

# Seeing through the confinement screen

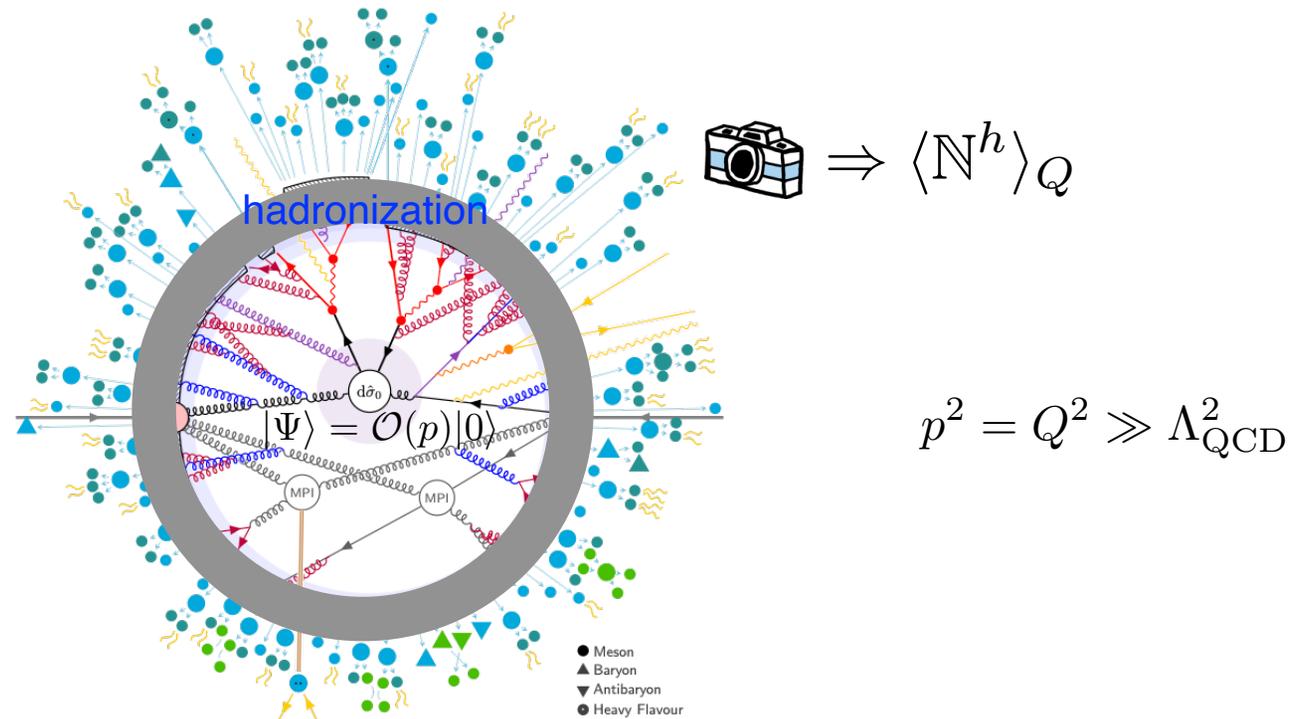
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2506.06431 with Hao Chen, David Simmons-Duffin,  
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New Frontiers of Quantum Field and Gravity, Peking University

# Motivation

- Can we predict the number of particles in a high-energy QCD process?



- Particle number itself encodes non-perturbative physics, but its scale evolution can be predicted using perturbation theory.

$$\frac{d}{d \log Q} \log \langle N^h \rangle_Q = ?$$

# Hadron multiplicities

- An old problem: hadron multiplicities

[Bassetto, Ciafaloni, Marchesini '80; Amati, Bassetto, Ciafaloni, Marchesini, Veneziano '80; Furmanski, Petronzio, Pokorski '79; Konishi '79; Mueller '81]

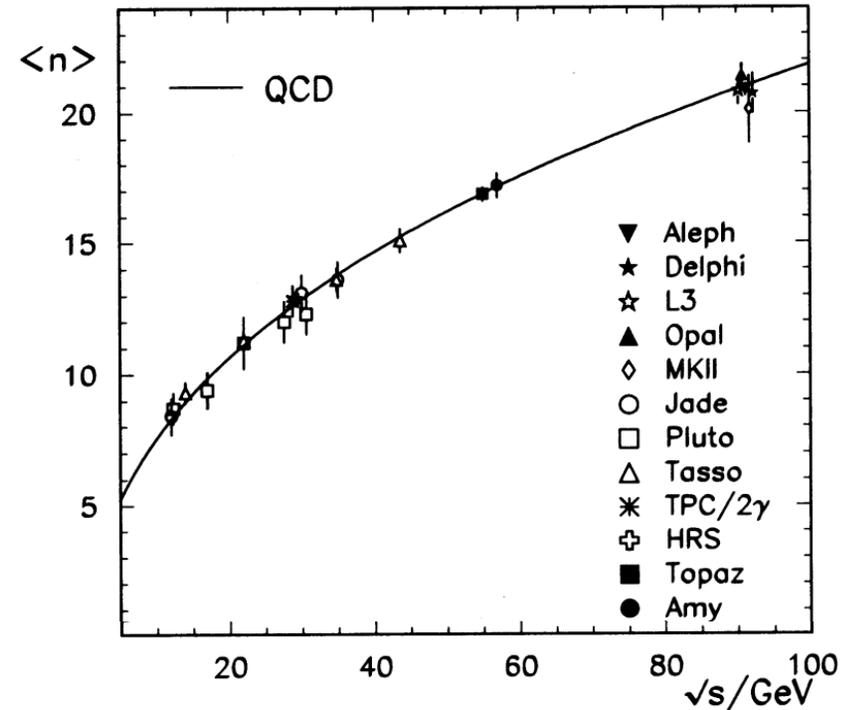
- Perturbative expansion breaks down; requires resummation:

$$\frac{d}{d \log Q} \log \langle N^h \rangle_Q = \sqrt{\frac{2C_A}{\pi}} \alpha_s + O(\alpha_s)$$

- Today: a new framework that can obtain (and generalize) this result.

Running and matching of detectors/light-ray operators

[Schmelling '95]



# Hadron detectors

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- Energy detector (ANEC): [\[Sternan '75\]](#)

$$\mathcal{E}(\hat{n}) = \lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} r^{d-2} \int_0^\infty dt n^i T^0_i(t, r\hat{n}) \quad \mathcal{E}(\hat{n})|\vec{p}\rangle = \omega_{\vec{p}} \delta^{(2)}(\hat{p} - \hat{n})|\vec{p}\rangle$$

- Hadron number detector:

