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Artist Mini Grant Spring 2017: Outcome Report
Professional Headshots with Ted Ely

This past March, during Spring Break, I attended auditions at the New England Theatre Conference. While I was in the Northeast, I took the train into New York City for a headshot session with professional headshot photographer, Ted Ely. I had been pointed in his direction by several different people – teachers at different acting intensives I had attended in the city, as well as a friend who had worked with him in the past. All gave him glowing reviews, praising his likeability and professionalism as well as his skill with the camera. An actor's headshot is one of her most important marketing tools, and it is very important that they be of the same style and quality as the other headshots making the rounds in casting offices and audition rooms around the country.

My first set of headshots had been taken by a local photographer in Staunton, VA. They had served me well as an undergraduate, but as an actor about ready to embark on her professional career, I needed new headshots that reflected how much I had changed in the last four years. So I started compiling all the names I had received from various sources, before finally settling on Ted Ely. To be frank, all I had to do was read the information on his website and I was sold. His wit, quirkiness, patience and dedication came through so well in the text he wrote that I was almost completely sure I had found the right photographer. I then contacted him about specifics, got to know him a bit more, and scheduled an appointment.

As I stated before, an actor's headshot is one of the most important tools in her toolbox. A single photo (sometimes two) needs to be able to convey something about your core personality, your abilities as an actor, and what you might be like to work with. It is your calling card – the first thing a casting director sees when you come in for an audition or interview and the main thing that they will remember about you. Therefore, it is extremely important that any actor – especially one just starting out – have headshots that compete in terms of style and quality with all of the other headshots making the casting and audition circuit. I couldn't have been happier with how mine turned out.

My experience with Ted Ely was wonderful, and I would highly recommend his services to anybody living or looking to work in the New York metropolitan area. And of course, I likely would not have been able to take advantage of his work without the help of this mini grant provided by the University of Virginia Miller Arts Scholars. Thank you to all of the supporters of the Miller Arts Scholars program, with a special thanks to Sandy and Vinie Miller and Evie and Stephen Colbert.

