

Project Title: *Professional Actor Headshots with Ted Ely*

An actor's headshots are one of the most important tools in her arsenal. It is usually the first thing a director sees, the first thing an agent sees, and the first impression of you in any audition. A professional-looking headshot is vital to an actor just starting out in the business. Unfortunately, they can be expensive for someone on a student's budget. But I believe this expense is an indispensable investment in my future career. It will pay off to have spent the time and money to have headshots taken by a professional photographer who specializes in actors' headshots, and knows exactly what catches a casting director or agent's eye in the hundreds of headshots they must sift through every week.

During the spring of my first year at UVA, I contacted a local photographer who specialized in portraits. They are good photographs, but I have had several teachers and directors tell me that they are not very good as headshots: the lighting is not very flattering and the framing is wrong. They have served me well as an undergraduate actor, but as an actor starting out in the professional world, it's important that I have headshots that will compete with established and more experienced actors. Over the past year, I have researched a number of individual photographers in New York City and elsewhere, with specific recommendations from teachers and friends in the business. During my investigation, I came to realize just how many photographers out there purport to specialize in actors' headshots, and how large of a range there exists in terms of price and quality. By the beginning of this semester, I had narrowed my search down to three photographers (all based in New York) who had been recommended to me by my teachers at the CAP 21 Conservatory, Michael Howard Studios, and the New York Film Academy, respectively.

With the help of a Miller Arts Scholars Rising Fourth-Year Arts Award (granted in Spring 2016), I was able to attend the One-Week Acting for Film Intensive at the New York Film Academy (NYFA) in New York City from January 9-14. During this program, one of the teachers gave a seminar that covered some of the basics of getting started the acting business, including the process and importance of getting professional headshots. He spoke about what makes a good headshot and what the current trends are in terms of what directors and agents prefer in terms of style and framing. One of our teachers gave an unqualified recommendation for a particular photographer with whom he had worked in the past – Ted Ely. Soon after that class, I visited Mr. Ely's website and was incredibly impressed with the quality and affordability of his work. He has several different kinds of headshot packages, based on the possible needs of the actor, and offers a discount to full-time students. Even without the discount, his fees are solidly in the middle of the range, which is surprising given his reputation among theatre professionals and the sponsorship of several well-known talent agencies.

With the help of a Miller Arts Scholars mini grant in the amount of \$700, I would be able to get professional-quality headshots taken by a well-known photographer working in the heart of the American theatrical community – New York City. These headshots would be a crucial step forward as I graduate and embark on my professional career as an actor.

Anticipated Timeline

In the interest of time and money, I have combined my headshot session with my trip to visit a friend at the University of Connecticut over Spring Break and my audition at the New England Theatre Conference. My schedule will be as follows:

March 6, 2017 – Drive to Storrs, Connecticut (University of Connecticut).

March 8, 2017 – Take 9:25AM train to NYC; Headshot session with Ted Ely at 3:00PM.

March 9, 2017 – Take train back to New Haven.

March 11, 2017 – New England Theatre Conference Audition.

March 12, 2017 – Return to Charlottesville.

Proposed Budget

Expenses	Amount	Detail
Classic Headshot Session	\$450	Headshot session with Ted Ely (student discount)
Additional Retouched Shot	\$40	I need a shot with glasses and without glasses
Make-up Artist	\$150	Extra fee for a professional make-up artist
Travel to New York City	\$35	Round-trip train fare from New Haven to NYC
NYC local Transportation	\$10	Metro-card for travel March 8 & 9
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$15	Unforeseen emergency expenses
Expense subtotal	\$700	

Income	Amount	Detail
MAS Mini Grant	\$700	
Personal Contribution	\$0	
Income subtotal	\$700	
Net Total (Income – Expenses)	\$0	

Budget Justification

- I am applying for just enough money to cover the expenses associated with a headshot session with professional headshot photographer, Ted Ely, and the travel expenses to and from New York City.
- I applied for, and was granted, an audition spot at the New England Theatre Conference on Saturday, March 11. I will be driving up to Storrs, Connecticut on March 6 and staying with a friend until March 10, when I will travel to Natick, Massachusetts for the NETC audition. While I am staying in Storrs, I will take the train to New York City on March 8 for the headshot session and stay there overnight with a family friend, returning to Storrs March 9. Thus, I am not including my travel to and from Connecticut or any housing expenses.
- I will adjust my personal contribution depending on the amount I receive for this grant.