

Max Tankersley  
Third Year Award Application

### **An Independent Study in Shakespearean Directing and Acting**

In my Third Year I want to prepare myself to direct Shakespeare in my time at UVA and beyond through intensives, classes, readings, watching productions, and experimentation with new knowledge and skills. I have selected these resources with the expectation that learning from programs for both actors and directors will strengthen my ability to direct future Shakespeare productions and lead actors by having experience in both roles. I have also incorporated opportunities to continue learning about how to create equitable, actively antiracist rehearsals and ensembles in this proposal. The theatre and Shakespeare, in particular, are historically white-dominated spaces, and I have a responsibility as a director to learn about that history and how reclaiming classical texts can be an act of decolonization and antiracism to create actively antiracist casting and rehearsal processes. UVA doesn't offer many opportunities for Shakespeare specific study in directing or acting, and I have designed this self-made curriculum with the intention of supplementing that part of my drama education.

I hope to spend my summer focused on two different intensives intended to balance my acting and directing development. The Shakespeare & Company virtual summer acting intensive is a weeklong program designed to develop a solid foundation for performing Shakespeare that came highly recommended by an acting and directing mentor of mine. My approach to directing would be deeply strengthened by the opportunity to experience their unique approach to embodying text. The Kennedy Center Directing Intensive would provide me with an opportunity to refine my directing skills by spending two weeks focused on the pre-rehearsal process as well as equitable rehearsal spaces.

Across the summer and fall, I would like to take several virtual classes to refine and inform specific parts of my craft as an actor and director of Shakespeare. HB Studio's Shakespeare course with Peter Francis James was recommended to me by a fellow UVA student as a great opportunity to refine my experience with Shakespearean acting. Shakespeare Theatre Company offers several virtual acting and directing courses focused on understanding how to perform and direct Shakespeare, and the opportunity to work with STC staff and actors would allow me not only to learn more but also to network further with a local theatre company. Clown for all Weekend is a clown-based scene study class that I think will be extremely helpful with all my work in directing Shakespeare given the prevalence of clown characters in those works. I would

also like to attend a one-day workshop with Active Arts entitled, “Finding the Keys: Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts,” which would continue my education in creating equitable theatre. I’ve based my timeline for these classes of current offerings with confidence that new sessions will be scheduled for the coming Summer and Fall of 2021.

I’d like to supplement my work in this self-created curriculum and in my classes with some additional resources to work my way through over the course of the year. I plan to subscribe to National Theatre Live and Digital Theatre plus in order to watch recordings of productions, which is an invaluable resource in this pandemic period where going to watch live theatre isn’t an option. I’m also going to subscribe to Masterclass, which will give me online access to training and lectures led by theatre and film professionals. I want to subscribe to the Dramatists Play Service’s play subscription, which sends 7 current and backlog plays quarterly for the year, which would allow me to get regular exposure to plays I otherwise wouldn’t have the chance or inspiration to read. I would also like to order a set of texts that were suggested by my faculty advisor, Dave Dalton, which will allow me to study more perspectives on directing both for Shakespeare and in general. I’ve also selected a group of books dedicated to continuing my education in creating theatre that is equitable and actively antiracist.

Once I have progressed through this training and independent study, I hope to apply that work to an audio drama by the Spring of my third year. This format would give me the opportunity to work with actors and also accounts for the possibility that this project would have to be done in a socially-distanced format. While directing in the New Works festival I’m finding that audio drama provides a unique opportunity to focus on textual analysis and highlight actors’ vocal work. In order to do create this project, I would need my own audio equipment, for which I would like to purchase four Sampson Q2U Microphones and a Focusrite Scarlett 4i4 Preamp. I’m planning to explore opportunities to put this audio drama on with different groups by reaching out to CIOs on Grounds as well as Washington D.C.-area actors when I’m living in Arlington.

This entire project would culminate in an outcome report and presentation focused on the practical skills and knowledge I’ve picked up from the intensives and classes, the theory I’ve learned from readings, and how all of that work has translated into an audio drama production made possible by the new equipment. My hope is to present an “artistic toolkit” assembled over the course of the year, containing new skills in directing and acting Shakespeare. That toolkit would be used to construct the culminating audio drama workshop production, where I would hope to showcase all of those new and refined skills in a performance setting.

