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Quasinormal modes of black holes: review and recent updates

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Slightly perturbed dissipative systems display characteristic solutions that are not quite normal modes. Nevertheless, these quasi-normal modes encode valuable information about the underlying physics, as well as the nature of the preceding perturbation. In the case of black holes, this means that quasinormal modes may tell us not only about the source spacetime, but also about that spacetime's recent history. In this talk I will review the relationships between quasinormal modes and their source black hole, and I will discuss efforts to decode this information from current and future gravitational wave observations.

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