

**Maelisa Singer**  
**Miller Art Scholar Minigrant Proposal**  
***The Last Five Years: Costume Design for a Musical***

We, Wesley Diener, Jack Gereski, and Maelisa Singer, are applying for Art Scholar Minigrants to fund our participation in the Lab Series production of *The Last Five Years*.

The Department of Drama's Lab Series will present Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* on November 18 and 19. Wesley will direct the musical, Jack will portray Jamie, and Maelisa will design the costumes. This production provides unparalleled opportunities for undergraduate drama students to take on larger responsibility within a professional theatrical environment. Our active participation in classes and departmental productions has equipped us with the necessary skills to stand on our own as artists.

One of the aspects of the Miller Arts Scholars that I personally find to be most valuable is its creative fostering of successful, innovative collaborations. If anything, this is perhaps what excites me the most about the organization. The joint effort of multiple creative minds working together can truly produce incredible outcomes. The opportunity to work with my talented peers on *The Last Five Years* would allow me to explore my own creative ideas and abilities while also providing me with a valuable learning experience in an intimate learning environment. My prior experience in the area of costume design and theatre has prepared me to successfully design and arrange various costume elements for this play. This prior experience includes costume designing for the Virginia Players Lab Series and the university's New Works Festival, as well as assistant designing for *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment* and *We Are Pussy Riot*

Furthermore, *The Last Five Years* is unlike any play I have worked on before. In fact, I have never worked on a play with a musical narrative, nor have I personally designed for a play's changing timeline. These aspects of *The Last Five Years* would provide me with excellent learning opportunities and I will certainly benefit from developing these new skills. The challenges the play presents, such as the changing timeline and various quick changes will also inevitably be challenges I will face in my future as a costume designer. Therefore, this project will help prepare me for the professional world of theatre and film.

We are requesting funding to cover the rights, royalties, and material rentals for this departmental production of an iconic musical. We feel very fortunate to present such a compelling work of theatre in departmental space, but the popular nature of this musical results in significant financial burdens. With the assistance of these minigrants, we hope to be able to represent this musical, our individual skillsets, and, most importantly, the collaborative, multidisciplinary nature of the Miller Art Scholars in the best possible way.

**Timeline**

Summer 2017: Finalize logistics, secure cast and technical designers  
October 7-November 17: Rehearsals  
November 18 and 19: Performances

**Budget**

Rights and Royalties ----- \$900  
Material Rental ----- \$400  
Technical Elements ----- \$200  
**Total ----- \$1,500**

To cover the budget, we are requesting the full \$1,500 that is allowed across the three minigrants. While we are grateful for support from the Drama Department for access to the Helms Theatre, the costume shop, and the prop shop, its financial support is minimal and we require this funding for rights, royalties, and rental materials.

Thank you so much to the Art Scholars for your consideration and continued support.