

# David Quang Pham (he/him)

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In college, my peers pursued higher education in order to become well-written scientists. They are now discovering new ions, fighting cancer with lasers, and stopping asteroids from hurtling towards our planet. My higher calling has been to be the science playwright. I can now make monologues for ions, create stage combat between lasers and cancer, and break Earth with a rocky game of dodgeball. I have also given a voice to my unheard colleagues.

2018 was the last I heard from them while studying in the cyclotron at my alma mater, Michigan State University (MSU). I had been immersed in my subatomic opera for my entire senior year. After graduation, I took a gap year to send this play 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 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.

At the start of a blazing 2020, a Dramatists Guild class led by alumni Laura Neill made me aware of Boston University (BU). I had visited the city twice for the Asian American Playwright Collective Playfest and a physics retreat at Boston College. The goal of either events was for the betterment of the world. I knew that my scientific insights ought to be shared with writers of the future. Once I branded myself as the science theatremaker in all gatherings, many playwrights reached out for help on their science plays. Soon, Working Title Playwrights (WTP) asked me to be their apprentice. In 2021, Playwrights Foundation approached me to be their literary fellow. My formal studies in playwriting and dramaturgy happened under the leading new play incubators in Atlanta and the Bay Area. To be more like the pioneering playwrights that mentored me there, I strive to obtain a higher degree.

How do I plan to stand out amongst the other dozens of particles who are applying? I will advance myself in New Noises. Particularly, this program would further my effectiveness in sharing how sparks fly when tackling limited daily prompts and weeklong assignments that are amorphous as quantum mechanics. Young playwrights with fresh ideas may get a lot out of positive mentorship from me as someone who has original thoughts and runs with it. As the Vice President of MSU's Society of Physics Students, I kept undergrads engaged by organizing artsy events where they saw compelling relationships in nature. I also mentored neurodivergent kids at 4th Wall Theatre Company (now Openspot). And in the past year, underserved communities have approached me to teach master classes on musical writing. To add, my experiences as a literary fellow has shaped my empathy with aspiring writers. Regardless, the barrier to developmental opportunities is the requirement for a visiting musical writer to have academic experiences in teaching. MSU's *imáGen* initiative and the University of the Arts' Polyphone Festival are some examples. It is a professional challenge that I look to overcome by my aspiration to grow as a musical writing educator at the Boston Playwrights' Theatre.

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And as a playwright, a pattern in my work is that the story traverses science communication through the human condition. TOUR, an opera about subatomic educators colliding in the academic Accelerator, was conceived as a physics undergrad. ELLIPSES, a musical about the isolated Galaxy family, was developed in our 2020 isolation. This musical found a yearlong home at Working Title Playwrights. My three-year-long plan is for BU to be the home and inspiration of my next science musical.

Based on the work at Boston Theater Marathon Festival and alumni Steven Barkhimer's musical profession, I know that BU is open to the form. As a librettist, I am going to be writing librettos, and seek mentorship from Barkhimer. My three-year graduate school project will be a musical that personifies science, perhaps telecommunication, having observed BU's research in it. Also, I will make the most of writing unplanned dozens of shorts and several full-length plays a year. Working Title Playwrights enhanced my playwriting discipline and connected me with my first stage manager, dramaturg, and director. I also produced as an affiliate of CreateTheater and Playwrights Foundation and as a mentee under Jane Dubin and Jennifer Isaacson of Theater Resources Unlimited. Working with Boston's artists may be sought if I am accepted, but I also look forward to connecting BU's theatre with my education as a science communicator. As a graduate student, my theses would be STEAM collaborations. Together, I would like to focus on humanizing the rich history of science in Boston.

My chronology in playwriting looks expansive lately. The best years of my life was as an apprentice, is as a fellow, and always as a champion of science plays. Much of the enlightenment happened in the dark years of 2020-2021. So, the time is now to get out of my Dark Age and onto an era of large-scale structure emergence. It is never too late to start grad school. However, the sooner I start, the earlier the galaxies, stars, planets, and ultimately cells can form; the more time there is for chaotic systems to settle with ecosystems; the smoother it is for intelligent life to set design my worlds and find their callings in art and science. Those who have graduated alongside me may be discovering new ions, fighting cancer with lasers, and stopping asteroids from hurtling towards our planet. However, I am a rare particle who can gravitate the masses towards what is present in the field of STEM and the natural field of science.

If I am accepted into Boston University's Playwriting program's orbit, I would acquire the tools to not only build myself but the communities who have raised me with limited resources and yet has the passion for the performing arts. I believe your open and diverse background, and reliable mission would accelerate me to be the pioneer in science playwriting that I know I could be. Thank you for your consideration and spacetime.