equation ( $E_s^\pm \phi_\ell^{(s)} = \phi_\ell^{(s\pm 1)}$ ),

$$\partial_r \left( \Delta \partial_r \phi_\ell^{(s)} \right) + s(2r - r_s) \partial_r \phi_\ell^{(s)} + \left( \frac{a^2 m^2 + is(2r - r_s)am}{\Delta} - (\ell - s)(\ell + s + 1) \right) \phi_\ell^{(s)} = 0.$$

They allow to extend the previous results from scalar to vector and tensor fields.

- $E_s^\pm$  are related to what are known as Teukolsky-Starobinsky identities.

In Chandrasekhar's notation,

$$\phi^{(-1)} = \Delta \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \Delta \phi^{(1)}, \quad \phi^{(1)} = \mathcal{D}_0 \mathcal{D}_0 \phi^{(-1)}, \quad \phi^{(-2)} = \Delta^2 \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \mathcal{D}_0^\dagger \Delta^2 \phi^{(2)}, \quad \phi^{(2)} = \mathcal{D}_0 \mathcal{D}_0 \mathcal{D}_0 \mathcal{D}_0 \phi^{(-2)},$$

where  $\mathcal{D}_0 \equiv \partial_r + i[am - \omega(r^2 + a^2)]/\Delta$ .

The new twist we are adding is that, in the static limit, we can truncate these operations, enabling us to increment  $s$  by unity,  $E_s^\pm \phi_\ell^{(s)} = \phi_\ell^{(s\pm 1)}$ .

# Conclusions

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# Conclusions and open directions

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- The direct detection of GWs is a unique opportunity to test GR in the strong gravity regime.
- Love numbers are an important observable to characterize and constrain the nature and internal structure of compact objects.
- Symmetries are key tools to shed light on the fundamental aspects of gravity and compact objects, and constrain broad classes of theories beyond GR.
- Isospectrality and the vanishing of the Love numbers in GR are examples of properties that follow from hidden symmetries in the theory.

# Conclusions and open directions

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- Do the symmetries extend beyond linear order, or are they an `accident' of the linearized dynamics?
- What can we learn from (hidden) symmetries of gravity about the regime beyond linear perturbation theory?



**Backup slides**

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# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '22]

- To understand the origin of the ladder symmetries, let's solve a slightly more general problem: scalar field at finite (low) frequency.

- The scalar action is

$$S = \frac{1}{2} \int dt dr d\Omega_{S^2} \left[ \frac{r^4}{\Delta} (\partial_t \phi)^2 - \Delta (\partial_r \phi)^2 + \phi \nabla_{\Omega_{S^2}}^2 \phi \right].$$

- Define the *near-zone* approximation by replacing  $(r^4/\Delta)\partial_t^2\phi$  with  $(r_s^4/\Delta)\partial_t^2\phi$ .
- This has the virtue of preserving the correct singularity as  $r \rightarrow r_s$ , while still accurately capturing the dynamics at larger  $r$ , as long as  $\omega r \ll 1$ .

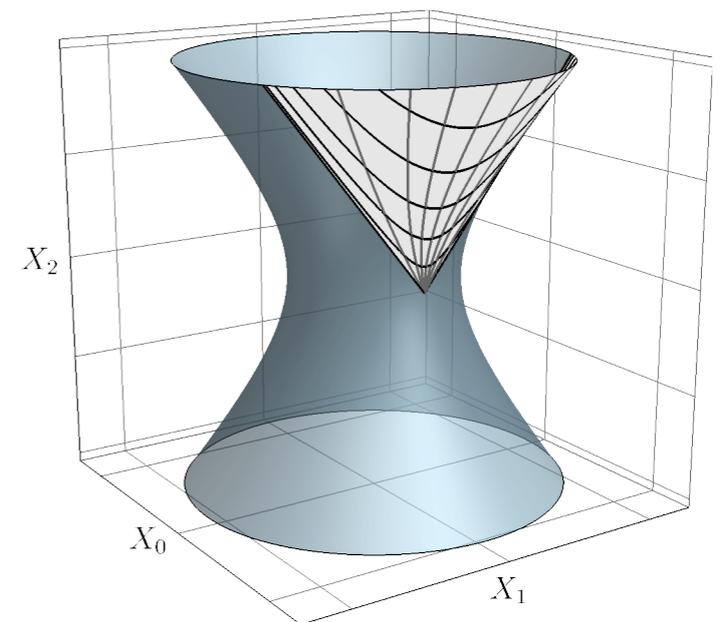
# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '22]

- In this limit, the scalar action is the same as that of a massless scalar minimally coupled to an *effective near-zone metric*:

$$ds_{\text{near-zone}}^2 = -\frac{\Delta}{r_s^2} dt^2 + \frac{r_s^2}{\Delta} dr^2 + r_s^2 (d\theta^2 + \sin^2 \theta d\varphi^2) .$$

- This metric is a conformally-flat  $\text{AdS}_2 \times S^2$  spacetime ( $\Rightarrow$  6 KVs + 9 CKVs).



