

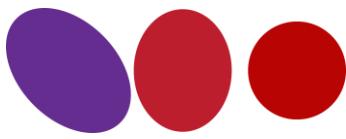


EL LIP SES

Book, Music, and Lyrics  
DAVID QUANG PHAM

[www.ellipsesplay.com](http://www.ellipsesplay.com)  
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## DAVID QUANG PHAM (he★him)



He is the musical theatre science communicator. Due to youthful trips to space camp and operas, he now devises from the branches of science. His subatomic opera, [TOUR](#), is a 2020 Downtown Urban Arts Festival finalist. He is cowriting PARALLEL UNIVERSITY for the NYPL Performing Arts Library program. He is a moderator at LMDA; a founding member of [CreateTheater ETC](#); an associate producer of [Reach For It, Inc.](#); a producing mentee of Jane Dubin and Jennifer Isaacson of [TRU](#); and a member of ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild, and ΣΠΣ. He holds a B.S. in Astrophysics from Michigan State University.

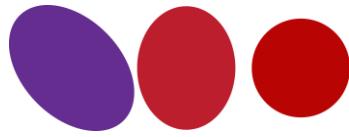
### ARTIST STATEMENT

I grew up in an Asian household. The only things 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

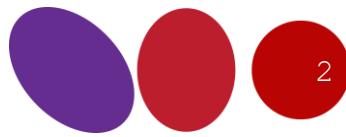
## SYNOPSIS

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



## DEMOS

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

## ORCHESTRA



# <sup>2</sup>CRUNCH

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

DAVID QUANG PHAM

## Adagio

E

A

E

G#R

6

A

E

SINGULARITY

A musical score for the first piano part, page 10, featuring two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of four sharps. The bottom staff uses a bass clef. Measures 11 and 12 are shown, separated by a vertical bar line. Measure 11 consists of eighth-note pairs (F#-G#, C#-D#) followed by a rest. Measure 12 begins with a rest, followed by eighth-note pairs (B-A, E-D), a sustained note (D), and another rest.

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

Give in-to in-ter-nal dark - ness. —

A musical score for a string quartet. The score consists of four staves, one for each instrument: Violin 1 (top), Violin 2, Cello, and Double Bass (bottom). The music is in common time. The key signature changes from G major (two sharps) to E major (no sharps or flats) at the beginning of the section. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some quarter notes. The section ends with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

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

Guitar

6 eighth-note rests followed by one eighth note on the 5th string.

11 E A E G<sup>#</sup>m C<sup>#</sup>m B A E

Fed by the spiraling kites of star dust

Guitar tablature for the first measure of the C major scale. The key signature is C major (no sharps or flats). The notes are: G (open 6th string), B (1st fret 5th string), D (open 4th string), F# (1st fret 3rd string), A (open 2nd string), and C (open 1st string).

