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Miller Arts Scholar Minigrant Outcome Report

On November 18 and 19, the Virginia Player's production of *The Last Five Years* was performed in the Helms Theater. The funding we received from the Miller Arts Scholar Minigrant was significant, and without it, I'm not sure our dream of performing this show would have been possible. I am extremely grateful to the Miller Arts Scholars and their donors for their generosity and support.

The Last Five Years was student directed, funded, designed, and performed – mostly by Miller Arts Scholars! The performances were free, and the audience turnout was far greater than originally expected. The depth of character and story we were able to tell given our budget and resource constraints as students made *The Last Five Years* a resounding success, and I believe even surprised some people.

As mentioned in my Minigrant Proposal, my main goal for *The Last Five Years* was to challenge myself as an actor and singer. That goal was accomplished. My character, Jamie, was the hardest acting and singing I have ever done. The show not only made me work on my vocal endurance, but on my emotional endurance. For the last 45 minutes of the show, I did not leave the stage, but shifted from excited to angry (and every emotion in between!) roughly every 4-5 minutes. It was insanely demanding and exhausting, yet left me fulfilled every night after every rehearsal and performance. After the show's final performance, I felt like something was missing because Jamie and *The Last Five Years* had been such an important part of my life.

As an actor on the fence whether to pursue performance as a career, *The Last Five Years* fueled me and inspired me like no other show had ever done before. At the conclusion of the rehearsals and performances, I experienced a drive to perform I had never felt before, and this confirmed to me that I would pursue acting after graduation.