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Excitation and saturation of the spinodal instability

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Ever since the discovery of the quark-Gluon plasma (QGP) the location of the critical point in the QCD phase diagram - the end point of the first-order transition between hadron matter and QGP - has been a main research goal for heavy-ion collisions experiments. We use the gauge/gravity duality to study as first a four-dimensional, strongly-coupled gauge theory with a first-order thermal phase transition. In the dual gauge theory the Gregory-Laflamme instability corresponds to the spinodal instability. We uncover the favored final phase separated state across phase mergers. This final inhomogeneous system is independent of the early unstable mode excitations.

Primary author(s) : Prof. MATEOS, David (University of Barcelona); Prof. CASALDERREY SOLANA, Jorge (University of Oxford); Dr ZILHAO, Miguel (CENTRA LISBON); Dr BEA, Yago (University of Barcelona); Dr ATTEMS, maximilian (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela)

Presenter(s): Dr ATTEMS, maximilian (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela)

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