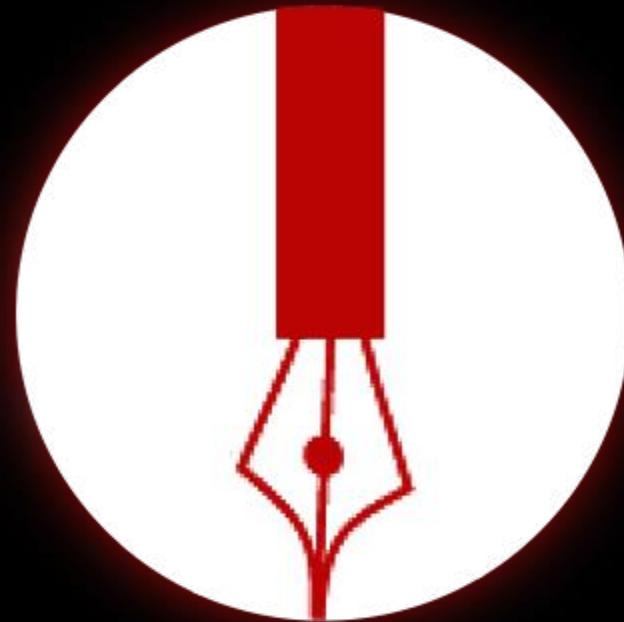


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Downtown Urban Arts Festival Announces 2020 Finalists

by Chloe Rabinowitz Nov. 19, 2019



emerging playwrights from around the world, DUAF has announced its 2020 finalists.

In Spring/Summer 2020, the Downtown Urban Arts Festival (DUAF) will return for its 18th annual season with Reg E. Gaines, Tony-nominated for Bring in da Noise Bring in da Funk, back as its Artistic Director. After his evaluation of scripts from a new crop of

List

Augusto Federico Amador - Fresno
Chima Chikazunga - For Chance
Alan "Rock" WILK - Imagine Judith
J. E. Robinson - Groove
Barbara Blumenthal-Ehrlich - Still Life
LaDarrion Williams - Concrete Rose
Melissa Rose - Baggage
D. Q. Pham - Fuse
Sheila Duane - Restoration Parts
Jason Tseng - The Other Side
Fred Crecca - The Cut
Jeremy Rafal - The Boy From Bantay



A photograph of a group of approximately 15 people standing on a stage in front of an audience. The audience is visible in the foreground, with their backs to the camera. The people on stage are dressed in a variety of casual and semi-formal attire. The background consists of a grey curtain.

WORKING TITLE PLAYWRIGHTS

AMBER BRADSHAW



The Managing Artistic Director of Working Title Playwrights



Aliyah Curry, 2020-2022 Rosalind-Ayres Williams Memorial Scholarship recipient

ALIYAH CURRY (she/her) is a Southern-raised writer and filmmaker, focusing on Black female sexuality and mental health. She brings these stories to life on stage, screen, and other mediums such as photography and poetry. Her work has been featured in *Port City Review*, *Permission to Write*, and various film festivals and exhibitions.



David Quang Pham, 2020-2021 WTP New Play Development and Dramaturgy Apprentice

David Quang Pham (he/him) is a science-based musical writer from Wyoming, Michigan. TOUR, the subatomic opera, is a frequent concerted feature under Musical Theatre Factory, a finalist for Downtown Urban Arts Festival 2020, and granted several readings. A member of ΣΠΣ, ASCAP, and the Dramatists Guild, he attained an astrophysics degree at Michigan State University. 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 looks forward to spinning many with Working Title Playwrights.

<https://www.tourmusical.com>









EL LIPSES

tour



Autumn Valley - Levelling

JD



Lee Osorio (he/his)



Minka Wiltz(she/her/hers)



Parris

EMILY MCCLAIN



Ellipses... A Collection of My Thoughts, Notes, Reactions, Vibes.

Emily McClain <emilymcclain234@gmail.com>

Tue 3/23/2021 11:32 AM

To: David Quang Pham <davidquangpham@outlook.com>

David,

I am truly in awe of this masterwork, having finished reading and listening to it yesterday afternoon. I spent the evening compiling and organizing my thoughts to share with you, and I typed them up in the body of the email this morning. Thank you for allowing me to serve as a reader for you on this piece. I am grateful for the trust you have in me and I hope that my thoughts/feedback serve your work. As always, take what resonates with you and discard the rest.

