**THEatre ACCELERATOR New Reality - Application**

Winter 2022 (02/14/2022 - 02/25/2022)  
Spring 2022 (05/16/2022 - 05/27/2022)

**Project Title \***

ELLIPSES

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Author 1 (main contact) \***

David Quang Pham

**Author 1 Title \***

Book, Music, and Lyrics

**Author 1 Pronouns**

he/him

**Website**

<https://www.ellipsesplay.com>

**Tell us about you/your team. Give us your life story/stories (in 200 words or less). Include pertinent musical theatre and AR/VR experience. \*** (Maximum of 200 words)

I am a musical theater science communicator. My theatrical Big Bang happened when my family went to see *Turandot* after visiting Space Camp. It was then that I cannot separate the two: performing arts and science.

My high school drama and math teachers made them visible and indivisible. During my Calculus class, our project was to creatively teach integration. So, I ended up writing a musical titled *Mathland*. It was a show about constants who cannot go upstage or downstage, integrating in a two-dimensional world. When my teacher graded my rubric, he wrote: “You should consider being a musical writer.”

I knew that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of eternity. My purpose is to introduce theatre artists to science and scientists to theatre. My heart looks to guide researchers to the fourth wall and theatremakers to the fourth dimension. Henceforth, I write love letters to science through musicals.

After completing an astrophysics and theatre education at Michigan State University, I studied playwriting as the second apprentice of Working Title Playwrights in Atlanta. I am the Literary Fellow of Playwrights Foundation, San Francisco. Be up to lightspeed at <https://www.scitheatre.org/>

**Describe success for you/your team in this program. What would you liked to have accomplished by the end? How might AR/VR help you achieve success? \*** (Maximum of 250 words)

ELLIPSES was my apprenticeship project at Working Title Playwrights, and I got to see the show on its virtual feet throughout 2021. Seeing the show with an audience was helpful, and my revisions are based on rehearsal feedback and audience responses I got through that yearlong experience. As WTP had provided web conference resources, THEatre ACCELERATOR may take us in a different and perhaps accessible direction.

In the New Reality Edition, my three specific goals for ELLIPSES are to a) record compelling room reverberation in our audio tracks by testing binaural recordings in VR, b) recreate and assess our set designs in different virtual spaces (<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/set>), and c) revolutionize our animated demos through AR (ex: <https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music/2-crunch>). Process and progress are success for this story. AR/VR looks to support our development steps in humanizing celestial objects and personifying the entire chronology of our Universe.

**How did you hear about THEatre ACCELERATOR?**

Marie Incontrera, NMI, and NYPL

**Which class of THEatre ACCELERATOR would you like to apply for? \***

Winter 2022 (02/14/2022 - 02/25/2022) Spring 2022 (05/16/2022 - 05/27/2022) Either

**Which social media accounts do you regularly use to engage with your audience/network? (check all that apply)**  
Facebook Twitter Snapchat Instagram YouTube Tumblr LinkedIn Pinterest TikTok

### **PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Do you have a completed draft of your script, music and lyrics? \***

Yes No

**Is your story original? \***

Yes No

**If no, do you have the rights to adapt the source material?**

Yes No

**Is anyone currently attached to your story? \***

Yes No

**Genre \***



**Sub-genre**



**Project Synopsis \*** (Maximum of 250 words.)

Spend an eternity in the family musical of epic proportions: ELLIPSES is a cosmology mythology that stars the Galaxy family and their dog Gravity as they face a life-changing event known as the Big Bang.

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. 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.

**Describe the theme of your story. What is unique, compelling, inspiring about your story? \*** (Maximum of 250 words.)

In ELLIPSES, ellipses are three overlapping ovals that represent childhood, teenhood, and adulthood. Milky Way is transitioning from childhood to teenhood while JD is transitioning from teenhood to adulthood. Singularity is in the third ellipse with its subsequent liminal space representing death.

The heart of its coming-of-age story is self-discovery as an anomaly. Each character has their own distinct and anomalous coming-of-age experience. The recent years of lockdown established the remote Galaxy family. It has made me channel the philosophical and physical concept of nothingness, which truly is a hidden “everything” in our Universe.

The chronology of our Universe is a family drama in play. The Big Bang, Big Crunch, Big Bounce, and Hubble’s Law influence the plot structure. The songs speak on subject matters from time dilation to galaxy formation to stellar evolution to Andromeda–Milky Way collision to apparent shift of position to dimensions. It is a science musical that is particularly relatable because of its family dynamics and its music that sparks curiosity within the audience.

