

# Recent developments in the Alaric parton shower

Benôt Assi, Florian Herren, Stefan Höche, Mareen Hoppe,  
Frank Krauss, Peter Meinzinger, Daniel Reichelt,  
Marek Schönherr, Federico Silveti

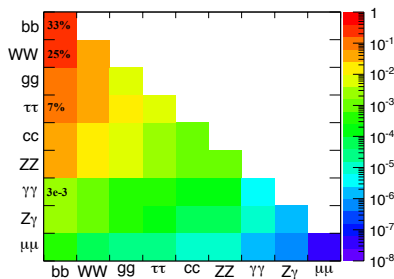
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory

LoopFest XXIV

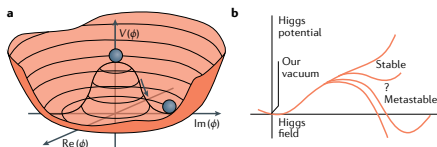
BNL, 05/27/2026

# What we are preparing for

- Higgs self interaction is key to understanding of EW sector
- Measurement will require careful combination of many analyses with full HL-LHC data set
- Heavy flavor channels needed for high statistical significance



[J. Alison] LHCP '24

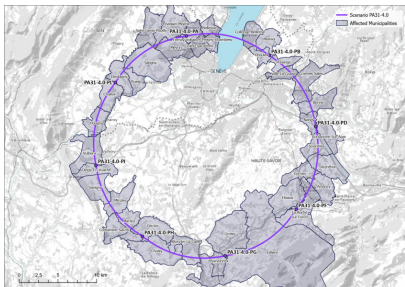


[Bass, DeRoeck, Kado] Nat. Rev. Phys. 3 (2021) 608

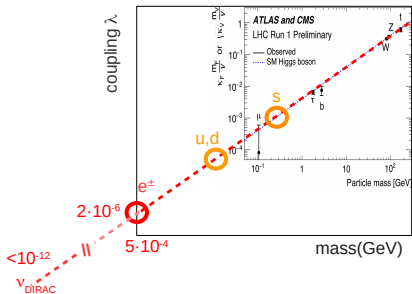
- Theory predictions for highly non-trivial final states required, e.g. heavy quark jets as part of inclusive heavy plus light
- Precise extraction of / limit setting on triple Higgs coupling depends crucially on understanding of all final states

# What we are preparing for

- Unprecedented luminosity at Tera-Z option of a potential FCC-ee would leave no room for mis-modeling of perturbative and non-perturbative QCD effects



[CERN] <https://home.cern/science/accelerators/>



[D. d'Enterria] FCC week '24

- Extraction of Higgs Yukawa couplings would depend on precise modeling of light / heavy flavor jet production and flavor dynamics

# Near-term focus of the Alaric project

- Parton shower at high theoretical precision
  - Increased logarithmic accuracy
  - Fully differential splittings at NLO
- Fixed-order matching and merging
  - MC@NLO & MEPS@NLO
- Integration into Sherpa event generator
  - Matching, merging & fusing
  - Hadronization tunes

# Matching and Merging

- Matched prediction given by MC@NLO master formula

$$\langle O \rangle = \int d\Phi_B \bar{B}^{(K)}(\Phi_B) \mathcal{F}_{MC}^{(0)}(\mu_Q^2, O) + \int d\Phi_R H^{(K)}(\Phi_R) \mathcal{F}_{MC}^{(1)}(t(\Phi_R), O)$$

- NLO-weighted Born cross section and hard remainder defined as

$$\bar{B}^{(K)}(\Phi_B) = B(\Phi_B) + \tilde{V}(\Phi_B) + I(\Phi_B) + \int d\Phi_1 [B(\Phi_B) K(\Phi_1) - S(\Phi_R)]$$

$$H^{(K)}(\Phi_R) = R(\Phi_R) - B(\Phi_B) K(\Phi_1)$$

- Parton shower described by generating functional  $\mathcal{F}_{MC}$   
Probability conservation:  $\mathcal{F}_{MC}(t, 1) = 1 \rightarrow$  cross section correct at NLO
- Parametrically  $\mathcal{O}(\alpha_s)$  correct, preserves logarithmic accuracy of PS

