

SUBMISSION FOR TRU DIRECTOR-WRITER COMMUNICATION LAB

You may email your application to TRUStaff1@gmail.com - please remember to rename the document to include YOUR name. **Paste 5-10 pages of your script at the end.**

Name David Quang Pham
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City Wyoming State MI Zip 49509
Email davidquangpham@outlook.com Ph: 616 818 5413

If accepted, the cost will be \$90 (\$75 if you are a TRU member). Please be sure to sign indemnification waiver on page 3.

If you are not selected by one of the directors for this lab, do you want us to hold your application for a future Lab? Yes

Note: if your application doesn't grab the interest of eight directors, you might want to review it and resubmit with a stronger presentation.

Title of Project: ELLIPSES

Genre (s): Coming-of-Age, Epic, Family Drama, Mythology

of characters 8+ played by 8+ actors

of sets/locations (~~is it a unit set?~~) 2

Brief marketing hook (your quick "elevator pitch" or log line, plus spin – why is this piece of special interest today?):

The world needs stories about the importance of connections while embracing science. As an astronomer turned musical writer, I connect everything in our Universe through verse. The Universe is everything. And family is everything. The Universe is actually a family, just on a grander scale. Like our Universe, family makes us. But what made the cosmos? Family. I welcome you to experience my story of how our Universe came to be by getting to know the Galaxy family and their dog Gravity in the family musical of epic proportions: ELLIPSES.

Brief synopsis (the meat of your “full pitch”):

ELLIPSES is a cosmology mythology that stars the Galaxy family and follows their quest to undo the Big Bang, after their dog Gravity sets it off.

Before the world that we have come to know, there lived a remote family of Galaxies. Singularity is the single parent who locked their six kids in the house. Milky Way is the baby sibling going through galactic puberty. SPT0615-JD is the oldest sibling looking to explore the Universe. This outgrown young adult is perfect for Gravity's manipulation. In a violent altercation, JD shoots Singularity to run away from home with Gravity (aka the Big Bang). Without their parent, the teenage Galaxies must fend for themselves in the vastness of the cosmos.

The chronology of our Universe is a family drama in play. The heart of its coming-of-age story is self-discovery as an anomaly.

Production history (including awards):

Showcase	DigiFest, Durban University of Technology, South Africa	October 19, 2021
Workshop	Theater Resources Unlimited - How to Write a Musical That Work	October 17, 2021
Concert Reading	WTP; Dir. Aliyah Curry, Dramaturg Jordan Ealey	July 15, 2021
Workshop	Theater Resources Unlimited - How to Write a Musical That Work	June 13, 2021
Table Reading	Working Title Playwrights MNDW	May 3, 2021
Table Reading	Working Title Playwrights MNDW	February 1, 2021
Table Reading	Working Title Playwrights MNCS	December 7, 2020
Table Reading	Socially Isolated Script Readings; Host Michael Perrie	November 14, 2020
Table Reading	Working Title Playwrights MNCS	October 5, 2020

Reviews (quotes):

“I love stories about families and yours is truly the most unique I've seen.” – [John Mabey](#)

“The play got me thinking about my / our place in the Universe – you can't get more epic than that.” – [Hank Kimmel](#)

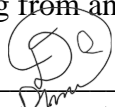
“I absolutely love this idea. The idea about a universe that's a family drama... How incredible is that... It's very unique and very original.” – [Paul Gordon](#)

Author's background (other productions of note, awards, honors, etc.):

David Quang Pham (he/him) is a musical theater science communicator who guides scientists to the fourth wall and theatre artists to the fourth dimension. Due to youthful trips to operas and space camp, he now writes love letters to science. His notable musicals personifying quantum mechanics, cosmology, and dimensions are respectively: [TOUR](#) (2020 DUAF finalist), [ELLIPSES](#), and [PARALLEL UNIVERSITY](#) with Malina Detcheva-Rossa and Marie Incontrera. After completing an astrophysics and theatre education at Michigan State University, he studied playwriting as the second apprentice of [Working Title Playwrights](#) in Atlanta. He is the Literary Fellow of [Playwrights Foundation](#), San Francisco. [Janelle Lawrence](#) mentors him, helping to forge his broad range of musical styles including gospel, pop, tango, and Xiqu. He is also a proficient trombonist; a founding member of CreateTheater ETC; a member of ΣΠΣ, ASCAP, the Dramatists Guild, LMDA, and TRU. Be up to lightspeed at <https://www.scitheatre.org/>