15 E A E G#m A E B E

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

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

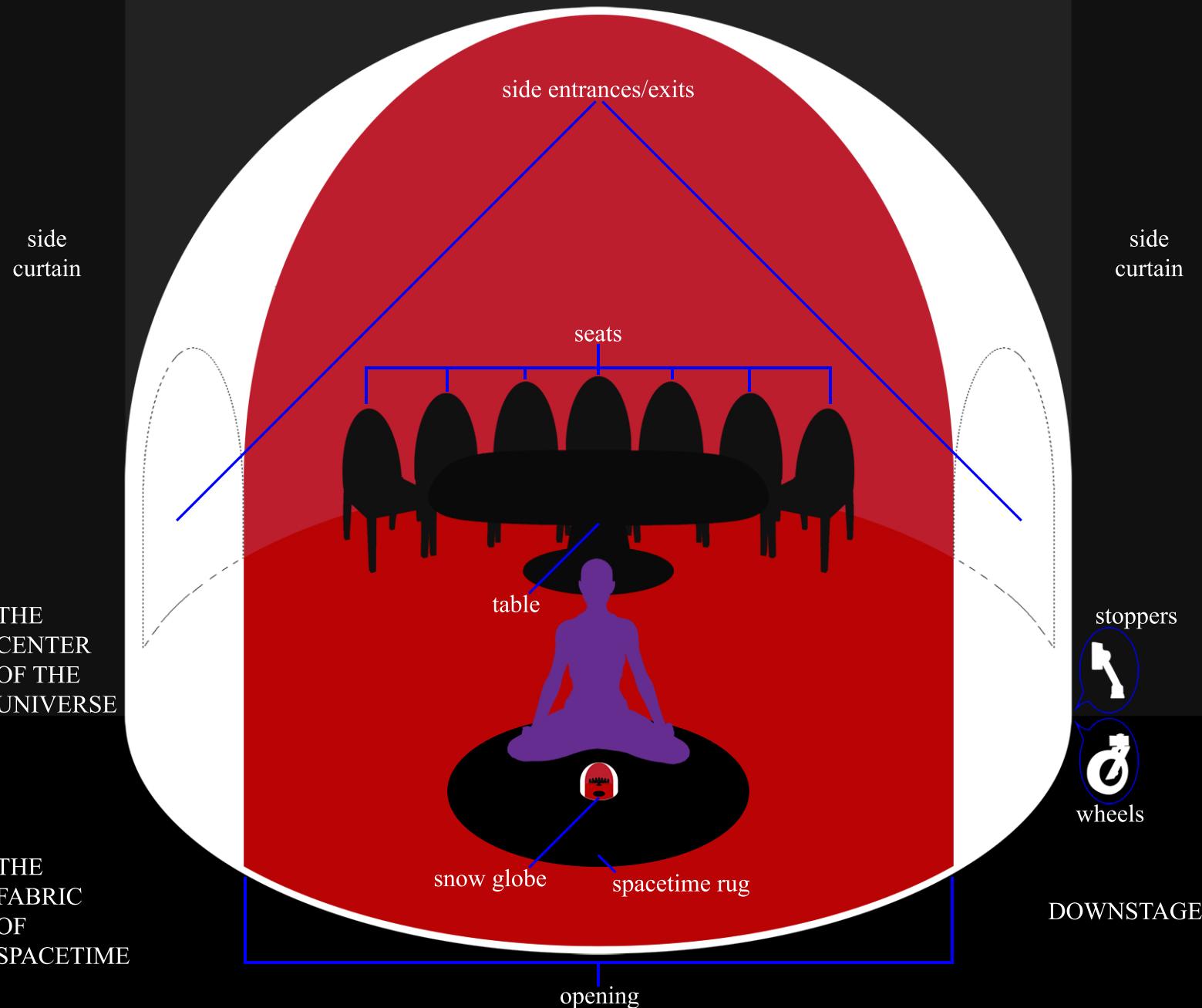
SINGULARITY

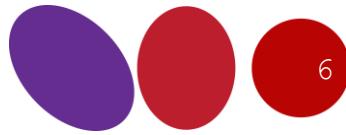
by string in theor-y. And fa-bric by space-time fa bric. Hold

CARTWHEEL WHIRLPOOL TRIANGULUM ANDROMEDA MILKY WAY

Guitar

# THE ELLIPSES / DOME HOME





## SET DESIGN

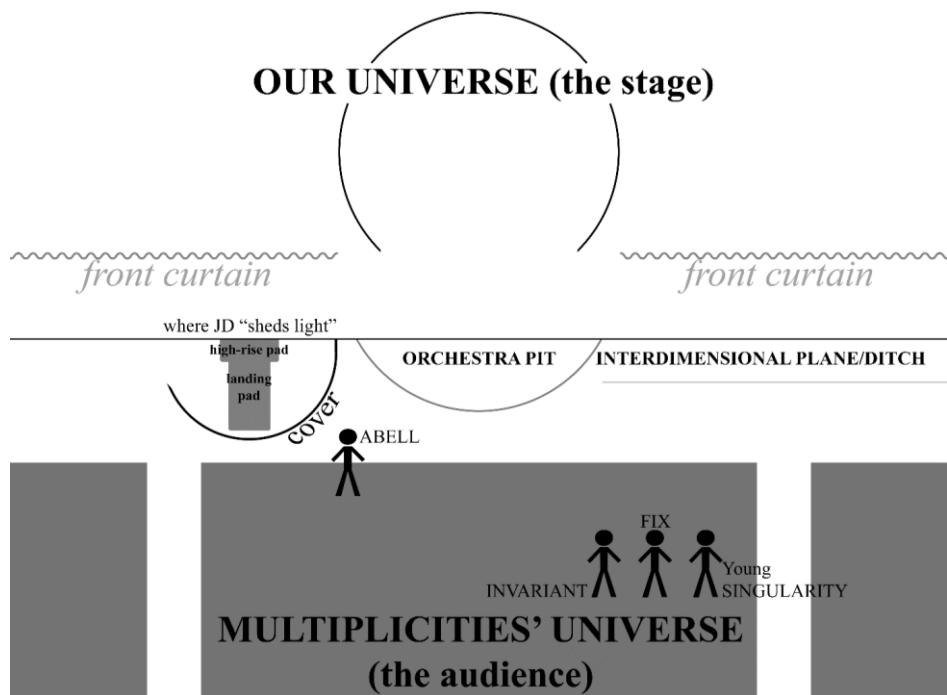
The Ellipse functions as a singularity to Singularity. This is where the Universe will have order and where everything can be accounted for. After the Big Bang, the Ellipse remains symbolic of the legendary “Center of the Universe.”

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.

The 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 hearkens back to Noh, which is rather structured. 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 Kunqu. The Galaxy family strives to be human to the commoners and aliens to the others.

The Ellipse may 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](http://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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