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Fourth Year Arts Award Outcome Report  
**Faculty Mentor:** Dave Dalton

### A Summer of Acting Study: The Artistic Trifecta

Thanks to the J. Sanford Miller Family and their continued support for the Miller Arts Scholars program, I was able to maintain and hone my acting craft amidst a global pandemic. My membership in the Miller Arts Scholars program for these past 3 years has been tangential to my artistic development. From first getting funding to attend SETC my second year, to staying in NYC for a Summer at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, to visiting NYC and seeing Hamilton right before the pandemic hit, it is clear to see that Miller Arts Scholars has played a large role in my time here at UVa.

In summary, my goal this past year was to nurture my acting craft despite the adversity of COVID-19. I accomplished this through an Acting Trifecta of professional feedback, self-inquiry and study with theory books, and immediate training application through involvement in a web series. To expand, I requested funding for professional training in both voice and acting, film equipment for self-taping, and books regarding acting technique. It was with this trifecta that I was able to keep my acting senses sharp in the midst of COVID-19.



*Some of the books purchased with this Arts Award.*

My faculty mentor, Dave Dalton, is a professor in the Department of Drama at UVa and is the drama representative for Miller Arts Scholars. I chose Dave as my mentor because he has been an integral player in my acting development at UVa. For example, Dave directed me in three drama department shows, to include *25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Lungs*, and *Love + Information*. On top of his directorial expertise, I have studied under his tutelage for the directing I and II courses provided in the department. Dave and I then began faculty mentorship in the spring of 2020 when I was first deciding upon this trifecta project. We commiserated over several Zoom calls to finalize my contingency plans for the arts award and this project was born.

Last spring, I had been admitted into the Terry Knickerbocker and Maggie Flanigan acting studios. At the time I was admitted, however, they were still contending on whether or not to risk in-person classes or relent to virtual learning. As these studios were in flux with their decisions, I decided to enroll in the more affordable option – Karen Armstrong’s Online Acting Class. Karen Armstrong is an acting coach based out of LA who runs biweekly film/television courses by invite only. I was afforded the opportunity to be invited to the class by former Arts Scholar, Marcha Kiatrungrit. The class operated as such: each week we were assigned a script side from either TV, film, or commercial and we were given a week to rehearse. Each week it varied whether we performed our pieces in class live or posted them up as self-tapes on the Facebook page. Regardless, each week was posed as a competition and if I wanted, I could join the rest of my classmates in on a money pool where we each bet \$5 for the week and the winner of the competition gained the pool. At 04:27 in the following video link, my submission for week 5 of Karen’s class won the competition!

<https://youtu.be/6jHXG3a-L04>

As stated in my original proposal, I had originally allocated a significant sum of the funding towards housing in NYC. Because I took classes online, however, this cost was never actualized. That being said, I found myself in a lucky position to further enrich my acting career. For example, I decided to brush up on two of my previous artistic minigrants: my headshot and website minigrants. I got a series of new headshots done with Cincinnati-area photographer Mikki Schaffner who generated such photos as these:



Following the same model I used with my headshot minigrant from my 3<sup>rd</sup> year, I tackled the project with gusto in order to formulate my TriForce. In addition to the headshots, I was able to allocate funding to revamp my website by updating the format and switching hosting sites from Wordpress to Wix. I transferred my domain name and updated my domain subscription in the meantime.

I also used a portion of the funding to purchase film and self-taping equipment for a web series I was a part of at the beginning of quarantine last year. Using the Zoom camera, Mounddog tripod, and Neewer lighting kit, I was able to participate in *Quaranteens* as the lead character, Jocelyn.

Unfortunately, the project only lasted about 6 months until the writers felt that quarantine was too broad a topic to tackle as novice screenwriters. Nevertheless, it was a fun project that helped me learn a lot about self-taping, 3-pt lighting, and editing. I also was opportune to further work with Marcha Kiatrungrit as a fellow co-star on the project. Out of our blossoming friendship thus came the idea to perform weekly Broadway duets. So, using my new filming and lighting equipment, I set up shop and together we collaborated virtually to perform these duets. Included in the video are two of the duets we recorded: “Take me or Leave Me” and “For Good”.

The next remaining portion of my funds was spent on voice and acting lessons through the fall and winter. I continued taking voice lessons with my long-standing vocal coach, Christina Fleming, in Charlottesville. Additionally, as Karen Armstrong moved to take a break from acting classes over winter break, I looked for more acting opportunities. I still had enough funds left from my previously allocated expenses to take on a new acting class. Before winter break, I was matched with a Virginia Alumni Mentor named Jack Gwaltney. Jack is a UVa alumni who is a professional actor in NYC who has appeared in over 25 tv shows and films. I was lucky enough to be matched with Jack and upon our first discussion he inquired if I would be interested in taking winter acting courses with him. I was much obliged and we set up a schedule. The course format followed as such: I would source recent monologues from poignant and topical tv shows and films, rehearse them on my own for a week, perform for Jack on Zoom, then spend the rest of the session taping and taking critiques from Jack. It was an incredible experience because I was not only able to add to my monologue book, but I also recorded various self-tapes (all of which appear in the video linked above) and networked with a professional actor.

In conclusion, this Arts Award was extremely fruitful for me in bolstering my professional skills as both an actor and filmmaker. I was able to take classes with three industry professionals across both the voice and acting fields, I gained knowledge about acting technique from the wealth of books I purchased, and I was able to participate in a web series while simultaneously boosting my self-taping skills. Although this past year was less than ideal, I’m proud that I was still able to immerse myself in the world of acting. With that, I am immensely grateful for the continued generous contributions of the J. Sanford Miller Family and their faithful dedication to the arts.

Karen Armstrong Summer Online Acting Courses  
\$150/month x 4 months –  
**Total: \$450**

Karen Armstrong Fall Online Acting Courses  
\$150/month x 4 months –  
**Total: \$450**

Christina Fleming Fall Voice Courses  
\$300/month x 2 months –  
**Total: \$600**

Headshots with Mikki Schaffner  
\$300 – headshots  
\$100 – hair and makeup  
**Total: \$400**

Jack Gwaltney Winter Online Acting Courses  
\$200/month x 2 months  
**Total: \$400**

Wix.com domain switch and hosting  
**Total: \$100**

“OnActing”, Sanford Meisner: \$8.79  
“The Art of Acting”, Stella Adler: \$18.83  
“How to Stop Acting”, Harold Guskin: \$10.39  
“Truth”, Susan Baston: \$19.99  
“The Revolution was Televised”, Alan Sepinwall: \$12.59  
“Intent to Live”, Larry Moss: \$11.49  
“Lettersto a Young Poet”, Rainer Rilke: \$3.99  
“Thinking Shakespeare”, Barry Edelstein: \$12.99  
“The Fervent Years”, Harold Clurman: \$12.16  
“The Tao of Pooh”, Benjamin Hoff: \$14.14  
“Zen in the Art of Archery”, Eugen Herrigel: \$9.39  
“Playing Shakespeare”, John Barton: \$12.21  
“Audition for Your Career, Not Your Job”, Tim Phillips: \$18.95  
“The Actor and the Target”, Declan Donnellan: \$14.64  
**Total: \$180.55**

Filming/Self-Taping Equipment  
Zoom Q2N-4K Handy Video Recorder with XY Microphone - \$199.99  
Neewer 3-Pt. Lighting Kit - \$186.99  
128 GB SD Card - \$37.99  
Mountdog Camera Tripod - \$34.99  
**Total: \$459.96**

**TOTAL: \$3,040.51**