# Symmetries of vanishing Love Numbers

[Hui, Joyce, Penco, LS and Solomon '22]

- The 6 KVs and 9 CKVs are:

$$T = 2r_s \partial_t$$

$$L_{\pm} = e^{\pm t/2r_s} (2r_s \partial_r \sqrt{\Delta} \partial_t \mp \sqrt{\Delta} \partial_r)$$

$$J_{23} = \partial_{\varphi}$$

$$J_{12} = \cos \varphi \partial_{\theta} - \cot \theta \sin \varphi \partial_{\varphi}$$

$$J_{13} = \sin \varphi \partial_{\theta} + \cot \theta \cos \varphi \partial_{\varphi}$$

$$J_{01} = -\frac{2\Delta}{r_s} \cos \theta \partial_r - \frac{\partial_r \Delta}{r_s} \sin \theta \partial_{\theta}$$

$$J_{02} = -\cos \varphi \left[ \frac{2\Delta}{r_s} \sin \theta \partial_r + \frac{\partial_r \Delta}{r_s} \left( \frac{\tan \varphi}{\sin \theta} \partial_{\varphi} - \cos \theta \partial_{\theta} \right) \right]$$

$$J_{03} = -\sin \varphi \left[ \frac{2\Delta}{r_s} \sin \theta \partial_r - \frac{\partial_r \Delta}{r_s} \left( \frac{\cot \varphi}{\sin \theta} \partial_{\varphi} + \cos \theta \partial_{\theta} \right) \right]$$

$$K_{\pm} = e^{\pm t/2r_s} \frac{\sqrt{\Delta}}{r_s} \cos \theta \left( \frac{r_s^3}{\Delta} \partial_t \mp \partial_r \Delta \partial_r \mp 2 \tan \theta \partial_{\theta} \right)$$

$$M_{\pm} = e^{\pm t/2r_s} \cos \varphi \left[ \frac{r_s^2}{\sqrt{\Delta}} \sin \theta \partial_t \mp \frac{\sqrt{\Delta} \partial_r \Delta \sin \theta}{r_s} \partial_r \pm \frac{2\sqrt{\Delta}}{r_s} \cos \theta \partial_{\theta} \mp \frac{2\sqrt{\Delta}}{r_s} \frac{\tan \varphi}{\sin \theta} \partial_{\varphi} \right]$$

$$N_{\pm} = e^{\pm t/2r_s} \sin \varphi \left[ \frac{r_s^2}{\sqrt{\Delta}} \sin \theta \partial_t \mp \frac{\sqrt{\Delta} \partial_r \Delta \sin \theta}{r_s} \partial_r \pm \frac{2\sqrt{\Delta}}{r_s} \cos \theta \partial_{\theta} \pm \frac{2\sqrt{\Delta}}{r_s} \frac{\cot \varphi}{\sin \theta} \partial_{\varphi} \right]$$

- Different perspective on the vanishing of the LNs proposed by [Charalambous, Dubovsky and Ivanov '21].
- This unifies the different sets of symmetries.
- Only  $T$ ,  $J_{ij}$  and  $J_{0i}$  remain good symmetries in the static limit ( $\omega = 0$ ).
- $J_{01}$  recovers precisely the ladders:  $\delta\phi = \xi^{\mu} \partial_{\mu} \phi + \frac{1}{4} \nabla_{\mu} \xi^{\mu} \phi$ , or equivalently  $\delta\phi_{\ell} = c_{\ell+1} D_{\ell+1}^{-} \phi_{\ell+1} - c_{\ell} D_{\ell-1}^{+} \phi_{\ell-1}$ ,  $D_{\ell}^{+} \equiv -\Delta \partial_r + \frac{\ell+1}{2} (r_s - 2r)$  and  $D_{\ell}^{-} \equiv \Delta \partial_r + \frac{\ell}{2} (r_s - 2r)$ .