My dramaturgical method is always to read through the play for the first time just as if I were an audience member coming to it completely cold (although there was "some" awareness of the material from MNDW sessions). When I finished that read through I was struck overall by how warm and loving the end of the universe was in your story. All the characters seemed to have reconciled with who they were and what they meant to each other for the most part. I would not have expected such a traumatic sounding thing as the end of the universe to have such a warm fuzzy feeling and I enjoyed that unexpectedness. The musical is a sprawling epic, there's no doubt about that, and the scope of the story is massive. There were points in that initial read where I lost the thread of the main character's journey but I was able to follow the central thematic statements to the conclusion. I kept that in my mind for my second read to hopefully be able to pinpoint exactly where things became convoluted for me in that first pass.

The following are my "stream of consciousness" notes from the second read. I only listened to a little bit of the songs this time through to remind myself of the general tune/mood and focused mainly on the lyrics of the songs. (The page #'s refer to the page of the script itself, not the page on the pdf file)

p.16- The opening stage sequence is visually reminiscent of a religious invocation especially with the entrances from the audience.

p.17- The various entrances of the different characters give us a window into their personalities in a really efficient way.

p.17- VERY intrigued by the movement possibilities.

p.20- I am getting very "Mother Knows Best" vibes (if you're familiar with Disney's Tangled, the Mother Gothel character sings this song) from Singularity. Is your intention to have them come off as slightly ominous or controlling or just over-protective?

p.23- I think there is room to clarify why being large/oversized is a bad thing for galaxies to be in this world.

p.24- The religious undertones again with the prayer before the meal.

p.25- I had a question about why Gravity was drawn to JD. Was there something specific about them that entices Gravity? What causes Gravity to separate themselves from their pack?

p.27- "Cutting Edge" is a wonderful "I Want" song in the musical theatre tradition. I very much appreciated Gravity's participation and the echo of the siblings.

*On my second read, I wondered if the audience was truly going to pick up on Abell when JD first mentions them. Will we connect that line with the character we have not really interacted with at this point?

p.31- The Tidals attacking could be a very scary moment! Does Singularity have control over them? Do they obey Singularity's commands?

p32/33- JD has expressed the intention to leave already- why does Singularity take the threat seriously this time?

p.33- Fixed Stars as a duet is such a powerful image. We literally use the stars' position in the sky to navigate our way across the ocean and their stability is essential. JD's desire to unmoor from that was striking me as foolish and shortsighted. Was that the intention or did you want JD to be more sympathetic?

p.38- I got the sense that Triangulum is the "enforcer" of the family but I wasn't totally clear why. They aren't the favorite or golden child- are they the eldest? Biggest? What is their status in relation to the siblings?

p39-41- What do you want the audience to think about Triangulum by the end of this song? Their argument for JD to stay isn't totally clear to me by the end of this piece.

p.42- The discovery of the BB Taser was not as big a deal as I think it probably should be. It was a little rushed or glossed over. Also, the thematic statement of the song "Zilch" seems to be a rehashing of earlier statements. What makes this moment unique in the journey?

p.45- I appreciated the mentioning of the cycles of toxic parenting & emotional trauma that came before and shaped how Singularity views themselves in the world.

p.46- There were several repeated beats on this page between JD & Singularity circling around the same objectives/obstacles.

p.47- JD's statement of purpose occurs on this page "To pour my heart into someone with less" was extremely compelling and I went back to reread their statements in "Cutting Edge" to align the statement of purpose with the superobjective. I think there is more to explore here in the connection of these thoughts for JD's character.

p.47- I'm not sure how "Luminous" propels the action of the story forward. What is Singularity's objective for this song? I wonder if there is a more pressing objective in JD's discovery and hiding of the BB Taser?

p.48/49- The attack on Singularity did not pack as much emotional punch as I think it needs to- JD essentially commits matricide but their motivation of the action in the immediate moment was unclear to me. JD's longing over Abell (a character we have yet to truly see anyone interact with in any meaningful way) does not resonate for me as a catalyst for this extreme action.

*What is the true significance of the BB Taser in this world? Does it function as a weapon? As a religious talisman? As a

mystical or mysterious powerful object?

p.52- the power of all the galaxies grieving Singularity was a really strong moment for me. I could see this effectively being staged and it being incredibly impactful. Could this be another opportunity for a movement based piece with

the individual galaxies interacting uniquely in their grief?

p57- I'm very engaged by the fact that none of the other children knew about the Taser? Why did Singularity choose to keep this a secret from all of them?

