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Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the MAR12 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Creating Catalytic Collaborations between Theater Artists, Scientists, and Research Institutions¹

DEBRA WISE, Catalyst Collaborative @ MIT

Catalyst Collaborative@MIT (CC@MIT) is a collaboration between MIT and Underground Railway Theater (URT), a company with 30 years experience creating theater through interdisciplinary inquiry and engaging community. CC@MIT is dedicated to creating and presenting plays that deepen public understanding about science, while simultaneously providing artistic and emotional experiences not available in other forms of dialogue about science. CC@MIT engages audiences in thinking about themes in science of social and ethical concern; provides insight into the culture of science and the impact of that culture on society; and examines the human condition through the lens of science that intersects our lives and the lives of scientists. Original productions range from Einstein's Dreams to From Orchids to Octopi – an evolutionary love story; classics re-framed include The Life of Galileo and Breaking the Code (about Alan Turing). CC@MIT commissions playwrights and scientists to create plays; engages audiences with scientists; performs at MIT and a professional venue near the campus; collaborates with the Cambridge Science Festival and MIT Museum; engages MIT students, as well as youth and children. Artistic Director Debra Wise will address how the collaboration developed, what opportunities are provided by collaborations between theaters and scientific research institutions, and lessons learned of value to the field.

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