$$z = (1, \vec{n}), \quad z^2 = 0$$

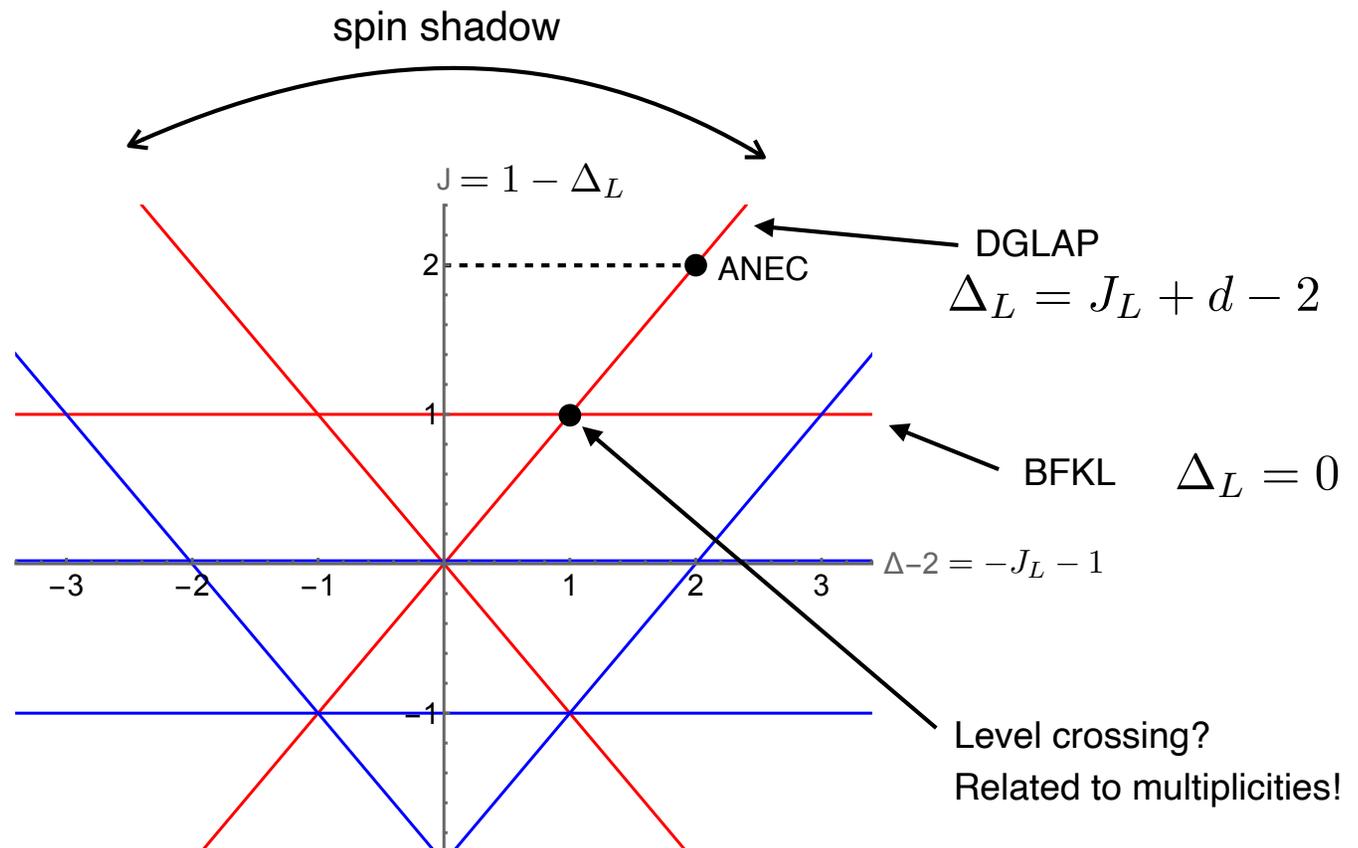
$$\mathbb{N}^h(z) \propto \sum_h \int \underbrace{dE E^{d-3}}_{\text{phase space measure}} a_h^\dagger(p) a_h(p) \Big|_{p=Ez}$$


  
 sum over particles

- Assuming massless particles; can also define detectors for massive particles
- Each detector has a scaling dimension  $\Delta_L$  and a Lorentz boost weight  $J_L$ . The hadron number detector has  $J_L = 2 - d$ .

# Detectors in perturbative QCD

- Chew-Frautschi plot:



- What is the relation between QCD detectors and hadron multiplicities?
- What is the space of QCD detectors at one-loop?

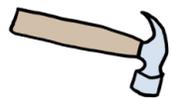
# Light-ray matching hypothesis

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- Measurements at infinity in the theory of hadron can be **matched** onto a linear combination of detectors/light-ray operators in perturbative QCD.

$$\mathcal{D}^{\text{IR}}(z) = \sum_i C_i \mathcal{D}_i^{\text{UV}}(z)$$

# local operator v.s. detector matching



: measurements at a point

Precisely described by  
local operators in the UV

$$\langle \mathcal{O}^{\text{UV}}(x_1) \dots \mathcal{O}^{\text{UV}}(x_n) \rangle$$

↓ long distances

$$\mathcal{O}^{\text{UV}}(x) = \sum_i C_i \mathcal{O}_i^{\text{IR}}(x)$$



: measurements at infinity

Precisely described by  
detectors in the IR

$$\langle \Psi | \mathcal{D}^{\text{IR}}(z_1) \dots \mathcal{D}^{\text{IR}}(z_n) | \Psi \rangle$$

↓ high-energy states

$$\mathcal{D}^{\text{IR}}(z) = \sum_i C_i \mathcal{D}_i^{\text{UV}}(z)$$

- Detectors/operators on both sides must transform in the same representation under symmetries preserved along the RG flow.

# Confinement as a Lorentz-invariant filter

See Hao's talk for more details

- IR detectors with definite Lorentz spin should be matched onto UV detectors with the same Lorentz spin:

$$\mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{IR}}(z) = \sum_i C_i(J_L, \mu) \mathcal{D}_{J_L, i}^{\text{UV}}(z, \mu)$$

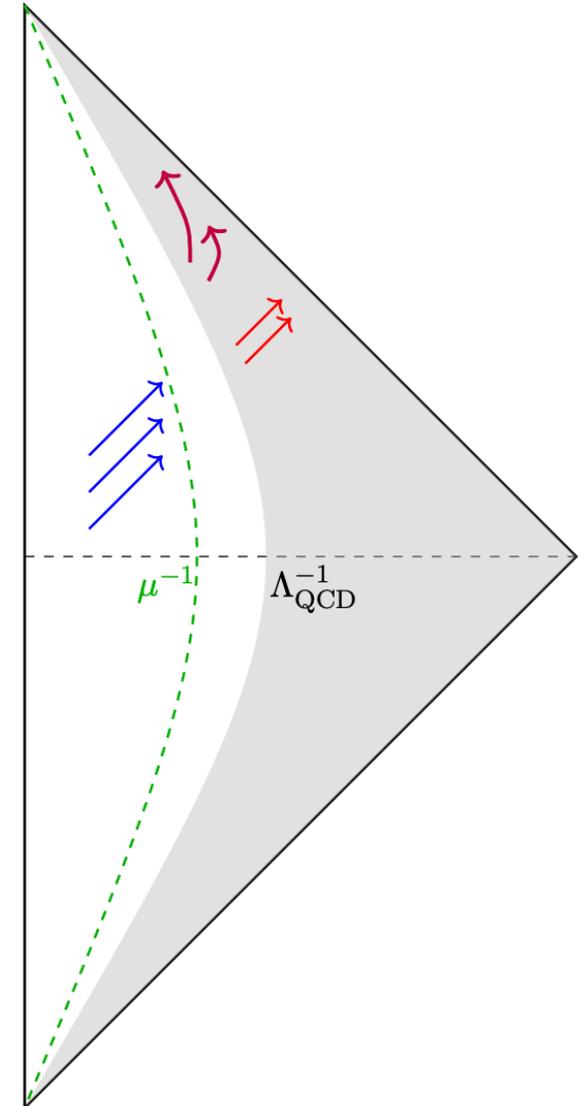
$$\langle \mathbb{N}^h \rangle = \sum_i C_i(J_L, \mu) \langle \mathcal{D}_{J_L, i}^{\text{UV}}(z, \mu) \rangle \Big|_{J_L=2-d}$$

Dimensional analysis:  $\langle \mathcal{D}_{J_L, i}^{\text{UV}} \rangle_Q \sim Q^{-\Delta_{L, i}}$

