5/3/13 Lecture outline

⋆ Reading: Zwiebach chapters 6 and 7.

• Recall, $S_{string} = \int dtdx\mathcal{L}(\frac{\partial y}{\partial t}, \frac{\partial y}{\partial x})$, with momentum densities

$$\mathcal{P}^t = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \dot{y}}, \qquad \mathcal{P}^x = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial y'}.$$

Least action gives the equations of motion

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{P}^t}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial \mathcal{P}^x}{\partial x} = 0.$$

As we discussed last time, the relativistic string action is proportional to the string's worldsheet area in spacetime:

$$\mathcal{L}_{NG} = -\frac{T_0}{c}\sqrt{(\dot{X}\cdot X')^2 - (\dot{X})^2(X')^2},$$

and we have

$$\mathcal{P}^\tau_\mu = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \dot{X}^\mu} = -\frac{T_0}{c}\frac{(\dot{X}\cdot X')X'_\mu - (X')^2\dot{X}_\mu}{\sqrt{(\dot{X}\cdot X')^2 - (\dot{X})^2(X')^2}},$$

and

$$\mathcal{P}^\sigma_\mu = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial X^{\mu\prime}} = -\frac{T_0}{c}\frac{(\dot{X}\cdot X')\dot{X}_\mu - (\dot{X})^2 X'_\mu}{\sqrt{(\dot{X}\cdot X')^2 - (\dot{X})^2(X')^2}}.$$

The condition $\delta S = 0$ gives the Euler-Lagrange equations

$$\frac{\partial \mathcal{P}^\tau_\mu}{\partial \tau} + \frac{\partial \mathcal{P}^\sigma_\mu}{\partial \sigma} = 0.$$

For the open string, $\delta S = 0$ also requires $\int d\tau[\delta X^\mu P^\sigma_\mu]_0^{\sigma_0} = 0$, which requires for each μ index either of the Dirichlet or Neumann BCs, at each end:

$$\text{Dirichlet} \qquad \frac{\partial X^\mu}{\partial \tau}(\tau, \sigma_*) = 0 \qquad \to \qquad \delta X^\mu(\tau, \sigma_*) = 0,$$

$$\text{Neumann} \qquad \mathcal{P}^\sigma_\mu(\tau, \sigma_*) = 0.$$

• Exploit $(\tau, \sigma) \to (\tau', \sigma')$ reparameterization invariance to pick useful "gauges", to simplify the above equations. We will discuss choices such that we can impose constraints

$$\dot{X}\cdot X' = 0 \qquad \dot{X}^2 + X'^2 = 0. \tag{1}$$

In this case, we have

$$\mathcal{P}^{\tau\mu} = \frac{1}{2\pi\alpha'}\dot{X}^\mu \qquad \mathcal{P}^{\sigma\mu} = -\frac{1}{2\pi\alpha'}X^{\mu'}, \tag{2}$$

and then the EOM is simply a wave equation:

$$(\partial_\tau^2 - \partial_\sigma^2)X^\mu = 0. \tag{3}$$

Now let's explain these things in more detail.

• Static gauge: pick $\tau = t$. Verify sign inside $\sqrt{\cdot}$ in this case: $X^{\mu'} = (0, \vec{X}')$, $\dot{X}^\mu = (c, \dot{\vec{X}})$, take e.g. $\dot{\vec{X}} = 0$ to get $\sqrt{\cdot} = c|\vec{X}'|$.

• In static gauge, there is no KE, so $L = -V$, and verify that string stretched length a, e.g. $X^1 = f(\sigma)$, has $V = T_0 a$: $\dot{X}^2 \to -c^2$, $(X')^2 = (f')^2$, $\dot{X}\cdot X' = 0$, gives $V = T_0 a$. So $\mu_0 = T_0/c^2$.

