

# Almost harmonic Maass forms and Kac-Wakimoto characters

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*joint work with*

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## Questions of Kac:

Investigate

- **automorphic properties**
- **asymptotic behaviors**

of characters for affine Lie superalgebras  $sl(m|n)^\wedge$ .

## History

- **Monstrous Moonshine:**

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$$\text{Rogers-Ramanujan identities} \longleftrightarrow A_1^{(1)} \text{ characters.}$$

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- etc.

## A character formula for $n = 1$ :

Proposition (Kac, Wakimoto '01)

For  $m \geq 2$ ,  $s \in \mathbb{Z}$ , we have

$$tr_s(m, 1) = 2q^{\frac{m-2}{24} - \frac{s}{2}} \cdot \frac{\eta^2(2\tau)}{\eta^{m+2}(\tau)} \sum_{\vec{k} \in \mathbb{Z}^{m-1}} \frac{q^{\frac{1}{2} \sum_i k_i(k_i+1)}}{1 + q^{-s + \sum_i k_i}}$$

$$q = q_\tau := e^{2\pi i \tau}, \tau \in \mathbb{H}, \quad \eta(\tau) := q^{\frac{1}{24}} \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} (1 - q^k)$$

# Kac-Wakimoto characters

**A generating function for  $n \geq 1$ :**

Proposition (Kac, Wakimoto '01)

For  $m \geq 2, n \geq 1$ , we have

$$\sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z}} \text{tr}_s(m, n) \zeta^s = \prod_{n=1}^{\infty} (1 - q^n) \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{\left[ \left(1 + \zeta q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \left(1 + \zeta^{-1} q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \right]^m}{\left[ \left(1 - \zeta q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \left(1 - \zeta^{-1} q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \right]^n}$$

$$\zeta = e^{2\pi iz}$$



- I. Automorphic properties
- $n = 1$  [Bringmann-Ono '09, F '11]
  - $n > 1$  [Bringmann-F '12]

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II. Asymptotic behaviors •  $n = 1$  [Bringmann-F '11]  
[Bringmann-Mahlburg '11]

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$$q = e^{2\pi i \tau}, \tau \in \mathbb{H}$$

## Refined question:

Relation between K-W characters and mock theta functions?

## Ramanujan's Mock $\theta$ -functions

Example.

$$f(q) = \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{q^{n^2}}{(-q; q)_n^2}$$

$$(a; q)_n := (1 - a)(1 - aq) \dots (1 - aq^{n-1})$$

## Remark.

$$f(q) = 2q^{1/24}\eta^{-1}(\tau) \cdot \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{(-1)^n q^{\frac{3n^2}{2} + \frac{n}{2}}}{1 + q^n}$$

# Mock theta functions

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S. Zwegers '02: The mock theta functions may be “completed” to transform as non-holomorphic modular forms.



# Zwegers's work

Let  $\tau \in \mathbb{H}$ ,  $u, v \in \mathbb{C} \setminus (\mathbb{Z}\tau + \mathbb{Z})$ ,  $z := e^{2\pi i u}$ ,  $w := e^{2\pi i v}$ ,  $q = e^{2\pi i \tau}$ .

## Appell-Lerch sums

$$\mu(u, v; \tau) := \frac{z^{1/2}}{\vartheta(v; \tau)} \cdot \sum_{n \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{(-w)^n q^{n(n+1)/2}}{1 - zq^n}$$

$$\vartheta(v; \tau) := \sum_{\nu \in \mathbb{Z} + \frac{1}{2}} e^{\pi i \nu} w^\nu q^{\nu^2/2}.$$