$$C_i(J_L) \sim (\Lambda_{\text{QCD}})^{\Delta_{L, i}}$$

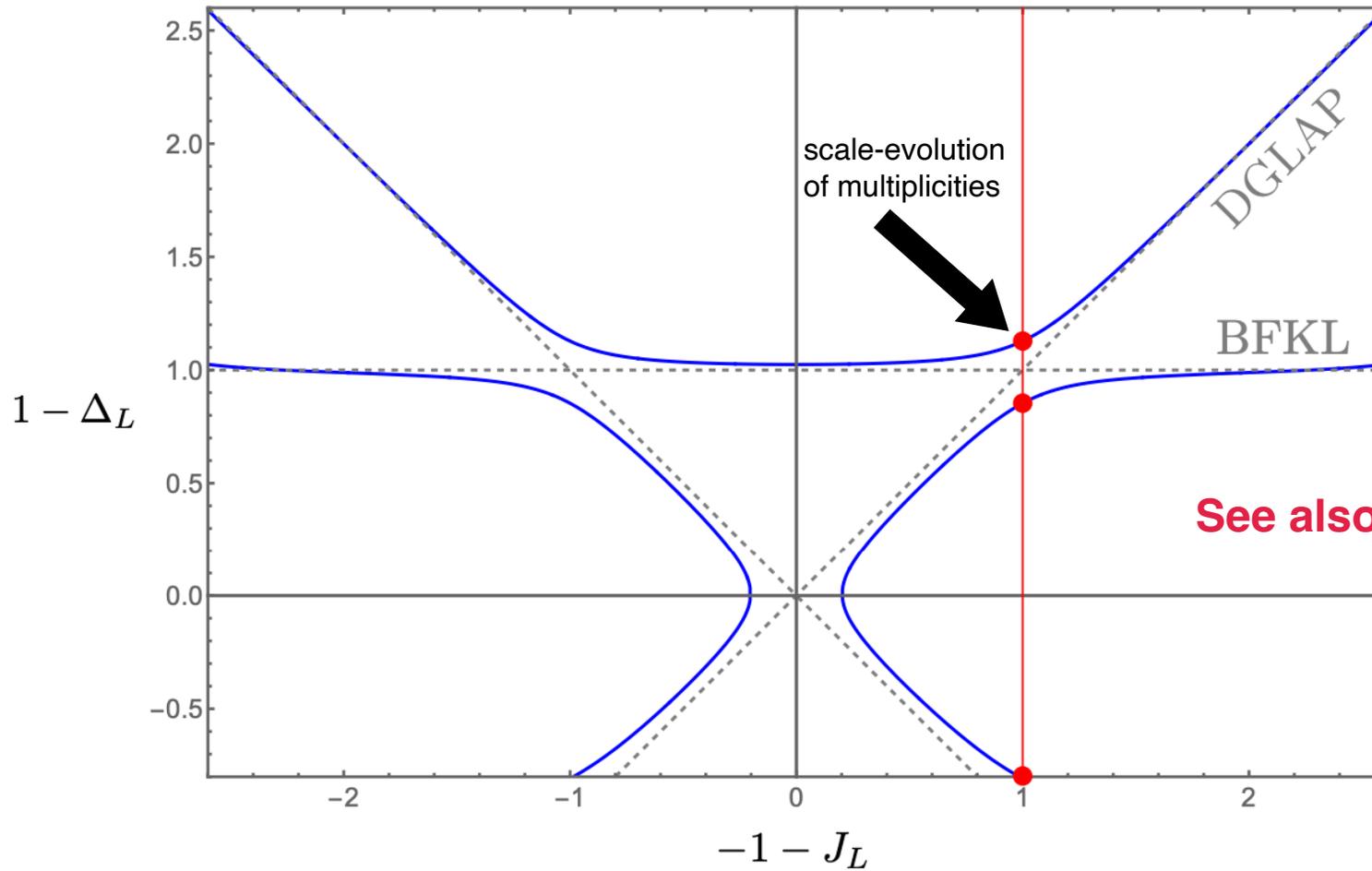
- At high-energy, QCD detector with the smallest  $\Delta_L$  controls the scale-evolution of hadron multiplicities.

$$\frac{d}{d \log Q} \log \langle \mathbb{N}^h \rangle_Q = -\Delta_{L, i_{\min}}(J_L, \alpha_s(Q)) \Big|_{J_L=2-d} + \dots$$



# Hadron multiplicities from DGLAP/BFKL mixing

- Chew-Frautschi plot of pure Yang-Mills theory at one loop:



# Light-ray operators and detectors in CFT

- Light-ray operators [Kravchuk, Simmons-Duffin '18] are analytic continuation of null integral (light transform) of local operators.

$$\mathbf{L}[\mathcal{O}](x, z) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} d\alpha (-\alpha)^{-\Delta-J} \mathcal{O}(x - z/\alpha, z)$$

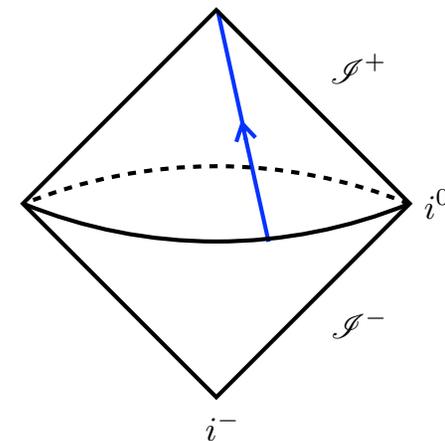
$$z^2 = 0$$

$$\mathcal{O}(x, z) = \mathcal{O}^{\mu_1 \dots \mu_J}(x) z_{\mu_1} \dots z_{\mu_J}$$

- $\mathbf{L}[\mathcal{O}]$  has quantum numbers  $(\Delta_L, J_L) = (1 - J, 1 - \Delta)$
- Choosing  $x = \infty$  gives an integral along future null infinity, and  $z = (1, \vec{n})$  is the embedding space coordinate of the celestial sphere  $S^{d-2}$ . This is a “detector operator”  $\mathcal{D}_{J_L}(z)$ .

- Each detector has a “spin shadow”  $\mathbf{S}_J : J_L \rightarrow 2 - d - J_L$ .

$$\mathbf{S}_J[\mathcal{D}_{J_L}](z) = \int D^{d-2} z' (-2z \cdot z')^{2-d-J_L} \mathcal{D}_{J_L}(z')$$



# DGLAP detectors in free theory

- In the free theory, detectors can also be defined by how they act on particles.
- DGLAP detector in free theory: (assuming pure Yang-Mills for now)

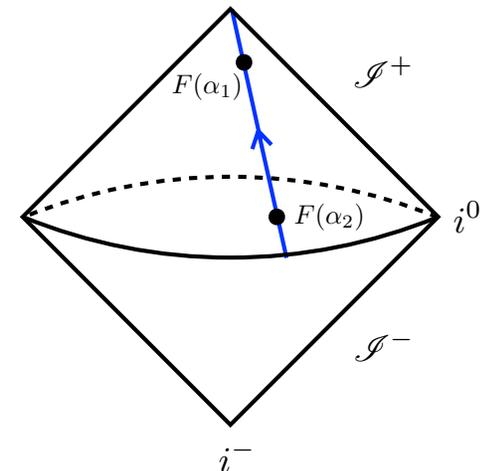
$$\mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \propto \delta^{ab} \sum_{\lambda} \int dE E^{-J_L-1} \left[ a_{\lambda,a}^{\dagger}(p) a_{\lambda,b}(p) \right] \Big|_{p=Ez}$$

- A detector that measures flux of  $E^{2-d-J_L}$ .  $J_L = 1 - d$  gives the ANEC operator.
- Can be written as a bilocal integral along a null direction  $z$  at future null infinity.

$$\mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \propto \int d\alpha_1 d\alpha_2 |\alpha_1 - \alpha_2|^{d-2+J_L} F_a(\alpha_1, z) F^a(\alpha_2, z)$$

$$J_L = 1 - d - n \Rightarrow \mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{DGLAP}} \propto \mathbf{L}[F \partial^n F]$$

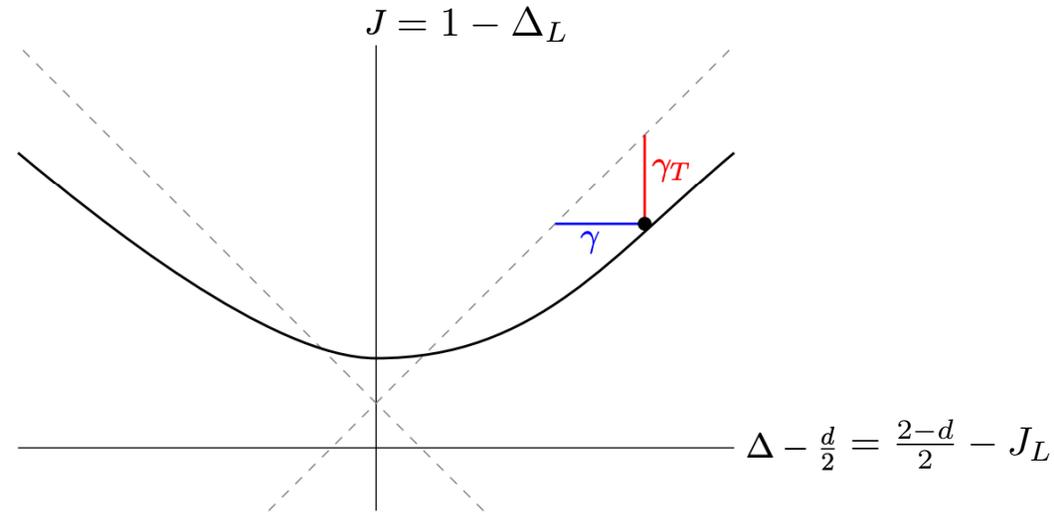
  
 light transform of twist-2  
 local operators



# Reciprocity relation

[Caron-Huot, Kologlu, Kravchuk, Meltzer, Simmons-Duffin '22]

- Local operators:  $J$  fixed,  $\Delta$  corrected (spacelike anomalous dimension)
- Detectors:  $J_L$  fixed,  $\Delta_L$  corrected (timelike anomalous dimension)



- Reciprocity relation: [Gribov, Lipatov '72; Basso, Korchemsky '06; Dokshitzer, Marchesini '06]

$$\gamma_T(J) = \gamma(J - \gamma_T(J)) \quad \gamma(J) = \gamma_T(J + \gamma(J))$$

- Instead of  $J$ , we should use  $J_L$  as the quantum number for the anomalous dimensions of detectors.

