

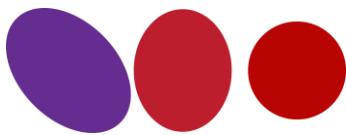


EL LIP SES

Book, Music, and Lyrics  
DAVID QUANG PHAM

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

©2020 - 2021



## DAVID QUANG PHAM (he★him)



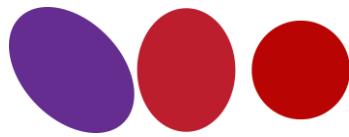
David loves the theatre space and space in general.

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 recipient of the 2020-2021 New Play Development and Dramaturgy Apprenticeship for [Working Title Playwrights](#) in Atlanta. He creates and 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](#). A member of ΣΠΣ, ASCAP, and the Dramatists Guild, he attained an astrophysics degree with a minor in theatre at Michigan State University.

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 and compete in the academic Accelerator. He is also 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

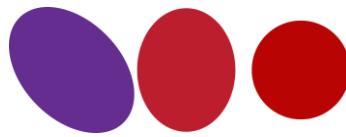
I grew up in an Asian household. All my parents ever watched were Eastern operas and Kabuki-esque theatre. So naturally, I compose on a pentatonic scale. As opposed to an eight-note diatonic scale in Western music, six notes are simple. Yet, if the instruments are primitive and the theme of the story 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.

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.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis & Character Breakdown . . . . .	1
Demos . . . . .	2
Sample Score . . . . .	3-4
Set Design . . . . .	5-6
History . . . . .	7
Objectives . . . . .	8

\*All texts highlighted in blue are hyperlinks

## THANK YOU

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

## SYNOPSIS

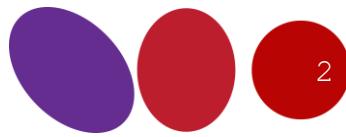
ELLIPSES is a musical science fantasy about family, child development, and adulthood. It follows Singularity, their six children, and their quest to undo the Big Bang, after a family member sets it off. When JD strikes down Singularity to run away from home with Gravity (the family dog), their younger 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 ○

The characters do not have an assigned gender. Any gender can play these roles.

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



## DEMOS

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

## ORCHESTRA



...

# CRUNCH

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

DAVID QUANG PHAM

Adagio

E A E G♯m C♯m B A E

SINGULARITY

Feed that hole in your heart. \_\_\_\_\_ Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness. \_\_\_\_\_

This musical score shows a single melodic line for the 'SINGULARITY' part. The key signature is F major (one sharp). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The vocal line starts with an eighth note 'E', followed by a sixteenth note 'A', then an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'G♯m', another eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'C♯m', a sixteenth note 'B', an eighth note 'A', and finally an eighth note 'E'. The lyrics 'Feed that hole in your heart.' and 'Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness.' are written below the staff.

Feed that hole in your heart. \_\_\_\_\_ Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness. \_\_\_\_\_

SINGULARITY

5 E A E G♯m A E B E E A E G♯m

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

This section continues the melodic line for 'SINGULARITY'. The vocal line starts with an eighth note 'E', followed by a sixteenth note 'A', then an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'G♯m', an eighth note 'A', an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'B', an eighth note 'E', an eighth note 'E', an eighth note 'A', and an eighth note 'E'. The lyrics 'Shed our light for no one.' and 'As it's Crunch Time, Ga-lax- ies.' are written below the staff.

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

Guitar

This section shows the guitar accompaniment for the 'SINGULARITY' part. The guitar part consists of sustained notes and chords. It features a series of eighth-note chords: a half note rest, a half note rest, a half note rest, a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', and a half note 'C♯m'.

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. \_\_

This section continues the melodic line for 'SINGULARITY'. The vocal line starts with an eighth note 'E', followed by a sixteenth note 'A', then an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'G♯m', another eighth note 'C♯m', a sixteenth note 'B', an eighth note 'A', and finally an eighth note 'E'. The lyrics 'In black holes, dwell wis-dom.' and 'Fed by the sprin-kles of star - dust.' are written below the staff.

In black holes, dwell wis-dom. \_\_\_\_\_ Fed by the sprin-kles of star - dust. \_\_

Guitar

This section shows the guitar accompaniment for the 'SINGULARITY' part. The guitar part consists of sustained notes and chords. It features a series of eighth-note chords: a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', and a half note 'B'.

SINGULARITY

15 E A E G♯m A E B E

Crush their dreams in your palm. \_\_\_\_\_ It is Crunch Time, my ba-bies.

This section continues the melodic line for 'SINGULARITY'. The vocal line starts with an eighth note 'E', followed by a sixteenth note 'A', then an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'G♯m', an eighth note 'A', an eighth note 'E', a sixteenth note 'B', and finally an eighth note 'E'. The lyrics 'Crush their dreams in your palm.' and 'It is Crunch Time, my ba-bies.' are written below the staff.

Crush their dreams in your palm. \_\_\_\_\_ It is Crunch Time, my ba-bies.

Guitar

This section shows the guitar accompaniment for the 'SINGULARITY' part. The guitar part consists of sustained notes and chords. It features a series of eighth-note chords: a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', a half note 'B', a half note 'E', a half note 'G♯m', a half note 'C♯m', and a half note 'B'.