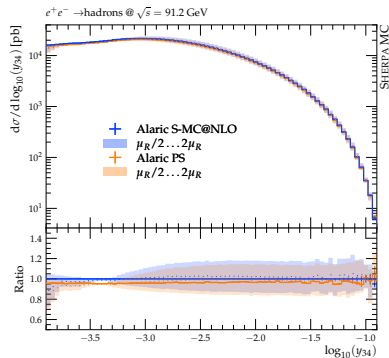
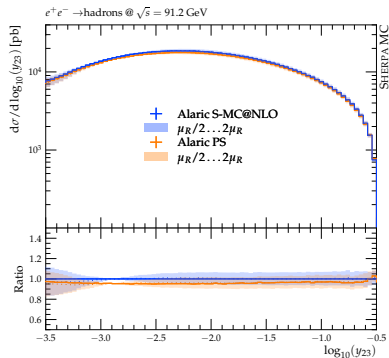
- Color- & spin-correct S-MC@NLO [Krauss,Schönherr,Siegert] arXiv:1111.1220
- All counterterms computed in analytic form

$\mu_R = \sqrt{s} = 91.2\text{GeV}$ $y_{n,n-1} > (10\text{ GeV})^2/s$		I [pb]	$\Delta I$ [pb]	RS [pb]	$\Delta RS$ [pb]	IRS [pb]	$\Delta IRS$ [pb]	$\Delta IRS/NLO$
n=3	CS	5118.85	0.37	-1034.4	1.4	4084.45	1.4	0.1‰
	Alaric	5174.47	0.38	-1087.6	1.8	4086.84	1.8	0.1‰
	CS- Alaric					$-2.39 \pm 2.32$		
n=4	CS	938.97	0.12	-94.45	0.73	844.52	0.74	0.5‰
	Alaric	922.36	0.12	-79.75	0.70	842.61	0.71	0.5‰
	CS- Alaric					$1.91 \pm 1.03$		
n=5	CS	46.1544	0.015	-2.341	0.058	43.813	0.060	1‰
	Alaric	44.6125	0.014	-0.857	0.067	43.756	0.068	1‰
	CS- Alaric					$0.057 \pm 0.091$		

- Fixed-order validation against Catani-Seymour subtraction

$e^+e^- \rightarrow \text{hadrons}$

[Krauss,Meinzinger,Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2507.22837

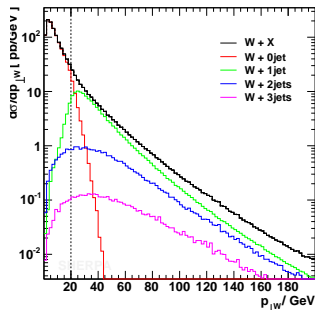


■ Color- & spin-correct S-MC@NLO [Krauss,Schönherr,Siegert] arXiv:1111.1220

■ All counterterms available in analytic form

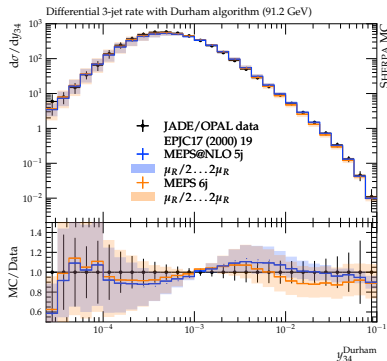
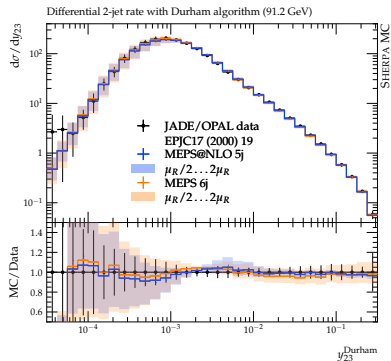
# Next-to-leading order multi-jet merging

- Idea: Partition phase space into “hard” and “soft” region
- Parton shower populates soft domain
- NLO calculations replace PS emission in hard domain
- Need criterion to define “hard” & “soft”  
→ jet measure  $Q$  (e.g.  $k_T$  jet resolution)  
and corresponding cut,  $Q_{\text{cut}}$



