



EL LIP SES

Book, Music, and Lyrics
DAVID QUANG PHAM

www.ellipsesplay.com
  [tumblr. @EllipsesPlay](#)

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DAVID QUANG PHAM (he★him)



David loves the theatre space and space in general.

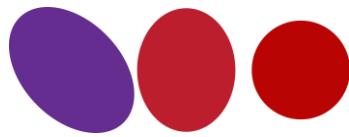
This passion for astronomy and theatre manifested from trips to space camp and operas as a kid. In middle and high school, he delved into music theory and plays the modern sackbut. The nerdy persona remained, and the artistic talents dwelled into his collegiate years. As he was finishing his bachelor's thesis, his sister informed him that his high school calculus teacher had been annually sharing his musical. During his junior year of high school, he wrote MATHLAND for their winter project. He returned to musical writing on the side. Soon, he uncovered his niche: science communication through the human condition.

Now, he is a science dramaturg from Wyoming, Michigan. He is the second apprentice of [Working Title Playwrights](#) in Atlanta. He practices professional new development dramaturgy under their Dramaturgy Master Intensive and the International Dramaturgy Lab with LMDA. He often follows Fornés's tenets.

He is a Founding Member of the [CreateTheater Expert's Theater Company](#). As a member of ΣΠΣ, ASCAP, and the Dramatists Guild, he attained an astrophysics degree with a minor in theatre at Michigan State.

Since college, he has been working on a particle physics fable. [TOUR](#) revolves around Quark, Lepton, Boson, and Atom. This opera has these subatomic educators collide in the academic Accelerator. It is a 2020 Downtown Urban Arts Festival finalist and was granted several readings. He is cowriting the book and music of [PARALLEL UNIVERSITY](#) with [Malina Detcheva-Rossa](#) and [Marie Incontrera](#).

As an artistic scientist, he theorizes that science and art are not two sides of the same coin. Science and art make the coin. He spins this superposition.



Artist Statement

I grew up in an Asian household. The only thing my parents ever watched were Kunqu-like operas and Kabuki-esque theatre. Naturally, I compose on a pentatonic scale. Six notes are simple, yet when the instruments are primitive and folksy, the opera is suddenly elaborate. Our Universe may be minimal and plain, but the universal plane is made up of mostly dark matter after all. That nature provides complexity. It is difficult to unravel this traditional fabric of spacetime, but it is a challenge I accept. 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, as science spins my creative process. I look for connections in my research within any branch of physics. In a Cyclotron, I felt that the quarks are also trying to attain a higher degree. At an Observatory, I noticed that the galaxies also felt aimlessly lost in our field. These personifications are amplified and made special by my culture's inherent devotion to humanizing nature. For example, we love to personify wind as ghosts. My mind is astrophysical and astral spiritual. These aspects grant me the spirit of a science writer for musicals and operas.

As a scientific artist and artistic scientist, I make simple things complex and complex things simple. Respectively, that is how I have approached composition and science communication. And when I write fables, I imagine that my friends are the audience. Anyone who has enough curiosity to knock down the gatekeeping, I consider a friend. For any generation, the closest community to that sentiment are college students who are the most inclusive. They may ensure that my composition and science communication are grounded and stay authentic. I believe that universities are best suited to progress the musicals whose goals are to be universal.

Universities continuously expand into the terrain of science, art, and culture. Colleges have the collaborative orbits to assemble physicists from STEM, dramaturgs from the theatre department, and historians from the center of Asian studies. What I strive to accomplish at any University is to build community, where these fields intersect and support one another. Not only do I foresee future theatremakers and researchers reading these scientific love letters but writing them with me. Once the everchanging Eastern and Western art forms' connections are made, we move onto the expansion of their shared Universes.



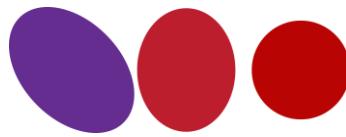


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*All texts highlighted in blue are hyperlinks

THANK YOU

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Edward Brown, Danny Caballero, Daniel Smith, Denise Troutman	Professors of Physics and Astronomy Professors of Theatre or Writing
Janelle Lawrence	Musical Theatre Mentor
Amber Bradshaw	Apprenticeship Facilitator
Emily McClain	First Reader
Alexis McKay	Fireworks/Stage Manager
Jordan Alexandria Ealey	Hat/Dramaturg
Aliyah Curry	Butterfly/Director
Parris Sarter, Minka Wiltz	Singularity
Vallea E. Woodbury	Gravity
Daniela Cobb	SPT0615-JD
Jason-Jamal Ligon	Cartwheel
Skye Passmore	Whirlpool
Abby Holland	Triangulum
Daniel Sakamoto-Wengel	Andromeda
Evan Phillips	Milky Way
Kait Rivas	Tidals
Sofia Palmero	Narrator
Kate Leanne Jacoby	Understudy

