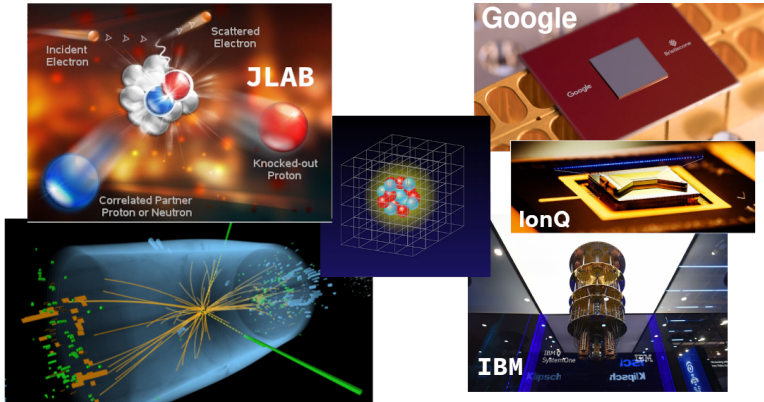


# Tuesday lectures: measurements and time-evolution

Alessandro Roggero



Trento Institute for  
Fundamental Physics  
and Applications

DNP/TALENT School

ECT\* – 17 June, 2025



# What is a Quantum Computer?

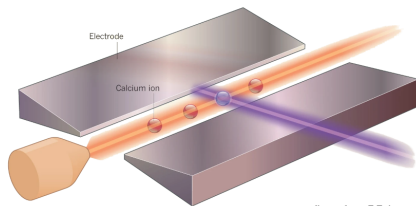


figure from E.Zohar

A Quantum Computer is a controllable quantum many-body system that allows to enact unitary transformations on an initial state  $\rho_0$

$$\rho_0 \rightarrow U \rho_0 U^\dagger$$

$n$  degrees of freedom so  $\rho \in \mathcal{H}^{\otimes n}$

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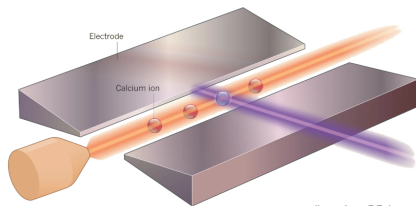


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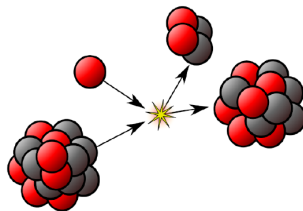
$n$  degrees of freedom so  $\rho \in \mathcal{H}^{\otimes n}$

In a Quantum Simulation we want to use this freedom to describe the time-evolution of a closed system

$$\rho(t) \rightarrow U(t) \rho_0 U(t)^\dagger$$

described by some Hamiltonian

$$U(t) = \exp(itH) .$$



# Black box model for a quantum computer



Blume-Kohout et al. (2013)

Box contains  $n$  qubits (2-level sys.) together with a set of buttons

- initial state preparation  $\rho$
- projective measurement  $\mathcal{M}$
- quantum operations  $G_k$

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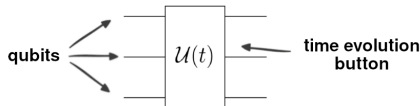
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- 1 discretize the physical problem
- 2 map physical states to bb states

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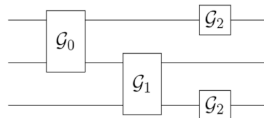
## Solovay–Kitaev Theorem

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- 1 discretize the physical problem
- 2 map physical states to bb states
- 3 push correct button sequence

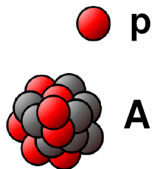
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# Steps in a quantum simulation

The quantum simulation of a nuclear reaction requires three main steps

## State preparation

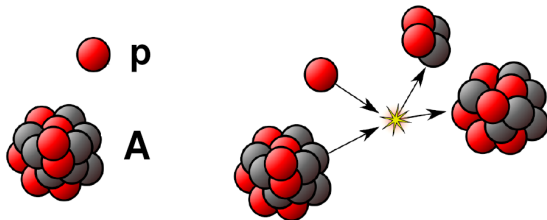


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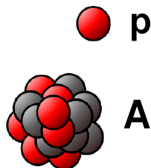
**Time  
evolution**



