

SMALL GRANT REPORT: BRINGING *MOLIERE THAN THOU* TO CAMPUS

On a recent visit to the Louvre, I saw a bust of Moliere and was immediately reminded of Tim Mooney. What a tribute to the actor who brings his show, *Moliere Than Thou*, to college and school campuses around the country and introduces audiences to his translations of speeches from the French playwright's repertoire, such as *Tartuffe*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *L'École des femmes*, and *Le Malade imaginaire*.

I have brought Tim Mooney three times to my university campus, the most recently thanks to a Small Grant from the AATF (and matched by funds from Student Activities at my university). Each time, Tim has delighted connoisseurs of Moliere's plays and neophytes alike. His costumed dramatization of monologues and his hilarious stage presence captivate audience members both young and not so young, from my colleague's seven-year-old daughter to my department chair, a professor of English. The latter was selected the first time she attended one of Tim's performances to role play *Tartuffe's* Elmire whom Tim's character is seducing. Unfortunately, I didn't have a camera that time, so I missed the great photo op of my chair whose red face contrasted starkly with the green hat he had placed on her head. Audience participation is one of the keys to Tim's success as members of the public are



selected to act as a foil to his antics.

Because he loves what he does, audiences pick up on his enthusiasm, and his diction is so clear they understand his rhyming translations without difficulty. Following his last performance at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, his "Stop thief" out of a scene from *Les Précieuses Ridicules* rang in my ears for months. This is indeed testimony to both his ability to capture the essence of the characters and the engaging cadence of his voice.

Bringing Tim to your campus is a great way to promote French culture during National French Week or throughout the year. I invite students and faculty from my university, local high school French teachers and their classes, and members of our local *Alliance française*: about 250 people attended the last show. Securing matching funding through the AATF Small Grant program is a great way to pay for the show.

I can't guarantee that you will think of Tim Mooney when you see a bust of Moliere, but I bet your audience members will remember discovering Moliere's hypocrites, would-be gentlemen, hypochondriacs, etc. through his delightful performances.

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