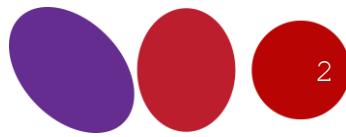
SYNOPSIS

ELLIPSES is the epic science mythology about family, child development, and adulthood. It stars Singularity and their teenage Galaxies and follows their quest to undo the Big Bang, after their family dog Gravity sets it off. When the oldest child strikes down Singularity to run away from home with Gravity, their younger siblings are left to fend for themselves in the vastness of the cosmos. The supermassive heart of this coming-of-age story is finding oneself in the nothingness...

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

◦ Androgyny and Astronomy ◦ ◦ Casting from historically excluded racial minorities is recommended ◦

<u>Character</u>	<u>Nature</u>	<u>Identity</u>
SINGULARITY The relativistically impossible single parent. Singularity wants to keep all the luminosity within the liminality.	Super Infinite Black Hole	Adult
GRAVITY A tidal dog. Gravity wants to ground and free up the wide-open space.	Tidal Force	Any
SPT0615-JD The prophetic galactic sibling. JD wants to shed light and be apparent to their lightless legacy.	Embryonic Galaxy	Young Adult
CARTWHEEL The aerobic galactic sibling. Cartwheel wants to earn their ring.	Ring Galaxy	Teen
WHIRLPOOL The anaerobic galactic sibling. Whirlpool wants to spiral into enlightenment.	Grand-Design Spiral Galaxy	Teen
TRIANGULUM The jingoistic galactic sibling. Triangulum wants to be the role model.	Spiral Galaxy	Teen
ANDROMEDA The scenic galactic sibling. Andromeda wants to find the pearl in our oysterous Universe.	Spiral Galaxy	Teen
MILKY WAY The angelic galactic sibling. Milky Way wants their voice to be all that it is cracked up to be.	Barred Spiral Galaxy	Preteen



DEMOS

1) “ Bounce ” (Galaxy Family)	1:47
➤ “We Are” Dance Overture	
2) “ Crunch ” (Singularity, Teen Galaxies)	3:36
➤ Choral Opening Number	
3) “ Cutting Edge ” (SPT0615-JD, Galaxies)	5:07
➤ “I Want” Song	
7) “ Big Bang ” (Singularity, Galaxies, Gravity, Tidals)	4:00
➤ Production Number	
10) “ Anomaly is Everything ” (Triangulum, Teen Galaxies)	4:28
➤ Uptempo Number	
11) “ Time is Relative ” (Cartwheel, Whirlpool)	9:19
➤ Ballad Duet	
13) “ Warp, Waves, and Wrinkles ” (Milky Way, Solar System)	3:57
➤ Showstopper	
19) “ Parallax ” (Gravity, SPT0615-JD)	2:24
➤ Charm Number	
	Genre: Pop
	Genre: Kunqu Opera
	Genre: Experimental Pop
	Genre: Metal
	Genre: Pop
	Genre: Psychedelic Pop
	Genre: Kunqu Opera
	Genre: Pop

ORCHESTRA



²CRUNCH

(Singularity, Cartwheel, Whirlpool, Triangulum, Andromeda, Milky Way)

DAVID QUANG PHAM

Adagio

E

A

E

G#R

6

A

E

SINGULARITY

A musical score for 'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The melody is in common time. The lyrics are: "Feed that hole in your heart. _____ Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness. ___. The vocal line includes a melodic flourish with a grace note and a sustained note.

Feed that hole in your heart. _____

Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness. —

SINGULARITY

A musical score for piano, page 5. The key signature is E major (no sharps or flats). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, primarily in the right hand. The notes are: E, A, E, G♯m, A, E, B, E, E, A, E, G♯m. The left hand provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.

Shed our light for no one. _____ As it's Crunch Time, Ga-lax-ies.

Cuja et al.

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and common time. It begins with a half note (two vertical stems). This is followed by a short vertical line with a dash above it, indicating a rest. The next five notes are quarter notes, each consisting of two vertical stems. The final note is a half note with two vertical stems.

SINGULARITY

11 E A E G[#]m C[#]m B A E

In black holes dwell wis dom
Fed by the sprin kles of star dust

D

A musical score for a string quartet. The score consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument: Violin 1 (top), Violin 2, Cello, and Double Bass (bottom). The music is in common time and is written in a treble clef system. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth note patterns, with some rests. The instrumentation includes two violins, one cello, and one double bass.