WAIVER AND INDEMNIFICATION (required if selected)

I understand that directors see many projects every year, and that it may be possible that they may already be working on or may have come across (or may yet come across) a project with similarities to mine. In exchange for the opportunity of meeting and being in a workshop with ten directors, I agree that I will not be entitled to any compensation or credit because of the use by any director or other Lab participant taking part in this event of any material similar to my own. I acknowledge that no fiduciary or confidential relationship now exists between any director taking part in the event and me, and I further acknowledge that no such relationships are established between any producer taking part in the event solely by reason of taking part in the event. I will under no circumstances bring legal proceedings against Theater Resources Unlimited or the Lab participants resulting from any communications made in connection with the event.



(applicant signature)November 15, 2021_____
dateELLIPSES_____
(title of show)David Quang Pham_____
print name clearly

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SINGULARITY, adult, a single parent of six Galaxies

GRAVITY, a dog

SPT0615-JD, young adult, Singularity's oldest child

CARTWHEEL, teen, Singularity's child

WHIRLPOOL, teen, Singularity's child

TRIANGULUM, teen, Singularity's child

ANDROMEDA, teen, Singularity's child

MILKY WAY, preteen, Singularity's youngest child

Supporting Characters

ABELL, child, person in the audience that JD sees, never speaks

INVARIANT, adult, Singularity's parent, appears in Act II

FIX, adult, Singularity's parent, appears in Act II

Ensemble

TIDALS, tidal forces personified as dogs

Bark: "Force" Howl: "Fall"

SOLAR SYSTEM, Milky Way's imaginary friends; principal
characters are in brackets [] for potential doubling

MULTIPLICITIES, Galaxies in the audience

*Androgyny Astronomy: Each character resembles the
androgynous nature, with open-ended vocal requirements

ACT ISCENE 1

THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

The Ellipse is stationed downstage center. Inside is a table with seats and a rug. Lights dwell solely within the Dome. Outside, the stage is mainly off limits. Everything upstage is concealed by the side curtains. Equations are teeming flowers in the space.
(<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/set>)

~~SINGULARITY hums as they pick equations outside the home. They place them on a dish. They head to the rug to meditate.~~

~~The MULTIPLICITIES are in the audience.~~

MULTIPLICITIES

~~Nothing.~~

~~Startled, SINGULARITY draws out the Big Bang Taser. They ignite it outwards.~~

~~The TIDALS distantly whimper.~~

~~The lights flicker. The curtains ripple. The field equations loom like a field of flowers. The Universe flashes their wonders.~~

~~From the audience, ABELL enters. They sit in a front row seat.~~

~~SINGULARITY stows away the Big Bang Taser underneath the rug, reversing the Universe. They look upon ABELL.~~

SINGULARITY

~~Nothing...~~

~~SINGULARITY leaves through a side exit of the home.~~

1. "BOUNCE" (<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/1-bounce>)

JD enters, holding a monocular.
They position themselves at the edge
of the home. They look out through
the monocular.

TRIANGULUM wanders out, carrying a
snow globe that resembles the
home. They head to JD. They snatch
their monocular and look out. They
toss it behind.

TRIANGULUM

NOTHING.

WHIRLPOOL spirals out. They catch
or pick up the monocular. They
look out.

WHIRLPOOL

NOTHING!

CARTWHEEL cartwheels out. They
snatch the monocular from
WHIRLPOOL. They look out.

CARTWHEEL

NOTHING!

ANDROMEDA pops out.

CARTWHEEL hands the monocular to
ANDROMEDA.

ANDROMEDA looks out. They stow
away the monocular.

ANDROMEDA

NOTHING!

MILKY WAY is disheveled. They
stroll in.

MILKY WAY

NUTHIN'...

The TEEN GALAXIES - CARTWHEEL,
WHIRLPOOL, TRIANGULUM, ANDROMEDA,
MILKY WAY - cluster towards the
center.

TEEN GALAXIES

LET'S BOUNCE!

The TEEN GALAXIES bounce away from each other. They land on their respective walls. They distinctly move and dance alongside the walls of the home. In choreographic exposition, they distinctly pose at certain melodic phrases.

SINGULARITY (OFFSTAGE)

MILKY WAY! ANDROMEDA! TRIANGULUM! WHIRLPOOL! CARTWHEEL!

