

**Novel BSM approach could
leave unique signatures on
the SGWB**

University of Milan

2026

Usha Raut

Rise Of Graviational Wave Astronomy

- Spectacular advances by LIGO, and other detectors in recent years.
- ...making gravitational wave astronomy a very promising window to explore the universe.
- Gravitational waves interact very weakly with matter.
- Due to such a minimal interaction, they can carry vital information, especially about the very early universe
- Also allows them to permeate the entire universe, creating a background, referred to as the SGWB.
- Identifying the possible sources as coming from a cosmological origin versus an astrophysical origin is considered one of the main challenges today.
- We mostly rely on Beyond Standard Model (BSM) theories in order to study possible cosmological sources..

Promising Field of SGWB

- **SGWB refers broadly to a superposition of several weak independent unresolved gravitational-wave sources.**
- **.. could include various cosmological sources from early universe scenarios.**
- **...for example, stochastic processes in the early Universe.**
- **relic gravitational waves from an inflationary epoch.**
- **cosmological phase transitions in the early universe, including QCD first order phase transition.**
- **BSM theories provide candidates for possible cosmological sources.**
- **detection of any of the primordial source for SGWB would be an exciting discovery.**

Standard Model of Elementary Particles

| | three generations of matter (fermions) | | | interactions / force carriers (bosons) | |
|--------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | I | II | III | | |
| mass | $\approx 2.16 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 1.273 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 172.57 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | 0 | $\approx 125.2 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ |
| charge | $\frac{2}{3}$ | $\frac{2}{3}$ | $\frac{2}{3}$ | 0 | 0 |
| spin | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1 | 0 |
| | u up | c charm | t top | g gluon | H higgs |
| | $\approx 4.7 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 93.5 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 4.183 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | 0 | |
| | $-\frac{1}{3}$ | $-\frac{1}{3}$ | $-\frac{1}{3}$ | 0 | |
| | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1 | |
| | d down | s strange | b bottom | γ photon | |
| | $\approx 0.511 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 105.66 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 1.77693 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 91.188 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | |
| | -1 | -1 | -1 | 0 | |
| | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1 | |
| | e electron | μ muon | τ tau | Z Z boson | |
| | $< 0.8 \text{ eV}/c^2$ | $< 0.17 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $< 18.2 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ | $\approx 80.3692 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ | |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | ± 1 | |
| | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | 1 | |
| | ν_e electron neutrino | ν_μ muon neutrino | ν_τ tau neutrino | W W boson | |

QUARKS

LEPTONS

GAUGE BOSONS
VECTOR BOSONS

SCALAR BOSONS

Credit:
Wikimedia

BUT... where is Gravity? Why is it Missing?

- **Enormous successes of SM with describing elementary particles, and their interactions.**
- **But.. Gravity is missing altogether!**
- **Hundreds of attempts have been made over several decades ...**
- **But still no success in including gravity in any meaningful way in Standard Model.**
- **Generally seen as an acceptable situation..**
- **..but is consistently being swept under the rug.**

Attempts to Add Gravity Continue..

- **Current Approach to integrating Gravity into the standard model:**
- **Via the AdS/CFT gauge-gravity duality.**
- **Initially very promising but increasingly been seen as unsustainable and unable to describe QCD.**
- **Relies on an anti-de-Sitter spacetime as its underlying structural manifold...**
- **...that clashes with reality.**
- **Recent astrophysical experiments, involving supernova, point to a deSitter spacetime.**

Gravity still not a part of SM

- **Bottom Line: The AdS/CFT gravity-gauge duality is not a path to unify gravity with the other fundamental interactions:**
- **..In fact, the AdS/CFT cannot even be applied to QCD physics.**
- **Gravity still not included in Standard Model**

Time for A Paradigm Shift?

- We present a novel attempt to include gravity in the Standard Model.
- The new proposed BSM “the strong or Nuclear Gravity approach”, is basically a geometric approach based on GR, rather than QFT.
- General idea first proposed by A. Salam, who pioneered the use of GR methods to study the strong interactions.
- Ref: A. Salam and D. Strathdee: Phys. Rev. D16 (1977) 2668; D18 (1978) 4596;
- Several other authors worked along similar lines:P.Caldirola, M.Pavsic and E.Recami: Nuovo Cimento B48 (1978) 205; Phys. Lett. A66 (1978) 9;
- This GR Approach eventually got sidelined with string theory rise.

