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Art Scholar Fourth Year Outcome Report

Theater Abroad: A Six Week Acting Intensive in Killarney and Dublin

Before I begin, I first want to thank the Miller Arts Program for providing me with the economic support to make my dreams for last summer a reality. Thanks to the funding I was given, I was able to participate in a 6-week Study Abroad acting program in Ireland. This was truly a life changing experience, and I would not have been able to do it without the financial support of Miller Arts or the support of the UVA faculty, particularly my mentor Cady Garey who encouraged me to apply and has encouraged me to bring all I have learned into the rest of my time at UVA.

Overall, this was an extremely informative experience for me as a theater artist who had been unable to gain new acting experiences over the past few years due to COVID-19. The 2 weeks I spent in Killarney and the 4 weeks that I spent in Dublin, however, were transformative to my understanding of what it means to work with an ensemble, to create new work, and to use your voice and body to tell a story. These are lessons I hope to carry with me as I go into the professional theater world as an actor and creator.

The first two weeks of the program were spent in the town Killarney, inside of the Ring of Kerry. While here, we learned a lot about the “Viewpoints” acting method. This method focuses primarily on ensemble work and learning to take in your fellow actors as well as your surroundings in your acting. This translated to many exercises involving walking around the room and thinking about who we were making eye contact with, and the speed and route that other actors moved throughout. Similarly, we took trips to different sites of natural beauty throughout the area and discussed the ways in which writers use their environment to inform their writing. Some of these trips included going to a Monastery and taking a bus tour of the Ring of Kerry. As someone who strongly admires nature and has always loved theater, it was fascinating to see those two aspects of my life come together so smoothly and provided me with a deeper understanding for Irish literature overall.



Photo of my and my roommates/ other members of the program at the Ring of Kerry

Another thing that I loved about Killarney was the exposure to authentic Irish culture that we received while we were there. Beyond theater, we learned about so many other art forms including the Harp, river dance, and the importance of oral storytelling in Irish culture. Coming from a young country such as the United States, I feel like I am not often forced to think about how rich art history can be. You can understand centuries of history and oppression through the props that have been used in performances or the ways that instruments were created. Even when these lessons didn't directly connect to my theatrical experience, it made a fundamental impact on my understanding of culture and art in general and provided me with a new way to conceive of a craft that I am familiar with.

INSERT PHOTO OF SHOWCASE

Our time in Killarney concluded with a 30-minute show case that we performed at a park near a local hotel. As is typical with Irish weather, it began to rain at the last minute, leading to a perfect exercise in viewpoints as we were all forced to “take in the elements” and use them to inform our acting and our interpretation of the piece.

For the remaining four weeks of the program, we moved to Dublin. While in Dublin, we studied at the National Theater School of Ireland, **The Gaiety School of Acting**. While at the Gaiety we took classes in voice, movement, devising, and Contemporary Irish Literature. The devising class known as *Manifesto* was my favorite of these classes by far. We would be given several different prompts such as writing a letter between two characters or creating a 10-minute piece in response to a photograph and then reworking these pieces over and over again in front of the class for hours. This led me to two of the biggest lessons I have learned as a creator: that you can find art in anything, and the importance of letting go of the need to entertain. This has led me to take more creative classes at UVA including two playwrighting classes with Doug Grissom. Additionally, it has led me to apply to artistic internships and

apprenticeships as I am now motivated to explore new work development even further as a developing artist post grad.

Additionally, we learned a lot about different playwrights throughout Irish history including Beckett, Sean O'Casey, and Lady Gregory, as well as contemporary writers such as Brian Friel. Beckett was probably the biggest name in Irish theater that we continue to come back to as he was the playwright of *Waiting for Godot*, a play that is famous even throughout the US because of its existentialist themes. In our final showcase, I performed a monologue from Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* as Maggie. This was a fun challenge for me as a performer who is accustomed to performing in more comedic roles. The monologue that I worked with however forced me to be more introspective and emotional than I had been used to. The biggest focus that I had, was to look at my use of voice and vocal fry, something I have historically struggled with. However, with the help of the tutors, I feel I was able to really shape the piece in a way that I found satisfying and that was transformative for me as an actress.



Me and my peer at the showcase
For the graduate Gaiety students



Backstage Tour of the Abbey Theater after *Translations*

Finally, one of the biggest takeaways I got from my time in Dublin was the magnitude of professional theater performances that we were able to get tickets to. While in Dublin we saw *Translations* by Brian Friel at the Abbey Theater, *A River Dance Show*, *The Dubliners*, and a showcase for the graduate students studying at the Gaiety, and more. Of these plays, *Translations* is one that has continued to resonate for me beyond my time in Ireland. The play discusses themes of colonialism and the loss of Irish culture after the imposition of the British. As I begin to work on my capstone in Global Development Studies, I have been hoping to explore these themes of arts and activism further and have been looking to Brian Friel as an entrepreneur for this kind of writing.



Photo with my Cohort after the Final Showcase

After four long and incredible weeks, my time at the Gaiety was wrapped up with a showcase of short scenes, monologues, and devised pieces that we were able to perform for all our tutors and other scholars in the program. Overall, I was incredibly proud of all the work that I was able to put forward and I am incredibly grateful for the Miller Arts Scholars Program for providing me with the funding that made this possible. I learned so much throughout the course of the acting intensive that has truly shaped the course of my final academic year, and my goals for the future. As I look to apply for jobs, I am proud to have this training under my belt and inspired to look for jobs in artistic development that I would not have considered prior.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate in this program!

Final Budget:

Expense	Description	Amount
Tuition/ IES Fees	Covers course costs, immunization expenses, and room and board in both Dublin and Killarney	\$7,864
Airplane Tickets	Roundtrip Economy Tickets departing from Newark, New Jersey on July 10 th and Returning to the States August 1 st (I stayed extra time for personal travel)	\$853.87

Total: \$8,717.87

Additional Costs were covered using personal funds