

APR06-2006-040100

Abstract for an Invited Paper  
for the APR06 Meeting of  
the American Physical Society

**Beacons of light—photon emission from hadronic collisions**

STEFAN BATHE, Brookhaven National Laboratory

Direct photons do not interact strongly with the medium produced in relativistic heavy-ion collisions, which makes them an exceptional observable: at intermediate  $p_T$  they provide information on the early stage of heavy-ion collisions; at high  $p_T$  they constitute a crucial reference for the medium modification of high- $p_T$  hadron production which has been observed. The PHENIX experiment at RHIC has found a significant excess of direct photons above the background from decay photons in Au+Au collisions at 200 GeV at both high and intermediate  $p_T$ . Furthermore, direct photon production in p+p and d+Au collisions has been measured, allowing a fundamental test of QCD as well as constraining the effects of cold nuclear matter. A systematic study of direct photon production will be presented and put into the context of theoretical models and earlier measurements.