

I have been training as a sound designer and sound engineer for theater since I arrived at the University of Virginia in 2008. In a theatrical production, the sound designer is responsible for putting together a sound system to suit the needs of the show, crafting any and all sound effects, writing or finding appropriate music for a script, among many smaller responsibilities too numerous to list here. As the designer designs, the engineer executes—putting equipment together, ordering supplies, and managing labor to make it all happen.

In my time at the University, I have been fortunate enough to receive a great deal of experience in both of these roles at the Department of Drama here at U. Va. However, there are certain experiences as both a designer and engineer in the real world that cannot be replicated with the facilities that we have at our disposal—most notably creating a system from scratch and working in new and different spaces with each project. Seeking to gain some experience out in the real world and fill some of those gaps in my experience, I proposed last spring that I would use the Arts Scholars grant to travel to New York City with Michael Rasbury, my advisor in U. Va. Drama, and assist him as he designed a production called *The Patsy*, for the Transport Group.

With the help of the Arts Scholars grant, I traveled to New York this summer and stayed there for one week, aiding Professor Rasbury in any manner that I could, and comparing how the artistic process of the Transport Group related to the artistic process I was used to at U. Va. Drama. I found that the process of technical rehearsals can be as trying in the real world as it is in college, due to the long hours spent in a dark theater. That said, the environment was incredibly pleasant and open—everyone for *The Patsy* was dedicated to executing the best show that we possibly could, and we all seemed to have a great experience.

Based on what I've read, [*The Patsy* was very well received by theatergoers](#), as was the design that I executed with Professor Rasbury. In addition, the experience from this summer was instrumental in establishing a more solid network in New York that I will most certainly be utilizing once I graduate from the University this spring. In fact, the Artistic Director of Transport Group, Jack Cummings III, contacted me recently with an offer of another assistantship with one of their shows. If all goes well, my relationship with Transport Group will continue to improve, and I will be off into a professional career!

In addition to this experience, I was also able to use some of my funds to purchase a professional-quality camera and several accessories for it. I wanted to have a good way to document productions that I've worked on. I plan on putting photos taken with this camera in my portfolio as visual aids.

Nothing about this experience, nor the positive consequences of it, would have been possible without the support of the Arts Scholars program. For their support of this program, I thank the Colbert family from the bottom of my heart, as well as Professor Rasbury for giving me the opportunity to travel with him to New York. It is an experience I will certainly always remember.

Max Krembs
CLAS Drama 2012