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

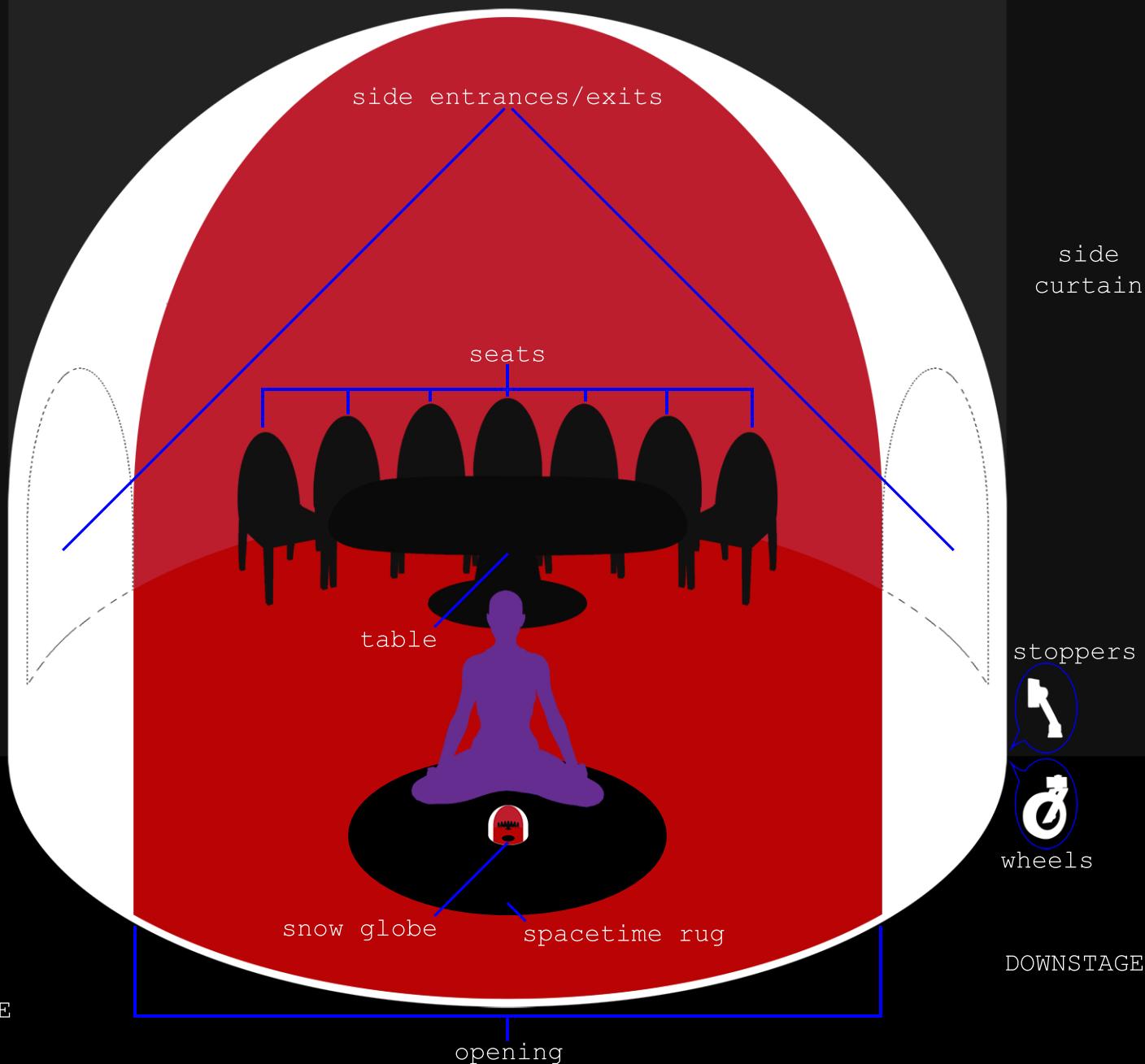
SINGULARITY

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

CARTWHEEL WHIRLPOOL TRIANGULUM ANDROMEDA MILKY WAY

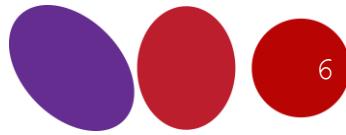
Guitar

# THE ELLIPSE / 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.

I do not believe that any 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
  - August 15, 2020: “Generating Story Idea” Master Class with Addae Moon, where WORKING TIDAL (ELLIPSES’s working title) was conceived
  - 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 MNCS
  - 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 MNDW
  - July 15, 2021: Concert Reading with Talkback backed by Working Title Playwrights

[Recording of the Reading on July 15, 2021](#)

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  
[ELLISSPESPLAY.COM](http://ELLISSPESPLAY.COM)



PARRIS SARTER  
Singularity



VALLEA E. WOODBURY  
Gravity



DANIELA COBB  
SPT0615-JD



JASON-JAMAL LIGON  
Cartwheel



SKYE PASSMORE  
Whirlpool



ABBY HOLLAND  
Triangulum



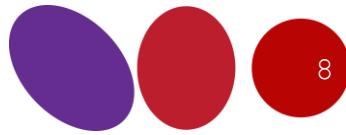
DANIEL SAKAMOTO-WENGEL  
Andromeda



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



Book, Music, and Lyrics  
DAVID QUANG PHAM

davidquangpham@outlook.com  
[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [@WorkingTidal](#)

(616)818 – 5413