On Campus

Give My Regards to Shubert

By
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Christopher Taggart (Jenica Miller)

Christopher Taggart was terribly disappointed when the Broadway production of *reasons to be pretty* closed after 85 performances this year.

A third-year student in the School of the Arts' producing and theater management concentration, Taggart '10SOA had interned first for the show's lead producer, Jeffrey Richards, during an off-Broadway run in mid-2008, and then for the Broadway production itself. While *pretty* enjoyed critical acclaim, though, its tenure at the

Lyceum Theatre was brief. “I saw the whole incarnation, from start to unfortunate finish,” Taggart says ruefully. “I took it personally when it closed.”

Taggart didn’t brood for long: The very next day he was offered a permanent job at Stuart Thompson Productions, which is the general manager for the current shows *Shrek the Musical* and *God of Carnage*. Now he’s working and completing his thesis concurrently.

Taggart says his internship working on *pretty* was essential to his landing a full-time paying gig; it would have been more difficult for him to take that internship without the financial support of the Shubert Foundation, which since 1980 has provided support to Columbia arts students working low- or nonpaying internships. The foundation’s most recent gift of $100,000 came in June, part of a larger $220,000 donation that included funding for fellowships and will provide 30 to 35 students with $1300.

For most theater students at the School of the Arts, completing at least two internships is a requirement. Placements run the gamut from Broadway shows to not-for-profit theater companies, unions such as Actors Equity, and institutions like Lincoln Center. “We consider the interest of the student and try to make a good match,” says Julie Rossi, SOA’s director of academic administration for theater arts.

Says Taggart: “The Shubert program was really helpful. It was important to know that money was coming my way; otherwise, I might as well have worked at Starbucks.”

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