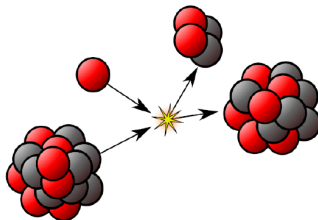
# Steps in a quantum simulation

The quantum simulation of a nuclear reaction requires three main steps

**State  
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**Time  
evolution**



**Measurement**



Today we will focus on the last two steps: time-evolution and measurement

# Quick recap of quantum gates

## single-qubit gates

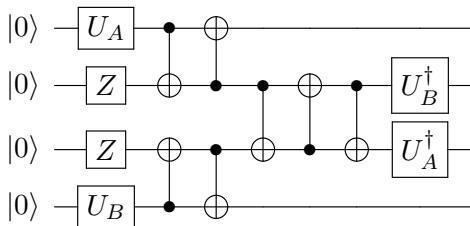
$$\text{---} \boxed{R_{\hat{n}}(\theta)} \text{---} = \exp\left(i\theta \frac{\hat{n} \cdot \vec{\sigma}}{2}\right)$$

$$\sigma_x = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \text{---} \boxed{X} \text{---}$$

$$\sigma_y = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \text{---} \boxed{Y} \text{---}$$

$$\sigma_z = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} = \text{---} \boxed{Z} \text{---}$$

$$S = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix} = \text{---} \boxed{S} \text{---}$$



## two-qubit entangling gate

$$\text{CNOT} = \text{---} \begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ | \\ \oplus \end{array} \text{---} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$|\Phi_0\rangle = a|00\rangle + b|01\rangle + c|10\rangle + d|11\rangle$$

$$|\Phi_1\rangle = a|00\rangle + b|01\rangle + c|11\rangle + d|10\rangle$$

**EXERCISE:** show that  $\forall U_A, U_B$  the output of the circuit above is  $|0000\rangle$

# Quick recap of quantum gates II

## Hadamard Gate

$$H = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- rotates between  $Z$  and  $X$  basis

$$\left. \begin{aligned} H|0\rangle &= |+\rangle \\ H|1\rangle &= |-\rangle \end{aligned} \right\} X|\pm\rangle = \pm|\pm\rangle$$

- generates uniform superposition

$$|0\rangle \xrightarrow{H}$$

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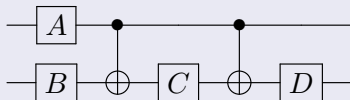
$$H^{\otimes 3} |0\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^3}} \sum_{k=0}^{2^3-1} |k\rangle$$

## Generic controlled unitary

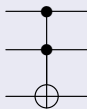
$$\begin{array}{c} \bullet \\ | \\ \hline \boxed{U} \end{array} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbb{1} & 0 \\ 0 & U \end{pmatrix}$$

### Single qubit $U$

Barenco et al. (1995)



### Controlled CNOT: Toffoli



$$= [6 \text{ CNOT} + 9 \text{ single qubit}]^*$$

\* see eg. Nielsen & Chuang

## Measuring an observable: single qubit case

Computational basis is eigenbasis of  $Z$  so that, if  $|\Psi\rangle = U_\Psi |0\rangle$ , we have

$$\langle\Psi|Z|\Psi\rangle = |\langle 0|\Psi\rangle|^2 - |\langle 1|\Psi\rangle|^2 \equiv |0\rangle \text{ --- } \boxed{U_\Psi} \text{ --- } \boxed{\text{meter symbol}}$$

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We now need to repeat calculation  $M$  times to estimate the probabilities

$$P(0) = |\langle 0|\Psi\rangle|^2 \sim \frac{\sum_k \delta_{s_k,0}}{M} \quad \text{Var} [P(0)] \sim \frac{v_0}{M} \longrightarrow 0 .$$



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Other expectation values accessible by basis transformation

$$X = V_X Z V_X^\dagger$$



$$Y = V_Y Z V_Y^\dagger$$



- for  $X$  we can use  $X = V_X Z V_X^\dagger$  where  $V_X$  is the Hadamard

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

- for  $Y$  we can use  $Y = S X S^\dagger$  so that  $V_Y = S V_X = S H$

## Measuring an observable: the Pauli group

Given a state  $|\Psi\rangle$  defined over  $n$  qubits and an encoded operator

$$O = \sum_{k=1}^{N_K} c_k P_k \quad P_k \in \{(\mathbb{1}, X, Y, Z)^{\otimes n}\}$$

we want to measure the expectation value  $\langle \Psi | O | \Psi \rangle$  [McClean et al. (2014)].