$e^+e^- \rightarrow \text{hadrons}$

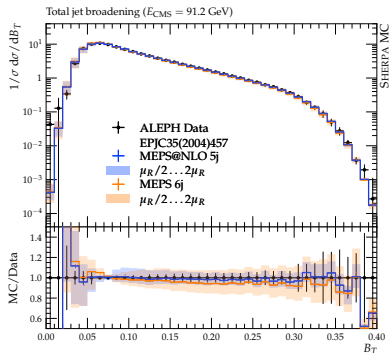
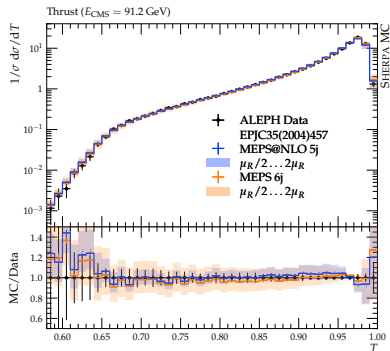
[Krauss,Meinzinger,Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2507.22837



- First merged prediction with up to 5 jets at NLO precision
- Radiation & splitting separated [Assi,SH] arXiv:2307.00728

$$e^+e^- \rightarrow \text{hadrons}$$

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# A new take on gluon polarization

# Rethinking splitting functions

[Campbell,Knobbe,Preuss,Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2505.10408

[LeBlanc,Roloff,Whitman,SH] arXiv:2512.07025

- Gordon decomposition [Gordon] ZeitPhys140(1928)630

$$\frac{\not{p} + \not{q}}{(p+q)^2} T_{ij}^a \gamma^\mu = T_{ij}^a \left[ S^\mu(p, q) + \frac{i\sigma^{\nu\mu} q_\nu}{(p+q)^2} - \frac{\gamma^\mu \not{p}}{(p+q)^2} \right]$$

- Leading and sub-leading (LBK!) soft behavior given by scalar current

[Gell-Mann,Goldberger] PR96(1954)1433, [Brown,Goble] PR173(1968)1505

$$S^\mu(p, q) = \frac{(2p+q)^\mu}{(p+q)^2}$$

- Magnetic term  $\sigma^{\nu\mu} = i/2[\gamma^\nu, \gamma^\mu]$  due to quark spin  
 $\gamma^\mu \not{p}$  generates seagull interactions of scalar theory

- Decomposition of triple & quartic gluon vertex even simpler

- Both decompositions hold at amplitude squared level [Chen et al.] arXiv:1404.5963

- **Scalar splitting functions & spin-dependent remainders**

Clean identification of overlap beyond kinematical limits

- At 1-loop level, Background Field Method allows to derive

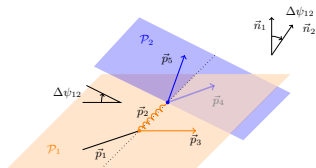
**Scalar radiators that satisfy the naive Ward identities**

→ Extension of soft current [Catani,Grazzini] hep-ph/0007142

# Application to gluon polarization

[Hoppe,Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2508.19018

- Conventional wisdom: Gluon spin correlations are a quantum effect

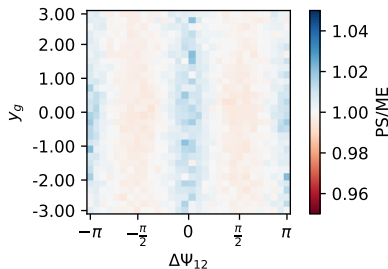
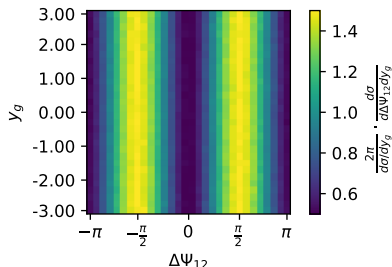


[Karlberg,Salam,Scyboz,Verheyen]  
arXiv:2103.16526

- Re-analyze using a new formalism  
→ Most correlations are classical

[Staelin,Morgenthaler,Kong]  
*Electromagnetic Waves*, Pearson (1993)