Introducing a new gauge/gravity duality

- In the Geometric Dual Approach, referred to as GDA, a new gauge/gravity duality is introduced.
- Conceptually very different from the so-called AdS/CFT duality.
- based on general relativistic arguments, rather than field-theoretic methods
- leads to the interesting conclusion:
 - that a strong-field version of gravity (also called nuclear gravity, or particle-level gravity) naturally emerges in the IR sector of QCD
- Same conclusions also been drawn by several other researchers.
- ..has been pretty much established as a traditionally alternate route to the infra-red sector of Quantum Chromodynamics.

Highlights from New BSM Approach

- **A strong ‘color’ nuclear level gravity force can lead to color confinement in accordance with GR.**
- **Color confinement in QCD essentially forbids the existence of isolated quarks and gluons.**
- **Can be compared to the well-known gravitational confinement provided by black holes.**
- **Color confinement could lead to a dual description of the strong interactions in terms of the usual gravitational confinement of matter inside black holes. (Hence the GDA) name**
- **Two equal descriptions for the confinement of quarks inside hadrons that are dual to each other:**
- **U. Raut, A General Relativistic Approach to Non-Perturbative QCD, Jour. High Energy Phys. Grav, 2023**
- **Also see ‘Extreme States of Matter’ (Helmut Satz), published by Springer, 2006**

New Paradigms for Hierarchy problem and TeV scale Gravity

- **Strong nuclear gravity using a large 'G' solves the Hierarchy Problem, and lowers the Plank scale:**
- **Compare to Current paradigm : This uses arbitrary compact extra/warped dimensions of spacetime lowers the Plank scale.**
- **A change in G corresponds to a change in the Plank mass $M_{Pl} = 1/\sqrt{G}$,**
- **Therefore, a large value of G inside strongly interacting particles lowers the Plank scale.**
- **Compact extra/warped dimensions not required**
- **Known Fact: the gravitational force has only been measured in the ~ 0.01 cm range, unknown in nuclear regimes.**

G as a step function versus a time varying function

Modification of the gravitational/dark energy sector:

$$G(T) = \begin{cases} G_h \sim 10^{38} G_N, & T > T_* \\ G_N, & T < T_* \end{cases}$$

$$\Lambda(T) = \begin{cases} \Lambda_h, & T > T_* \\ \sim 0 \text{ (or small)}, & T < T_* \end{cases}$$

In the above, T^* is the QCD confinement temperature, G_h and Λ_h are the values of gravity coupling and cosmological constant before the hadronization phase.

Theoretical Feasibility of a High G , High Λ scenario

- Unlike certain scalar-gravity theories, our step-function variation of G :
- Shows no violation with of BBN.
- As shown, ..in a step-function evolution, the additional terms in the Friedman equation cancel the effects of a different initial value of G .
- This has been extensively investigated by several different authors over the decades.
- A. Serna and J. M. Alimi, Phys. Rev. D. 53, 3087 (1996).
- D. I. Santiago, D. Kalligas and R. V. Wagoner, Phys. Rev. D 56, 7627 (1997).
- V. Pettorino, C. Baccigalupi and G. Mangano, JCAP 01, 014 (2005).

Summary of Approach

- **New geometrical version of the gauge/gravity correspondence introduced.**
- **promises to be a new and effective tool for exploring the non-perturbative IR segment of QCD.**
- **.. strong nuclear gravity force acting in nuclei might leave ‘signatures’ of HFGWs on phenomenology at LHC and RHIC, including high and ultra-high frequency Gravitational Waves**
- **Focus today will be on possible signatures in the SGWB from QCD phase transitions in the early universe.**

BSM and First Order Phase Transitions

- Certain scenarios permit FOPTs to occur in BSM:
- For example, any mechanism to solve the hierarchy problem:
- Currently, a mechanism used to solve the hierarchy problem is via the introduction of warped/ extra dimensions, dark matter sectors with non-trivial gauge.
- Just like warped and extra dimensions, a high G serves exactly the same purpose!
- A high G value, especially along with a dark matter sector operating in the QGP seems to be a candidate for a strong first order phase transition, with a significant emission of gravitational waves.
- A change in G corresponds to a change in the Plank mass $M_{Pl} = 1/\sqrt{G}$

Other Expected Effects of a much larger G.

