

Project Title: *A Summer at Michael Howard Studios (New York City)*

In my senior year of high school, before even my 18th birthday, I had to make a very difficult decision about my future as an artist. By this point in my life, I already knew that my life's work would be in the theater and was forced to decide: should I attend an intensive conservatory for acting or pursue a liberal arts education? Because I wanted a well-rounded education as an undergraduate, I chose to come to the University of Virginia, and I have thrived in the liberal arts setting, pursuing a history major and Spanish minor in addition to my degree in Drama. However, as I approach my third year as an undergraduate in Drama, I realize there are certain limitations of time and opportunity that arise from not pursuing a specialized arts education. In the last year, I have come to the important conclusion that my skills as an actor are in need of more specialized training. Therefore, I am proposing a project involving six weeks of intensive study at the prestigious Michael Howard Studios in New York City.

Michael Howard Studios is one of the top acting studios in the country, which several UVA drama majors have attended in the past with great success. I have applied and been accepted into their six-week summer conservatory. The chief goal of my participation in this program is to hone my abilities as an actor, preparing myself for a career as an artist in the theater, film and television. The studio's summer conservatory includes classes in advanced acting techniques, scene study, voice, movement, and Shakespeare – all of which will be valuable supplements to my training at the University of Virginia. In addition to these practical skills, I hope to gain confidence as a performer, learn as much as possible about the world of theater – both as an art form and as a business – and gain a deeper understanding of myself as an artist. The conservatory-style training of this program will provide me with a specialized range of skills that I need as an actor, time exclusively dedicated to developing those skills, and a place in which to explore my abilities and the art of drama – a studio located at the center of American theater, New York City.

In addition to a summer acting program, I am also planning to study abroad during the next academic year at the University of Birmingham. This university currently has the best undergraduate university theater program in the United Kingdom, according to several different nation-wide surveys. While I will also be fulfilling requirements for my other major and minor, my studies in Birmingham will be primarily focused on theater – acting, directing, and script analysis. To help me realize my goals for a year abroad, I have received a CLAS Study Abroad Scholarship in the amount of \$3,000. But before I launch myself into the conservatory-style environment of Birmingham's drama department, I hope to obtain a firm basis in the foundational techniques of acting, which a summer at the Michael Howard Studio will be able to provide. I will be entering the Birmingham drama program as a third-year student, and my theatrical training thus far at UVA will not equal the level of training obtained by third-year students at the University of Birmingham. To minimize this gap, and to be able to get the most out of the high quality instruction I will be receiving, I will need the skills, determination and perseverance that I will learn during a summer at Michael Howard Studios.

By attending a summer conservatory such as this, not only will I be supplementing my current education in the theater, but I will also be preparing myself for the hyper-competitive process of auditioning for MFA acting programs, which are infamous for their selectivity. I simply cannot afford to let opportunities like a summer at Michael Howard Studios pass me by. With this in mind, I am applying for the maximum award amount (\$1200) to help me pay for the tuition of the Michael Howard Studios Summer Conservatory. This amount will not cover all of my anticipated expenses, but it will certainly lighten the burden. To be clear, I will attend this program regardless of my reception of any awards, but I hope that my artistic pursuits and need for further training will warrant some recognition of my suitability for this award.

To prove that this training will not be wasted, this summer I will be starting the process of developing and writing an original work, focused on the challenges that face young actors in the realm of modern professional theater. The production of this piece will be the focus of my fourth year project. My training at the Michael Howard Studio will be the first step toward the creation of this piece, of which I will present a finalized version in April of 2017 to display the product of the training and education made possible by this award.

Anticipated Timeline

Summer 2015

- June 20th → Depart for New York.
- June 22nd → The Michael Howard Summer Conservatory begins classes.
 - Classes meet Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM.
- August 2nd → Leave New York.

2016-2016: Study Abroad at the University of Birmingham

Fourth Year (2016-2017): Projected Timeline

- September – December 2016 → Complete script for final project.
- January 2017 → Audition and finalize cast.
- February 2017 → Begin rehearsal process.
- April 1st, 2017 → Present final project, which will display the skills and training that I acquired at Michael Howard Studios, as well as the work I will have done in my year abroad at the University of Birmingham.
 - The postponement of my presentation date (the first stage of which would normally be presented in April 2016) has been approved by the director of the Miller Arts Scholars, Michael Rasbury, because of my plans to study abroad at the University of Birmingham for the entirety of the 2015-2016 academic year.

Proposed Budget

Expenses	Amount	Detail
Michael Howard Conservatory Tuition	\$3,560	Includes \$400 discount for early admission.
Housing	\$2,150	6-weeks, hosted by the School of Visual Arts.
Travel to/from New York	\$178	Round-trip Amtrak ticket
Local Transportation	\$120	\$20 per week for New York City Transit Metrocard
Meals	\$900	\$150 per week, for six weeks, for all meals
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$60	Laundry, class supplies, and unexpected expenses
Expense subtotal	\$6,978	

Income	Amount	Detail
College Arts Scholars Arts Award (Anticipated)	\$1,200	
Sydney Elizabeth Owens Memorial Award (Anticipated)	\$5,000	
Personal Contribution	\$778	
Income subtotal	\$6,978	
Net Total (Income – Expenses)	\$0	

Budget Details

- I am applying for the maximum award amount of \$1200, which will be entirely dedicated to the program's tuition.
- In addition to this award, I am also applying for the Sydney Elizabeth Owens Memorial Award (hosted by the Alumni Association), meant to help fund a transformative summer or semester experience, which I anticipate this program to be.
- I will adjust my personal contribution depending on my receipt of either of these awards.