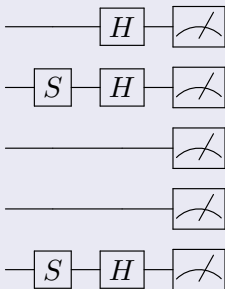
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Example:  $X_0 Y_1 Z_2 Z_3 Y_4$



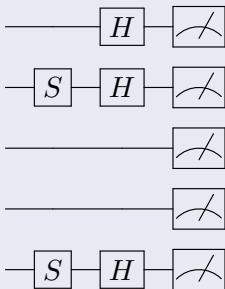
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- $\forall k$  perform  $M$  experiments to get  $\langle P_k \rangle$  with

$$\text{Var}[P_k] \sim \frac{\langle P_k^2 \rangle - \langle P_k \rangle^2}{M} = \frac{1 - \langle P_k \rangle^2}{M}$$

- we can now evaluate  $\langle O \rangle$  with variance

$$\text{Var}[O] = \sum_{k=1}^{N_K} |c_k|^2 \text{Var}[P_k]$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{total error} \propto \sqrt{N_K/M}.$$

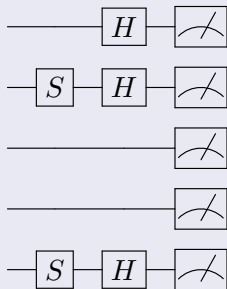
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- naive estimator has total error  $\propto \sqrt{N_K/M}$
- we can measure multiple terms together!

$$X_0 Y_1 Z_2 Z_3 Y_4 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} X_0 Y_1 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_2 Z_3 Y_4 \\ X_0 Y_1 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_2 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_3 Y_4 \\ \dots \\ \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_0 Y_1 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_2 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_3 \textcolor{blue}{\mathbb{1}}_4 \\ X_0 \textcolor{green}{X}_1 Z_2 Z_3 \textcolor{green}{X}_4 \\ \dots \end{array} \right. \Rightarrow \epsilon_{tot} \propto \sqrt{\frac{N_G}{M}}$$

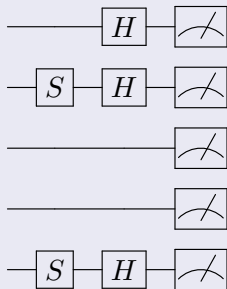
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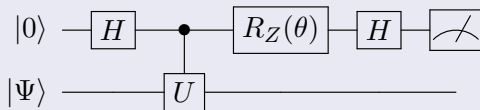


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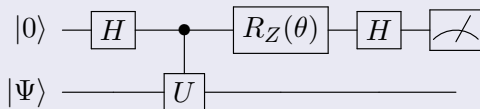
- can do much better  $M \approx \frac{\sqrt{N_K}}{\epsilon}$  [see 2111.09283]

## Measuring an observable: Hadamard test



Kitaev (1995)

# Measuring an observable: Hadamard test



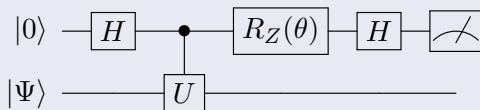
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When  $\theta = 0$  we have:

- 1  $|\Phi_0\rangle = |0\rangle \otimes |\Psi\rangle$
- 2  $|\Phi_1\rangle = \frac{|0\rangle + |1\rangle}{\sqrt{2}} \otimes |\Psi\rangle$
- 3  $|\Phi_2\rangle = \frac{|0\rangle \otimes |\Psi\rangle}{\sqrt{2}} + \frac{|1\rangle \otimes U|\Psi\rangle}{\sqrt{2}}$
- 4  $|\Phi_3\rangle = \frac{|0\rangle \otimes (\mathbb{1} + U)|\Psi\rangle}{2} + \frac{|1\rangle \otimes (\mathbb{1} - U)|\Psi\rangle}{2}$



