

Past, Present, Future

Tabitha is way ahead of her time
Dakota is behind the times
Just in time to meet in the middle
as iTab & Coda!

It gives a whole new meaning to
“Right Person, Wrong Time”

Past, Present, Future

For My Midwest and Middle East Friends

SYNOPSIS

The sci-fi adventure romance musical follows two lonely musicians: Tabitha, a 1st-century Galilean lyre maker, and Dakota, a 21st-century Midwestern guitar maker. When given magical instruments carved from spacetime wood, they accidentally tear a rift in time and trap themselves in the 19th-century Romantic era. Blending ancient hymns with modern music, they form the duo ¡Tab & Coda! to survive the wrath of the cosmic Timeharmonic Orchestra and find a way home.

It explores bittersweet themes like mortality, appreciation for wisdom, everlasting search for freshness, and the value of nature in music.

WHY (THEN) NOW (LATER)?

Past, Present, Future speaks to many of our feelings of not fitting into your own era. Seeing a 1st-century woman find her soul in alternative hip-hop while a 21st-century newcomer finds peace in ancient hymns is meant to comfort the audience who feel like an outsider into seeking out musical communities. By blending ancient roots with future sounds, they prove that we can find our people and build a home, even when the timing feels completely wrong. Tabitha and Dakota are like us: they are the right people at the wrong times.

It also matters now when we are all out of sync with the world. We're living in a hyper-digital age where algorithms dictate what we listen to and everything is moving too fast. The Timeharmonic Orchestra personifies that pressure to be perfect and efficient all the time. When ¡Tab & Coda! fight back with instruments made of wood and seeds, the musical is a gentle reminder to unplug, slow down, and remember the human soul behind the art.

Past, Present, Future is the comedy of *Back to the Future* meets the mythology of *Hadestown* meets the romance of *The Great Comet*.

PLOT SUMMARY

Trapped in the 19th-century Romantic era by guitars carved from spacetime wood, a 1st-century Galilean lyre maker and a lonely 21st-century Midwesterner must blend ancient hymns with hip hop to survive a tyrannical cosmic orchestra and find their way home.

Space and time are in harmony due to the endless performance of the Timeharmonic Orchestra, overseen by Eternity Linger and their Timepipers: Frailty (Past), Reality (Present), and Destiny (Future). They navigate time as birds dropping seeds to keep the timeline rooted (“Overture/Prologue”).

In 1st Century Galilee, Tabitha is a lyre maker trying to revolutionize music that prioritizes individualism and a deep awe of nature over Enlightenment. In present-day Free Soil, Michigan, Dakota is a guitar maker deeply into the classics (“Born in the Wrong Generation”). Their parents see them as failures who will never find someone (“The Right Person”). Frailty and Destiny, annoyed by Reality’s strictness, decides to get back at Reality by playing Cupid. Destiny grows an American basswood tree for Tabitha to carve her oud. Meanwhile, Frailty offers Judean date palm seeds to Dakota for their guitar. With a strum, it sends them to the 19th Century (“The Wrong Time”). Tabitha and Dakota do not get along (“Must Be Nice (Times Like These)”).

Outside spacetime, Frailty and Destiny watch the timeline grow wonky. Reality scolds them and demands that they get Tabitha and Dakota home or else Eternity will fire the Conductor and restart the timeline (“Out of Tune”).

Meanwhile, Dakota’s middle and last sounds like אֶפְשָׁרִי or “possible” in Hebrew. Tabitha and the Romantic era folks find hope in it (“אֶפְשָׁרִי (Efshari, [Anything’s Possible](#))”). The Timepipers try to stop Tabitha and Dakota as they get along and play music to jump around years. The couple’s antics catch the attention of the underground movement as they unintentionally kickstart the Romantic era and inspire the creation of the classical guitar. They form the musical duo, ךTab & Coda! (“Band Together”).

They start to accept the trajectory they are on, which is none, as they fall for each other (“Start from the Conclusion”). The Timepipers reach Tabitha and sow seeds of doubt into her (“Life is Short (You Must Be This Old to Die)”).

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Tabitha wants a future together *or technically the past*, but Dakota once again does not know themselves. Eternity steps in and rattles the timeline, sending Tabitha and Dakota home (“Right Person, Wrong Time”).

