

## **FAVA: Immersion in French Opera, Art Song, and Language**

I am applying for an Arts Award to travel to Périgueux, France and participate in the Franco-American Vocal Academy program, where I will sing a full opera role and work intensely on French music and language. The Franco American Vocal Academy (FAVA) centers its mission on performance opportunities for young singers. While there are many summer opera programs that offer similar opportunities for technical training, FAVA distinguishes itself with a valuable combination of technical achievement, immersive language instruction, and most importantly, significant performance opportunities. Additionally, FAVA features an incomparable international experience, which is a vital learning experience for an aspiring opera singer who must learn various languages and repertoire. France is among the three major opera centers and personally, French vocal repertoire occupies a very important section of my musical passion. Located in the south of France, Périgueux is a small, cultured town, where I will be able to put my French courses from the University into practice.

With my acceptance into the program, I have been cast as Ourrias in Gounod's five act opera *Mireille*. As one of the lead characters in this opera, I will obtain the experience and skills necessary to take on a leading operatic role with full orchestra and staging; this is a unique and extremely valuable experience for a young singer such as myself. Additionally, I will be working on French repertoire outside of the mainstage production while at FAVA. I have been asked to prepare at least six French art songs and one aria and will be featured in at least two different recital performances with this repertoire. As I am required to fully learn all this repertoire, including the full operatic role, before I arrive in France, the vocal and dramatic work while training with FAVA will engage me on an artistic and professional level that I have never previously experienced.

As an aspiring opera singer, FAVA provides the ideal circumstances to develop as a young singer. At 19 years old, I am too young to obtain full operatic roles with most programs, and FAVA presents this invaluable opportunity to immerse myself in a full role as well as significant French art song and repertoire. This is a unique characteristic of the program; unlike many opera training programs that may only offer occasional coachings, the FAVA curriculum includes private lessons and coachings in addition to language, acting, and technique classes in

small groups. As a member of the FAVA program, I will also be eligible to participate in masterclasses with guest artists.

The undergraduate years of a young singer's vocal development are possibly the most important and also challenging to position oneself for a successful career in the future. In addition to technical training at the University level in voice lessons, performances, and music courses, it is essential to participate in summer programs, where young singers can acquire real experience in full operatic roles, learn from a completely different field of instructors and peers, and sharpen necessary language skills in an international program, such as FAVA. As a University of Virginia student, this performance participation is even more important; I truly cherish and appreciate the highly academic instruction that our music department offers, but this means that seeking external performance instruction and experience is absolutely vital to positioning myself for future opportunities in such a competitive industry. However, this also means that young singers must acquire the necessary funds for these summer programs. With thousands of dollars expected in tuition and housing, I am so grateful and fortunate to have programs such as the Miller Art Scholars where these financial burdens can be lessened. With the possibility of this grant, my operatic aspirations become more realistic.

## **Timeline**

### **Spring**

February-June: Prepare repertoire with Pamela Beasley for participation in FAVA

### **Summer**

July 2-August 15: Attend FAVA program, including lessons, coaching, language classes, and opera/recital performances

### **Fall**

November: Present a recital to the public featuring technique and repertoire developed during the FAVA program

## **Budget** - <http://www.favaopera.org/#!/france-fees/t68rc>

Tuition - \$1,900

Housing - \$850

Meals - \$1,000

Music - \$150

Transportation - \$1,500

Total – \$5,400

The program's costs clearly exceed the amount available through the rising 3<sup>rd</sup> year Art Scholars awards; I am requesting \$2,500 to cover my transportation and meal fees. I am prepared to cover the remaining \$2,900 for tuition, housing, and music from my personal savings that I have collected from my part time employment as a music director with DMR Adventures in Charlottesville. I am also applying for the College's Small Research and Travel Grants, which could potentially contribute an additional \$1,500 towards this large budget, covering the majority of my tuition.

## **Participation in the Arts**

I have eagerly taken advantage of all performance opportunities both within and outside the University community. In the music department, I study voice privately with Pamela Beasley, I study piano privately with John Mayhood, and I sing as a member of the University Singers and Chamber Singers. I was awarded with departmental recognition last semester for my success as a semifinalist at the national NATS competition and for my presentation of a full recital. In the drama department, I performed in *Wonderful Town* under Bob Chapel's direction and have taken multiple performance classes. Through student-run organizations, I have performed with First Year Players and will be portraying Douglas Panch in Spectrum Theatre's production of *Putnam County's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Spelling Bee* this semester. In addition to performance, I serve on the Executive Board for the University Singers, acted as First Year Player's Fundraising Chair last semester, and hold positions on the Music Arts Board and the Student Council Student Arts Committee. I also serve as the Music Director at DMR Adventures, a local children's theatre. Outside of the University, I have performed with Ash Lawn Opera consecutively in their productions of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Last summer I attended the Bethesda Music Festival, where I portrayed Micha in *The Bartered Bride* and Riff in *West Side Story*.

I have tried to engage myself with the Art Scholars here at UVa as much as feasible while balancing the many time commitments of a performance student. I greatly enjoyed participating in the seminar section last semester; it was a wonderful experience to connect with the many impressive faculty members as well as my inspirational peers in the program. I attended social events, including the new member welcome at Open Grounds and helped publicize for the interest meeting. I am disappointed to be unable to participate in the discussion this semester due to a required course conflict, but I have been remaining active through contact with members and my participation in Elena's publicity efforts. I am looking forward to rejoining the discussion and seminar sections next year.