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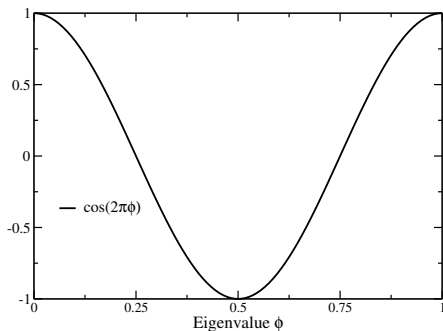
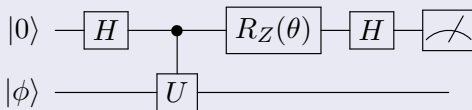
## Result of ancilla measurement

$$\langle Z \rangle_a = \frac{\langle \Psi | (U + U^\dagger) | \Psi \rangle}{2} = \mathcal{R} \langle \Psi | U | \Psi \rangle$$

**EXERCISE:** find the proper angle  $\theta$  needed to measure the imaginary part

## EXAMPLE: eigenvalue estimation

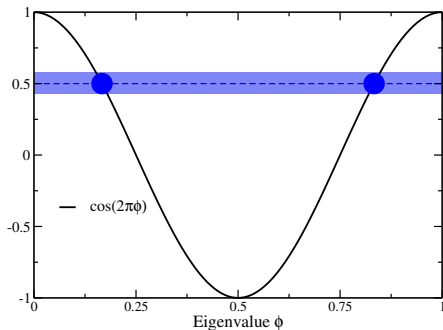
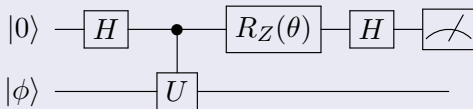
Take a unitary  $U$  and an eigenvector  $|\phi\rangle$  so that:  $U|\phi\rangle = e^{i2\pi\phi}|\phi\rangle$



- for  $\theta = 0$ :  $\langle Z \rangle_a = \cos(2\pi\phi)$

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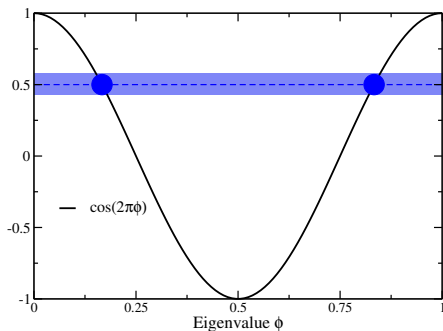
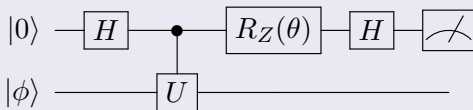


- for  $\theta = 0$ :  $\langle Z \rangle_a = \cos(2\pi\phi)$
- error  $\delta$  with  $M \propto 1/\delta^2$  samples:

$$\text{Var}[Z_a] \sim \frac{1}{M}$$

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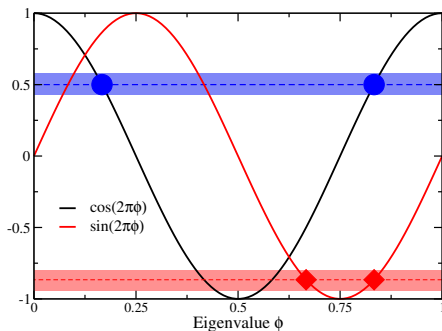
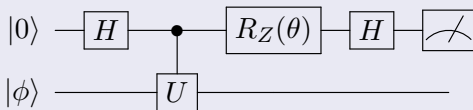
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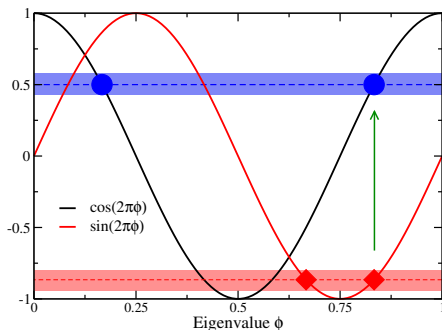
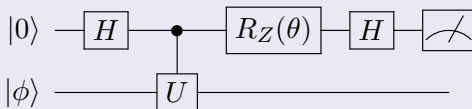
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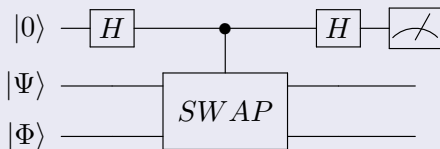
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## EXAMPLE 2: the SWAP test

- State Tomography: reconstruction of state  $|\Psi\rangle$  costs  $O(N)$  samples
- State Overlap: we can compute  $|\langle\Psi|\Phi\rangle|^2$  using only  $O(\log(N))$  gates

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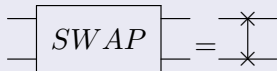