- Reproduces known results, both in collinear & wide-angle region



# Algorithm for polarized parton evolution

[Hoppe,Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2508.19018

- If gluon emitted off scalar dipole, store dipole polarization (i.e. current):

$$j_p^\mu(p_i, p_j; q) = \frac{J_{ij}^\mu(q)}{\sqrt{-J_{ij}^\nu(q)J_{ij,\nu}(q)}} , \quad \text{where} \quad J_{ij}^\mu(q) = S^\mu(p_i, q) - S^\mu(p_j, q)$$

- If gluon splits according to  $k_\perp$ -dependent part of  $g \rightarrow gg$  or  $g \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ :
  - If polarization vector defined for this gluon:
    - Contract with decay polarization  $j_d^\mu(q_i, q_j)$
    - Reweight splitting probability by  $(j_p^\mu j_{d,\mu})^2$
    - If  $g \rightarrow gg$ , mark new gluons as correlated
  - If polarization vector undefined for this gluon:
    - Define polarization vector for correlated partner as polarization vector of the decay  $j_d^\mu(q_i, q_j)$
- If gluon emits another gluon, transfer polarization and information on correlated partner to emitter

No spin density matrices. Not restricted to any kinematical limit.

Optimal scaling (linear in number of particles, both time & memory)

# Classical effects

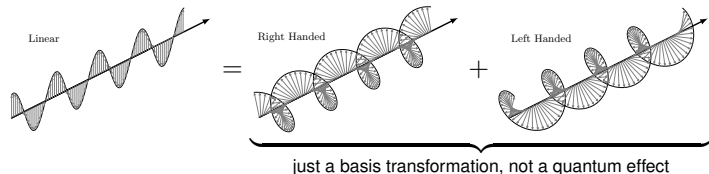
Recall your E&M lectures [Staelin,Morgenthaler,Kong] *Electromagnetic Waves*, Pearson (1993)

- Dipole antennae create linearly polarized EM waves
- Receivers must be co-polarized for maximum power transfer

## QCD charge dipoles are *literally* dipole antennae

But what about conventional wisdom ...

- Do large off-diagonal entries in spin density matrices indicate that spin correlations are non-trivial quantum interferences?
- Not necessarily ... we could just be using an unsuitable basis:



Recall: Dipoles only generate *linearly* polarized waves

# Quantum effects

- First actual quantum effect: Correlation of the newly produced gluons in the  $k_{\perp}$ -dependent part of a collinear  $g \rightarrow gg$  splitting

[Webber] Phys.Lett.B193(1987)91

## This is correctly captured by the new algorithm

Still just a correlation, not an interference

- *Quantum interferences* require at least six external QCD charges  
→ 3 production / decay planes defined by, say,  $K^{\mu}$ ,  $L^{\mu}$ ,  $M^{\mu}$

$$\frac{K_{\rho}K_{\sigma}L_{\alpha}L_{\beta}M^{\mu}M^{\nu}}{(\tilde{M}\tilde{L})(\tilde{M}\tilde{K})(\tilde{L}\tilde{K})} \tilde{P}_{g \rightarrow g, \mu\nu, (i)}^{\rho\sigma, \alpha\beta}(p_1, p_2) \approx$$
$$2C_A z_2 \left[ \frac{\cos \theta_{\tilde{K}\tilde{p}_{1,2}} \cos \theta_{\tilde{L}\tilde{p}_{1,2}}}{\cos \theta_{\tilde{K}\tilde{L}}} - \frac{\cos \theta_{\tilde{K}\tilde{p}_{1,2}} \cos \theta_{\tilde{M}\tilde{p}_{1,2}}}{\cos \theta_{\tilde{K}\tilde{M}}} \right] + \left( \begin{array}{c} K \leftrightarrow L \\ 1 \leftrightarrow 2 \end{array} \right)$$

- Suppressed by  $z_2$  or  $z_1$
- Azimuthal integral vanishes

## This is *not captured* by the algorithm

But neither are other suppressed interferences, such as color monsters

[Dokshitzer,Khoze,Mueller,Troyan] Basics of perturbative QCD, Editions Frontières (1991), Sec.6.3.3

