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Miller Arts Scholars
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Expanding my Dance Training and Preparing for Future Choreographic Work

Original Project Proposal

My project proposal is to attend the Joffrey Ballet School San Francisco summer intensive program from July 25 - August 6, 2022. With this grant, I am hoping to gain more experience within my discipline. At this intensive, I will be able to take ballet, contemporary, modern, pilates, and a variety of other classes throughout the two weeks that I am there.

Overview

My arts award provided funding for me to attend the dance intensive in San Francisco this past summer. I was able to attend classes for two weeks, expand upon my dance skills, and learn from new dance instructors. With the help from my faculty mentor Katie Schetlick, I was able to keep a journal about my time at the intensive, describing the classes, instructors, and activities that we participated in daily. Katie is a dance professor in the dance department here at UVA and I chose her to be my faculty mentor for a number of reasons. She is a highly trained dancer, but also has many dance connections. After I came back from the intensive, I learned that Katie had previously danced with one of my instructors from the intensive!

During the two weeks, I was able to take classes from faculty members such as Josie Walsh, Andrew Brader, Zak Ryan Schlegel, and Bradley Shelver just to name a few. These instructors taught ballet, contemporary, and pointe classes each day. At the end of every day we had rehearsal with Josie Walsh, who choreographed a piece for our show that we performed at the end of the two weeks. These instructors helped me expand upon some of the skills that I have already learned here at the university. Their comments on how to become a stronger dance technician were helpful and I learned a lot by taking their classes. My favorite instructor was Zak Ryan Schlegel, who taught us contemporary dance. I talked to him after class about his work and learned that he often comes to Richmond, Virginia. I am hopeful that I can take another class with him soon.

Not only was I able to improve upon my dance technique, but I was able to visit California for the first time and navigate on my own in a new environment. We took weekend trips to the local tourist spots. I was able to see the Golden Gate Bridge, Sausalito, and other local tourist sites for example. I learned very quickly that San Francisco was cold and cloudy, even during July and August in the middle of summer.

One of my favorite parts of the trip was that I was able to learn so much from other dancers. We stayed in San Francisco State University, where we performed, lived, ate, and took classes. In the dorms, I lived in a suite-style apartment, with four other roommates. My roommate was from Los Angeles, and we learned that we were similar to each other, despite being from opposite coasts of the country. All of my roommates and I took classes together each day, and I learned a lot about how different dancers from parts of the country came to Joffrey. Each one of them specialized in different dance styles that others of us were not as familiar with. I loved seeing them dance in class, along with the other twenty girls or so, because I was able to observe how they performed and showed their own artistry through their dancing.

Upon my return home, I choreographed for UVA's Dance Department in the Fall of 2022. While we were unable to host a formal showing of the concert, I still was able to incorporate some of the skills that I learned at the Joffrey intensive into my rehearsal and choreography. I had never choreographed before this, but was able to learn even more through the choreographic process. I worked with four other amazing dancers who are students here at UVA, and created a piece to the song *Latch (Karaoke Version)* by Sam Smith. We met twice weekly all semester and I was able to help design the costume and lighting for the piece. I am hoping to choreograph again in the future, now that I have a better understanding of how the process works. I also have been able to attend classes through the university and pursue my dance minor. This semester I am in a class with Katie Schetlick and another with Kim Brooks-Mata. Additionally, I am performing in a piece through the Spring Dance Concert this semester, working with another student choreographer.

I have also been able to choreograph and perform with the Rhapsody Ballet Ensemble CIO on Grounds. I choreographed a ballet piece last semester for our fall show *The Nutcracker*. This semester, I am choreographing a contemporary piece for our spring concert as well. I have been able to take classes through this club as well during both semesters. I plan on participating in both Rhapsody Ballet Ensemble's performances and the UVA Dance Department's performances next year.

I used the entirety of my \$3000 budget to attend the intensive and travel to California. It was one of the most rewarding experiences and I had so much fun getting to meet new people, learning more about my favorite styles of dance, and being able to take classes with instructors who come from all over the nation. I absolutely loved attending the intensive and would like to thank the Miller Arts Scholars program for making this possible. I have been using what I learned from this intensive for the past year, and look forward to continuing this in my future dance endeavors.

Final Budget:

Item Cost
Tuition \$1,398 (\$699 per week, includes both weeks)
Housing at San Francisco State University \$1,298 (\$649 per week, includes both weeks)
Meals \$550 (\$225 per week, includes both weeks)
Miscellaneous \$150
Total: \$3396
Total Funding Requested: \$3000



(A picture with Zak after one of our contemporary classes.)

(A picture of the Golden Gate Bridge from one of our weekend trips- it was always cloudy!)





(A picture of my roommates and I at In-n-Out. It was my first time trying the famous California fast-food restaurant.)

(A picture of my class and Josie Walsh, who choreographed our performance piece after our show on the last day of the intensive.)