Buhrman, Cleve, Watrous & de Wolf (2001)

$$\Rightarrow \langle Z \rangle_a = |\langle\Psi|\Phi\rangle|^2$$

### The SWAP gate

$$\text{SWAP } |\Psi\rangle \otimes |\Phi\rangle = |\Phi\rangle \otimes |\Psi\rangle$$

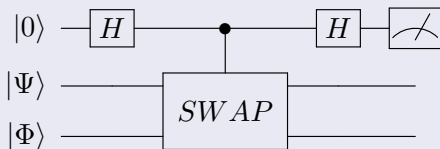


$$2 \text{ qubits} \Rightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$



## EXAMPLE 2: the SWAP test

- State Tomography: reconstruction of state  $|\Psi\rangle$  costs  $O(N)$  samples
- State Overlap: we can compute  $|\langle\Psi|\Phi\rangle|^2$  using only  $O(\log(N))$  gates

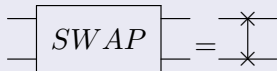


Buhrman, Cleve, Watrous & de Wolf (2001)

$$\Rightarrow \langle Z \rangle_a = |\langle\Psi|\Phi\rangle|^2$$

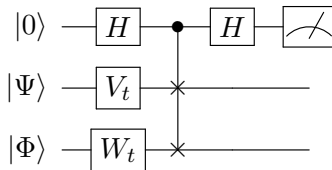
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Why should we care?



$$\Rightarrow M(\Psi \leftrightarrow \Phi) = \left| \langle\Psi|V_t^\dagger W_t|\Phi\rangle \right|^2$$

Efficient transition matrix element!

# What is a Quantum Computer?

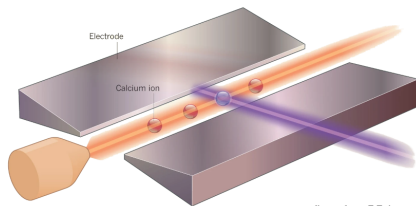


figure from E.Zohar

A Quantum Computer is a controllable quantum many-body system that allows to enact unitary transformations on an initial state  $\rho_0$

$$\rho_0 \rightarrow U \rho_0 U^\dagger$$

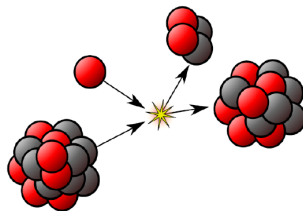
$n$  degrees of freedom so  $\rho \in \mathcal{H}^{\otimes n}$

In a Quantum Simulation we want to use this freedom to describe the time-evolution of a closed system

$$\rho(t) \rightarrow U(t) \rho_0 U(t)^\dagger$$

described by some Hamiltonian

$$U(t) = \exp(itH) .$$



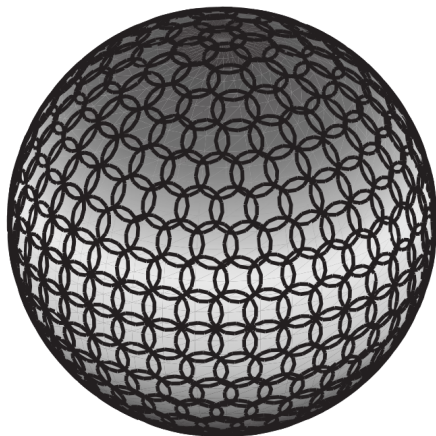
# Can we always do this?

image from Nielsen&Chuang

Any unitary operation can be thought as the time evolution operator for some (Hermitian) Hamiltonian

$$U \leftrightarrow e^{iH}$$

A simple counting argument shows that for a fixed choice of universal buttons (quantum gates) there are unitary operations on  $n$  qubits which will require  $O(2^n)$  operations



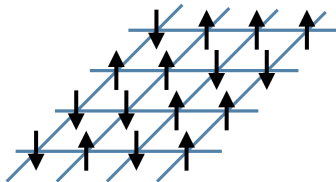
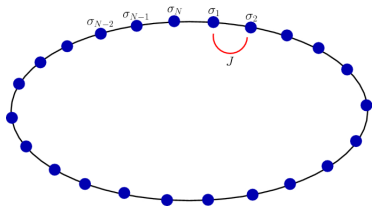
We can find Hamiltonians whose time evolution cannot be simulated efficiently

