

Spring 2018 Honors Enrichment Awards

Russian Opera Workshop in Philadelphia – Cassidy Dixon



Cassidy Dixon had a summer at the opera, thanks to her Honors Enrichment Award. For four weeks this summer, Cassidy attended a Russian Opera Workshop in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her average day consisted of Russian language class, opera coachings, song recitals, and two master classes. When not trying to decipher the Cyrillic alphabet or singing for world-renowned figures in the opera community, Cassidy was observing other students working with the coaches. During her time at the opera workshop, Cassidy was given the opportunity to sing in two master classes. The first was with a faculty member from the Academy of Vocal Arts, one of the top opera training programs in the US. In this class, Cassidy learned about audition techniques. In the other master class, Cassidy sang with retired Metropolitan Opera Singer Benita Valente, and was able to practice some of her repertoire. In the final week of the program, Cassidy applied all that she had learned to her performances in the Russian Romances Recital and the Russian opera *Prince Igor*, by Alexander Borodin. Her time at the

Russian Opera Workshop not only gave Cassidy some much-needed Russian language training (she can now ask questions and tell people how she feels in Russian), but it provided her invaluable connections to key figures in the classical music world.

Presenting Research in Portugal – Matt Schmittle



Last April, Matt Schmittle embarked on a flight to the beautiful Porto, Portugal to present his research at the International Conference of Cyber Physical Systems (ICCPS) thanks to his Honors Enrichment Award. The conference was hosted in a huge palace built in the 1800s called el Palacio de Bolsa. During the conference, Schmittle presented his research on the OpeUAV Project, an online drone simulator for research and education. There were many people who were interested in Matt's work, and he was one of the only undergraduates to present at the

conference! Matt later presented a second time on a colleague's abstract and had to prepare for the whole talk only 45 minutes before speaking. His impromptu presentation

luckily went very well. Matt's trip to Porto was not only a well-deserved reward for months of hard work on his research project, but an amazing learning opportunity. This trip inspired Matt to continue research as he pursues a PhD in graduate school and allowed him to learn a lot about Portuguese culture. When not in conferences, Matt explored the riverfront, churches, and beaches of Porto, tried some traditional Portuguese cuisine, and met other students from all over the world. Matt learned how to present at a conference and network, but also about how stepping out of his comfort zone and opening up to new people can lead to amazing opportunities.

Fashion Internship in NYC – Jillian Luetje



This summer, Jillian Luetje moved to the big city after living in a rural area her whole life, thanks to her Honors Enrichment Award. Jillian was working in New York City as an intern at Haddad Brands, a licensing company that makes children's wear for Nike and Levi's brands. Jillian helped to make the brands that she worked with more sustainable and environmentally friendly, allowing her to connect her studies to the real world. Jillian's daily work included evaluating sustainability in the company, helping the company to make improvements, and helping her team evaluate new factories. Through living in New York and working at her internship, Jillian learned a lot about the field she is interested in and living on her own, and made a ton of new friends and business contacts. Jillian's summer internship experience helped her secure a fall internship at QVC, which will allow her to learn even more about the industry and give her additional opportunities to network! In the words of Jillian, "It is

crazy how one decision, such as accepting a summer internship, can change the whole course of your career and outlook on life."

Archival Research in Virginia – Jack Ausmus

Early in the morning on Monday, June 4th, Jack Ausmus woke up early to begin his trip to the University of Virginia. Thanks to his Honors Enrichment Award, Jack was able to pursue archival research on the Carter family of Oatlands, Virginia this summer. The Carters were a family of slave owners, and Jack wanted to find information about the people enslaved by



them over the years. While researching the Carters, Jack took trips to Montpelier and Monticello to visit the former homes of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. On these trips he was able to visit the “Mere Distinction of Color” exhibit as well as the Sally Hemmings exhibit. Jack was able to apply what he learned from these trips to his research in UVA’s archives. Through his research, Jack gained a lot of knowledge about slavery as well as the difficulties of interpreting slavery. He was unable to find any direct information about the people enslaved by the Carters, but as he learned on his trips to Montpelier and Monticello, there is often not much of a trail to follow when researching enslaved peoples. Jack’s experience reinforced the idea that when doing research, you can not go in hoping for a specific set of answers, because there are always questions that you never thought to ask along the way. Hopefully, Jack can apply his newfound skills to another research opportunity in the future!

Panpapanpalya Dance Congress in Australia – April Singleton



This summer, April Singleton flew down under by attending the Panpapanpalya dance congress in Australia, thanks to her Honors Enrichment Award. April was invited along with her dance group to perform their production of *Women of Consequence* at this week-long event hosted by the University of Australia. This congress had four themes that were present throughout the week: dance, gathering, generations, and learning. Every morning, there were different dance flavor workshops that anyone could attend, including Ugandan dance, traditional Māori dance, breaking, and more. There were also multiple dance performances throughout the week. To represent the theme of gathering, there were scheduled gatherings every hour. April’s group collaborated with the University of Cape Town, and by the end of the week they discovered and discussed some common characteristics of influential female activists. Panpapanpalya’s featured keynote, *Make Your Move: Bodies Creating*

Change, talked about how dancers can influence the next generation to create social, educational, and personal change with their bodies. They incorporated this idea into their project by ending their piece by reaching towards their youngest dancer. The last theme, learning, was celebrated with a variety of workshops, where April learned a lot about integrating mathematics with dance, using dance to develop social and emotional competencies, and representing science with different dance elements. April will be able to use what she learned in Australia towards her work at UD. She plans to take the new ideas of interdisciplinary dance to her entrepreneurship major and some of the tips she learned in her workshops to her work as a facilitator for dance workshops in local schools. In the words of April, her trip to Australia “will continue to provide value to my career at the University of Delaware and beyond.”

Archaeological Excavation in Peru – Amy Ciminnisi

This July, Amy Ciminnisi set out for the summer adventure of a lifetime in the beautiful country of Peru. Thanks to her Honors Enrichment Award, Amy, who dreams of one day becoming an archaeologist, volunteered for PIAPAN, an archaeological project in the Nepeña



District of Peru. This site is the former home of the Casma, a local indigenous group that this project is striving to uncover more information about. On her first day of excavations, Amy participated in a ritual to thank the Earth Mother for allowing the project and to pray for their safety throughout the season. For her first two weeks, Amy was working directly on the excavation sites, digging up an array of different artifacts. These were long yet rewarding days, with Amy waking up at 5:30am and not finishing work until 7pm every day! During her last two weeks in Peru, Amy worked in the lab analyzing ceramic shards and discovered her passion for ceramics. Now, Amy thinks that she wants to specialize in ceramics when she becomes an archaeologist. Amy’s trip not only taught her a great deal of new information and techniques that she can utilize in her future career, but about the culture of Peru as well. When not busy digging up artifacts or working in the lab, Amy danced salsa, went to cock fights, and even tried guinea pig with

her fellow volunteers. Amy’s month in Peru truly transformed her as a person. She made incredible friendships and amazing memories, and learned so much about not only archaeology, but herself. She can not wait until the day comes when she can go back to Peru!