

Cecilia Huang
Fourth Year Award Application

Directing A Play

Proposal Overview

Starting with acting at UVA, I enjoyed taking part in both the scenes on stage and in the house. Obsessed with the “bigger picture”, I stepped into Professor Dave Dalton’s directing class and fell in love with this craft of telling clear stories to the audience from off-stage. Two years into my studies here, I wanted to adopt the knowledge I gathered so far by directing a play. While further sharpening my directing skills, I will also have the opportunity to use production photos for future M.F.A. applications.

Proposal Details

I have never had a chance to direct a play from the beginning to the end. The short scenes I have directed or am currently directing range from 5 minutes to 13 minutes. Being fragments of a play, my current directing works all lack the character and story development of a complete work. Therefore, instead of organizing individual scenes, I want to use the Rising Fourth-Year Award to direct a play on stage.

During this project, my top priority will fall on the aspect of directing and acting. In the past two years at the Drama Department, I greatly focused on those two areas. As I continued learning, I realized the two overlapped a lot. Starting with acting classes and acting in theatre, I observed different directing routines and ways of giving instructions from different professors and directors. As I gradually moved to directing and workshopping, I leaned to highlighting vocal choices and physical choices. After taking directing classes and acting classes with the perspective of Professor Dave Dalton, I learned to focus not only on acting but also on the sense of space, direction, and distance. With the classroom knowledge, I closely observed Professor Dave Dalton's directing work in *Twelfth Night* as an assistant director and took detailed notes of the process. Through directing a play using the Rising Fourth-Year Award, I will be able to exercise all my recent and past knowledge regarding directing and have a deeper understanding of the role of a director.

I focused on finding a play that has minimal set and tech for my project. They are roughly an-hour long with a smaller cast. In this case, I will be able to challenge myself without going beyond my ability. Added to this, the minimal set and tech will allow me to direct the play by focusing on acting and movement choices that reflect the personal and interpersonal journey of the characters. This would help me build on both my directing and acting skills.

After talking to my faculty advisor Professor Dave Dalton, *The Other Place* by Sharr White became my first choice. It is an eighty minute play that explores Juliana’s journey of discovering and accepting her dementia symptoms as she strives to meet her missing

daughter at “the other place”. The realistic touch of the piece influenced me as I am writing my own play. And the enchanting story is one of my favorites. With a gradual tension build-up, the play will encourage me to work through the complex emotional journey with actors in my directing.

Furthermore, I also found three backup plays: *A Bench at The Edge* by Luigi Jannuzzi, *A Number* by Caryl Churchill, and *Bad Dates* by Theresa Rebeck. Having the additional options provides me with backups in case I encounter difficulties in getting the rights of *The Other Place*.

I will work with my faculty advisor Professor Dave Dalton during the process of casting, script studies, staging, and final presentation of the play. The process will allow me to discover my strengths and weaknesses in directing. As my first full-length directing project at UVA, it is also an important keystone in my portfolio both reflecting my personal growth and experience in directing. Thus, I will hire an outside photographer to take professional production photos of the process. This will become quality material that I can use to apply for M.F.A in theatre and especially directing.

Logistics

➤ **Cost**

This play will be a crucial project in my theatre portfolio and application to M.F.A. Therefore, documenting the work is important. I plan to hire a professional photographer to take quality photos of three two-hour-sessions: publicity pictures, one of the rehearsals, and the final dress rehearsal. I have reached out to a couple of local photographers and the price range of service is around 1500-2100 dollars in total (or around 400-700 dollars per event). Therefore, I will need the help of the Rising Fourth-Year Award.

Here are some examples and links for the possible price range:

1. \$1000 for up to Two Hours: [Charlottesville Virginia Senior Portraits Central Virginia \(alijohnson.com\)](http://Charlottesville Virginia Senior Portraits Central Virginia (alijohnson.com))
2. \$ 850 to \$1200 for roughly an hour: [Grad \(hunterandsarah.com\)](http://Grad (hunterandsarah.com))
3. Starting at \$400 to \$600 per event: [Services \(jannatulpramanik.com\)](http://Services (jannatulpramanik.com))
4. \$750 to \$ 1800 per event: [Pricing for Charlottesville Family + Newborn photos \(lofirefly.com\)](http://Pricing for Charlottesville Family + Newborn photos (lofirefly.com))

I will apply to do the play through Virginia Player Lab Series Selection. If my application gets accepted, I will get access to free final performance spaces, right of the play, and light or sound equipment. On the other hand, if my application gets rejected, I will direct the play through enrolling into an independent study session with Professor Dave Dalton. Doing it as a classroom project, I will be able to access B006 as my final performance space. In this case, I will get free access to the lighting and sound equipment in B006.

I will need to attain the license of the play if doing it as a classroom project. Dramatic Play Service holds the rights of the play and the minimum fee per-performance will be 105 dollars. Since we are doing at least two performances, we foresee a 210 dollars-cost for rights.

While the play includes simplified sets and costumes, I will allocate a part of the Rising Fourth-Year Arts Award as costume, props, and set fees.

➤ **Production Timeline**

May 10th: Reach out to Virginia Players; Reach out to potential actresses and production staff.

May 30th: Request the rights of the play from Dramatic Play Service.

Summer 2023: Assemble production staff. Finalize cast members, production schedules, and locations with Professor Dave Dalton. Study and prepare the text of the play with Professor Dave Dalton.

August 28th: First Read-through

August 29th to September 7th: Rehearsals-Table Works

September 8th to November 6th: Rehearsals

November 6th to November 13th: Tech Rehearsal and Dress Rehearsals

November 15th and November 16th: Final Performances

Budget

Photographer	Through hiring a professional photographer, I will be able to attain quality photos of publicity shots, a rehearsal process, and the final dress rehearsal.	\$2100
Costume	I will use minimal funds to supplement the actor's wardrobe.	\$300
Set and Props	The play requires minimal set and props. A minimal fee will be required.	\$300
Contingency	Used for un-foreseen and emergency circumstances, including possible \$ 210 fees to attain rights when doing it as a classroom project.	\$300
Total	\$3000	
Budget Income	MAS Fourth Year Award \$3000	