

# THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

Pham  
David Quang Pham

## ELLIPSES

*IDEA Opera Grants - 2021-2022*

### *Pham*

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## Application Form

### *IDEA Opera Grants*

*Supported by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation*

August 11, 2021: Intent to apply deadline  
September 22, 2021: Application deadline  
October 2021: Adjudication  
November 2021: Notification

For more information, please refer to the grant guidelines [here](#).

Contact Diana Hossack, grantmaking associate, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org) for questions.

### *Applicant Information*

#### **Lead Applicant First Name\***

David Quang

#### **Lead Applicant Last Name\***

Pham

#### **Lead applicant team role\***

Composer

#### **Lead applicant bio\***

*The biography should be narrative and limited to 1,000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.*

David Quang Pham (he/him) is a galaxy-class astronomer and songwriter. After completing an astrophysics and theatre education at Michigan State, they studied under Working Title Playwrights' Apprenticeship in Atlanta. This passion for astronomy and theatre manifested from trips to space camp and operas as a kid. He plays the modern sackbut. In high school, he wrote his first musical (MATHLAND) for a Calculus project. He has been drafting musical love letters to science ever since. Janelle Lawrence is his musical mentor. Since college, David has been working on a particle physics opera. TOUR revolves around subatomic educators who collide and compete in the academic Accelerator and is a 2020 Downtown Urban Arts Festival finalist. His songs have been performed at Cabaret on the Couch, Musical Theatre Factory, and Play Cafe. He traverses science communication through the human condition.

#### **Teammate First Name, if applicable**

*[Unanswered]*

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## Teammate Last Name, if applicable

[Unanswered]

## Teammate role

[Unanswered]

## Teammate bio

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1,000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

## Teammate Email

[Unanswered]

## Personal Statement

### Personal statement\*

What inspires you creatively? Why have you chosen this subject matter? Why did you choose to tell this story as an opera?

I grew up in an Asian household. All my parents ever watched were Eastern operas and Kabuki-esque theatre. So naturally, I compose on a pentatonic scale. As opposed to an eight-note diatonic scale in Western music, six notes are simple. Yet, if the instruments are primitive and the theme of the story is folksy, the opera is suddenly elaborate. The Universe I live in is minimal; it sounds plain. So, the universal plain is mostly dark matter (silence). That nature provides complexity. It is difficult to unravel this traditional fabric of spacetime. It is a challenge I accepted. I strive to unroll my culture's artistic scroll. As a Vietnamese American, I aspire to connect the Eastern and Western art forms.

As an artful scientist, I make these connections by writing love letters to science. Science spins my creative process. I look for connections in my research in any branch of physics, particularly as a college student. At the Cyclotron, I felt that the quarks are also trying to attain a higher degree. In the Observatory, I noticed that the galaxies also felt aimlessly lost in our field. And these personifications are amplified and made special by my culture's inherent devotion to humanizing nature. We love to turn wind into ghosts. My mind is astrophysical and astral spiritual. These aspects grant me the spirit of the science musical writer.

## Work Samples

Work samples are one of the most important parts of this application. Your work samples represent the artistic merit of your work and the work of your collaborators.

If available, you are encouraged to submit excerpts from the work for which you are requesting support. If you do not have samples from that work, please provide samples that demonstrate your ability to write in the genre/style of the proposed work.

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## Composer

Please provide two work samples for the composer that reflect the best work of the artists involved (audio, video, and/or score or chart samples). Media samples can be Vimeo, YouTube, or SoundCloud links.

Although no previous experience with opera is required, we are interested in hearing any vocal music you might have written and if possible, would like to get some sense of your notational skills (e.g., scores, chord charts, or other graphic representation of your music).

The total timing of the musical selections should not exceed 20 minutes. Trim samples to the specific excerpt that you would like to be reviewed. If you are not trimming the samples as suggested above, clearly mark the timings in the notes (e.g., Play from 3'22"-7'49").

MIDI recordings are permitted but not recommended. For any questions about work samples, please contact Diana Hossack, grantmaking associate, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org).

