

**Edinburgh Fringe Festival — Experiencing New Works, Solo Shows, & Experimental
Theatre at an International Performing Arts Festival**

MAS Arts Award Application | Abby Milne, Drama Scholar

PROJECT OVERVIEW NARRATIVE

OVERVIEW

I am applying for a combined budget of \$6000 with second-year Drama Scholar Kate Hovey for a roughly week-long visit to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland in early August 2025. The Fringe is an annual international performing arts festival that showcases new work, experimental and devised theatre, street performance, music, stand-up comedy, and other boundary-pushing live art forms in a variety of venues throughout the city. I have wanted to go to the Fringe since at least my junior year of high school, and I would be incredibly excited to attend the festival this summer after my work contract with the Virginia Theatre Festival ends.

Kate's and my Arts Award funding would cover: transportation to and from Scotland and around Edinburgh during the festival, lodging, food, and ticket prices for the shows. I would apply to use professional development funding from the Jefferson Scholars Foundation to cover any of my additional costs. We are both working with faculty advisor Dave Dalton from the Drama Department, who taught us in his Directing I course last Fall, to complete this application.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PREPARATION

I have experience traveling through Europe and navigating international travel, housing, and trip planning after attending the UVA in London: Culture of London study abroad program last summer. For several weeks before and after the program itself, I traveled with a group of UVA students through Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Venice and Rome, a Greek island, three Iberian Peninsula cities, and Paris. Spending a summer traveling on public transit, commuter trains, cheap flights, and the occasional Uber taught me how to navigate unfamiliar cities and adapt to new situations, giving me more confidence in my ability to find my way around Edinburgh and plan an itinerary for each day of the Fringe. I have also briefly visited Edinburgh in February 2020, so I would somewhat know my way around!

I have reached out to Hoos Abroad via email about renewing my passport in time for an August trip. I have also opened an account in their portal, logged my itinerary, and begun the process of applying for international travel.

CURRENT & FUTURE GOALS

I have worked on a variety of directing, performing, and administrative projects through the Drama Department, Live Arts, and student-run theatre groups. My experience in various theatrical production roles has offered me insight into different aspects of the creative process,

and I would be curious to see the finished product of other artists' processes at the Fringe. Artistic mentors have told me, time and time again, that the best way to inspire my artistic work is to absorb as much art as possible. I want to be an artistic "sponge" at the Fringe — soaking up the creative energy all week long!

Next year, I plan to write and perform a solo show as a passion project. I received a Miller Arts Minigrant to purchase a collection of solo play scripts that will inspire and inform my writing, but nothing beats learning from live performances. Many of the Fringe's offerings are short-form (45 - 60 minutes) one-person shows or stand-up acts; I will have a lot to learn from the solo performers at the Fringe and could incorporate their storytelling techniques and the structural devices of their shows as I develop my own project.

After UVA graduation, I hope to continue to direct and perform in freelance projects (and potentially keep playwriting and producing my work). Experiencing a broad variety of shows and performances will always benefit my artistic practice by inspiring my future projects and expanding my theatrical toolkit. I am particularly excited about experimental work, small musicals, and new play/musical development, and the Fringe will have plenty of performances in this vein for me to watch.

PRESENTATION

I plan to keep a log of every show I see in Edinburgh — listing information such as title, genre, performer, venue, and my impressions of the performance. While I likely cannot take photos of most performances themselves, I will get photos outside of venues and document Kate's and my general Edinburgh experience as much as possible. We can present this information at the presentation next April on a slideshow presentation with our notes on each performance and our overall takeaways from our experience at the Fringe.

CLARIFICATION ON UNDERGRADUATE RECORD/RESUME

As my resume indicates, I plan to graduate from the College a year early in May 2025. Instead of a traditional fourth year, I am enrolled in a one-year Master's of Commerce program at the McIntire School, from which I will graduate in June 2026. I will still be a student in their fourth year at UVA, still plan to be engaged in the arts community, and would still be on Grounds to present my Arts Award results in April 2026.

PROJECTED BUDGET

(assuming we would stay 7 days / 6 nights total in Edinburgh)

Item	Price	Notes
Flight (both ways)	~ \$1,408.94 per person ~ \$2,818 total	Leaving August 2 & returning August 8 May cost more for the checked baggage; price may go up after grants are chosen Flights from Skyscanner, link off the Fringe website
Festival Tickets	Differ between performances; 30 shows @ ~ \$20 each = \$600 per person \$1,200 total	The ticket prices on the Edinburgh Fringe website ranged from about 10 to 22 pounds (give or take!), which equates to about \$12.94 - \$28.47. There may be 2 for 1 or other discounts available once we get to Edinburgh. I averaged the ticket price to give me an idea based on a rough schedule of five shows per day (doable considering the short duration and close proximity of the shows).
Housing	Roughly \$350 per night for 2 people \$2,100 total for 6 nights - \$1,050 per person	AirBnbs near Edinburgh. I had success staying in Airbnbs during my travel last summer; hotels looked more expensive on the Fringe site and may fill up due to the popularity of the Festival Note: housing may be more or less expensive depending where we decide to rent for the week
Food	\$40 per day per person for 7 days \$560 total	We may be able to cut personal expenditures by finding cheaper food options & cooking at the Airbnb
Transportation (within Edinburgh) - Lothian bus	£5 per day x 7 days = £35 = about \$45.28 per person	The Fringe website says "Edinburgh is a compact city and most venues

network	\$92 total	are located within easy walking distance of each other,” so I anticipate we’ll largely be walking around to get from venue to venue. The bus can get us to the outskirts (ie back to our Airbnb) – we’ll want to use Ridacard, contactless payment or the Lothian Bus M-Tickets App
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Total: \$6,770

