

Kiana Pilson

Miller Arts Dance Scholar

Rising Fourth Year Arts Award Proposal

### **Studying with the American Dance Festival and CLI Studios**

American Dance Festival (ADF) provides a holistic approach to studying dance that invites performers, academics, and activists into the field. Every year ADF partners with New York University's Tisch School of the Arts to hold a winter dance intensive. This eight-day intensive is open to dancers with a variety of experience levels and takes place in early January. For this week of programming, students attend classes, engage in discussions, and have access to performances from renown NYC artists. ADF's approach to dance study allows dancers to both improve their technique and to pursue dance as a way to engage with the world around them. Therefore, I am applying for a Miller Arts Rising Fourth Year Award to attend the American Dance Festival's 2020 winter intensive, as well as various online classes.

Until quite recently, I intended to apply this application towards a 5-week intensive that ADF holds during the summer months. However, cancellations due to COVID-19 has led me to provide ADF's January program as an alternative. Nevertheless, ADF's winter intensive would allow me to strengthen my dance training *and* to further pursue dance from an academic lens. As a sociology major and dance minor, I enjoy making connections between movement and groups of people. I believe dance and its relationship to the body can give valuable insights into creating, sustaining, and enriching communities. Through the American Dance Festival, I would have the chance to engage with peers and professionals across the globe, exposing me to a variety of perspectives. This opportunity to merge my major and minor studies, is unique, and I hope to take advantage of this experience while I still can.

Additionally, I plan to supplement ADF's training with a variety of online dance classes through CLI studios. CLI is an online platform that produces dance classes from world-renown choreographers in multiple styles. A summer subscription with CLI would allow me to take the breadth of classes that are typically offered during ADF's summer intensive. More specifically, I plan to focus on CLI's hip hop and contemporary dance courses. These are the two dance styles I enjoy the most, but I have not been able to engage with them in much of my training at UVA. Being able to improve my technique in these two dance forms will benefit any future projects I choose to explore and help me to become a well-rounded dancer.

Ultimately, the American Dance Festival and CLI studios will grant me access into the professional dance world. Both work with accomplished choreographers and/or esteemed dance companies. If I am able to attend this intensive and these online classes, I can start to make informed decisions about how I might pursue dance professionally.

## **Plan for Outcome Report**

If I am funded, I plan to track my progress through journaling and video updates. Throughout the summer, I plan to take what I have learned from CLI's classes to improvise or choreograph a short phrase on a bi-weekly basis. This way I will be able to see my growth in these few months visually. During the winter intensive, I mostly plan to journal what I am learning, since the program is only a week long. Then, I would create another video update once I have returned to school. My hope is to use all of these experiences as brainstorming for a dance piece I have already committed to choreographing through a Miller Arts minigrant. Ideally, I would compose through UVA Dance Program's 2021 spring concert. With the materials of my tracked progress from the summer classes, the winter intensive, and UVA's dance concert, I would create a compilation of journal entries and video footage to present in my outcome report.

## **Concerns and Limitations**

It is possible that COVID-19 will still pose a threat to public safety in January 2021. If so, ADF's winter programming may also be cancelled. Although this would make it difficult to pursue any in-person training and/or performance opportunities, I would be dedicated in researching other alternatives with my faculty advisor, Kim Brooks Mata.

## **Project Timeline**

### Spring 2020

- May: Register for a subscription with CLI Studios

### Summer 2020

- June – August: Take online dance classes with CLI Studios
- Track growth through bi-weekly footage of improvised material

### Fall 2020

- Apply to ADF's Winter Intensive and pay related fees
- Organize housing and travel plans to New York
- Submit a choreography proposal for the 2021 spring dance concert

### Winter Break

- Early January
  - Attend American Dance Festival's winter intensive and journal progress
  - Create dance progress video from experience with ADF

### Spring 2021

- Dance Concert: auditions, rehearsals, showings, and performances
- Compile video footage and journal entries for personal reflection and outcome presentation
- Submit and present outcome statement at the Center for Undergraduate Excellence

**Budget**

**Winter Intensive Expenses**

Application Fee.....	\$40
ADF Tuition.....	\$750
* Travel in NYC.....	\$50
Train Fare to and from NYC.....	\$250
** Housing (\$170 a night for 8 days).....	\$1,360
Food (\$50 a day for 8 days).....	\$400
SUBTOTAL 1.....	\$2,850

---

**Summer Training Expenses**

3-Month Subscription to CLI Studios.....	\$300
--	-------

---

**TOTAL.....\$3,150**

\* One 7-day unlimited MetroCard is \$33. This accounts for one 7-day metro card and additional fare for the remaining day in New York.

\*\* Heavily Estimated; Housing prices fluctuate, as students often organize affordable group-housing options closer to registration.

**Because my budget exceeds the award amount, I am committed to covering the remaining costs through my personal job earnings.**

## **Evidence of Participation in the Arts**

During my time at UVA, I have participated in various student organizations and productions. My first year, I was in the Cavalier Marching Band – on the color guard – and danced in Mahogany, a hip hop dance troupe on Grounds. During my second year, I danced and choreographed in Shakespeare on the Lawn's *Romeo and Juliet: A Story of Interracial Love* and in UVA's *The Black Monologues*. Additionally, I have danced in UVA Drama's dance concert each spring semester since my first year.

The arts classes I have taken at UVA (or am currently enrolled in) are listed below:

- Spring 2020
  - DANC 3300: Dance Composition
  - DANC 3400: Dance and Culture
  - DANC 2430: Production Laboratory: Dance
  - CASS 1011 College Arts Scholars Discussion
- Fall 2019
  - DANC 2300: Dance Improvisation
  - CASS 1010: College Arts Scholars Seminar
- Spring 2019
  - DANC 2210: Ballet I
  - DRAM 4950: Special Topics in Theatre: The Black Monologues
- Spring 2018
  - DANC 2430: Production Laboratory: Dance
- Fall 2017
  - MUEN 2690: African Music and Dance Ensemble 1
  - KINE 1720: Dance for Fitness
  - MUBD: Marching Band I

I was accepted into the Arts Scholars program, in the dance discipline, during the spring of my second year. In my past two semesters at UVA, I have taken both seminars that the program offers (as listed above). Additionally, I was accepted for the most recent (Spring 2020) Artist Minigrant Award.