











**3** The midpoint of a piano string of tension  $T$ , density  $\rho$ , and length  $l$  is hit by a hammer whose head diameter is  $2a$ . A flea is sitting at a distance  $l/4$  from one end. (Assume that  $a < l/4$ ; otherwise, poor flea!) How long does it take for the disturbance to reach the flea?

slu.

The hammer hits the midpoint of the string at  $l/2$ , since the hammer head is  $2a$ , at  $t = 0$ , the hammer extends from  $l/2 - a$  to  $l/2 + a$ . This generates two waves going at wave speed  $c = \sqrt{T/\rho}$ .

The wave speed is constant thus  $\Delta x = \sqrt{T/\rho}t$ .

The distance between the right side of the string that hits the hammer to the point  $3l/4$  where the flea is sitting is,

$$3l/4 - (l/2 + a) = l/4 - a = \Delta x$$

$$\Rightarrow l/4 - a = \sqrt{T/\rho}t \Rightarrow t = \sqrt{\rho/T}(l/4 - a) \quad \diamond$$

**9** Solve  $u_{xx} - 3u_{xt} - 4u_{tt} = 0$ ,  $u(x, 0) = x^2$ ,  $u_t(x, 0) = e^x$ . (Hint: Factor the operator as we did for the wave equation.)

slu.

$$u_{xx} - 3u_{xt} - 4u_{tt} = 0 \Leftrightarrow \left( \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} - 3\frac{\partial^2}{\partial x \partial t} - 4\frac{\partial^2}{\partial t^2} \right) u = 0 \Leftrightarrow \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - 4\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) u = 0$$

Let  $v = \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) u$ ,

$$\left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} - 4\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) v = 0 \Rightarrow v_x - 4v_t = 0 \Rightarrow -v_x + 4v_t = 0 \Rightarrow v(x, t) = f(4x + t)$$

$$v = \left( \frac{\partial}{\partial x} + \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \right) u \Rightarrow u_x + u_t = f(4x + t)$$

$$u_x(x, 0) = 2x \text{ and } u_t(x, 0) = e^x \Rightarrow 2x + e^x = f(4x)$$

Let  $g(s) = \frac{1}{4}s$  and  $h(s) = 2s + e^s$

$$f = h \circ g \Rightarrow f(4x + t) = h(x + \frac{1}{4}t) = 2x + \frac{1}{2}t + e^{x+\frac{1}{4}t} \Rightarrow f(4x + 0) = 2x + 0 + e^x + 0$$

So,  $f$  works, and we have,

$$u_x + u_t = 2x + \frac{1}{2}t + e^{x+\frac{1}{4}t} \quad (1)$$

Now the left hand side factors as,

$$u_x + u_t = \langle 1, 1 \rangle \nabla u$$

This suggests the following change of variables,  $y = x + t$  and  $z = x - t$  which gives,

$$u_x = u_y + u_z \text{ and } u_t = u_y - u_z$$

$$x = \frac{y+z}{2} \text{ and } t = \frac{y-z}{2}$$

Plugging into (1)

$$u_y + u_z + u_y - u_z = 2u_y = 2\frac{y+z}{2} + \frac{1}{2}\frac{y-z}{2} + e^{\frac{y+z}{2} + \frac{1}{4}\frac{y-z}{2}}$$

$$\Rightarrow u_y = \frac{y+z}{2} + \frac{1}{4}\frac{y-z}{2} + \frac{1}{2}e^{\frac{y+z}{2} + \frac{1}{4}\frac{y-z}{2}}$$