**How did you come up with this story and why do you feel compelled to tell it now? \*** (Maximum of 250 words.)

As an astrophysics student, I made sense of it all by personification. My first science musical was about subatomic educators in a collegiate Accelerator. Working Title Playwrights considered this quantum tale to be worthy for their apprenticeship. For long-term programs, I like to start fresh and create a new story. Addae Moon taught my first class. For namesake reasons, I dove into astronomy. This time, I conceptualized on a macroscale. He shared a photo of a child with a gun, and I thought “the Big Bang.” He had us meditate about a hub of books with a dark figure in the room, and I recalled Hubble’s Law which states that Galaxies must distance from the Center of the Universe. Back in New Musicals Inc’s conference, it seemed intriguing that most pitches were family dramas. As a dramaturg who helped single parent writers, this led me to the Singularity of perspectives. In “Working Title,” there was tidal forces to unleash. “…” came because that was how I jokingly titled life these past years.

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. 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 this universal musical: ELLIPSES.

**How will AR/VR help you create and/or tell your story? \*** (Maximum of 250 words.)

Zoom’s collaborative process has virtually made what ELLIPSES is now. My physics background informs my prediction of the technological future and confidence in virtual reality. AR/VR can only help, especially because of the current state of the world.

The world of ELLIPSES is the entire Universe. What comes close to its rate of expansion is the Metaverse. VR can visualize the expansion of a theatre stage in a fathomable way. In the story, the way we demonstrate universal expansion is through its movable dome set that traverses upstage and downstage. When the dome moves upstage, it represents the Big Bang. When the dome moves downstage, it represents the Big Crunch. VR will assist in communications with a director that stage directions could not visually state.

AR can plant celestial phenomena and objects into the show. Astronomical props and events that appear include Milkomeda’s Quasar, the Solar System puppets, field equations personified as flowers, electricity of the Big Bang Taser, etc. Ideally, it would help to know what viewers see in them before prop masters make the real things.

Eventually, ELLIPSES looks and strives to be known as an in-person staged musical. Virtual reality will lend itself to the creative team and performers’ dramaturgical insight on how the science concepts. It makes for an immersive rehearsal process before set designers make the finishing touches on the starry and galactic set.

**Who will want to see your musical? Describe your target audience. \***

Families who are into science fantasy; age range: 15-35; fanbase: nerd culture, pop music

**What will audiences love about your story? \***

The characters and family dynamics and theatricality

**How might you market your show to your target audience? \***

For the WTP apprenticeship concert and reading, we marketed it through a star-studded team of theatre artists, some with science backgrounds (two medical professionals and a botanist) and most who identify with the global majority. The vocalist who portrays the protagonist is Daniela Cobb, a performer in the National Broadway Tour of The Lion King. The major point is that everyday people with any level of interest in science or any love for established stories will gravitate to our family musical.

While showcasing the work at Durban University of Technology’s DigiFest and Annual Research Conference, we connected with planetarium visual artists. We are considering marketing our songs at planetariums and museums.

We will continue to produce and publish animation to bring our songs to life and share them at Musical Theatre Factory, Play Café, and other communities.

**Link to music demos. \***

<https://www.ellipsesplay.com/music>

### **PROJECT HISTORY**

**Has your story previously been produced?**

Yes No

**If yes, please described any past readings, workshops or productions.**

2022 • Semifinalist • National Music Theater Conference, O'Neill Theater Center

December 11, 2021 • Lab • Theater Resources Unlimited; Dir. Miriam Eusebio

October 17, 2021 • Workshop • Theater Resources Unlimited

July 15, 2021 • Concert Read w/ Talkback • WTP; Dir. Aliyah Curry, Dramaturg Jordan Ealey

June 13, 2021 • Workshop • Theater Resources Unlimited

May 3, 2021 • Reading w/ Talkback • Working Title Playwrights

February 1, 2021 • Reading w/ Talkback • Working Title Playwrights

December 7, 2020 • Reading w/ Talkback • Working Title Playwrights

October 5, 2020 • Reading w/ Talkback • Working Title Playwrights

### **DIVERSITY SURVEY (Optional)**

To better understand the writers we're helping, please consider answering these self-identification questions.

**What is Writer 1's ethnicity?**

White Hispanic or Latinx Black or African American Native American or American Indian Asian Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian (MENASA) Pacific Islander Multi-ethnic or two or more racesOther

**What is Writer 1's gender?**

Male Female Transgender Nonbinary Other

### **REFERENCES**

Please provide up to three professional references.

**Reference 1**

Hank Kimmel

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