In the following act, Tabitha has the time of her life in 21st Century Galilee with alternative hip hop (“Passing By, Running Behind”). Meanwhile, Dakota is stuck in the 1st Century and meets Tabitha’s father. Dakota finds a pile of basswood and carves an oud (“Keep Tabs (on Your Heart)”).

Tabitha stumbles upon a music history museum where she finds Dakota’s mother, a curator, crying at an ancient oud with םTab & Coda!’s melodic line carved in it. With each other’s help, she steals the oud (“אָפּטָרױ – Reprise”).

Outside spacetime, everything is back to going awry (“The Songs Linger (Long Enough)”). Now, Tabitha and Dakota are back, stuck in a void time limbo, but they got a second chance together (“Seconds Count”).

Outside spacetime, Eternity finds the timeline is warped out of shape. They have enough of the chaos and must do a reboot. While firing the Conductor, Eternity finds out the Conductor is in cahoots with the lovebirds. Eternity takes the Conductor’s baton and stabs them with it. Eternity orders the Timepipers to kill the rest of the Timeharmonic Orchestra (“Out of Wack”).

Meanwhile, Tabitha and Dakota jump around time in a chaotic fashion. Tabitha reveals she knows of the Timepipers and their guitars transcend their powers. If they go back in time in “the outside world” and stop Eternity from killing the Conductor, they can save the timeline but ultimately be separated (“Paradox”). They go and save the Timeharmonic Orchestra. Their last performance is a dance with Eternity singing (“In Loving Destiny”).

Back in the 21st Century, Dakota and their mother visit a museum near Galilee. They stare at a guitar with a םTab & Coda!’s melodic line intently. The museum closes, not without the alarm blaring (“From the End”).

Tabitha and Dakota reunite, this time in the Baroque period. Tabitha jokes: “If it’s not Baroque, don’t fix it.” Dakota emphasizes how much better it would be if the next vacation is in the Renaissance. The Timeharmonic Orchestra are once again in chaos (“In Loving Destiny – Reprise”).

PLOT SUMMARY (SCENE-BY-SCENE)

Act I

Scene 1: The cosmic timeline remains balanced through the constant performances of the Timeharmonic Orchestra, overseen by Eternity Linger and the three shapeshifting bird-like Timepipers: Frailty (Past), Reality (Present), and Destiny (Future).

Scene 2: In 1st Century Galilee, a lyre maker named Tabitha longs for an individualistic sound. Meanwhile, in 21st Century Michigan, a guitar maker named Dakota isolates themselves by clinging purely to ancient music. Both of their families view them as failures.

Scene 3: Annoyed by Reality's strict rules, Frailty and Destiny play Cupid. Destiny gives Tabitha American basswood for an oud, and Frailty gives Dakota ancient Judean date palm seeds for their guitar. When strummed, the wood and seeds warp spacetime, trapping them in the 19th Century.

Scene 4: Tabitha and Dakota initially clash bitterly over their chronological differences. Meanwhile, outside of time, Reality discovers the rift and warns the other Timepipers that if they don't get the humans home, Eternity will fire the Conductor and wipe the timeline completely.

Scene 5: Trying to play together to trigger a way home, Tabitha and Dakota keep accidentally jumping through different years, driving the pursuing Timepipers crazy. Their anomalies accidentally ignite the Romantic era movement and invent the classical guitar. Forming a duo ¡Tab & Coda!, they integrate modern music with ancient hymns, slowly falling in love.

Scene 6: The Timepipers track down Tabitha, clouding her mind with existential doubts about her mortality. Though Tabitha wants a future with Dakota, Dakota's inner identity crisis stalls their relationship. Suddenly, Eternity violently intervenes, tearing the timeline apart and forcefully banishing Tabitha and Dakota away from the era.

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Act II

Scene 1: The separation has a twist: Tabitha is accidentally thrown into the 21st Century, where she thrives in alternative hip hop. Meanwhile, Dakota is stranded in 1st Century Galilee. With Tabitha's father, Dakota finds a stash of remaining basswood and carves a brand-new oud.

Scene 2: In the 21st century, Tabitha stumbles into a music history museum. She finds Dakota's mother, a curator, crying next to an ancient oud featuring ¡Tab & Coda!'s signature melodic line. With the mother's help, Tabitha steals the oud and tears a rift into a time limbo to reunite with Dakota.

Scene 3: Outside of time, Eternity completely loses patience with the warped reality. They fire the Conductor. Discovering the Conductor was secretly helping the lovers, they brutally stab the Conductor with their own baton. Eternity turns tyrannical, ordering the Timepipers to massacre the remaining members of the Timeharmonic Orchestra.