SINGULARITY

15 E A E G[#]m A E B E

Crush their dreams in your palm. _____ **It is Crunch** _____ **Time** _____

D

19 A E B E E E B C# G#

CARTWHEEL WHIRLPOOL TRIANGULUM ANDROMEDA MILKY WAY

Con-sume star sy stems. Con-sume worlds

Guitar

24 C#m G#m E E B C# G# C# E

SINGULARITY

String

CARTWHEEL WHIRLPOOL TRIANGULUM ANDROMEDA MILKY WAY

that teem. Con-sumed by thoughts of fam-i-ly. Fam-i - ly....

Guitar

29 E C#m E E C#m C#m E

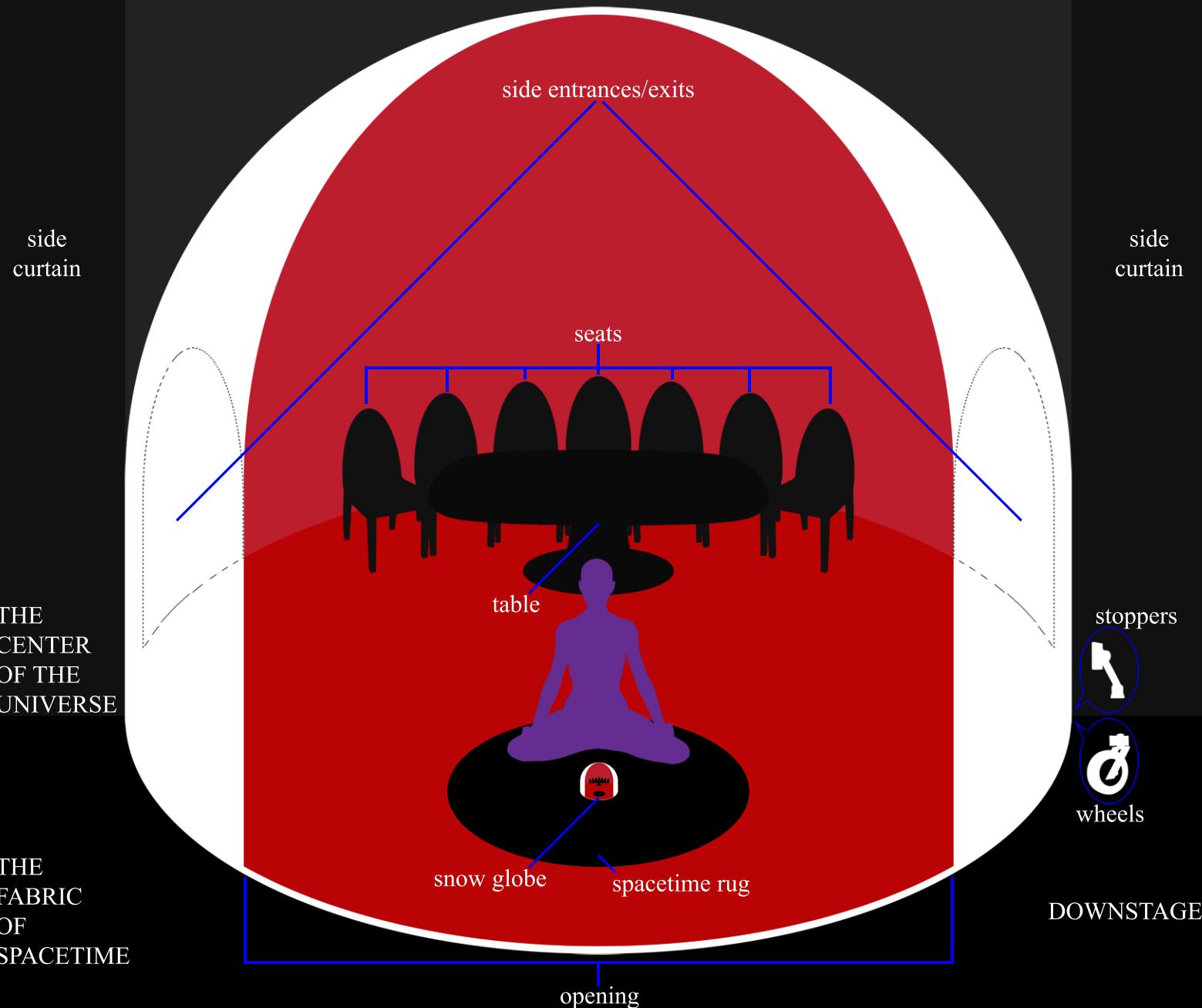
SINGULARITY

by string in theor-y. And fa-bric by space-time fa bric. Hold

CARTWHEEL WHIRLPOOL TRIANGULUM ANDROMEDA MILKY WAY

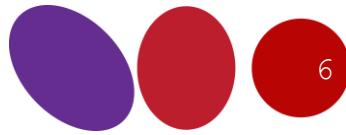
Guitar

THE ELLIPSES / DOME HOME



THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE

FOURTH WALL



SET DESIGN

The Ellipse functions as a singularity to Singularity. This is where the Universe will have order and where everything can be accounted for. After the Big Bang, the Ellipse remains symbolic of the legendary “Center of the Universe.”

The inspiration for the Ellipse or the Dome Home is mainly from the worldwide isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In geometry, ellipses are ovals. The oval-shaped Galaxies are the occupants of this household. In linguistics, ellipses indicate omissions. This household is in the middle of nowhere, much like Japan to the rest of the world for millennia.

My worldbuilding is heavily influenced by a lifelong consumption of Japanese media. As a kid, SAILOR MOON got me animated about outer space. In theatre, Kabuki and Noh twirl my creative processes, though these modes of performances have their particulars. Throughout ELLIPSES, Kabuki is evident in the names and actions of the characters. This dome also hearkens back to Kabuki, which is rather stylized. It is elliptical, confined, and has scientific and fantastical elements. This makes space for the movements of the Galaxies to then be gestured and codified like Kabuki. The Galaxy family strives to be human to the commoners and aliens to the others.

The Ellipse would have been more representative of the “alienation effect” prior to the pandemic. The benefit of the post-pandemic era of isolation is that this household is more relatable. Many of my generation had to move back to our parents in order to make ends meet when unemployment was skyrocketing. It does not help when all our siblings are returning home, too.

None of us have a circle of friends. No Ellipse is that perfect.

