# Personal Statement – David Quang Pham

Theatre is where we can break walls, new grounds, and dimensions. 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. And my drama and math teachers made them more visible and indivisible. In high school, I wrote *Mathland*. It was a musical about folks who could not go upstage or downstage, integrated in a two-dimensional world. My teacher said: "You should consider being a scriptwriter." So, I went on and got an astrophysics degree.

My higher calling is to become the science playwright. In fact, I majored in science so that I can faithfully make ionic monologues, create stage combat between lasers and cancer, and break Earth with rocky choreography. My peers studied science to craft new ions, fight cancer with lasers, and stop meteors from striking Earth. I give a voice to my unheard colleagues by writing their stories. Indeed, my first formal play, TOUR, was about particles going to college in a nuclear reactor. I wrote this at Michigan State University (MSU) while finishing my undergraduate degree.

After graduation, I took a gap year to send TOUR out. Then, the writer of *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*, reg e gaines, read it and invited me to New York. He said that the science spoke to the urban heart. We are all quarks colliding with one another in the accelerator called life. And like any particle, I needed to reach the excited state of a higher degree.

In 2020, a Dramatists Guild class led by Laura Neill introduced me to Boston University (BU). Guild members believed my scientific insights benefited writers. Once I branded myself as the science theatre artist, other science writers requested my help. Working Title Playwrights (WTP) soon made me an apprentice. In 2021, Playwrights Foundation made me their Literary Fellow where I read plays from BU grad students and alumni. My formal studies in playwriting occurred under the leading new play organizations in Atlanta and San Francisco. I look to grad school to be more like my mentors who have pushed their theatrical skills to the highest degree.

I approach Boston University for the community, resources, and the science. Boston is turning out playwrights who specialize in science, such as Sloan grantee Kira Rockwell, and educators who write about the science community, like Melinda Lopez. Ultimately, an MFA provides us the tools to climb educational slopes. I have taught classes and mentored for much of my life.

And I look to meet academic standards through my aspiration to grow as an educator at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre. I would advance myself in New Noises, a program that can put me lightyears ahead when it comes to teaching my scientific creative process. Because of my distinct upbringing, I have countless original thoughts and run with them. My mentorship can help young playwrights with fresh ideas discover more of their own unique voices.

When I was the Vice President of MSU's Society of Physics Students, I kept pupils engaged by organizing artistic events where they saw compelling relationships in nature. I have lent my methods of personification so that they can make connections between the chemical elements and human personalities. And on Physics and Astronomy Day, we annually visited a local science museum to combine science demonstrations and theatre for school-aged children.

I also mentored neurodivergent kids at Openspot Theatre. Within those four years of volunteer work, they developed an interest in science storytelling. One student created a water molecule character while another wrote its scene for a showcase. It was rewarding and encouraging to see the next generation embrace my love for science.

In that spirit, I strive to connect Boston Playwrights' Theatre with my education as a science communicator and unite artists and scientists. Together with the community, I would like to humanize the rich history of science in Boston. My three-year plan is for BU to be the home and inspiration of my next science musical. This play would be my graduate thesis.

My chronology in playwriting is expansive. Much of the creative expansion occurred as a fellow and an apprentice. Coming out of the dark ages, I am ready to engage in large-scale structure emergence as a graduate student. I look to uncover advantages in challenges when writing new materials, including dozens of shorts and a full-length play per year; plays about scientists who are crafting new ions, fighting cancer with lasers, and stopping meteors from striking Earth. Boston University is where we can break walls, new grounds, and dimensions.

Following grad school, I look to spearhead as an educator and practitioner of science storytelling. The diverse setting and scientific accomplishments of Boston University's Playwriting Program would help me be a pioneer in science playwriting that I know I could be.

Thank you for your consideration and spacetime.

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After graduation, I took a gap year to send TOUR out. Then, the writer of *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*, reg e gaines, read it and invited me to New York. He said that the science spoke to the urban heart. We are all quarks colliding with one another in the accelerator called life. And like any particle, I needed to reach the excited state of a higher degree.

In 2017, I toured science and theatre departments at the University of Iowa (UI). I eventually realized that scientific principles could lend itself to theatrical standards. Once I branded myself as the science theatre artist, other science writers requested my help. Working Title Playwrights (WTP) soon made me an apprentice. In 2021, Playwrights Foundation made me their Literary Fellow where I read plays alongside alumni Deborah Yarchun. My formal studies in playwriting occurred under the leading new play organizations in Atlanta and San Francisco. I look to grad school to be more like my mentors who have pushed their theatrical skills to the highest degree.

I approach the Iowa Playwrights' Workshop for the community, resources, and the science. Iowa turned out playwrights who specialize in science and technology, such as Sloan grantee Amanda Keating and Deborah Yarchun, and educators who write about scientists, like Lisa Schlesinger. Ultimately, an MFA provides us the tools to climb educational slopes. I have taught and mentored

for much of my life. And I look to meet academic standards through my aspiration to grow as an educator in the teaching assistantships. I would advance myself as an Iowa Arts Fellow, a program that can put me lightyears ahead when it comes to teaching my scientific creative process. Because of my distinct upbringing, I have countless original thoughts and run with them. My mentorship can help playwrights with fresh ideas discover more of their own unique voices.

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In that spirit, I strive to connect Iowa Playwrights' Workshop with my education as a science communicator and unite artists and scientists. Together with the community, I would like to humanize the rich history of science in UI. My third-year plan is for UI to be the home and inspiration of my next science musical. This play would be my graduate thesis.

My chronology in playwriting is expansive. Much of the creative expansion occurred as a fellow and an apprentice. Coming out of the dark ages, I am ready to engage in large-scale structure emergence as a graduate student. I look to uncover advantages in challenges when writing new materials, including dozens of shorts and a full-length play per semester; plays about scientists who are crafting new ions, fighting cancer with lasers, and stopping meteors from striking Earth. University of Iowa is where we can break walls, new grounds, and dimensions.

Following grad school, I look to spearhead as an educator and practitioner of science storytelling. The exploratory community of Iowa Playwrights' Workshop would help me be a pioneer in science playwriting that I know I could be.

Thank you for your consideration and spacetime.