MILKY WAY lugs their way to the table.

ANDROMEDA heads to the table.

TRIANGULUM triangulates to the table. They set the snow globe on the table.

WHIRLPOOL spirals to the table.

CARTWHEEL cartwheels to the table.

SINGULARITY (O.S) (CONT'D)

JD!

JD remains staring out at the Edge. They extend their arm out.

JD

ABELL...

ABELL reaches out to JD.

End of "BOUNCE"

All TIDALS prowl in and surround the table.

SINGULARITY arrives with dishes. They bow.

SINGULARITY

Declinations, family. The Galaxy family. It is that time.

SINGULARITY places the dishes around the table.

GRAVITY narrates.

GRAVITY

Nothing comes close to family... Except "pets."
I'm Gravity.

(MORE)

GRAVITY (CONT'D)

I've been in here for infinite dog years. And this is the story of the Galaxy family. We've long lived in this Ellipse. Singularity has closed off the outside world for quite some time. Eternities, in fact. This Dome is all they've ever known. Most kids aren't much older than a dozen eternities, but one is nearing two. I like this one. This Ellipse is only perfect, with our oldest Galaxy: JD...

JD is on the edge. While their siblings see "nothing" out there, JD sees their future Ellipse in the nothingness. Beyond the Edge of the Universe. I sense that their dream is to have an ellipse of their own. JD deserves a life of their own. What adult doesn't want to leave the safety of their home to go explore the Universe?

Singularity does not own us: Galaxies or me, a tidal force. Singularity can't hold us forever. Singularity shall face the Big Bang, even if it's the last thing Gravity does. In Zenith... Force!

SINGULARITY shushes GRAVITY. They set a dish on the ground, for the TIDALS to feast upon.

MILKY WAY hugs SINGULARITY.

The TEEN GALAXIES bow.

TEEN GALAXIES

Declinations, Singularity.

The TEEN GALAXIES sit, while TRIANGULUM unfortunately sits on the whoopie cushion.

SINGULARITY

Sounds like someone enjoyed a little too much gas giants.

TRIANGULUM

Quit the snickers, Milky Way.

SINGULARITY

Has anyone seen my scope? Where could they be? It's got to be in here...

SINGULARITY touches the snow globe.

ANDROMEDA

Everything in here is a cluster flux. Wouldn't hurt to look out-

SINGULARITY

If you escape my gravitational pull and step out onto the space, you'll end up ripping apart the Fabric of Spacetime. Then I, the grandmaster of the Universe, will be out of order. Forget the scope. We got all the cosmic formulas right here in our Ellipse. With my wrists and black-hole heart, I cooked you nebulae something special: nuclear pasta and meteors.

CARTWHEEL

Special for the trillionth millennium, you Bach Ho. ("Bach Ho" is Vietnamese for "white tiger," sounds like "black hole," and implies tiger parenting.)

SINGULARITY

I, *tiger nomy/mom/dad*, am so glad that this meal is as special as our first. They're heated to over ten million degrees Kelvin and rotated in the cosmic microwave background at the angular velocity of a dozen sine squared its solar latitude minus one sine to its fourth power. Strongest material in the cosmos. A variety of nutrition from the crusts of neutron stars. Dismantle the mantle. But leave the core. I'd love to planet these.

GRAVITY tries to grab TRIANGULUM's dish.

TRIANGULUM slaps away GRAVITY.

TRIANGULUM

That is not for you to gravitate to. Stupid tidal force... Nothing between those ears but a vacuum.

TRIANGULUM unnervingly scratches GRAVITY's ear.

ANDROMEDA

Throw the dog a meteor. If a tidal force wants a swig, they can have the spaghettification. Fix...?

ANDROMEDA tosses invisible spaghetti to GRAVITY.

ANDROMEDA (CONT'D)

Who's a good tidal force? You all are!

The TIDALS bark while SINGULARITY
tries to get them to sit.

TIDALS	SINGULARITY
Force! Force! Force! Force!	Fix. Fix. Fix. Fix. Fix. Fix.
Force! Force!	

MILKY WAY dives into their dish.

TRIANGULUM

Again, Milky Way?

ANDROMEDA

Ye mostly photons, Triangulum.

CARTWHEEL

It takes eight millennia to burn that,
Andromeda.

WHIRLPOOL

A simple nap ain't last any longer, Cartwheel.