## Zwegers's completion:

$$\widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau) := \mu(u, v; \tau) + \frac{i}{2}R(u - v; \tau)$$

$$R(u; \tau) := \sum_{\nu \in \mathbb{Z} + \frac{1}{2}} (-1)^{\nu - \frac{1}{2}} \left\{ \operatorname{sgn}(\nu) - E\left((\nu + c)\sqrt{2\operatorname{Im}(\tau)}\right) \right\} e^{-2\pi i \nu u} q^{-\nu^2/2}$$

$$E(x) := 2 \int_0^x e^{-\pi u^2} du = \operatorname{sgn}(x)(1 - \beta(x^2))$$

$$\beta(x) := \int_x^\infty u^{-\frac{1}{2}} e^{-\pi u} du$$

# Zwegers's work

## Theorem (Zwegers '02)

Assuming the notation and hypotheses above,

- i.  $\widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau) = \widehat{\mu}(v, u; \tau),$
- ii.  $\widehat{\mu}(u + 1, v; \tau) = z^{-1} w q^{-\frac{1}{2}} \widehat{\mu}(u + \tau, v; \tau) = -\widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau),$
- iii.  $\zeta_8 \widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau + 1) = (-\tau/i)^{-\frac{1}{2}} e^{\pi i(u-v)^2/\tau} \widehat{\mu}\left(\frac{u}{\tau}, \frac{v}{\tau}; -\frac{1}{\tau}\right) = \widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau),$
- iv.  $\widehat{\mu}\left(\frac{u}{\gamma\tau+\delta}, \frac{v}{\gamma\tau+\delta}; \frac{\alpha\tau+\beta}{\gamma\tau+\delta}\right) = \chi(A)^{-3} (\gamma\tau + \delta)^{\frac{1}{2}} e^{-\pi i \gamma(u-v)^2/(\gamma\tau+\delta)} \cdot \widehat{\mu}(u, v; \tau).$

# Harmonic Maass forms

## Definition (Bruinier-Funke, '04)

A *harmonic Maass form* of weight  $k \in \frac{1}{2}\mathbb{Z}$  on  $\Gamma_0(4N)$  is a smooth  $f : \mathbb{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$  satisfying

- $\forall A \in \Gamma_0(4N), \tau \in \mathbb{H},$

$$f(A\tau) = \begin{cases} \left(\frac{c}{d}\right)^{2k} \epsilon_d^{-2k} (c\tau + d)^k f(\tau), & k \in \frac{1}{2}\mathbb{Z} - \mathbb{Z} \\ (c\tau + d)^k f(\tau), & k \in \mathbb{Z} \end{cases}$$

- $\Delta_k f = 0$ , where  $\Delta_k := -y^2 \left( \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2}{\partial y^2} \right) + iky \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + i \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \right)$
- $f$  has at most linear exponential growth at all cusps.

$$\epsilon_d := \begin{cases} 1, & d \equiv 1 \pmod{4}, \\ i, & d \equiv 3 \pmod{4}. \end{cases}$$

$$\tau := x + iy \in \mathbb{H}$$

**Decomposition:**  $f = f^+ + f^-$

$$f^+ := \sum_{n \gg -\infty} c_f^+(n) q^n \quad \text{“holomorphic part”}$$

$$f^- := \sum_{n < 0} c_f^-(n, y) q^n \quad \text{“non-holomorphic part”}$$

## “Definition”

A **mock modular form** is the holomorphic part of a harmonic Maass form.

## Case $n=1$ :

Theorem (Bringmann-Ono, '09)

*Assuming the notation and hypotheses above, we have that*

$$\frac{1}{2}q^{-\frac{s^2}{2(m-1)} + \frac{1}{2} - \frac{m}{24}} \operatorname{tr}_s(m; 1) = 2^{m-2} q^{-\frac{s^2}{2(m-1)}} \frac{\eta^{2m}(2\tau)}{\eta^{2m+1}(\tau)} R(-s\tau; (m-1)\tau)$$

*is a non-holomorphic modular function (i.e. weight 0).*

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i.e. up to a  $q$ -power,  $tr_s(m; 1)$  is a **mixed mock modular form**,

*the product of a holomorphic modular and a mock modular form.*

# Mock theta functions

Universal Mock Theta Functions [Gordon-McIntosh]:

$$g_2(w; q) := \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{(-q; q)_n q^{\frac{n^2+n}{2}}}{(w; q)_{n+1} (qw^{-1}; q)_{n+1}}$$

$$g_3(w; q) := \sum_{n \geq 0} \frac{q^{n^2+n}}{(w; q)_{n+1} (qw^{-1}; q)_{n+1}}$$

All original mock- $\theta$ 's may be obtained from  $g_2$  and  $g_3$ .