## SAMPLE 1

### Sample 1 title\*

"Crunch" - ELLIPSES

### Sample 1 A/V link\*

<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/2-crunch>

### Sample 1 A/V password (if necessary)

### Sample 1 composer\*

David Quang Pham

### Sample 1 librettist (if applicable)

David Quang Pham

### Sample 1 description/annotation\*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about this work sample and credit performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Minka Wiltz, Jason-Jamal Ligon, Skye Passmore, Abby Holland, Daniel Sakamoto-Wengel, Evan Hill Phillips

### Sample 1 score or chart (optional)

Upload the score/chart below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

## SAMPLE 2

### Sample 2 title\*

"Warp, Waves, and Wrinkles" - ELLIPSES

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## Sample 2 A/V link\*

[https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/13-warp\\_waves\\_and\\_wrinkles](https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/13-warp_waves_and_wrinkles)

## Sample 2 A/V password (if necessary)

### Sample 2 composer\*

David Quang Pham

## Sample 2 librettist (if applicable)

David Quang Pham

## Sample 2 description/annotation\*

Please include roles, voicing, and information about this work sample and credit performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

Evan Hill Phillips, Daniel Sakamoto-Wengel, Daniela Cobb, Abby Holland, Jason-Jamal Ligon, Skye Passmore, Minka Wiltz

## Sample 2 score or chart (optional)

Upload the score/chart below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

### Librettist

*Please attach two writing samples (in PDF format only), limited to 20 pages in total (e.g., you may include one 8-page sample and one 12-page sample). Although no previous experience with opera is required, we are especially interested in seeing any lyrics, poetry, or theater work you may have written.*

### SAMPLE 3

## Sample 3 title\*

"Bounce" — "Crunch" · ELLIPSES

## Sample 3 A/V link

## Sample 3 A/V password (if necessary)

### Sample 3 composer

David Quang Pham

## Sample 3 librettist (if applicable)

David Quang Pham

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## Sample 3 description/annotation

Please include roles, voicing, and information about this work sample and credit performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

If not excerpting, please provide timings for guided listening.

### SAMPLE 4

## Sample 4 title

"Warp, Waves, and Wrinkles" · ELLIPSES

## Sample 4 AV Link

## Sample 4 A/V password (if necessary)

### Sample 4 composer

David Quang Pham

## Sample 4 librettist (if applicable)

David Quang Pham

## Sample 4 upload

Please include roles, voicing, and information about this work sample and credit performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

If not excerpting, please include timings for guided listening.

## Overview

### Work title\*

Title or working title of the opera in development

ELLIPSES

*Please update these fields if anything has changed since you submitted the intent to apply.*

### Work summary\*

*Submit a plot summary of the work associated with the application.*

ELLIPSES is an epic science mythology about family, child development, and adulthood. ELLIPSES stars Singularity and their teenage Galaxies and follows their quest to undo the Big Bang, after Gravity (the family dog) sets it off.

Every character is named after a celestial object. Singularity is the single parent who locked their kids in the house. Milky Way is the baby sibling who is going through galactic puberty. SPT0615-JD is the rebellious young adult who wants to leave home to go explore the Universe. JD is sick and tired of being stuck in the house with their family. In a violent altercation, JD shoots Singularity to run away from home with Gravity (aka the Big Bang). Without their parent, the younger siblings are left to fend for themselves in the vastness of

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the cosmos. These Galaxies spend the rest of time looking for their missing oldest sibling. The supermassive heart of this coming-of-age story is self-discovery in isolation...

## Project activity type\*

Reading

## If "Other," describe here.

### Project description\*

*Describe the specific activities for which funding will be used.*

An IDEA Opera Grant will help present our first live musical reading of ELLIPSES. Our unique sciart blend will incentivize educational theatres in Atlanta, such as Aurora or Horizon, to provide a performance space. As the school year begins, this event will connect students from the local school districts to the performing arts through science. The show will star ten Atlanta-based performers playing the roles of the members of the Galaxy family. This two-hour retelling of the Universe will have the audience laughing and relating to the struggles/wonders of puberty and adulthood. There will be a talkback led by our dramaturg, Jordan Alexandria Ealey.

The grant will cover the theatre venue rental for two rehearsals and the reading. It will generally compensate 16 team members (dramaturg, stage manager, music director, stage director, ten vocalists, and two understudies), and cover the cost of travel and housing for the creative team (dramaturg and author).

### Proposed project start date\*

*Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before December 1, 2021.*

08/01/2022

### Proposed project end date\*

*Grant-funded activities must be completed by December 1, 2022.*

11/01/2022

## Creative Team

*Please name any other creative or performing artists associated with this project, if known at this time (e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg).*

*You are not required to have a full creative team in place at this time.*

### Creator name

Jordan Alexandria Ealey

### Creator role

*(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)*

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Dramaturg

## Creator bio

*You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.*

Jordan Alexandria Ealey (they/she) is a dramaturg, theatre artist, and scholar who divides their time between Atlanta, GA and the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area. As a dramaturg, Jordan specializes in new play and musical development; her work has been seen with places such as Synchronicity Theatre, Theatrical Outfit, Working Title Playwrights, and Hush Harbor Lab. Jordan co-hosts and co-produces Daughters of Lorraine, a podcast on black theatre from a black feminist perspective, which is supported by HowlRound Theatre Commons. A proud artist-scholar, Jordan is pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, where they research black women-authored musicals from the nineteenth century to the present. Jordan is most passionate about advocating for marginalized theatre artists and hopes to continue to do so in their career.