SINGULARITY

Most of you went through a phase where you ate
megatons. You want to accrete and be a Grand-
Design Spiral Galaxy, don't you? Like
Whirlpool?

CARTWHEEL mocks WHIRLPOOL's
physique.

WHIRLPOOL

You may be well rounded, but you ain't got
spiral arms in this fight. You're full of heavy
blue stars. Ring a bell, Ring Galaxy?

CARTWHEEL

Gal, I put no weight or stress on myself. All
you are are stretched-out circles. Y'all are
the morbidly spiral Galaxies.

ANDROMEDA

Least you're not a two-dimensional square, like
this Galaxy.

TRIANGULUM

I'll run faster than light circles around you,
Galaxies.

TRIANGULUM tosses the whoopie
cushion at CARTWHEEL.

CARTWHEEL and WHIRLPOOL go on the
defense.

MILKY WAY
 (Mouthful of nuclear pasta)
 Kau tau to you, ellipsoids.

CARTWHEEL, WHIRLPOOL, TRIANGULUM
 Shut your worm hole, you quasi-Galaxy. At least
 we're not babies!

SINGULARITY
 Oneness, clusters of stars! Gals. Your hearts
 are all vigorous.

SINGULARITY lovingly pinches MILKY
 WAY's cheek.

SINGULARITY (CONT'D)
 Always, full of grace. Let us save space.

2. "CRUNCH" (<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/2-crunch>)

SINGULARITY prays.

SINGULARITY
 FEED THAT HOLE IN YOUR HEART.
 GIVE INTO INTERNAL DARKNESS.
 SHED OUR LIGHT FOR NO ONE.
 AS IT'S CRUNCH TIME, GALAXIES.

IN BLACK HOLES, DWELL WISDOM.
 FED BY THE SPRINKLES OF STARDUST.
 CRUSH THEIR DREAMS IN YOUR PALM.
 IT IS CRUNCH TIME, MY BABIES.

The TEEN GALAXIES pray with
 SINGULARITY.

TEEN GALAXIES
 CONSUME STAR SYSTEMS.
 CONSUME WORLDS THAT TEEM.
 CONSUMED BY THOUGHTS OF FAMILY. FAMILY...

SINGULARITY
 STRING BY STRING IN THEORY.
 AND FABRIC BY SPACETIME FABRIC.
 HOLD OUR LOVE AS A WHOLE.
 IT IS CRUNCH TIME, WE BELIEVE.

WHIRLPOOL
 IT IS CRUNCH TIME, SINGULARITY.

TRIANGULUM
 IT IS CRUNCH TIME, SINGULARITY.

CARTWHEEL
 IT IS CRUNCH TIME, SINGULARITY.

ANDROMEDA

IT IS CRUNCH TIME, SINGULARITY.

MILKY WAY

IT IS CRUNCH TIME, NOMY/MOMMY/DADDY SING.

SINGULARITY

IT IS CRUNCH TIME, JD?
SPT0615-JD?

End of "CRUNCH"

3. "CUTTING EDGE" (https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/3-cutting_edge)

GRAVITY splits from the TIDALS.
They stroll to JD, who is looking
upon their Galaxy family, to be
their canine companion.

JD

NOT THE TIME
TO PUSH ME OVER THE EDGE...
CUT INTO MY—
PUSH ME OVER THE EDGE OF THE...

GRAVITY turns JD's head to what's
outside.

JD (CONT'D)

CENTER WITH OUR RELATIVES.
OUR TIDAL DOGS.
GRAVITY, ALWAYS GROUNDING ME.

JD nears the edge of the home.

JD (CONT'D)

YOU SEE.
I GO OFF ON A TANGENT.

WHERE THE CUTTING EDGE WILL BE...

WHERE THE CURVATURE CONCEALS ALL WORLDS LEADING INTO KINSHIP.
SAIL OUT OF THIS ELLIPSE.
WHERE THE ASTRAL BEACH WILL MEET AN OCEAN FULL OF CHORAL
REEFS.
SEA WITH OTHER ELLIPSES.

JD takes a jab at their siblings.

JD (CONT'D)

WHY IS THIS CIRCLE LACKING THE CURIOSITY IN ALL?
STUCK IN THIS HERE, GALA.
WHY ARE THESE OVALS BENT ON SEEING NOTHING IN MYSTERY?
LOOK BEYOND THESE GALAXIES.

TEEN GALAXIES
CUT AWAY FROM THE EDGE!