# Mock theta functions

## Universal Mock Theta Functions

### Example

$$f(-q) = -4qg_3(q; q^4) + \frac{(q^2; q^2)_\infty^7}{(q; q)_\infty^3 (q^4; q^4)_\infty^3}$$

## Case $n=1$ :

### Theorem (F, '10)

The following are true.

(i) For  $m \geq 2$ ,  $s \in \mathbb{Z}$  we have

$$g_2 \left( q^{\frac{m-1}{4} - \frac{s}{2}}; q^{\frac{m-1}{2}} \right) = \widehat{\Theta}_m(\tau) \operatorname{tr}_s(m, 1) - \eta_{m,s}(\tau).$$

(ii) For  $m \in 3\mathbb{N} + 1$  and  $s \in \mathbb{Z}$  we have

$$g_3 \left( q^{\frac{m-1}{9} - \frac{s}{3}}; q^{\frac{m-1}{3}} \right) = \widehat{\Theta}_m(\tau) (q^P \cdot \operatorname{tr}_s(m, 1) + q^{-P} \cdot \operatorname{tr}_{s+\frac{r}{3}}(m, 1)) - \beta_{m,s}(\tau).$$

(iii) For  $m \in 6\mathbb{N} + 1$  and  $s \equiv \frac{m-1}{6} \pmod{m-1}$  we have

$$g_3 \left( q^{\frac{m-1}{9} - \frac{s}{3}}; q^{\frac{m-1}{3}} \right) = \widehat{\Theta}_m(\tau) \cdot q^{\frac{m-1}{36} + \frac{s}{6}} \cdot \operatorname{tr}_s(m, 1) - \psi_{m,s}(\tau).$$

## Case $n=1$ :

Corollary. (F, '10)

*Ramanujan's mock- $\theta$  functions are K-W characters.*

## Example

$$f(-q) = -4q\widehat{\Theta}_{12}(\tau) \left( q^{\frac{1}{2}} tr_1(13, 1) + q^{-\frac{1}{2}} tr_5(13, 1) \right) + F(\tau)$$

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- Methods used for  $n = 1$  fail.

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- Characters do not appear to be mixed mock modular.



# Kac-Wakimoto characters

**Case  $n > 1$ :**

Theorem (Bringmann-F, '12)

*The Kac-Wakimoto characters  $tr_s(m, n)$  are **almost mock modular forms** of weight 0 and depth  $n/2$ .*

# Defining almost harmonic Maass forms

## Weight $\kappa$ Maass raising operator:

$$R_{\kappa} := 2i \frac{d}{d\tau} + \frac{\kappa}{y}$$

$$R_{\kappa}^n := R_{\kappa+2(n-1)} \circ \cdots \circ R_{\kappa+2} \circ R_{\kappa}$$

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i.e.