# DGLAP detectors

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- DGLAP detector in free theory: (assuming pure Yang-Mills for now)

$$\mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \propto \delta^{ab} \sum_{\lambda} \int dE E^{-J_L-1} \left[ a_{\lambda,a}^{\dagger}(p) a_{\lambda,b}(p) \right] \Big|_{p=Ez}$$

- Well-defined for all  $J_L \in \mathbb{C}$ . **(See Hao's talk later)**
- Become not IR safe after turning on interactions  $\Rightarrow$  need to be renormalized
- For generic  $J_L$ , running of the DGLAP detector is controlled by the Dokshitzer-Gribov-Lipatov-Altarelli-Parisi (DGLAP) equation.

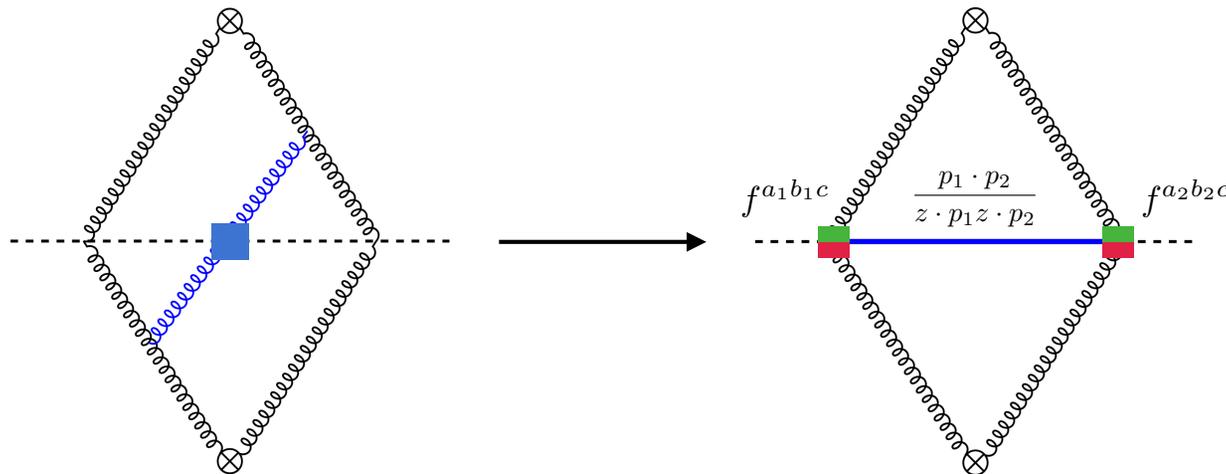
$$\gamma_{\text{DGLAP}}(J_L) = 4C_A \left( \psi(-J_L) + \gamma_E - \frac{1}{(J_L+2)(J_L+1)} - \frac{1}{J_L(J_L-1)} \right) - \beta_0$$

- Multiiplicities correspond to  $J_L = -2 \Rightarrow \gamma_{\text{DGLAP}}(J_L) \sim \frac{2C_A}{\pi(J_L+2)}$

# BFKL detector from the soft theorem

- The pole at  $J_L = -2$  comes from the leading soft theorem.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \langle \mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \rangle^{1\text{-loop}} &= \int d\text{PS}_{n-1} \int d\beta \beta^{-J_L-1} |\mathcal{F}_{\text{tree}}(\beta z, p_2, \dots, p_n)|^2 \\
 &\sim \int d\text{PS}_{n-1} \int d\beta \beta^{-J_L-3} \underbrace{\sum_{i,j=2}^n \frac{p_i \cdot p_j}{z \cdot p_i z \cdot p_j}}_{\frac{1}{J_L+2}} \underbrace{f^{a_i b_i c} f^{a_j b_j c} \left( \mathcal{F}_{\text{tree}}^{a_2 \dots b_j \dots a_n} \right)^* \mathcal{F}_{\text{tree}}^{a_2 \dots b_i \dots a_n}}_{\text{tree-level matrix element of BFKL detector}}
 \end{aligned}$$



# BFKL detector in free theory

- The BFKL detector is a product of two “color-interference” detectors smeared over the celestial sphere:

$$\mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{BFKL}}(z) = \int D^{d-2} z_1 D^{d-2} z_2 K_{J_L}(z_1, z_2, z) : \mathcal{N}^c(z_1) \mathcal{N}^c(z_2) :$$

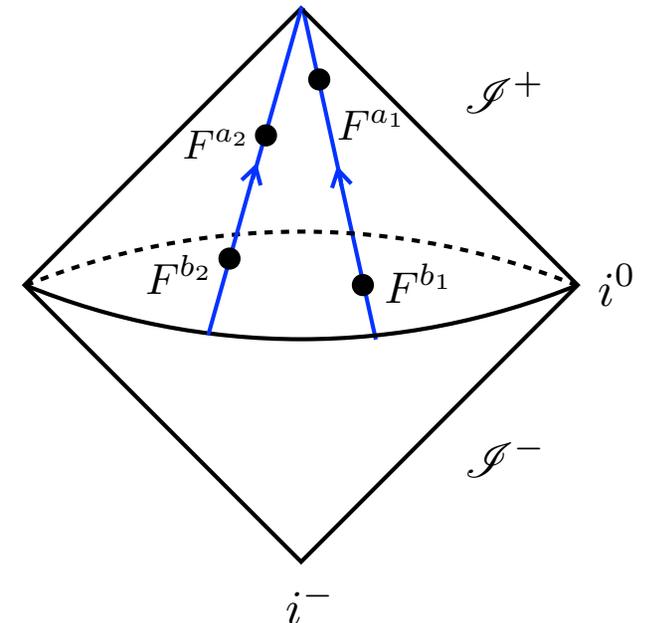
project onto a single Lorentz irrep

color correlations

$$\mathcal{N}^c(z) \propto i f^{abc} \sum_{\lambda} \int \frac{E^{d-2} dE}{2E} \left[ a_{\lambda, a}^{\dagger}(p) a_{\lambda, b}(p) \right] \Big|_{p=Ez}$$

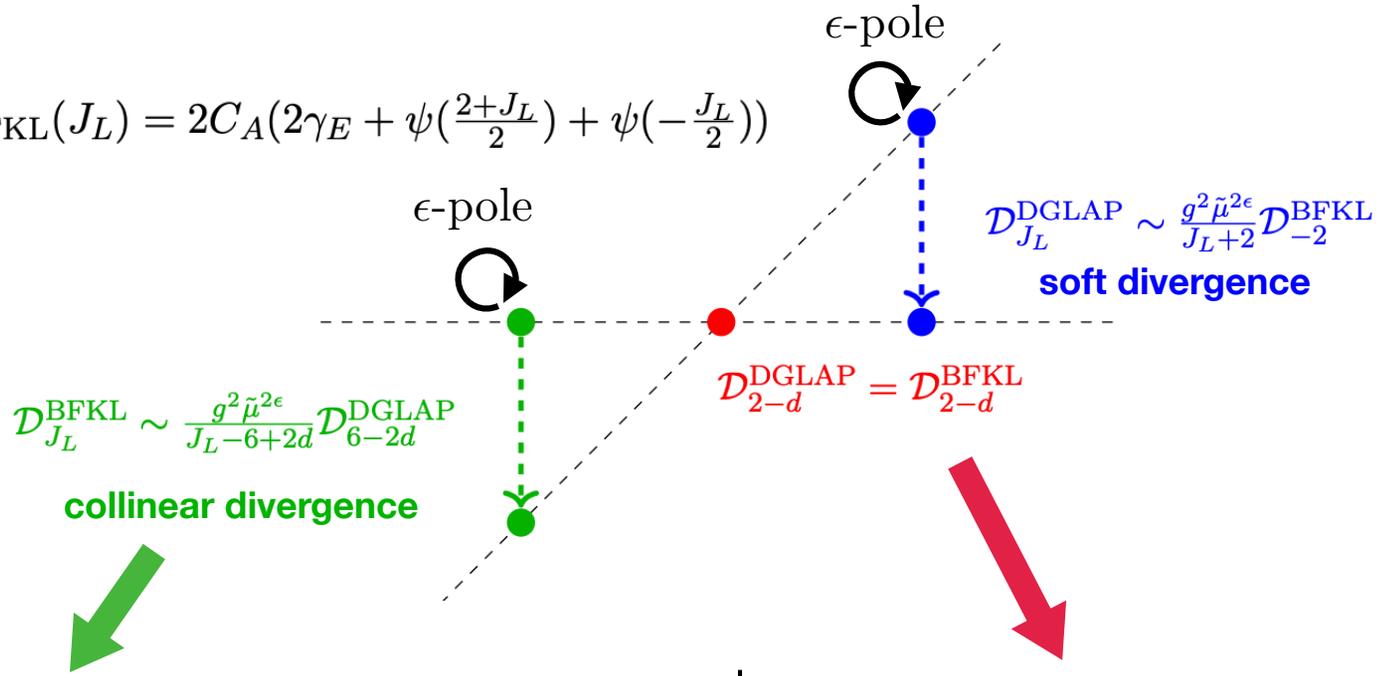
$$K_{J_L} \propto \left( \frac{-2z_1 \cdot z_2}{(-2z_1 \cdot z)(-2z_2 \cdot z)} \right)^{-\frac{J_L}{2}}$$