Scene 4: Tumbling wildly through chaotic eras, Tabitha realizes their magical instruments can transcend the orchestra's cosmic powers. They must travel to the outer world, alter history, and save the Conductor from Eternity. The catch is that fixing the timeline will permanently force them back into their separate home eras. They make the leap, successfully fighting back and defending the Orchestra in a final performance.

Scene 5: Back in the safe 21st Century, Dakota and their mother visit a music museum near Galilee, staring longingly at the guitar containing the "¡Tab & Coda!" inscription. As the museum closes, the alarms blare out. Suddenly, the timeline fractures again: Tabitha and Dakota are instantly reunited in the Baroque Period. The Timeharmonic Orchestra collapses back into beautiful, chaotic disarray around them.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

TABITHA BAT JESSE is a lyre maker from 1st Century Galilee way ahead of her time and in over her head. She seeks that “new sound.” Destiny, the Timepiper of the Future, gifts her American basswood which she uses to build her oud that sends her into the future. Tab finds home in alternative hip hop. As a singer, she is a breath of fresh air to what music could be.

DAKOTA F. CHÉRY is a guitar maker from 21st Century Free Soil, Michigan behind the times. They honor the “oldies.” Frailty, the Timepiper of the Past, gifts them Judean date palm seeds for their guitar which sends them back in time. Kota finds home in psalmody. As a guitarist, they are an old soul showing what music once was, never staying up to date on the mainstream.

JESSICA F. CHÉRY is the mother of Dakota. She is a history buff who curates for the Music House Museum near Traverse City, Michigan.

JESSE is the father of Tabitha.

TIMEHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

ETERNITY LINGER is the omnipotent Spacetime Bandleader. They lead the Timepipers (the chorus of fate) to run each timeline smoothly but is on the verge of firing the Conductor. Playing the zither and flutes of all kind, they are based on Ling Lun, the legendary founder of music in ancient China.

FRAILITY is the Timepiper of the Past, based on the Norse Norn, Urd. They navigate darkened times as a plover with metallic calls. They are the oldest of the three immortal shapeshifters. They like messing with Reality.

REALITY is the Timepiper of the Present, based on the Norse Norn, Skuld. They trek the rough terrains of spacetime as an upland sandpiper with ethereal whistles. They are the most uptight and suck up to Eternity.

DESTINY is the Timepiper of the Future, based on the Norse Norn, Verdandi. They go with the flow of time as a spotted sandpiper with high-pitched calls. A child, they are the youngest. Like Frailty, they enjoy pranking Reality.

CONDUCTOR is the literal music conductor of the production. They shape how time flows for the time travelers, based on their choice of instruments and musical phrases. Without them, every being (will) dies/died.

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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

1. Overture / Prologue: The Seeds of Fate Timeharmonic Orchestra
2. Born in the Wrong Generation Tabitha, Dakota, Jesse, Jessica, Ancient People, Modern People
3. The Right Person Tabitha, Dakota
4. The Wrong Time Tabitha, Dakota, Timepipers
5. Must Be Nice (Times Like These) Tabitha, Dakota, Romantics
6. Out of Tune Eternity, Timeharmonic Orchestra
7. [אֶפְשָׁרִי \(Efshari, Anything's Possible\)](#) Tabitha, Dakota, Romantics
8. Band Together Tabitha, Dakota, Timepipers
9. Until the Beginning Tabitha, Dakota, Romantics
10. Life is Short (You Must Be This Old to Die) Tabitha, Timepipers
11. Future Plans Tabitha, Dakota, Timeharmonic Orchestra
12. Right Person, Wrong Time Tabitha, Dakota

ACT II

13. Passing By, Running Behind Tabitha, Jessica, Modern People
14. Keep Tabs (on Your Heart) Dakota, Jesse, Ancient People
15. אֶפְשָׁרִי – Reprise
16. The Songs Linger (Long Enough) Timeharmonic Orchestra
17. Seconds Can't Count Tabitha, Dakota
18. Out of Wack Eternity, Conductor, Timeharmonic Orchestra, Tabitha, Dakota
19. Paradox Company
20. In Loving Destiny Eternity
21. From the End Dakota, Jessica, Tabitha
22. In Loving Destiny – Reprise Company

★One or two songs will be a David Quang Pham signature science song teaching paleoethnobotany and archaeology.