*General note: the humor and sibling rivalry/politics is a strength of the piece overall. I wish we had more of that!

p64- Has JD/Gravity's relationship changed in their experiences on the edge? Was looking for the character or plot progression in "Verse" but it wasn't totally clear to me. Exploring the changes in the power dynamics of their relationship could be a reason for this song?

p66- How did Andromeda know Milky Way was gone?

p70- I really appreciated the rivalry and resentments explored by Cartwheel and Whirlpool. I think there is room for some specificity in their grievances against Triangulum or the others.

p77- "Time is Relative" is such a great caper duet. It had a modern Cole Porter feel with the wordplay that I enjoyed.

p81- I'm not totally clear on Whirl and Cart's motivation to return to the home. Are they worried about repercussions? Are they afraid of the unknown?

p84- I wish for some clarification on the Tidals shift from family pets to ominous creatures. Is it because Singularity is no longer alive to control them?

p88- Milky Way's journey and interaction with the planets was interesting but I'm not clear how it functions in the overall narrative arc. Is this intended to be a full-scale subplot? Coming in at p88 seems a little late.

p93- Is there a way to fully integrate Milky Way's journey with JD? They didn't have much interaction prior to the BB Tassing of Singularity.

p97- LOL at the Zit moment

p99- I really enjoyed the Tidals on the prowl. Very effective and scary, and it shifted the mood immediately.

p102- The idea to personify the time scale of galactic time using a human life development is very cool and makes it much easier to understand.

p107- "Far Fetched" The eyeball moment gave me pause both times I read the piece. Where did they get it from? How does JD know what it is?

p112- Singularity's vision of the children as puppets is very interesting symbolism to how they view the galaxies.

p115- 100 pages for Act 1 is pretty heavy. Are you open to trimming anything to streamline this action?

p116- Seeing Singularity's parents at the top of Act 2 is a really engaging choice since we've already formed opinions about them based on Singularity's statements in Act 1.

p123- The visuals of Tidals rescuing Singularity are really strong (and I'm not normally a fan of flashbacks but I

thought it effectively elaborated on elements I needed to know more about!)

p126- I have questions about JD's lack of remorse- this choice is making me pull away from this character and their journey.

p128- Why has JD never heard this before now? How do they feel about this new information?

p132- Triangulum's forgiveness moment comes from left field for me. They went on this whole extended journey but they're so quick to immediately forgive JD for causing this whole thing?

p134- Tri's statement "we cleared our minds on this journey" didn't fully illuminate what happened. Their objective seemed fairly static so I didn't know what discovery or change occurred for them

p141- LOL to Cluster Flux

p143- Do we need them to rehash to each other what we've already witnessed? Could this page time be better allocated to pursuing active objectives or new goals?

p152- When Singularity returns how does that impact the new changes Tri and the others have made in their self-governance? Would everyone be equally excited to see Singularity return to their previous position of power?

p163- Why does the change in Parallax occur? How has JD or Gravity changed to allow this new progress? Why were they unable to achieve it before?

p164- "Tangent" What is the forward progression of the plot explored in this song?

p167- I would have liked for this break-up to be more developed. I wasn't sure why Gravity was suddenly leaving after most of the play had been about establishing the bond between JD and Gravity. What is compelling Gravity to leave?

p176- JD's desire for truth is admirable.

p188- The "boss battle" final showdown vibe is engaging. I think it's a very earned moment.

p193- There is amazing strength in the image of Singularity fighting off the pack of Tidal wolves. This sequence is really compelling!

p196- The concluding curtain call images are so sweet. A good note to end the piece on.

Concluding Thoughts:

Overall the strengths of this piece are 100% the sibling/family dynamics and the desire for self-actualization as major thematic statements. You've done an amazing job bringing this aspect of your story to life through the dialogue and lyrics of the songs. The central conflict between Singularity and JD drives the action forward to a point, but then that conflict kind of resolves itself and becomes a conflict between JD and Gravity. The transition between these two central conflicts was not totally clear to me why or how it occurred. Additionally, I'm not sure that the subplot of JD's attraction to Abell adds significantly to the overall story. Milky Way's solo journey was a plot thread I would love to see more fully developed, especially how Milky Way's desires coincide or diverge from JD's. You have such a beautiful and complex multi-layered story with this family and I want to know everything about them!