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} F \text{ weight } \kappa \\ \Delta_\kappa(F) = sF \end{array} \right\} \xrightarrow{R_\kappa} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} R_\kappa F \text{ weight } \kappa + 2 \\ \Delta_{\kappa+2}(R_\kappa F) = (s + \kappa)R_\kappa F \end{array} \right\}$$

# Defining almost harmonic Maass forms

## Definition (Kaneko-Zagier)

An **almost holomorphic modular form of weight  $\kappa$**  on  $\Gamma \subseteq \mathrm{SL}_2(\mathbb{Z})$  is a function  $F : \mathbb{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$  satisfying

1  $F(\gamma\tau) = (c\tau + d)^\kappa F(\tau) \quad \forall \gamma := \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \Gamma,$

2  $F(\tau) = \sum_{j=0}^r \frac{f_j(\tau)}{y^j},$  where  $f_j(\tau)$  is holomorphic,  $0 \leq j \leq r.$

# Defining almost harmonic Maass forms

**Example.**

$$\widehat{E}_2(\tau) := E_2(\tau) - \frac{3}{\pi y}$$

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Here, the “holomorphic part” is the **quasimodular form**

$$E_2(\tau) := 1 - 24 \sum_{n \geq 1} \sigma_1(n) q^n.$$

$$\sigma_1(n) := \sum_{d|n} d$$

# Almost harmonic Maass forms

## Definition (Bringmann-F, '12)

An **almost harmonic Maass form** (almost HMF) of weight  $\kappa \in \frac{1}{2}\mathbb{Z}$  and depth  $r$  for  $\Gamma$  is a function  $f : \mathbb{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$  satisfying

$$\mathbf{1} \quad f|_{\kappa}\gamma(\tau) = \chi(d)f(\tau)$$

$$\mathbf{2} \quad f = \sum_{j=0}^r g_j R_{\kappa+2-\nu}^{j-1}(g),$$

where  $g$  = harmonic Maass form weight  $\kappa + 2 - \nu$ ,

$g_j$  = almost holomorphic modular form weight  $\nu - 2j$ ,

$\nu \in \frac{1}{2}\mathbb{Z}$  fixed.

# Almost harmonic Maass forms

## Structure of almost HMFs:

almost hol. modular ↘

↙ harmonic Maass

$$f = \sum_{j=0}^r \underbrace{g_j}_{\text{weight } \nu-2j} \underbrace{R_{\kappa+2-\nu}^{j-1}(g)}_{\text{weight } \kappa-\nu+2j}$$

weight  $\kappa$



# Almost harmonic Maass forms

## Examples.

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- Harmonic Mass forms are almost HMFs of depth  $r = 0$ .
- Almost hol. modular forms are almost HMFs of depth  $r = 1$ .

# Almost mock modular forms

## “Definition”

An **almost mock modular form** is the holomorphic part of an almost harmonic Maass form.

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

*Sketch of proof of main theorem for  $n > 1$ :*

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Proposition (Kac, Wakimoto '01)

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$$\sum_{s \in \mathbb{Z}} \text{tr}_s(m, n) \zeta^s = \prod_{n=1}^{\infty} (1 - q^n) \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{\left[ \left(1 + \zeta q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \left(1 + \zeta^{-1} q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \right]^m}{\left[ \left(1 - \zeta q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \left(1 - \zeta^{-1} q^{k-\frac{1}{2}}\right) \right]^n}$$

$$\zeta = e^{2\pi iz}$$

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$$\varphi(z; \tau) := \frac{\vartheta\left(z + \frac{1}{2}; \tau\right)^m}{\vartheta(z; \tau)^n}$$

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$$\varphi(z; \tau) := \frac{\vartheta\left(z + \frac{1}{2}; \tau\right)^m}{\vartheta(z; \tau)^n}$$

where

$$\vartheta(z; \tau) := \sum_{\nu \in \mathbb{Z} + \frac{1}{2}} e^{\pi i \nu} \zeta^\nu q^{\nu^2/2}.$$



# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

$\varphi(z; \tau)$  transforms like a **Jacobi form** of index and weight  $\frac{m-n}{2}$ :

$$\mathbf{1} \quad \varphi(z + \lambda\tau + \mu) = q^{-\frac{(m-n)\lambda^2}{2}} e^{-2\pi i(m-n)\lambda z} \varphi(z; \tau), \quad \lambda, \mu \in \mathbb{Z}$$

$$\mathbf{2} \quad \varphi\left(\frac{z}{c\tau+d}; \gamma\tau\right) = \chi(\gamma)(c\tau+d)^{\frac{m-n}{2}} e^{\frac{\pi icz^2(m-n)}{c\tau+d}} \varphi(z; \tau),$$

$$\gamma = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} \in \Gamma_0(2).$$

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

## Remark.

The Jacobi form  $\varphi(z; \tau)$  is **meromorphic**, with poles of order  $n > 1$ .  
Eichler-Zagier theory of **holomorphic** Jacobi forms doesn't directly apply.