- A Wilson loop at future null infinity decorated by four field strengths.
- $\Delta_L = 0$  for all values of  $J_L \Rightarrow$  a horizontal trajectory at  $J = 1$  on the C-F plot.
- Running is controlled by the Balitsky-Fadin-Kuraev-Lipatov (BFKL) equation.



# DGLAP/BFKL mixing

$$\gamma_{\text{BFKL}}(J_L) = 2C_A(2\gamma_E + \psi(\frac{2+J_L}{2}) + \psi(-\frac{J_L}{2}))$$



light-ray OPE:

$$\mathcal{N}^c(z_1)\mathcal{N}^c(z_2) \sim \frac{g^2 \tilde{\mu}^{2\epsilon}}{2z_1 \cdot z_2} \mathcal{D}_{6-2d}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z_2)$$

$$\langle \mathcal{D}_{J_L}^{\text{BFKL}}(z) \rangle \sim \int d\theta \theta^{J_L-5+2d} \frac{g^2 \tilde{\mu}^{2\epsilon}}{\theta^2} \langle \mathcal{D}_{6-2d}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \rangle$$

$$\sim \frac{g^2 \tilde{\mu}^{2\epsilon}}{J_L - 6 + 2d} \langle \mathcal{D}_{6-2d}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z) \rangle$$

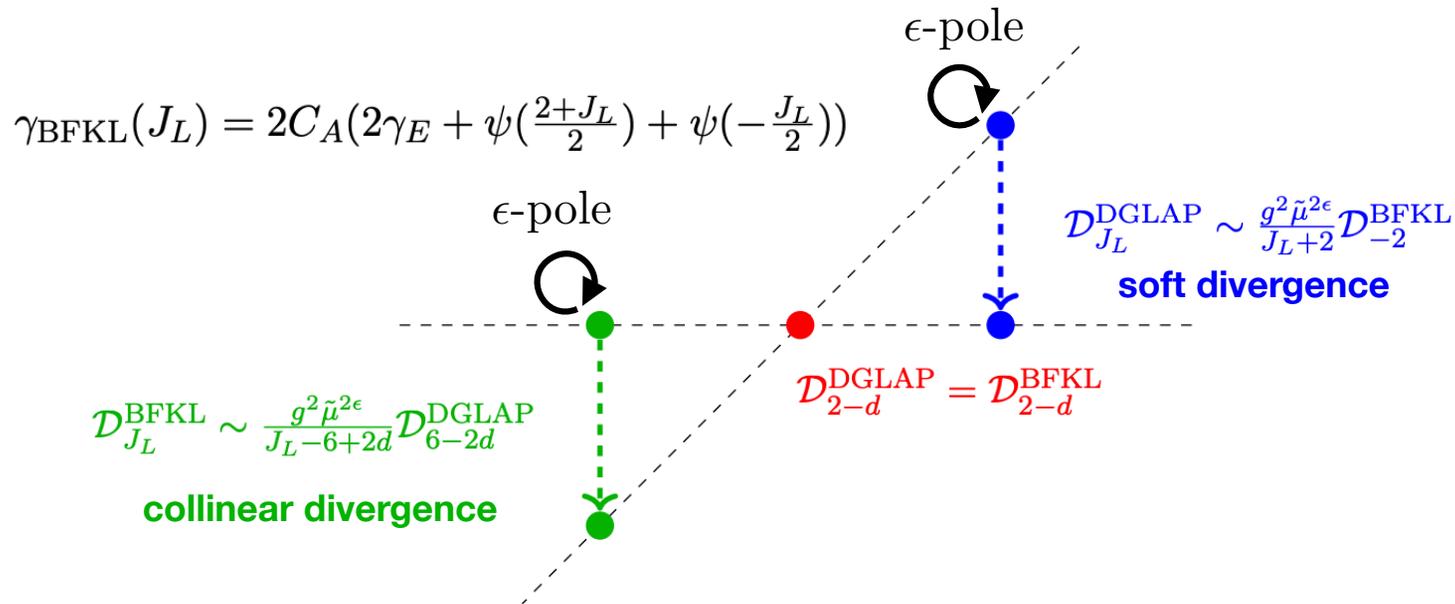
$$\mathcal{D}_{2-d}^{\text{BFKL}}(z) = \frac{\text{vol}(S^{d-3})}{2} : \mathcal{N}^c(z) \mathcal{G}^c :$$

color charge operator:

$$\mathcal{G}^c = \int D^{d-2} z' \mathcal{N}^c(z')$$

$$\Rightarrow \mathcal{D}_{2-d}^{\text{BFKL}}(z) = -\frac{\text{vol}(S^{d-3})}{2} C_A \mathcal{D}_{2-d}^{\text{DGLAP}}(z)$$

# DGLAP/BFKL mixing



- A non-degenerate multiplet at the intersection:

$$\mathbb{D}_{J_L} = U_1 \begin{pmatrix} \mu^{J_L+2-2\epsilon} \mathcal{D}_{J_L,g}^{\text{DGLAP}} \\ \mathcal{D}_{J_L,g}^{\text{BFKL}} \end{pmatrix}, \quad U_1 = \begin{pmatrix} -\frac{C_A \pi^{1-\epsilon}}{\Gamma(1-\epsilon)} & 0 \\ \frac{C_A \pi^{1-\epsilon}}{\Gamma(1-\epsilon)} & \frac{1}{J_L+2-2\epsilon} \end{pmatrix}$$

- Renormalized detector:  $[\mathbb{D}_{J_L}]_R \equiv \mathcal{Z}_{J_L}^{-1} \mathbb{D}_{J_L}$

should remove both  $\epsilon$ -poles and  $J_L$ -poles

# Renormalization of DGLAP/BFKL detectors

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- Dilatation matrix of the multiplet:

$$D = \begin{pmatrix} -J_L - 2 & 0 \\ \boxed{1} & 0 \end{pmatrix} + \frac{\alpha_s}{2\pi} \begin{pmatrix} -\gamma_1(J_L) & 4C_A \\ -\gamma_{21}(J_L) & -\gamma_2(J_L) \end{pmatrix} + O(\alpha_s^2)$$

a log multiplet!

- Why  $\sqrt{\alpha_s}$ ?  $\Delta_L^+ = \frac{1}{2} \left( J_L + 2 + \sqrt{(J_L + 2)^2 + \frac{8C_A}{\pi} \alpha_s + \dots} \right) + \dots$

$\swarrow \alpha_s \rightarrow 0$

$\swarrow J_L \rightarrow -2$

$$J_L + 2 + \alpha_s \underbrace{\left( \frac{2C_A}{\pi(J_L + 2)} + \dots \right)}_{\gamma_T^{\text{DGLAP}}(J_L)} + O(\alpha_s^2)$$