We use the following independent Friedmann equation to model a homogeneous isotropic universe.

$$H^2 \equiv \left(\frac{\dot{R}}{R} \right)^2 = \frac{8\pi G\rho}{3} - \frac{k}{R^2} + \frac{\Lambda}{3},$$

- Per our BSM model, the effective gravitational constant G_{eff} is much larger during the QGP era,
- Effects that immediately follow:
- For fixed energy density, ρ , and assuming $k = 0$,
- $H^2 = \frac{8\pi G_{eff}}{3} \rho + \frac{\Lambda}{3}$
- Since H varies as $G_{eff}^{1/2}$, expect a more rapid expansion rate, with the horizon size being altered.
- This could lead to a decrease the timescale of the QCD transition.
- resulting in higher GW frequencies

Potential Gravitational Wave Sources

- **Pre-Hadronization and Transition Phase:**
- **Strong Gravitational Waves can originate from a potential FOPT during QGP-Hadronic matter transition**
- **QGP known to behave as a near-perfect fluid.**
- **Bubbles expand within the background fluid. Kinetic energy stored in the bubble walls are released during bubble collisions.**
- **Transformed into gravitational waves that carry away information about the phase transition.**
- **GWs also coming from Sound waves from the Expanding bubbles.**
- **Turbulent motion of charged particles in the QGP background fluid can form magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) turbulence**
- **..another significant source of gravitational waves**

Total Power Spectrum

Therefore, the power spectrum for the total emitted gravitational waves would need to include the sums of each of the following contributions:

$$h^2 \Omega_{total}(f) = h^2 \Omega_{kinetic}(f) + h^2 \Omega_{sound}(f) + h^2 \Omega_{MHD}(f)$$

The energy density spectral function that can be used to describe the stochastic gravitational wave background:

$$\Omega_{gw}(f) \equiv \frac{1}{\rho_{crit}} \frac{d\rho_{gw}}{d(\ln f)} = \frac{f}{\rho_{crit}} \frac{d\rho_{gw}}{df}$$