- Miller Arts Scholars Arts Award: \$6,000
- (Abby) Jefferson Scholars Professional Development Fund: \$385
- Kate’s personal funding: \$385

TIMELINE

- **As soon as Arts Award funding announced/released:** Abby & Kate purchase plane tickets, Airbnb, and initial Fringe tickets
- **Through July 31, 2025:** Abby works at Virginia Theatre Festival
- **August 2, 2025:** Abby & Kate fly to Edinburgh
- **August 2 - 8, 2025:** Abby & Kate at Edinburgh Fringe Festival

We will likely choose many of our shows while we are in Edinburgh — some of interest:

- [Earnest...?](#)
- [Bibbity Bobbity Bondi](#)
- [A Year and a Day](#)
- [Married at Fringe Sight](#)
- [ABBA Odyssey: The Live Concert!](#)
- [Absurd Hero \(The Musical\)](#)
- [Almost Famous](#)
- [BOMBSHELL](#)
- [Beth Knight: Who Told You to Be Small](#)
- [Tomatoes Tried to Kill Me but Banjos Saved My Life](#)
- **August 8, 2025:** Kate heads to London, Abby flies home to Charlottesville
 - May shift this date up to August 7th depending on Kate’s London plan

NOTES & RESEARCH

Fringe Festival FAQs: <https://www.edfringe.com/faqs/>

How to do the Fringe on a budget (Playbill):

<https://playbill.com/article/heres-how-to-do-the-edinburgh-festival-fringe-on-a-budget>

EVIDENCE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

As a double-major in Drama and English, I have taken creative practice and theory-based courses across the Drama Department and supported my liberal arts studies with literature courses. My coursework in Directing, Acting, New Works production, Script Analysis, Queer Performance, Lighting Design, Dramaturgy, and Shakespeare Tragedies/Romances (English Department) have prepared me to appreciate a variety of performing arts genres by exposing me to such varied pieces as South Asian-influenced drag, a contemporary Japanese play, and a Canadian musical. At the Fringe, I would bring an appetite for experiencing diverse performances, and I would love to watch international actors and creators perform live. Outside of Drama, I have taken an introductory Keyboard/Piano class and have taken private classical voice lessons with Prof. Brenda Patterson since the Spring 2023 semester (with a break in Spring 2024). My Culture of London study abroad program also involved experiential performing arts learning; our class attended and discussed productions at the Globe, the Old Vic, the National Theatre, and the West End, as well as an unconventional Brecht show in an empty townhouse.

Extracurricularly, I directed the short play “Going Bananas” by Mary Hall for the New Works Festival earlier this semester. I am currently in performances for *As You Like It: A Community-Engaged Musical* with UVA Drama and am preparing to direct a student staged reading of *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe in April. Last academic year, I was a playwright in the New Works Festival and a director/writer of a short film in the Overcranked Film Festival. Outside of the department, I have held leadership roles in the student-run groups Spectrum Theatre and First Year Players (FYP) since my second year. I directed the musical *Fun Home* for Spectrum in October 2023 and spent the next year as Producer. Spectrum had lost most of its membership and funding after rocky leadership before my time, so I worked to resurrect the organization by recruiting a new creative team, publicizing our shows, rebuilding institutional knowledge, and largely teaching myself how to navigate CIO leadership logistics. I have been involved in every branch of FYP — cast, tech, pit orchestra, artistic staff, and production staff — and have worked on six FYP shows total, one for each of my semesters at UVA.

I joined the Miller Arts Scholars program as a third-year. I have taken the Fall seminar and am currently in the Spring discussion class. I have also taken advantage of both Minigrant opportunities since I joined, receiving \$1,000 in funding for my professional website (<https://www.abbymilnetheatre.com/>), play scripts, and professional graphic design software. I am a founding member of the Great Big Arts Calendar group within Miller Arts, in which my most significant contribution was to create a spreadsheet to organize the contact information for student leaders in all arts-focused CIOs/clubs on Grounds.

PORTFOLIO EXAMPLES

***Karens* (2024) – UVA Drama New Works Festival:** <https://youtu.be/XUyXSag48G0>

Role: Playwright

This is an excerpt from a performance of my short play "Karens" at the UVA Drama New Works Festival in February 2024 in the Helms Theatre. The night this production was filmed, one of the actors in the play was sick and I played the role of Karen Olson, the PTA President and de facto Head Karen.

The summary of the play: Classism, Buddhism, and a shocking secret derail the first-ever Zoom meeting of a private school PTA. (Directed by Megan Wenig)

***Fun Home* (2023) – Spectrum Theatre:**

<https://www.abbymilnetheatre.com/portfolio-collections/my-portfolio/project-title-3>

Role: Director

At the attached link are stills from a performance of the Tony-Award winning musical *Fun Home* by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori. I directed this production for the student-run group Spectrum Theatre, and it performed at the Student Activities Building in October 2023.

Based off of her 2006 graphic memoir, *Fun Home* follows the life of lesbian cartoonist Alison Bechdel (the namesake of the Bechdel Test) in three parallel timelines: Bechdel's childhood, young adulthood, and adulthood. In the musical, "Big Alison" grapples with her late father's extramarital affairs with men (and boys) and his suicide when Bechdel was twenty.

Director: Abby Milne

Assistant Director: Matt Tucker

Vocal Directors: Charlotte Mulligan and Rachel Guo (Accompanist: Mary Edith Plunkett)

Choreographer (not featured in this scene): Kai Alfonso

FUN HOME is [was] presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals.

www.concordtheatricals.com.

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Book and Lyrics by Lisa Kron

Based on the Graphic Novel by Alison Bechdel

Photos: Sierra Funk (Graphic Design: Sierra Funk and Abby Milne)

Designers: Meixin Yu and Alyssa Bui