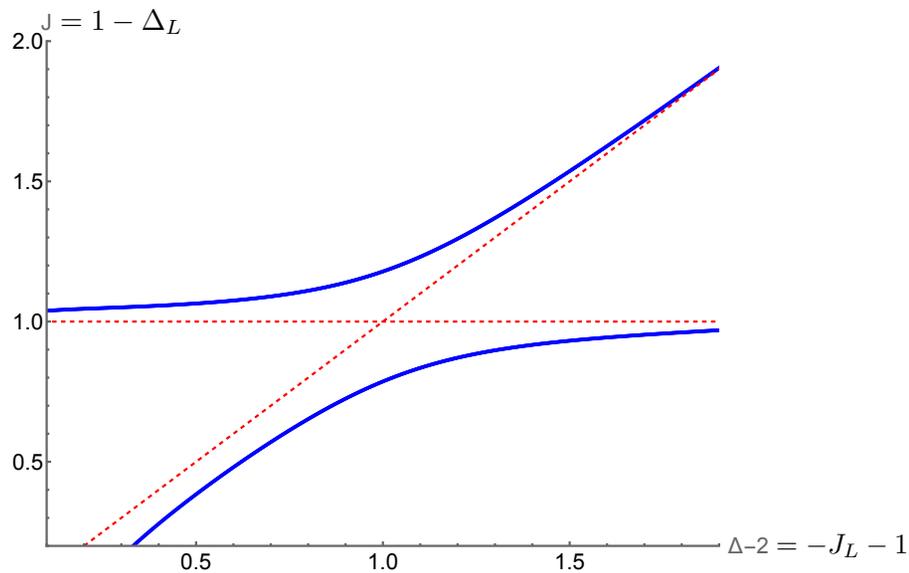
$$\sqrt{\frac{2C_A}{\pi} \alpha_s} + O(\alpha_s)$$

# Renormalization of DGLAP/BFKL detectors

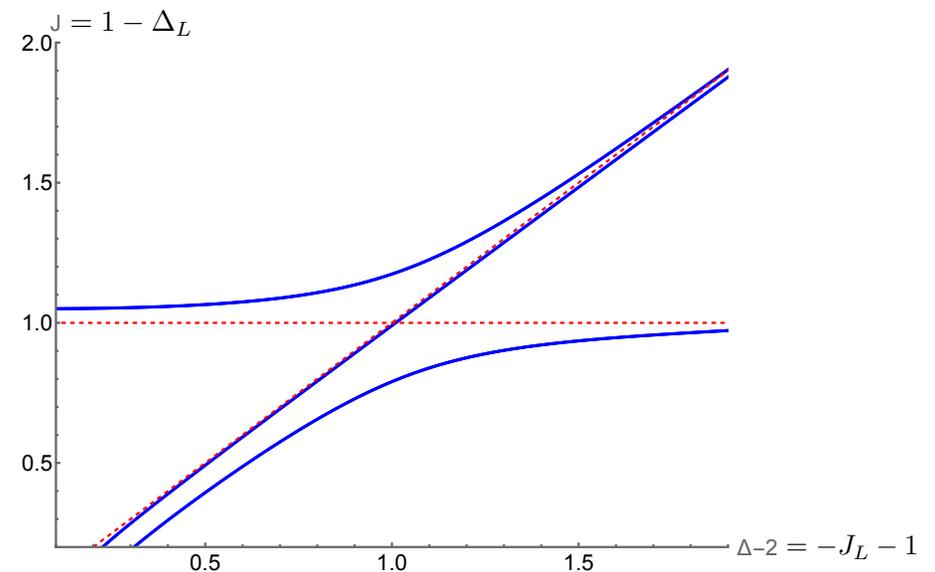
$$D = \begin{pmatrix} -J_L - 2 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} + \frac{\alpha_s}{2\pi} \begin{pmatrix} -\gamma_1(J_L) & 4C_A \\ -\gamma_{21}(J_L) & -\gamma_2(J_L) \end{pmatrix} + O(\alpha_s^2)$$

$$\text{Det}(D + \Delta_L) = 0$$

pure YM



QCD



# Mapping out the C-F plot of QCD

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- Define a more general hadron detector that measures massive particles and have general Lorentz spin:

$$\mathbb{N}_{J_L}(z) \propto \sum_h \int d^d p \delta(p^2 - m^2) (2p \cdot z)^{J_L} a_h^\dagger(p) a_h(p)$$

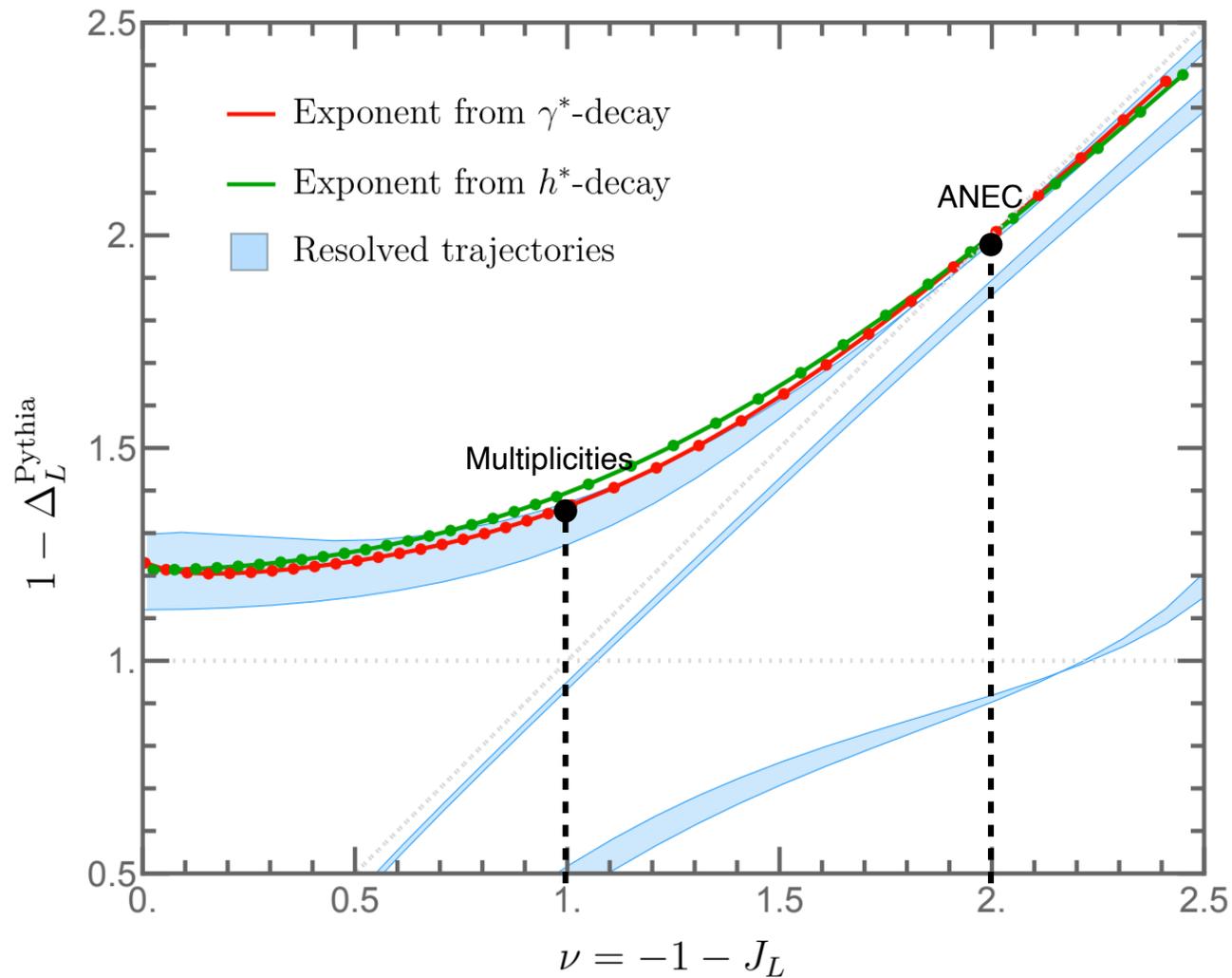
$$\underbrace{\frac{d}{d \log Q} \log \langle \mathbb{N}_{J_L}(z) \rangle_Q}_{\downarrow} = -\Delta_{L, i_{\min}}(J_L, \alpha_s(Q)) + \dots$$

