I received a Professional Development Grant to help support a performance tour that I organized for the Lit Moon Theatre Company during July and August 2004. The tour included four performances of a production of *Hamlet* that I directed for the Lit Moon Theatre Company. This piece premiered in 2001, and since then has been seen several times in Santa Barbara, and at two different festivals in Montreal, receiving the Centaur Award for Best Drama at the Montreal Fringe Festival in the summer of 2003. On the basis of this success, *Hamlet* was invited to the 8th Shakespearean Festival in the Polish tri-cities of Gdansk, Sopot, and Gdynia. As part of this tour, Lit Moon arranged an additional stop in Prague, where we played at the Divadlo U Hasicu, or the Fireman’s Theatre.

On all counts, this tour was an unprecedented success. In Prague, the piece played to warm, enthusiastic audiences, and received great attention in the area press. We were heard on Prague radio, seen on Prague television, and received previews and/or reviews in the major Czech language dailies and weeklies, as well as the English language daily, the Prague Post. In addition, the performance was reviewed favorably (“one of the best productions of *Hamlet* that I have every seen”) by noted Czech critic, Vera Ptackova, in the theatre quarterly *The World and the Theatre*. In addition, I was able to meet numerous directors, actors, and designers, and am involved in exploring relationships and collaborations with many of them, including a company of young Czech theatre artists in Prague. In addition, I continue to work with Prague-based scenographer Milon Kalis, who is presently developing the scenic elements for a production of *The Tempest* that I hope to premiere in 2006.

Our experience in Gdansk was equally successful. We were one of fifteen productions at the Shakespeare Festival, and were received warmly and favorably. The performances (2) were sold-out before we arrived, and both performances had standing-room only audiences. In addition, I taught a two-day workshop in Shakespearean performance that was one of the most stimulating teaching experiences I have ever had. Working with young Polish students, and having them develop and awareness of how Shakespeare’s texts work in English, was simply exhilarating. In addition, I was able to meet several directors in Gdansk, and have developed a relationship with festival organizer Jerzy Limon. I was so inspired by this festival that I am in the planning processes of organizing a Shakespeare festival in Santa Barbara, which will draw on the resources of many of the people that I met while on tour, as well as the artistic stimulation I experienced while there. This festival is projected to appear in Santa Barbara in the fall of 2006.

In the ways outlined above, the specific objectives named in my application were all accomplished. I have deepened my existing contacts in the region, and made many
more important ones. I have met and conferred with other stage directors, scenic designers, and festival organizers, and am involved with developing future collaborations with many of these artists. Furthermore, I wrote a review of the Gdansk festival, and have sent it to *Slavic and Eastern European Performance* journal, and have begun another article on the directing work I have developed with Prague scenographer Milon Kalis.

Without a doubt, this performance tour was one of the most exciting, rewarding, and illuminating experiences of my directing career. It was important and necessary to bring much of my professional directing work back to the region that has inspired it since 2000. The knowledge that I have gained, and the stimulation and inspiration that I have enjoyed, have significantly fed all my work as a teacher of theatre. My knowledge of contemporary Central European theatre continues to grow and expand, and this contributes to a better sense of contemporary international performance, and how it relates to what is happening in the United States. My students (I believe) have gained from my experiences working with theatre artists from other cultures, and my directing work continues to be transformed by *working* with those artists, and *seeing* theatre in this region. Finally, this tour has helped refine notions of future professional development. In the next several years, I hope to bring more international work to Santa Barbara in the shape of an international Shakespeare festival and conference, with the hope that it may contribute to the cultural life of Santa Barbara in general, and my students in particular.