

Artist Statement ○○○ ELLIPSES

My theatrical Big Bang occurred when I saw *Turandot* after visiting Space Camp. To me, the performing arts and science are inseparable. My teachers made them more visible and indivisible. I wrote math songs that had them saying: “You should be a musical writer.” Still, I continued to study science so that I can faithfully create ionic lyrics and break Earth with rocky choreography. I uncover truths by writing musical fables. Years ago, a theatre in Atlanta read my opera about particles going to college in a nuclear reactor. They soon made me the figurehead of their new developmental program where we devised on a macroscale. Our singularity of perspectives birthed the universal musical starring the Galaxy family and their dog Gravity titled ELLIPSES.

In the 2020s, ELLIPSES has had four table reads, three workshops, and a public concert reading. The latest draft’s focus is to develop the liminal spaces between the elliptical spaces. In the story, ellipses are three overlapping ovals representing childhood, teenhood, and adulthood. Milky Way transitions from childhood to teenhood, JD transitions from teenhood to adulthood, and Singularity transitions beyond. I look for chances to receive periodic feedback on this script with performers portraying these characters. It helps bring out the coming-of-age truths that audiences can sense in intuitive ways. I want teens and adults to depart with an understanding that galaxy formation and movements are truly human development and a family on a grander scale, so we are all Galaxies.

Whatever the Universe sends goes to our development by supporting: a) an ongoing collaboration with our dramaturg who is devoted to Black and Asian theatre; b) new alliances with directors of matching specialties; c) concerts at theatre festivals for professional feedback and audience reactions; and d) the creation of a concept album to accompany the libretto—studio recordings with established vocalists; new pop or operatic compositions such as “Far-Fetched” and more; grander reorchestrations of “Cutting Edge”, “Anomaly/Family is Everything”, “Tangent”, etc. A national performing arts organization gave me a complementary call after ELLIPSES did not advance as one of their two annual grantee selections. The adjudicators noted the story as being “a cultural touchstone that would soar with professional quality demos.”

Everything the Universe sends would help ELLIPSES be the cultural, musical, and universal touchstone that it knows it is. From the Galaxy family and their dog Gravity: Thank you for your consideration and spacetime.

Speaking of dogs: “Force!” I loved *T.U.F.F. Puppy* and I am grateful that this year’s award is dedicated to the cartoon’s composer, Adam Schlesinger. In his spirit, I look to be the champion of nerd musicals in my own right.