Can be extracted from Pythia simulation/experiments

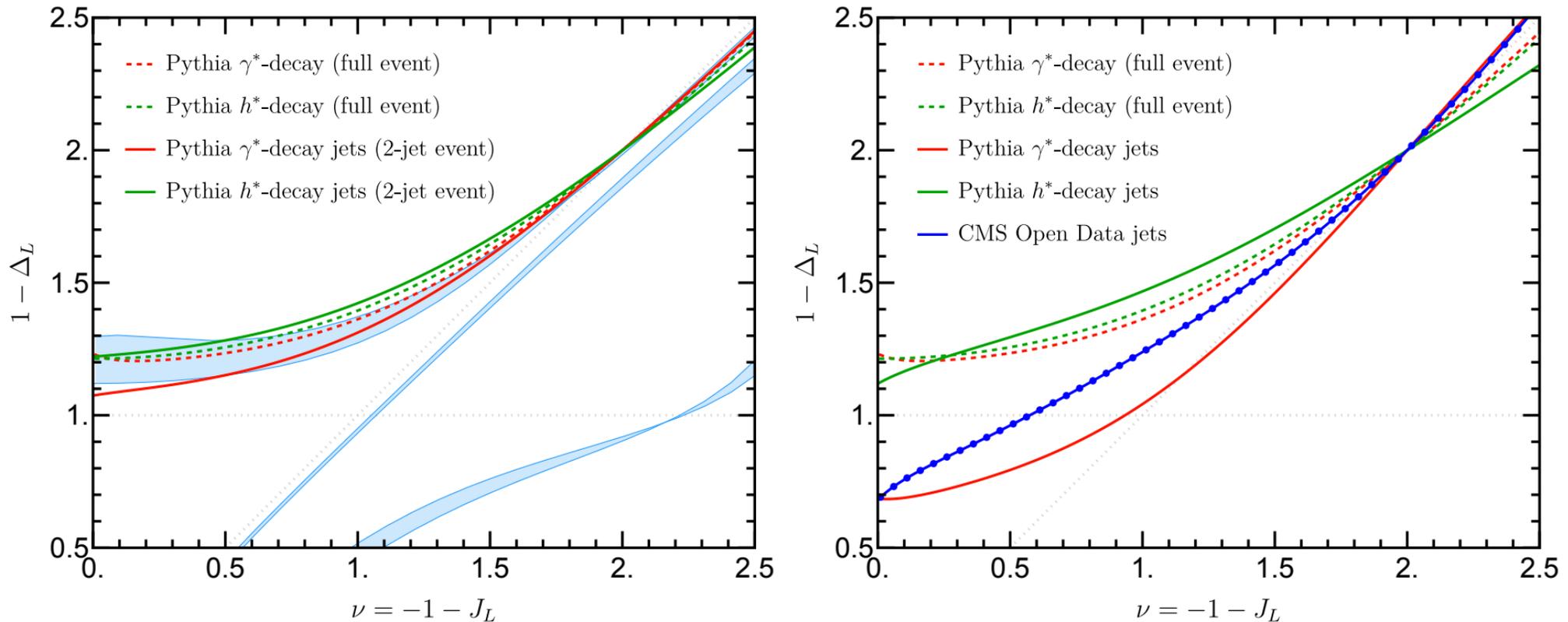
- By varying  $J_L$ , we can see the shape of the leading trajectory of QCD in data!

# Comparison with Pythia simulation

$$\frac{d}{d \log Q} \log \langle N_{J_L}(\vec{n}) \rangle_Q = -\Delta_{L, i_{\min}}(J_L, \alpha_s(Q)) + \dots$$



# Comparison with jet algorithm and CMS open data

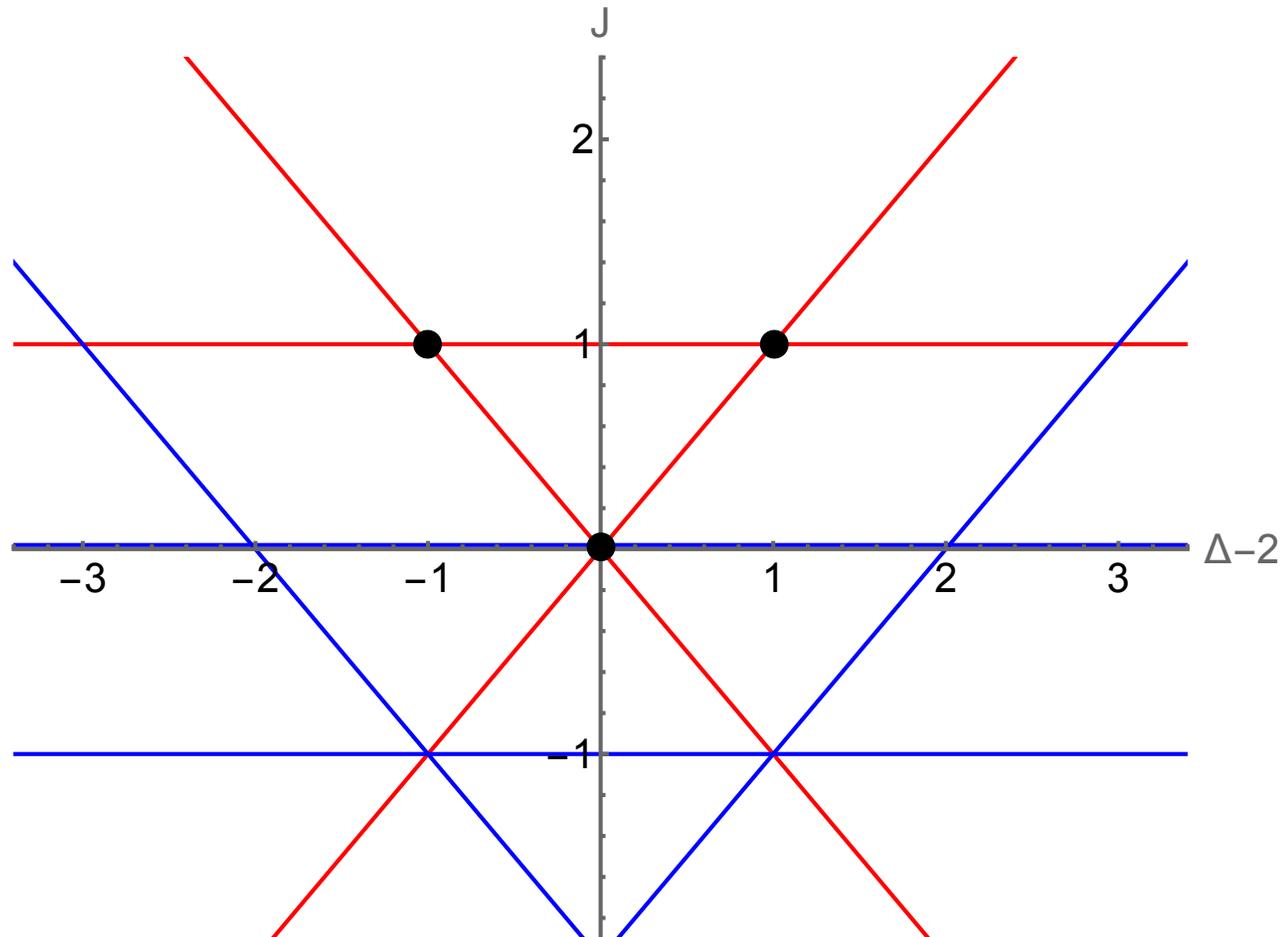


- Jet algorithms break Lorentz invariance, but seem to only lead to mild modifications.
- Analytical results don't agree with CMS open data due to the additional energy dependence from the quark/gluon fraction.

# Subleading trajectories

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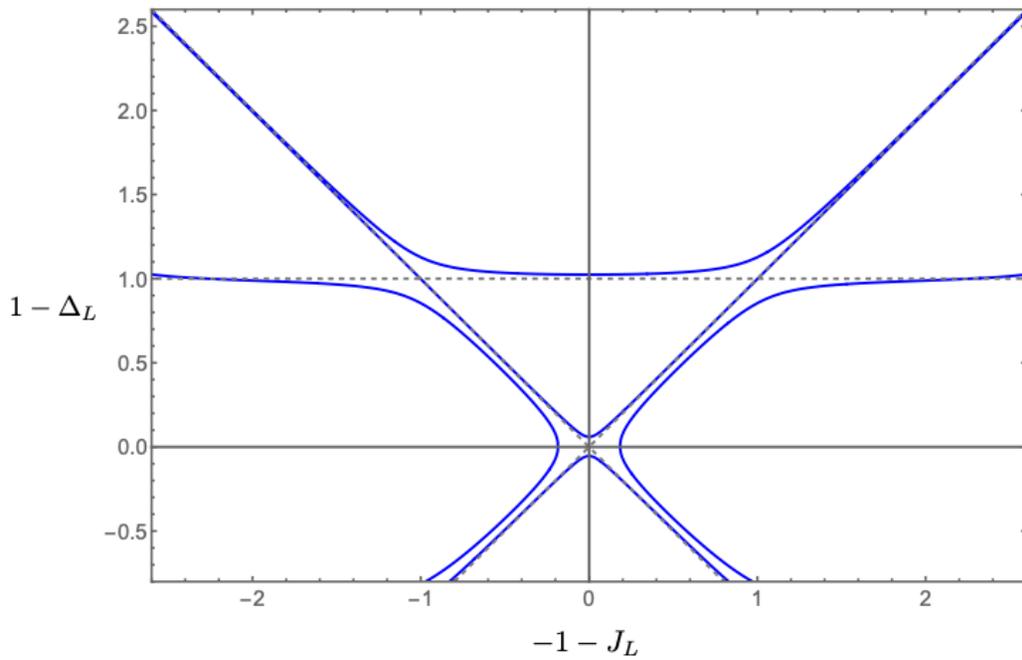
- The DGLAP anomalous dimension also has poles at  $J = 0, -1, -2, \dots$
- The pole at  $J = 0$  (or  $J_L = -1$ ) is due to the mixing between DGLAP and its spin shadow (subleading soft theorem [\[Casali '14\]](#)). The two detectors also become exactly the same at the intersection.