WHEW! Okay I know this is a LOT, looking back over this email, I had a lot of thoughts on this piece-- and I think that really speaks to the power of this story! I am very happy to talk more if anything I've said is unclear or you would like more detailed thoughts on a particular section, or really anything you need. I hope this is helpful for your process and again I am so grateful to have been able to serve your work in this small way.

Warmest wishes always,
em

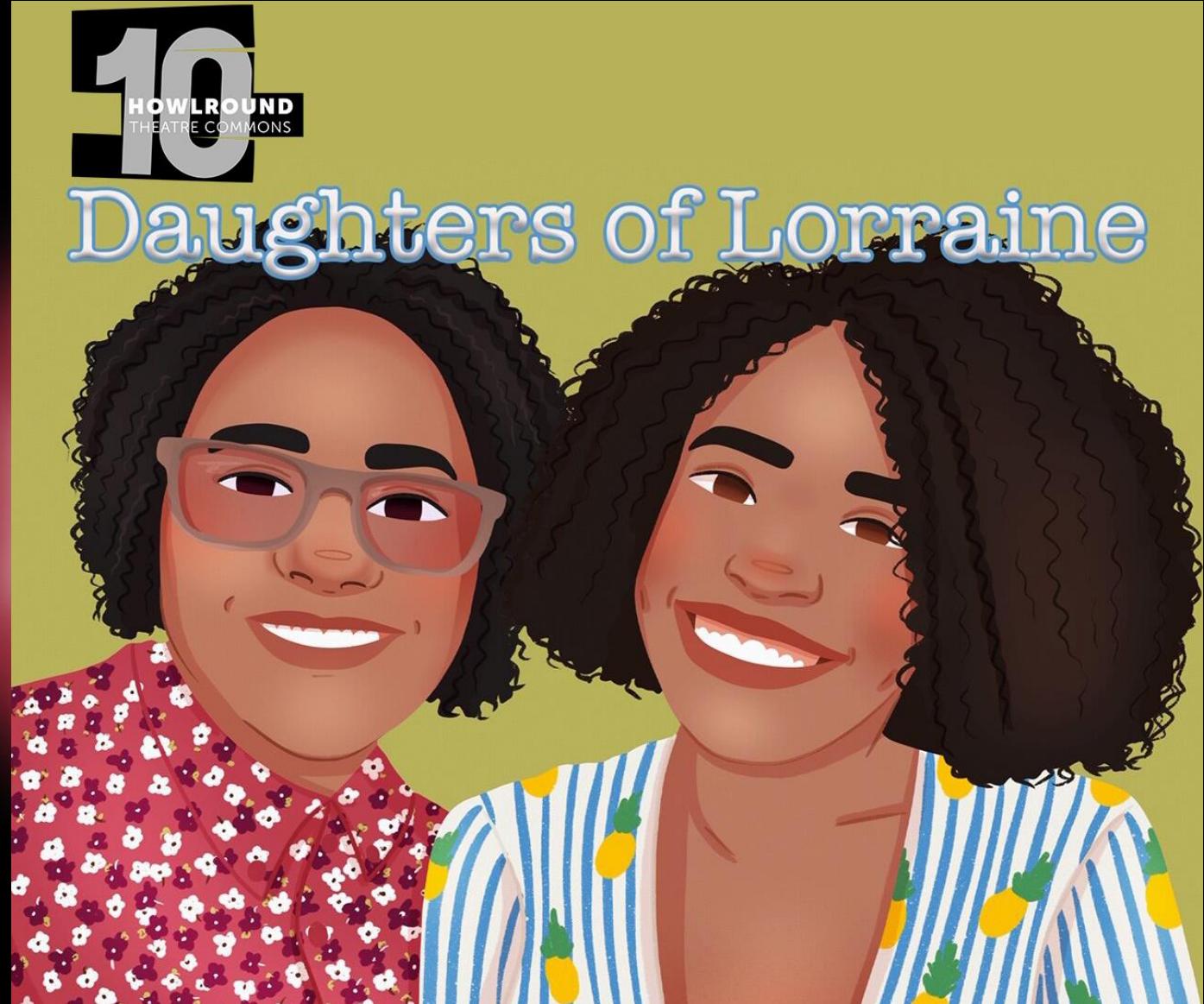
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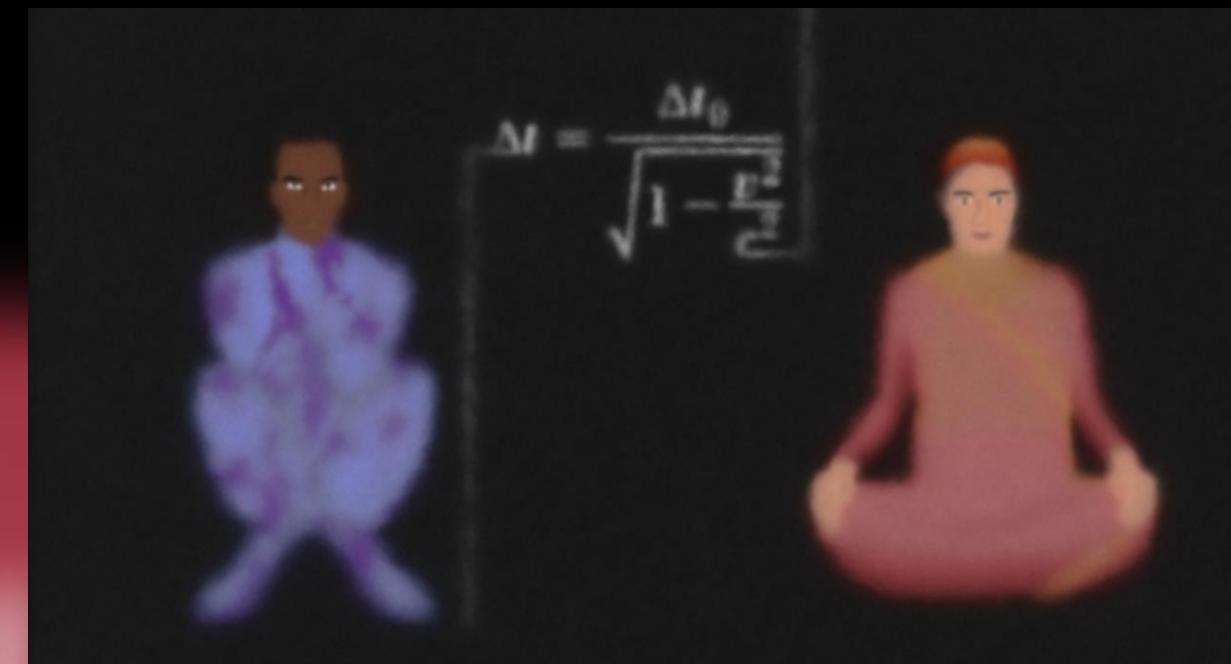
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Dramaturgy by JORDAN ALEXANDRIA EALEY