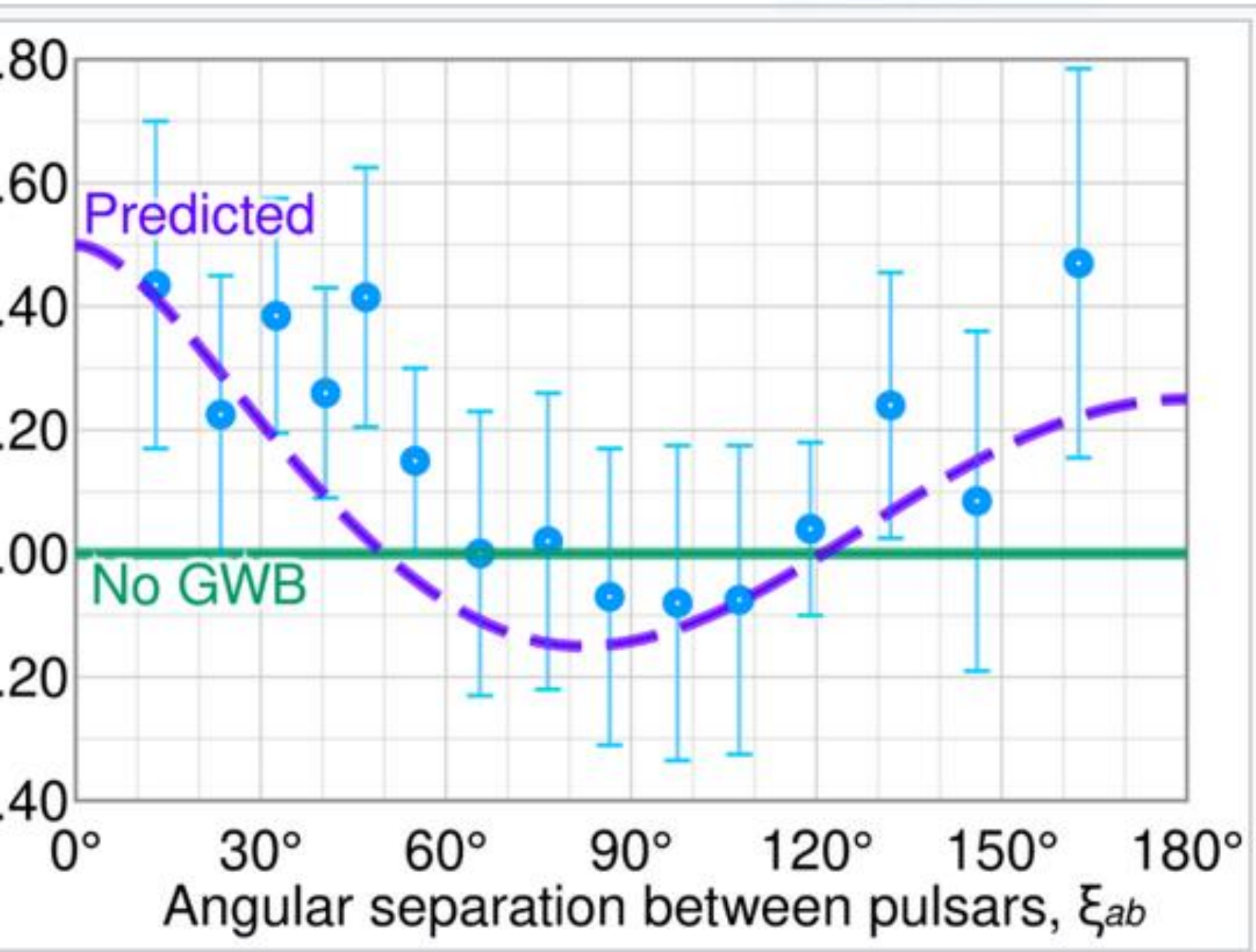
The critical energy density today that will be needed to close the universe can be expressed as:

$$\rho_{crit} \equiv \frac{3H_0^2 c^2}{8\pi G}$$

H_0 is the current Hubble rate

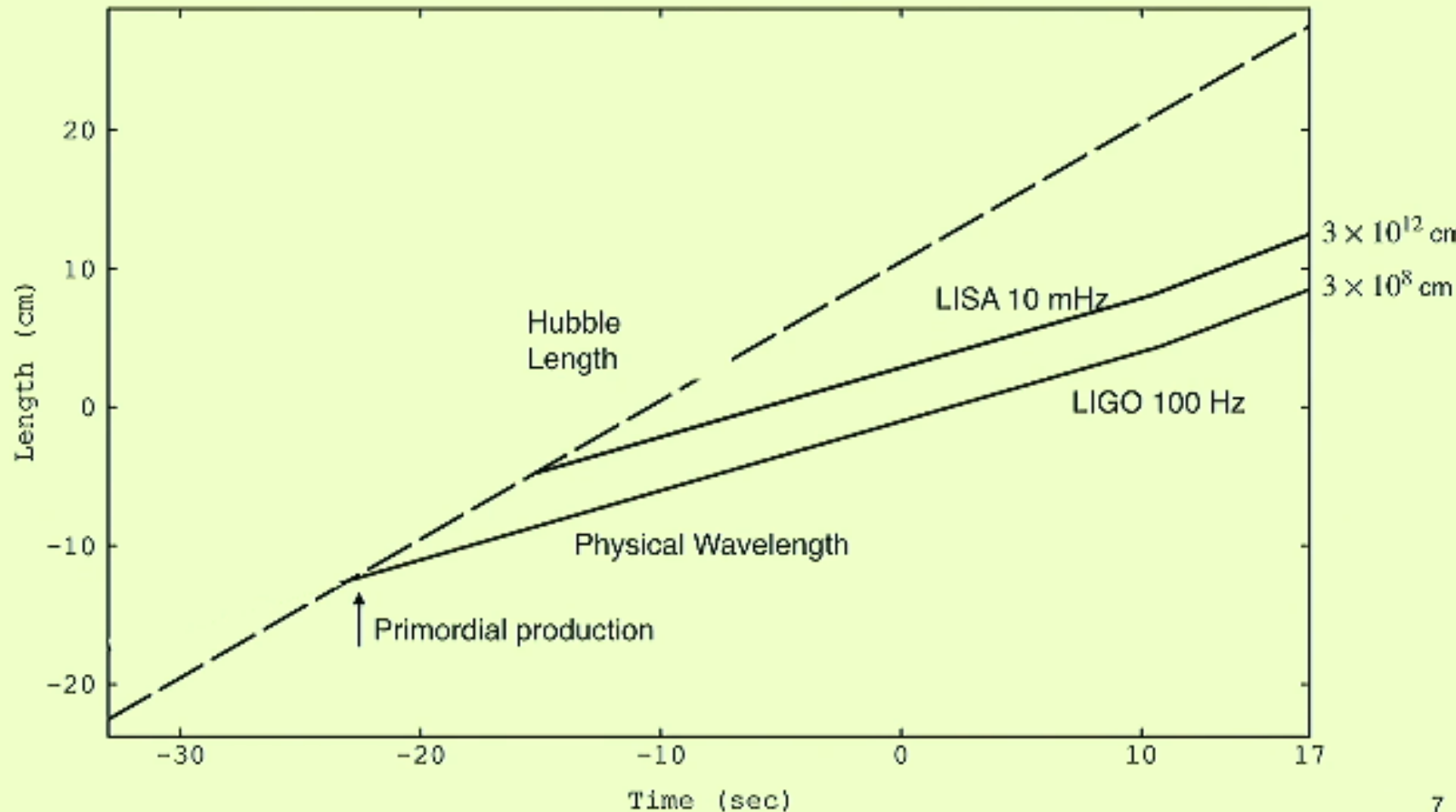
The NANOGrav 15 yr Data Set: Evidence for a Gravitational-wave Background In July 2023