# Holomorphic Jacobi forms

A theta decomposition:

## Proposition (Eichler-Zagier)

*Holomorphic Jacobi forms  $\phi(z; \tau)$  of weight  $\kappa$  and index  $M$  satisfy*

$$\phi(z; \tau) = \sum_{b \pmod{2M}} h_b(\tau) \vartheta_{M,b}(z; \tau),$$

*where  $(h_b(\tau))_{b \pmod{2M}}$  is a vector valued modular form of weight  $\kappa - \frac{1}{2}$ .*

$$\vartheta_{M,b}(z; \tau) := \sum_{\substack{\lambda \in \mathbb{Z} \\ \lambda \equiv b \pmod{2M}}} e^{\frac{\pi i \lambda^2 \tau}{2M} + 2\pi i \lambda z}$$

# Meromorphic Jacobi forms

Question. What is the analogue of the theta decomposition of **holomorphic** Jacobi forms in the **meromorphic** case?

1 Case  $\phi(z; \tau)$  has simple or double poles [Dabholkar-Murthy-Zagier, '12]

$$\phi(z; \tau) = \phi^F(z; \tau) + \phi^P(z; \tau),$$

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“finite part”



“polar part”

# Meromorphic Jacobi forms

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The **finite part**  $\phi^F(z; \tau) = \sum_{b \pmod{2M}} h_b(\tau) \vartheta_{M,b}(z; \tau)$

is a **mixed mock Jacobi form**.

# Meromorphic Jacobi forms

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The coefficient functions  $h_b(\tau)$  are **mixed mock modular forms**.



# Meromorphic Jacobi forms

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**Remark 1.**  $\phi^F$  and  $\phi^P$  are completed to non-holomorphic Jacobi forms  $\widehat{\phi}^F$  and  $\widehat{\phi}^P$ , respectively.

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**Remark 1.**  $\phi^F$  and  $\phi^P$  are completed to non-holomorphic Jacobi forms  $\widehat{\phi}^F$  and  $\widehat{\phi}^P$ , respectively.

**Remark 2.** Proof uses Zwegers's mock Jacobi forms of index  $M$ .

# Meromorphic Jacobi forms

2 Case  $\phi(z; \tau)$  has poles of arbitrary order  $n \geq 1$ .

**Question.** What can we say about meromorphic Jacobi forms in general?

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

## Theorem (Bringmann-F, '12)

*For the meromorphic Jacobi form  $\varphi(z; \tau)$  (poles order  $n$ ), we have the decomposition*

$$\varphi(z; \tau) = \varphi^F(z; \tau) + \varphi^P(z; \tau).$$

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

In our setting (Kac-Wakimoto characters),

$$\varphi^F(z; \tau) := \sum_{\ell \in \mathbb{Z}} h_{\ell}(\tau) q^{\frac{\ell^2}{2(m-n)}} \zeta^{\ell} = \sum_{\ell \pmod{m-n}} h_{\ell}(\tau) \vartheta_{\frac{(m-n)}{2}, \ell}(z; \tau),$$

$$\varphi^P(z; \tau) := - \sum_{j=1}^{\frac{n}{2}} \frac{\tilde{D}_{2j}(\tau)}{(2j-1)!} \delta_{\varepsilon}^{2j-1} \left[ f_{\varepsilon}^{\left(\frac{m-n}{2}\right)}(z; \tau) \right]_{\varepsilon=0}.$$