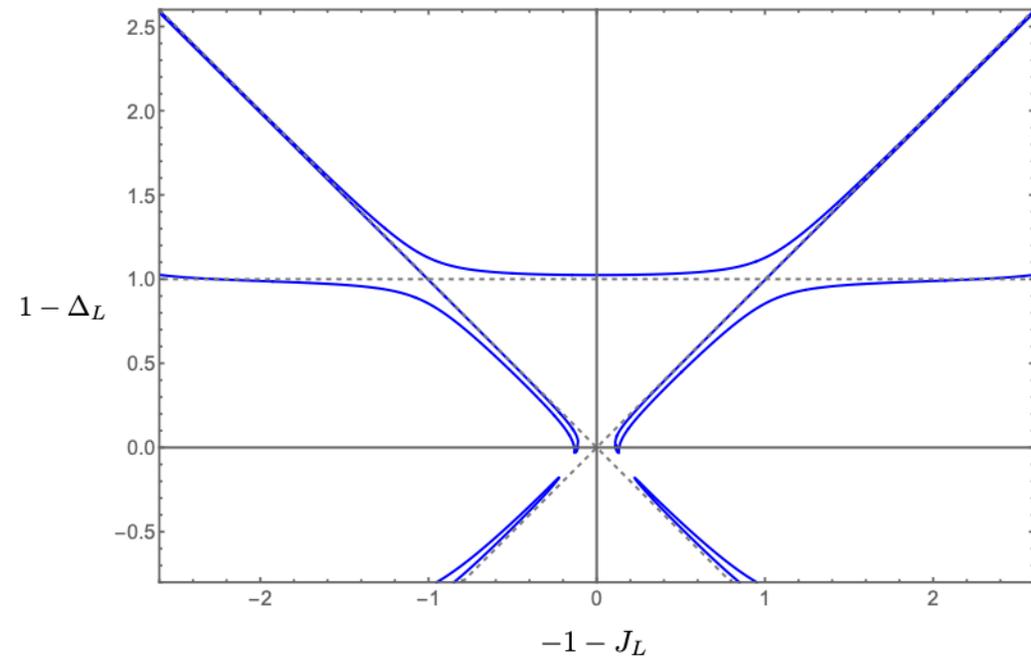
# C-F plot including subleading trajectories

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$n_f = 2$



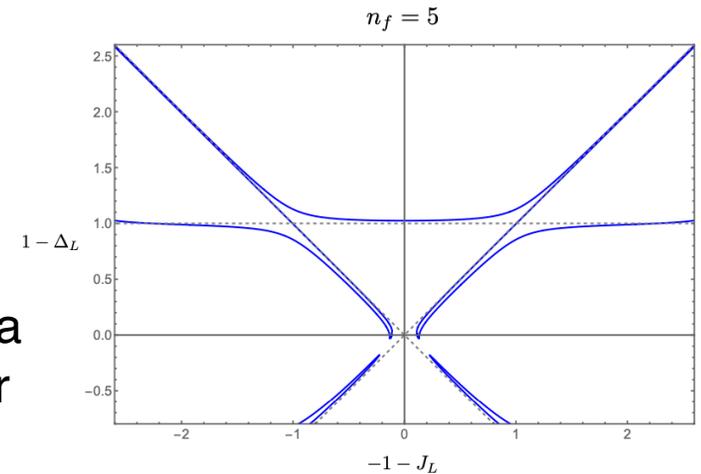
$n_f = 5$



# Summary and outlook

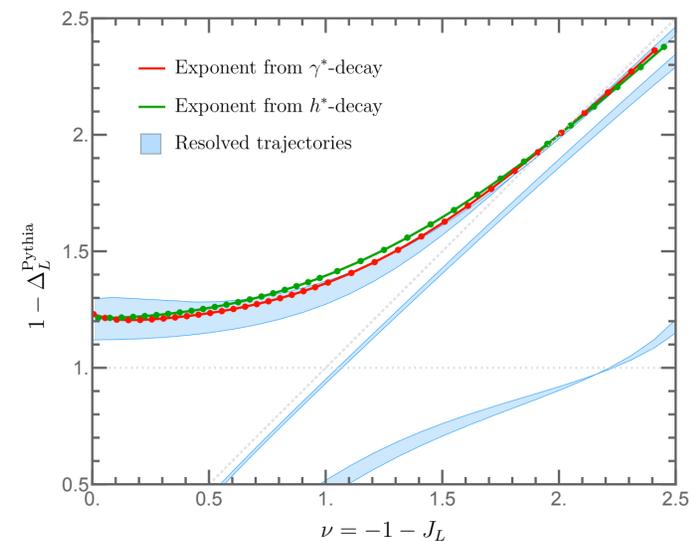
## Summary:

- Explored the Chew-Frautschi plot of QCD at one-loop, and resolved the mixing between DGLAP/BFKL and DGLAP/shadow DGLAP trajectories.
- Argued that hadron multiplicities can be matched onto a linear combination of QCD detectors. The prediction for the  $Q$ -evolution agrees well with Pythia simulation.



## Future Directions:

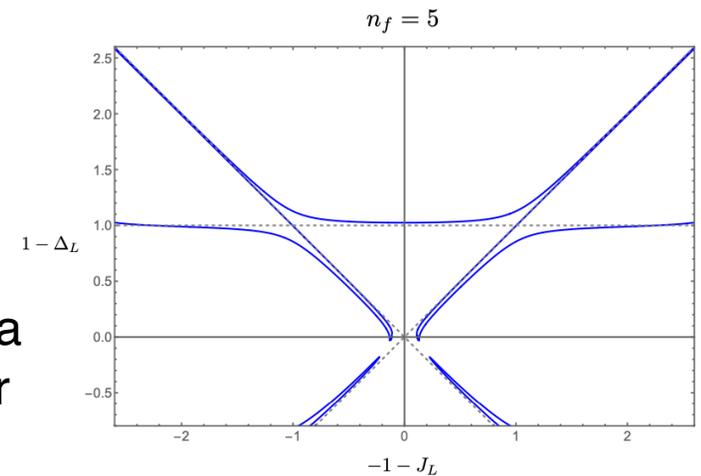
- Improve the comparison with CMS open data.
- Subleading trajectories and other intersections?  
Generalized BFKL detectors?
- What other measurements can be matched onto QCD detectors? **See Hao's talk!**



# Summary and outlook

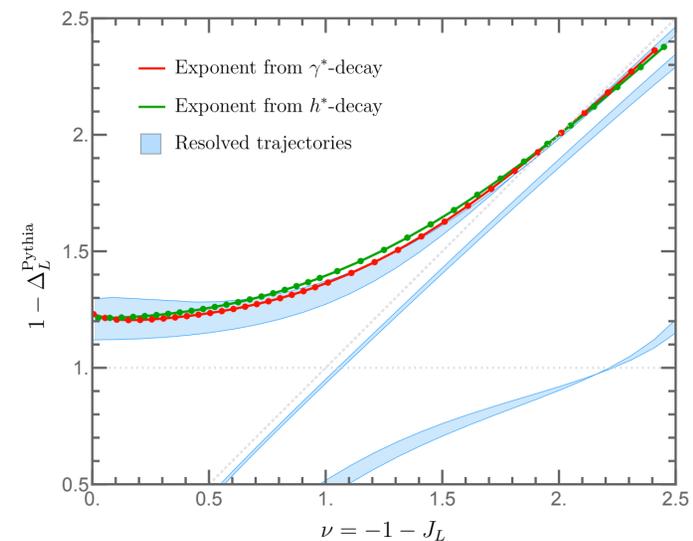
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- Subleading trajectories and other intersections? Generalized BFKL detectors?
- What other measurements can be matched onto QCD detectors? **See Hao's talk!**



Thank you!