# Efficient Hamiltonian Simulation

Hamiltonians encountered in physics have usually structure, like locality

$$H_{Ising}^{1D} = J \sum_{i=1}^N Z_i Z_{i+1} + h \sum_{i=1}^N X_i$$

$$H_{Heis}^{1D} = J \sum_{i=1}^N \vec{\sigma}_i \cdot \vec{\sigma}_{i+1}$$



$$H_{Ising}^{2D} = J \sum_{\langle i,j \rangle} Z_i Z_j + h \sum_i X_i$$

$$H_{Heis}^{2D} = J \sum_{\langle i,j \rangle} \vec{\sigma}_i \cdot \vec{\sigma}_j$$

All these situations are examples of 2-local spin Hamiltonians

# Quantum Simulation of k-local Hamiltonians

- locality constraints number of terms appearing in the Hamiltonian
- one can approximate full evolution with products of evolutions

$$e^{it(A+B)} = e^{itA}e^{itB} + \mathcal{O}(t^2\|[A, B]\|)$$

- locality constrains how expensive any individual term can be

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S. LLOYD (1996):  $k$ -local hamiltonians can be simulated efficiently

Consider a system of  $n$  qubits and a  $k$ -local Hamiltonian  $H = \sum_j^{N_j} h_j$  where each term  $h_j$  acts on at most  $k = \mathcal{O}(1)$  qubits at a time for  $N_j = \mathcal{O}(\text{poly}(n))$ , then using the Trotter-Suzuki decomposition

$$\left\| U(\tau) - \prod_j^{N_j} \exp(i\tau h_j) \right\| \leq C\tau^2$$

we can implement  $U(\tau)$  with error  $\epsilon$  using  $\mathcal{O}(\text{poly}(\tau, 1/\epsilon, n)4^k)$  gates.

## Explicit example: Ising chain

Let's consider for instance a simple 1D Ising chain with Hamiltonian

$$H = J \sum_{i=1}^{N-1} Z_i Z_{i+1} + h \sum_{i=1}^N X_i$$

Since  $[Z_i, X_i] \neq 0$  the following decomposition is only an approximation

$$e^{-itH} \approx e^{-iJtZ_1Z_2} e^{-iJtZ_2Z_3} \dots e^{-iJtZ_{N-1}Z_N} e^{-ithX_1} e^{-ithX_2} \dots e^{-ithX_N}$$

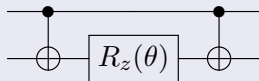
How good is the approximation above? If we collect all the two-qubit  $Z$ s in  $H_Z$  and the transverse fields in  $H_X$  we have

$$\|e^{-itH} - e^{-itH_Z} e^{-itH_X}\| \leq \frac{t^2}{2} \|[H_Z, H_X]\|$$

- for more check out: Childs et al. 1912.08854

### EXERCISE

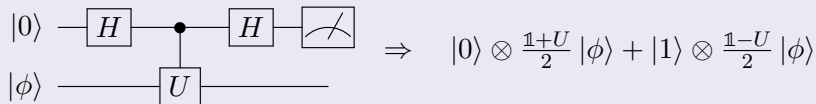
Show that  $U_2 = e^{-i\frac{\theta}{2}Z_1Z_2}$  is



## EXAMPLE 3: Can we apply a non-unitary operation?

YES, but only with some probability

- this can be useful for example if the transition matrix element we considered before is generated by a non unitary operator



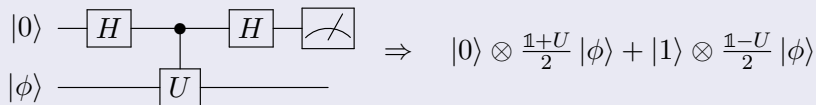
- we will measure  $|0\rangle$  with  $P_0 = \frac{1}{2} (1 + \mathcal{R}\langle\phi|U|\phi\rangle) \Rightarrow |\phi_0\rangle = \frac{1+U}{2\sqrt{P_0}} |\phi\rangle$



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### Concrete example: projection operators

If we take  $U$  to be the reflection around  $|\psi\rangle$ , like  $U = (2|\psi\rangle\langle\psi| - \mathbb{1})$ , we find

$$P_0 = |\langle\phi|\psi\rangle|^2 \Rightarrow |\phi_0\rangle = \frac{|\psi\rangle\langle\psi|}{\sqrt{P_0}} |\phi\rangle = |\psi\rangle$$