DEVELOPMENT

- August 2020 — July 2021: Working Title Playwrights New Play Development and Dramaturgy Apprenticeship
 - October 5, 2020: Reading with Talkback of the first 11 pages at the Monday Night Critique Sessions
 - December 7, 2020: Reading with Talkback of the first 11 pages of the second act at the Monday Night Critique Sessions
 - February 1, 2021: Reading with Talkback of “Zilch” to “Big Bang” at the Monday Night Development Workshops
 - May 3, 2021: Reading with Talkback of “Warp, Waves, and Wrinkles” at the Monday Night Development Workshops
 - July 15, 2021: Concert Reading with Talkback backed by WTP
- June 2021 — ongoing: Theater Resources Unlimited Workshops
 - June 13, 2021: How to Write a Musical That Works – Part One: The World and the Want Workshop with Talkback

Working Title Playwrights Apprenticeship presents
a concert reading of a science musical about family

A LIP SES

Book, Music, and Lyrics by DAVID QUANG PHAM
Dramaturgy by JORDAN ALEXANDRIA EALEY
Directed by ALIYAH CURRY
Managed by ALEXIS MCKAY
Moderated by AMBER BRADSHAW
Narrated by SOFIA PALMERO
Performed by the Star-Studded Cast

ONLINE VIA ZOOM
THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021
SHOW · 6:30PM ET | TALKBACK · 9PM ET
ELLIPISESPLAY.COM



PARRIS SARTER
Singularity



VALLEA E. WOODBURY
Gravity



DANIELA COBB
SPT0615-JD



JASON-JAMAL LIGON
Cartwheel



SKYE PASSMORE
Whirlpool



ABBY HOLLAND
Triangulum



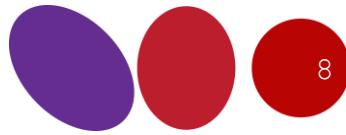
DANIEL SAKAMOTO-WENGEL
Andromeda



EVAN PHILLIPS
Milky Way



KAIT RIVAS
Tidals



OBJECTIVES

Quarterly-Semiannual Readings



High School - University Outreach and Engagement (Target Market)



The material is astrophysics. The words on the page do not convey the entropy, the collisions, and the movement of the Galaxies, quite like workshop productions. ELLIPSES strives to have its overall coming-of-age theme be more relatable. The University's theatre departments will focus on the theories of theatre, while our writer focuses on the laws of physics.

ELLIPSES strives to:

- Support the educational needs of theatre students
- Form connections between dramaturgs and scientists
- Encourage fruitful collaborations beyond the classrooms
- *Give teachers and professors a break from lecturing by sending their students off to go see a live science experiment in action*





AUTHOR'S CONTACT



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