

Don Whitton Memorial Bursary

The 2021 Don Whitton Memorial Bursary was once again awarded to Luisa Handford to help her pursue her dream of a career in the theatre. In this letter she shared her voyage of discovery with us.

Dear Gabriola Players,

Thank you so much for awarding me the Don Whitton Memorial Bursary, which will be a great help as I return to Capilano University for my third year in the Acting for Stage and Screen program.

The past two years have been an unforgettable experience for me, I feel words could never explain how much the program has taught me. Every day I feel very grateful to have the chance to study such a beautiful art form in this depth.

In just the past year, I've acted in many student films, stage productions, music videos and built my first demo reel. I've written commercials, short films, stage plays, zoom plays, monologues and stand-up comedy. Most recently, I've taken up an interest in directing. During my most recent term at Capilano, I directed three stage plays: *The Provoked Husband* (a 2021 version of *The Provoked Wife* by John VanBrugh), *Timely Matters* by Stephanie Cardona, and *Hidden Reflections*, a play I wrote, inspired by and including works by Canadian poet Shane Koyczan, an artist I have long admired.

Hidden Reflections was one of two plays which were performed and filmed in the Blueshore Theatre at Capilano. Seeing my work performed on this stage is a memory and thrill I will never forget. I never expected I'd ever see a story I wrote come to life. I always figured I was an actor and only an actor, but the empowering experience of my work being performed has helped me build the confidence to expand my skill set beyond acting. The program at Capilano has exposed me to so many levels of performing arts media in which I never thought I could ever succeed. I've learnt that success comes in many forms, and one of its finest forms is failure. I have learnt more, developed stronger, and succeeded further, from failing first.

My reasons for continuing to pursue this course are many. I know I belong in this profession, there is no career path I would rather follow. I love the learning experience and environment in which I am surrounded. I still have so much to learn and the education I have been receiving at Capilano is beyond anything I ever imagined. I will forever have this experience of learning as I pursue my dreams of a career in the performing arts.

Thanks again.

Luisa



The staging of Luisa's play *Hidden Reflections* at Capilano.