- An array of milli-second pulsars were used to form a detector at the galactic level.
- The pulsars are monitored every few weeks.
- NANOGrav collaboration used the world's largest radio telescopes, such as the Arecibo, and the (VLA) Very Large Array to monitor the array.
- NANOGrav is currently sensitive to gravitational waves in the frequency range of 10^{-9} to 10^{-6} Hz.
- Even with using world's largest telescopes, might require several years of observation to detect a signal.
- Able to detect currently only a tiny fraction of the full GW spectrum.



- The blue dots show the correlation observed between pulsars in the NANOgrav (2023) study versus the angular separation between those pulsars.
- The theoretically predicted correlation curve is the Hellings-Downs model curve (indicated in purple)
- The solid green line refers to the case when there is no gravitational wave background at all.

The timescales various detectors would be able to 'see' cosmological events.



➤ The diagram shows the timescales various detectors would be able to 'see' cosmological events.

➤ $L(t)$ is the cosmological length scale. Assuming that the expansion is dominated by the radiation era, $L(t)$ is approximated as linearly growin with time.

➤ We are able to extrapolate the plot to find that the NANOgrav range of 10^{-6} Hz would perfectly probe the era of the entire QGP phase which lasts approximately from 10^{-10} to 10^{-6} sec.

(Diagram by Bruce Allen, Courtesy of Institute of Physics, IOP) Better diagram (next slide)

SGWB signals vs LIGO signals! Very Different!

- **The Hellings and Downs correlation curves are what the PTA and or LISA detectors would be looking for.**
- **Not the ‘binary chirp’ observed by the LIGO collaboration**
- **The GW150914 signal, picked up by LIGO was very distinctive (the final inspiral and merger of two stellar-mass black holes),**
- **But... any possible SGWB signal would be much harder to pick up.**
- **.. signal likely to be a result of superposition of millions of unresolvable signals associated with various sources.**
- **General Prediction: waves from FOPT in our BSM model would be detected by either LISA or PTA SGWB collaborations.**

Conclusion

- **The proposed theory is theoretically feasible and unlike scalar-tensor theories does not violate any known physics, in spite of a changing G .**
- **Is phenomenologically falsifiable, which makes it very much a scientifically sound hypothesis.**
- **Predictions are very strong and can directly involve current NANOgrav detectors.**
- **Obtaining actual cosmological signatures is a highly desirable outcome, as it can shed light on inflation, and other early universe scenarios.**

Thank you!!