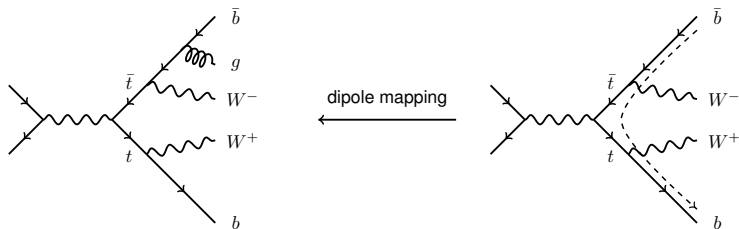
# Resonance- and width-aware parton evolution

# The Problem – Part I: Kinematics

- Alaric built on Catani-Seymour like dipole subtraction terms

$$\mathcal{D}_{ij,k} = -\frac{1}{2p_i p_j} m \langle \tilde{1}, \dots, \tilde{j}, \dots, \widetilde{m+1} | \frac{\mathbf{T}_i \mathbf{T}_k}{\mathbf{T}_i^2} V_{ij,k} | \tilde{1}, \dots, \tilde{j}, \dots, \widetilde{m+1} \rangle_m$$

- Dipole momentum mapping affects top-quark virtuality



Induces multiplicative correction to Born cross section of the form

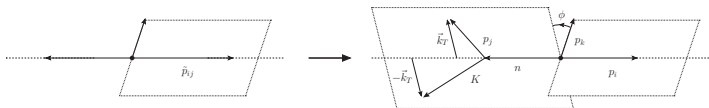
$$\frac{[(p_{W^+} + \tilde{p}_b)^2 - m_t^2]^2 + m_t^2 \Gamma_t^2}{[(p_{W^+} + p_b + p_g)^2 - m_t^2]^2 + m_t^2 \Gamma_t^2} \frac{[(p_{W^-} + \tilde{p}_{\bar{b}})^2 - m_t^2]^2 + m_t^2 \Gamma_t^2}{[(p_{W^-} + p_{\bar{b}})^2 - m_t^2]^2 + m_t^2 \Gamma_t^2}$$

→ can be large, even if recoil effects of  $\mathcal{O}(\Gamma_t)$

# Resonance aware momentum mapping

[Liebschner,Siegert,SH] arXiv:1807.04348, [Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2604.13978

- Recoil vector in Alaric kinematics mapping can be chosen freely



- Choose to distribute recoil only on top-quark decay products



Top-quark virtualities unaffected  $\rightarrow$  no changes to production rate

# Resonance aware splitting functions

[Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2604.13978

- Alaric standard radiator given by

$$V_{ig,k}^{(s)}(p_i, p_j, n) = 8\pi\mu^{2\epsilon}\alpha_s C_i \frac{2(p_i p_k)(p_i n)}{(p_i p_j)(p_k n) + (p_k p_j)(p_i n)}$$

$n$  – gauge vector connected to momentum mapping

- Recoil now distributed to  $W$ -bosons  
→ spoils partial fractioning of eikonal
- Use standard Catani-Seymour technique

for identified partons [Catani,Seymour] hep-ph/9605323

$$V_{ig,k}^{(s,CS)}(p_i, p_j, n) = 8\pi\mu^{2\epsilon}\alpha_s C_i \frac{2(p_i p_k)}{(p_i p_j) + (p_k p_j)}$$

Requires re-computation of S-MC@NLO matching terms

# The problem – Part II: Coherence effects

[Jikia] Phys.Lett.B257(1991)196, [Khoze,Stirling,Orr] Nucl.Phys.B378(1992)413

- ME squared above & close to threshold consists mainly of  $tb$  dipoles

$$B_i^2 = \frac{2p_i q_i}{(p_i p_j)(p_j q_i)} - \frac{m_t^2}{(p_j q_i)^2}, \quad \begin{array}{l} p_i - b \text{ momentum} \\ q_i - t \text{ momentum} \\ p_j - g \text{ momentum} \end{array}$$