## **Project Timeline**

### **Summer 2021**

- KC Directing Intensive 2021: Creating for the Future / A Practical Approach to Directing July 11 – 24, 2021 (Application due May 1st, 2021)
- Shakespeare & Company Acting Intensive (Session dates released April 1st, 2021)

### **Fall 2021**

- STC Workshop or Class (Dates TBD)
- HB Studio-Shakespeare with Peter Francis James (Dates TBD)
- Clown for all Weekend with Christopher Bayes (Dates TBD)
- Finding the Keys: Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts (Available 4/7, 7/22, 10/14, 12/9)

### **Summer 2021-Spring 2022**

- Independent study through books, plays, and digital theatre subscription services

### **Spring 2021**

- Culmination of Audio Drama production

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

\_\_\_\_\_ I am currently involved in studying the arts through the Drama Major program at UVA, directing and acting at the university, and serving in leadership roles in multiple arts organizations. I am directing an original audio drama in the department's New Works Festival, and acting in Shakespeare on the Lawn's Production of *Love's Labour's Lost* (Dumain & Forester). I am currently serving as an Artistic Director with Virginia Players and as Publicity Officer for Shakespeare on the Lawn. I was just admitted to the Arts Scholars program and can't wait to expand my involvement in the near future.

### **Drama and Shakespeare Credits at UVA**

- DRAM 2020: Acting I (Fall 2019)
- DRAM 3651: Directing I (Spring 2020)
- ENGL 3271: Shakespeare's Histories & Comedies (Fall 2020)
- DRAM 3090: Theatre and Social Change (Spring 2021)
- DRAM 2620/2630: Sound Design and Lab (Spring 2021)
- DRAM 4593: Special Topics in Performance: Directing in New Works (Spring 2021)

## **Miller Arts Scholars Third Year Award Budget**

### Category 1: Intensives

<a href="#">Kennedy Center Directing Intensive:</a>	“Engages participants in rigorous conversations, practical activities, and master classes.” (July 11 – 24, 2021, application due May 1)	\$125.00
<a href="#">Shakespeare &amp; Company Acting Intensive:</a>	Weeklong virtual summer acting training (10-5 pm, Dates: TBD)	\$700.00

### Category 2: Subscriptions and Books

<a href="#">National Theatre Live/Digital Theatre Plus</a>	Online digital theatre access subscriptions for watching, analyzing, studying performances	\$130.00/\$180.00
<a href="#">Masterclass:</a>	Online access to training and lectures led by theatre and film professionals	\$180.00
<a href="#">DPS Subscription:</a>	Subscription to quarterly delivery of 7 DPS plays for continued exposure to new plays	\$144.00
Directing Books:	<a href="#">Shakespeare our Contemporary</a> (\$40), <a href="#">The Empty Space</a> (\$13), <a href="#">Subsequent Performances</a> (\$20), <a href="#">Directing Shakespeare in America</a> (\$30), <a href="#">A Director Prepares</a> (\$40), <a href="#">The Paper Canoe</a> (\$50)	\$193.00
Equitable Antiracist Theatre Books:	<a href="#">Ensemble-Made Chicago</a> (\$25), <a href="#">Shakespeare on the Shades of Racism</a> (\$25), <a href="#">We Do This Til We Free Us</a> (\$15)	\$65.00

### Category 3: Hardware

<a href="#">Focusrite Scarlett 4i4 Preamp</a>	“Gives you the ability to put four mics/actors on two independent audio tracks, giving you greater flexibility and control.”	\$255.00
<a href="#">Sampson Q2U Microphones</a> x4:	Dynamic, adaptable microphones	\$300.00

### Category 4: Classes

<a href="#">HB Studio</a>	5 week virtual Shakespearean Acting class (5 weeks, 1 session per week, dates TBD)	\$325.00
<a href="#">Shakespeare Theatre Company</a>	STC offers several 5 week-long virtual acting/directing courses, (dates and content TBD)	\$150.00
<a href="#">Art Equity</a>	Finding the Keys Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts (Available 4/7, 7/22, 10/14, 12/9)	\$125.00
<a href="#">Clown for All Weekend</a>	Clown-based scene study class	\$150.00

**Budget Income:** Income Item: MAS Third Year Award \$3,000 Income Item: Personal Contribution \$22.00 **Total: \$3,022**