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*quasimodular forms* ↘

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*diff. operator* ↑

↙ *mock Jacobi*



# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

$$f_{\varepsilon}^{(M)}(z; \tau) := \sum_{k \in \mathbb{Z}} \frac{e^{4\pi i M k z} q^{M k^2}}{1 - e^{2\pi i (z - \varepsilon)} q^k},$$

$$\delta_{\varepsilon} := \frac{1}{2\pi i} \frac{d}{d\varepsilon}.$$

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

## Theorem (Bringmann-F, '12)

(1) *The functions  $\varphi^P$  and  $\varphi^F$  may be completed to nonholomorphic Jacobi forms  $\widehat{\varphi}^P$  and  $\widehat{\varphi}^F$ , respectively, of weight and index  $\frac{m-n}{2}$ .*

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(1) The functions  $\varphi^P$  and  $\varphi^F$  may be completed to nonholomorphic Jacobi forms  $\widehat{\varphi}^P$  and  $\widehat{\varphi}^F$ , respectively, of weight and index  $\frac{m-n}{2}$ .

(2) The coefficient functions  $h_\ell(\tau)$  are **almost mock modular forms** of weight  $\frac{m-n-1}{2}$  and depth  $\frac{n}{2}$ .

# Kac-Wakimoto characters (proof sketch)

Corollary (Bringmann-F, '12)

*In particular, the Kac Wakimoto characters  $\mathrm{tr}_\ell(m, n)$  are **almost mock modular forms** of weight 0 and depth  $\frac{n}{2}$ .*

# Almost harmonic Maass forms

## Structure of almost HMFs:

almost hol. modular ↘

↙ harmonic Maass

$$f = \sum_{j=0}^r \underbrace{g_j}_{\text{weight } \nu-2j} \underbrace{R_{\kappa+2-\nu}^{j-1}(g)}_{\text{weight } \kappa-\nu+2j}$$

weight  $\kappa$

## Example 1. [n=2, double pole]

In this case, the completed

$$\widehat{h}_\ell(\tau) \frac{\eta(\tau)^{m+6}}{\eta(2\tau)^{2m}}$$

is a harmonic Maass form of weight  $\frac{3}{2}$  with shadow

$$\vartheta_{\frac{m-2}{2}, \ell}(0; \tau).$$

## Example 2. [n=4, pole order 4]

In this case, the completed  $\widehat{h}_\ell$  is an almost harmonic Maass form of wgt.  $\frac{3}{2}$ , depth 2 given by

$$\widehat{h}_\ell(\tau) = \sum_{j=1}^2 D_{2j}(\tau) R_{\frac{3}{2}}^{j-1}(g(\tau)),$$

## Example 2. [n=4, pole order 4] (cont.)

where  $D_4$  and  $D_2$  are the *almost holomorphic modular forms*

$$D_4(\tau) = 2^m \frac{\eta(2\tau)^{2m}}{\eta(\tau)^{m+12}},$$

$$D_2(\tau) = 2^m \frac{\eta(2\tau)^{2m}}{\eta(\tau)^{m+12}} \left( \left( -\frac{m}{24} - \frac{1}{6} \right) E_2(\tau) + \frac{m}{6} E_2(2\tau) \right) \\ + \frac{2^{m-3}(4-m)}{\pi y} \frac{\eta(2\tau)^{2m}}{\eta(\tau)^{m+12}}.$$



## Example 2. [n=4, pole order 4] (cont.)

The form  $g(\tau)$  is a harmonic Maass form with shadow  $\vartheta_{\frac{m-4}{2}, \ell}(0; \tau)$ .

## Further work:

- Bringmann-Creutzig-Rolen, '14
- Olivetto '14
- Bringmann-F-Mahlburg '15
- Bringmann-Rolen-Zwegers '16
- Brigmann-Olivetto '17
- ⋮

Thank you