

Embodied Narratives: Art as a Tool for Scientific and Literary Engagement

Ben Sachs, Class of 2026

This summer, I completed Stella Adler's 9-week Summer Conservatory in New York City while simultaneously producing a narrative-based podcast tracking my personal growth throughout the summer. I am a Biology and English major and a member of multiple performing arts groups on campus (Masque & Gown, Ursus Verses), and thus my interests lie in many different disciplines. After completing two summers of biology research, I found myself unsatisfied with a strictly scientific path and became increasingly determined to figure out how (or if it is possible) to combine my disparate interests into something I can explore post-grad!

My initial goal for the podcast included talking to people working at the intersection of health/medicine and arts/humanities, reading and seeing plays relating to these disciplines, and investing time in developing my acting skills. But, as the summer progressed, the "story" of my podcast shifted from something academic into a more personal narrative focus. While I included many of the intellectual exercises, the Adler program ended up taking a lot more of my energy and focus, and so the podcast reflects that. Overall, I produced three episodes, each ranging from 60-90 minutes with a similar structure corresponding (chronologically) to each third of the Adler conservatory. Each episode contains a daily debrief of my experience at the conservatory, including interactions with classmates, funny stories, and audio recordings of my teachers. Then, two of the episodes contain short interviews (one with hospital clowns and the other with a conservatory friend). After there is a segment where I discuss a play relevant to medicine/health and the performances I attended in those three weeks. Finally, each episode concludes with a summation of how I feel these fields intersect and whether that feels relevant or exciting for my future careers. With the help of my advisor, each episode attempts to create a storytelling experience by including music and soundscapes to place the audience in my environment.

While I share this in the podcast (attached [here](#) and accessible for members of the Bowdoin community), I found that while I did not end this summer with some major epiphany with my life's purpose in the future, my experiences this summer certainly solidified my direction. Because I loved and was extremely challenged by the Stella Adler conservatory, I feel increasingly that my future career will involve creative/humanistic fields, whether I am an artist in it or am studying it. I am extremely grateful for the fellowship and the opportunity to create this podcast, and I hope you enjoy!

Faculty Mentor: Davis Robinson

Funded by the Micoleau Family Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts

Plays Read/Discussed: *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner, *The Man Who* by Peter Brook, *Equus* by Peter Shaffer, *King Lear* by William Shakespeare, *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller, *The Little Dog Laughed* by Douglas Carter Beane, *As Bees in Honey Drown* by Douglas Carter Beane, *The Lonesome West* by Martin McDonagh, *The Realistic Joneses* by Will Eno

Live Performances Discussed: *HA HA HA HA HA HA HA* @ The Public Theater, *Floyd Collins* on Broadway, *Cabaret* @ The Kit Kat Club, *Forgiveness* @ The Stratford Shakespeare Festival, *As You Like It* @ The Stratford Shakespeare Festival, *Hadestown* on Broadway, *Purpose* on Broadway