Directed by ALIYAH CURRY

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Narrated by SOFIA PALMERO

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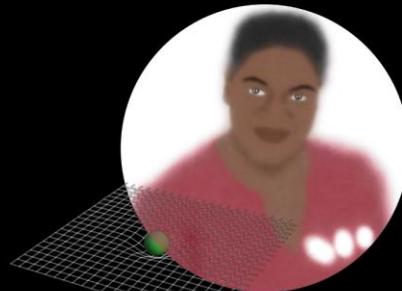
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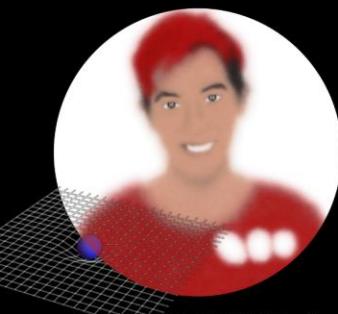
PARRIS SARTER VALLEA E. WOODBURY DANIELA COBB
Singularity Gravity SPT0615-JD



JASON-JAMAL LIGON SKYE PASSMORE
Cartwheel Whirlpool



DANIEL SAKAMOTO-WENGEL EVAN PHILLIPS
Andromeda Milky Way



QUOTES

“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, Broadway Composer/Lyricist of *Jane Eyre & Daddy Long Legs*

QUOTES

“I love stories about families and yours is truly the most unique I've seen.”

- John Mabey, Award-Winning Playwright

“The play got me thinking about my / our place in the Universe — you can't get more epic than that. Graphics and animation....wow!”

- Henry W. Kimmel, President of WTP & Alliance for Jewish Theatre





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