- Additional contributions from the  $t\bar{t}$  dipole suppressed by top-quark velocity
- But width suppressed interference survives, even close to threshold:

$$2\text{Re}[B_i B_k^*] = \frac{\Gamma_t^2}{E_j^2 + \Gamma_t^2} \left( \frac{q_i q_k}{(q_i p_j)(p_j q_k)} - \frac{p_i q_k}{(p_i p_j)(p_j q_k)} + \frac{p_i p_k}{(p_i p_j)(p_k p_j)} - \frac{p_k q_i}{(p_k p_j)(p_j q_i)} \right)$$

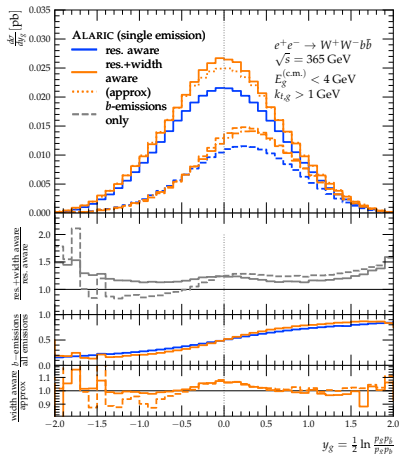
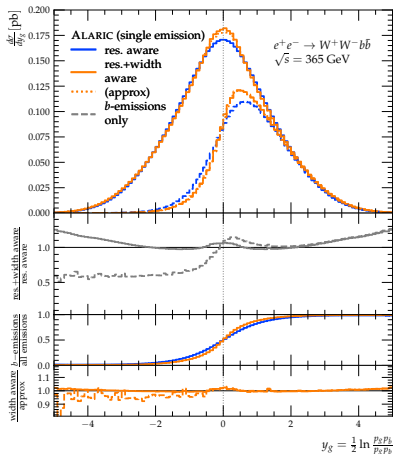
- Defines width-aware splitting kernel

$$V_{ij,k}^{(s,w)}(p_i, p_j, p_k, q_i) = V_{ij,k}^{(s,CS)}(p_i, p_j, p_k) + 8\pi\mu^{2\varepsilon}\alpha_s C_i \chi(z) \left( \frac{2(p_i q_i)}{(p_i p_j) + (q_i p_j)} - \frac{2(p_i p_k)}{(p_i p_j) + (p_k p_j)} \right)$$

where  $\chi(z) = (1-z)^2 / [(1-z)^2 + \gamma^2]$

# Width aware evolution

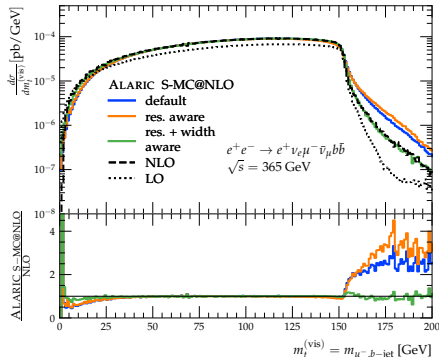
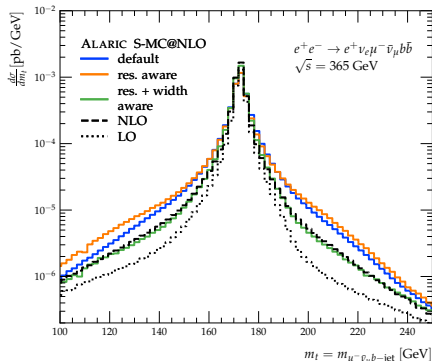
[Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2604.13978



- Lund-plane rapidity of first parton-shower emission
- Width-awareness affects central region → emissions more forward

# Width aware NLO matching

[Reichelt,SH] arXiv:2604.13978



- Truth-level reconstructed top-quark virtuality
- Standard vs. width-aware S-MC@NLO

- Particle-level reconstructed lepton- $b$ -jet virtuality

# Summary & Outlook

Current and future developments of Alaric:

- Higher-order corrections
  - NLO splitting functions
- Fixed-order matching
  - MC@NLO for initial-state evolution
  - Fully differential NNLO matching
- Practicalities
  - Release as part of Sherpa 3.1.x
  - Several components available in Python