JD
WHY DON'T YOU MAKE ME?
ALL YOUR FIGHTS HAVE DRIVEN A WEDGE.
PLEASE LET ME BE AT PEACE BY THE EDGE.
GO BACK AND CIRCUMVENT.
I'LL JUST BE OUT ON A TANGENT—

In JD's head, the TEEN GALAXIES
seem to be droning on.

TEEN GALAXIES
SPT0615-JD.
AS WE ARE JUST SAYING BEFORE YOU CUT US OFF.
NOTHING'S CUTTING OUTTA THE EDGE.
NO ONE'S GOING OVER THE EDGE.
JOIN US FOR CRUNCH.

JD
APPARENTLY, I HAVEN'T MADE MYSELF CLEAR.
CUTTING MY EDGES MAKES MYSELF APPARENT AS *YOU*. (*SINGULARITY*)
AND SHEDS MY LIGHT UPON A *LIGHTLESS GALAXY*. (*ABELL*)
MY HEART TELLS ME THERE'S A PROMISING FAMILY, OFF—
END OF THIS TANGENT.

TEEN GALAXIES
SPT0615. CHILD.
NO NEED TO BE APPARENT— (DRONING ON IN JD'S HEAD)
JOIN US FOR CRUNCH.

JD
MY FUTURE IS AN ELLIPSE WHERE MY LEGACY IS ABELL...
TO BE THE ADULT IN THE ROOM.

JD lets GRAVITY ground them.

TEEN GALAXIES
SPT0615-JADED—

JD
JD GOES OFF OF THE TANGENT!
ALL MY COSMIC POEMS MUST REACH TO THE ENDS OF THIS EPIC TALE.
OUR AUDACIOUS VERSE.
THERE MIGHT BE A FRIEND WHO WILL FOLLOW IN MY LYRICAL TRAILS
TO THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE...

YOU'LL KNOW.
I'LL BE CUTTING TO THE EDGE.

End of "CUTTING EDGE"

GRAVITY
Force!

JD
Grounded. You're my tidal
force, Gravity.

SINGULARITY

I will spare a millennium to listen to your verse, JD. You are apparent to me. Clear and crisp like how I raised you to be.

JD

I love you too, Singularity...

SINGULARITY

You love Gravity, too much. That dog is a bad influence.

JD

You Singularity, raised me physically. Gravity raised my spirit.

SINGULARITY

Your soul will be dragged down to their level if you keep it up. What are you looking forward to? What's pulling at your heart?

JD

Abell... There is something ringing in mine.

SINGULARITY

A *bell*? Your astronomical clock must be malfunctioning.

JD

My biological clock remains malnourished.

SINGULARITY

Our biology has no logic. If you hope for any of your fictitious clock to be functioning and *nourished*, you may... *Galaxies*?

TEEN GALAXIES

Join us for Crunch—

JD

I'm done with Crunch. I'm tired of the same old dish of photons that we eat and dishing it out with these teen Galaxies.

MILKY WAY

JD, *who* is Abell?

JD

Abell... May just be a tiny curiosity. Haha. *Like you, Milky Way.*

SINGULARITY

Even a grownup Galaxy needs to accrete. My babies need to grow. There's *nothing* out there for you.

JD

There is someone for that *nothing*. That someone is me.

SINGULARITY

You're nothing but a spoiled nebula if you've forgotten all the constants and variables I've picked for you. All the light I shed.

JD

I'm ready to pass on your light. Our light. Singularity... *May I go to the Edge of the Universe?*

SINGULARITY

We have *everything* in the Center of the Universe. No.

JD

Can I play with *nothing*? Please?

SINGULARITY

No means *no*.

JD

Pretty please with a supergiant on top?

SINGULARITY

The sight of darkness is not enough for you?

JD

As your heart has told you... There is a prophecy that once we gather enough light, we must share with the lightless. Abell... I've set my sights on a fulfilling legacy.

SINGULARITY

What was said is unapparent. Drop this legacy nonsense. The future is *nothing*. Be present for your family. Join us for Cr-

SINGULARITY reaches for JD.

GRAVITY bites SINGULARITY. They brawl with SINGULARITY.

TIDALS

Force! Force! Force! Force! Force! Force!

GRAVITY grounds SINGULARITY on the rug. They try to corral the TIDALS.

GRAVITY

Force. Force. Force. Force. Force. Force.