## Creator 2 name

Alexis McKay

## Creator 2 role

*(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)*

Stage Manager

## Creator 2 bio

*You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.*

Lexi McKay (she/her) is a mixed woman who moved to Atlanta, GA after working in Savannah, GA for three years. She is a stage manager and loves to work at as many places as possible to learn as much as she can from all the amazing theaters. She is also the Program Coordinator at Out of Hand Theater, an administrator for Atlanta Theatre Artists for Justice, board member of SheNYC Arts, and loves to teach technical theater to kids whenever she can. When she's not working, she is finding a quiet corner to curl up with her dogs and try to get her next play written.

## Creator 3 name

Damien Lockhart

## Creator 3 role

*(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)*

Stage Director

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## Creator 3 bio

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

## Creator 4 name

### Creator 4 role

(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)

## Creator 4 bio

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

## Work Information

### Roles\*

For example, in an opera adaptation of *The Avengers*, a cast list might look like this: Captain Marvel, Soprano; Black Widow, Mezzo-Soprano; Spiderman, Tenor; Black Panther, Baritone; The Hulk, Bass. For a list of common voice types in opera, please click [here](#). You are welcome to include non-traditional/alternate voice types, and may explain those choices below.

Singularity, Gravity, SPT0615-JD, Cartwheel, Whirlpool, Triangulum, Andromeda, Milky Way,

### Chorus\*

If applicable, indicate the number of singers in the chorus by voice type (e.g., Soprano: 4, Alto: 2, Tenor: 6, Bass: 1).

Mezzo-Soprano—Soprano: 1, Baritone—Tenor: 1

### Instrumentation\*

Please list the instruments you will utilize in your work (e.g., "I will write for 1 piano, 1 violin, 1 viola, 1 cello, and 1 Iranian santur").

I have written and will write for 1 piano, etc.

### Provide a scenic breakdown of the opera\*

You may use either a character/scene breakdown, storyboard, or dramaturgical outline that narrates the theatrical arc of the work. Please refer to [this link](#) for examples.

<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/about/ellipses-set.pdf>

### Libretto (optional)

Please upload as much of the libretto as is available. A partial or libretto outline is acceptable.

<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/script>

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## Intellectual property\*

"Existing work" includes items such as a novel, short story, film, or life story. Please select the appropriate choice from the drop down menu below.

This is my own original work.

## Rights documentation

If the work is based on an existing work protected by copyright, please attach rights documentation or outline the timeline and process for securing the rights. Rights must be secured by the adjudication of applications. If rights documentation is not available now, please email it to Diana Hossack, grantmaking associate, by October 1, 2021. Otherwise, your application will be deemed incomplete and unable to proceed to the adjudication phase.

## Project Information

### Timeline\*

Provide a timeline for the development of the work, including the activities for which you are requesting funding. An example of a timeline is included below for your reference.

January 2021: Creative team meeting with composer, librettist, and dramaturg

March 2021: Libretto reading

April – October 2021: Revisions to the libretto, completion of excerpts or full piano/vocal score for workshop

Late October 2021: Piano/vocal workshop (5 days), recorded by OPERA America videographers (day 6)

Post-workshop: Creative design meeting with the stage director, librettist, composer, and media designer

**This is an example. Your timeline may include other activities.**

August 2022:

September 2022:

October 2022:

November 2022:

Post-reading: Creative team meeting with author, director, and dramaturg

### Budget\*

IDEA Opera Grants fund up to \$12,500 of your project. Please use the budget worksheet [here](#) to provide your budget. Upload it as an Excel document.

This budget worksheet covers many possible expenses and you do not need to complete every line. There are five "Other" lines in each budgetary section to add other expenses.

### Total requested funding\*

Please indicate your total request below. You may request up to \$12,500.

## Other

### Is this your first time applying to an OPERA America grant program?\*

Yes

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**From which organization did you hear about this grant opportunity?\***

OPERA America

**If Other, please specify.**

**Through which channel?\***

Please select all that apply.

Other

**If Other, please specify.**

IDEA was discovered in 2020 before the application deadline and after the LOI deadline.

## *Confirmation*

**Lead applicant signature\***

By typing your name below, you acknowledge that the information contained in this application and its attachments is accurate and complete.

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## File Attachment Summary

*Applicant File Uploads*

*No files were uploaded*