• In static gauge, express S in terms of $\vec{v}_\perp = \partial_t\vec{X} - (\partial_t\vec{X}\cdot\partial_s\vec{X})\partial_s\vec{X}$ (with $ds \equiv |d\vec{X}|_{t=const} = |\partial_\sigma\vec{X}||d\sigma|$), show $(\dot{X}\cdot X')^2 - \dot{X}^2(X')^2 = (\frac{ds}{d\sigma})^2(c^2 - v_\perp^2)$, to get $L = -T_0\int ds\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}$. Also get

$$\mathcal{P}^{\sigma\mu} = -\frac{T_0}{c^2}\frac{(\partial_s\vec{X}\cdot\partial_t\vec{X})\dot{X}^\mu + (c^2 - (\partial_t\vec{X})^2)\partial_s X^\mu}{\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}},$$

$$\mathcal{P}^{\tau\mu} = \frac{T_0}{c^2}\frac{ds}{d\sigma}\frac{\dot{X}^\mu - (\partial_s\vec{X}\cdot\partial_t\vec{X})\partial_s X^\mu}{\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}}.$$

• Free, Neuman BCs, P^σ_μ for the $\mu = 0$ component implies that endpoints move transversely, $\partial_s\vec{X}\cdot\partial_t\vec{X} = 0$, so $\vec{v}_\perp = \vec{v}$. The condition $\vec{P}^\sigma = 0$ at the endpoints implies that the speed of light, $v = c$, for the free (Neuman) BCs.

• Choose σ parameterization such that

$$\partial_\sigma\vec{X}\cdot\partial_\tau\vec{X} = 0 \qquad \text{and} \qquad d\sigma = \frac{ds}{\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}} = \frac{dE}{T_0}.$$

(Using $H = \int T_0 ds/\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}$ and $\partial_t(ds/\sqrt{1 - v_\perp^2/c^2}) = 0$.) The last equation above is equivalent to $(\partial_\sigma\vec{X})^2 + c^{-2}(\partial_t\vec{X})^2 = 1$. With this worldsheet gauge choice,

$$\mathcal{P}^{\tau\mu} = \frac{T_0}{c^2}\partial_t X^\mu = \frac{T^0}{c^2}(c, \vec{v}_\perp), \qquad \mathcal{P}^{\sigma,\mu} = -T_0\partial_\sigma X^\mu = (0, -T_0\partial_\sigma\vec{X}).$$

We can write this as

$$\mathcal{P}^{\tau\mu} = \frac{1}{2\pi\alpha'}\dot{X}^\mu \qquad \mathcal{P}^{\sigma\mu} = -\frac{c^2}{2\pi\alpha'}X^{\mu'}, \tag{4}$$

and then the EOM is simply a wave equation:

$$(\partial_\tau^2 - c^2\partial_\sigma^2)X^\mu = 0. \tag{5}$$

• Solution of the EOM for open string with free BCs: $\vec{X}(t,\sigma) = \frac{1}{2}(\vec{F}(ct+\sigma)+\vec{F}(ct-\sigma))$ where the open string has $\sigma \in [0,\sigma_1]$ and (1) implies that $|\frac{d\vec{F}(u)}{du}|^2 = 1$, and $\vec{X}'|_{ends} = 0$ implies $\vec{F}(u+2\sigma_1) = \vec{F}(u) + 2\sigma_1\vec{v}_0/c$. Note $\vec{F}(u)$ is the position of the $\sigma = 0$ end at time u/c. Then show that $\vec{v}_0$ is the average velocity of any point σ on the string over time interval $2\sigma_1/c$. Example from book: $\vec{X}(t,\sigma=0) = \frac{\ell}{2}(\cos\omega t, \sin\omega t)$. Find $\vec{F}(u) = \frac{\sigma_1}{\pi}(\cos\pi u/\sigma_1, \sin\pi u/\sigma_1)$, giving $\vec{X}(t,\sigma) = \frac{\sigma_1}{\pi}\cos(\pi\sigma/\sigma_1)(\cos(\pi ct/\sigma_1), \sin(\pi ct/\sigma_1))$.