

**Project Title: Expanding Cello Performance and Electronic Music Production**

**Project Proposal:** All of my past proposals for grants from Miller Arts have focused on expanding my capacity as a cellist and electronic music producer. By purchasing many of the necessary pieces of equipment for music production, I have been able to expand my abilities as a musician, ultimately pushing the boundaries of what is possible with my cello. This experience has been both incredibly fruitful and difficult. Learning to effectively utilize complicated software and powerful pieces of machinery has been no easy task. Yet, this process of exploration and creation has truly helped me develop my skills as a musician in ways I could have never imagined. I listen to songs, both classical and those on the radio, with a newfound intensity. I'm increasingly curious to explore new genres of music. I see my main instrument as a jumping off point to explore new instruments. I appreciate production value and unique sounds in songs. And so much more.

As I enter my fourth year, I realize that my work on this project cannot stop. The potential of what I have been able to do with Miller Arts funding has not yet been fully reached. I want to commit to this project even more, while also taking time to explore the cello more itself. Thus, I am applying for funding that will allow me to explore both my cello and music production in even more depth. Next year, my outcome presentation will not only be a culmination of the work I have done the previous year, but also of my entire journey through the Miller Arts Scholar program.

I have been a classically trained cellist for 15 years, but over the past two years, I have begun to explore different types of music. This experience has been quite shocking, as I have seen the power of music in a much different way. Creating new types of music beyond the classical genre has inspired me to see other ways that music can effectively resonate with people. Thus, I hope for this project to be an opportunity for me to utilize my musical talents to create new music. With these new pieces of equipment, instruments, and software, I will be able to create music that truly pushes the boundaries of what I have previously engaged with. My goal is to create 3 new, completed songs, and to collaborate with other musicians to challenge conventional music standards. I also plan to work with other student artists, to create a music video for one of my personal compositions. This will truly provide me an exploration of the arts unlike anything I have ever done.

**Items Requested: Each item is hyperlinked to a website with the product listed for sale.**

**Practicello:** This is one of the most unique cellos I have ever seen, and I'm very excited about the opportunities it presents. By providing ease of transport with this cello, I will be able to take cello samples for production tracks in various locations. This will allow me to incorporate a wide variety of different sounds (my original idea is to incorporate natural sounds) into my cello playing. I also see this cello as allowing me to continue practicing while travelling. This has been a struggle of mine over past years, and this would allow me to solve this problem. A major reason why this cello is also important is that it will allow me to keep playing during travel, which I plan to do a significant amount of over the next few years. Fellowship programs

and scholarship opportunities that I am currently pursuing all will require a significant amount of international experience, which will undoubtedly make it difficult to keep playing my cello. This cello solves that problem, and will allow me to continue creating music in any environment. Price: \$1,450.00 + shipping.

**Ableton Upgrade:** Although learning Ableton continues to be both a challenge and fascinating endeavor, I believe that upgrading the software to the “Suite” version would provide me a greater capacity to explore my musical creativity. This upgrade includes “Max for Live” which will allow me to, essentially, build instruments within the Ableton software. It also provides more access to unique Ableton plugins. If I plan to continue to produce music at the highest possible level, this upgrade is the next step. Price: \$369.00

Alesis **Full Keyboard:** In order to expand my abilities as a pianist and to be able to integrate this instrument with my production, I think a full keyboard is a necessity. After chatting with multiple friends who play keyboards, I believe this one is the best “bang for my buck.” In purchasing this keyboard, I hope to expand upon my background in piano, and having piano play a central role in my music production process. Price: \$278.00 + shipping.

**Serum Synth Plugin:** This is a synthesizer software that will allow me to have an incredible amount of control over my music production process. It has been recommended to me by various producers, and I think it will help me take full advantage of what my Ableton software can do. Price: \$189.00

**Serato DJ Pro:** This software will allow me to take full advantage of my controller and aid in live performance settings. As I have stated in previous grant requests, my live performances offer me the opportunity to integrate skills I have learned through music production with my controller skills and performance goals. Price: \$129.00

**Carbon Fiber Cello:** To my surprise last fall, my mother introduced me to a man she plays tennis with who produces carbon fiber cellos in New York. After playing the cello for a week, I decided that it produced a unique enough sound to include in this grant request. Its durability is also an important consideration, allowing me to bring it to places where I might not bring my more fragile, wooden cello. This durability will be crucial if I plan to integrate more cello playing in my live performances. Additionally, the carbon fiber cello is not as responsive to changes in humidity and temperature, which is an added level of protection for this cello.

Price: \$1,000 + shipping

In sum, the new cellos offer me both travel capacity and durability that I believe allow this project to go far beyond the confines of my time at UVa. The new software will allow me to fully utilize both the hardware I already have and make new music at a heightened level.

This grant is truly an investment far beyond this project, and will allow me to continue creating regardless of time or living situation. I'm very excited to start this project, as I believe it is starting a change in the way I create music for the rest of my life.

I see each of these pieces of equipment as both an extension of my current work, and a new opportunity to continue creating music well beyond my time at UVa.

Additionally, working with Professor Rasbury to fully utilize the Ableton software and my music production capabilities will allow my work to truly flourish.

**Total Cost: \$3,415 before shipping and sales tax**

All of these items have been thoroughly researched and discussed among peers within the music department. I truly believe each of these items to be both necessary for my explorative project and the best “bang for my buck.”

I understand that this request is slightly over the grant amount, and I will probably need to purchase more chords and adapters to properly utilize all of this equipment and to ensure that I can use them in conjunction with one another. I have already started saving my own money to make these purchases as I truly want to employ the full range of capabilities that these purchases can provide.

**Project Timeline:**

- 1) During the spring semester, I hope to learn the new functions of my Ableton software and spend significant time practicing on my keyboard. I hope to create my first, full produced track with a leading cello voice by early May. Finishing a song by the end of the first spring semester will be a critical step in actively pursuing this project, and thus will serve as my *first benchmark*.
- 2) Over the summer, I hope to master using all of this software and hardware, and by my third year, I will be able to experiment and collaborate with other musicians. I have already talked with musicians at UVa, and many have expressed interest in this experimental, collaborative project. Creating a second, fully completed track with another artist, most likely utilizing vocals from members of my a cappella group, will be my *second benchmark*.
- 3) My *third benchmark* will be mixing and mastering a track for a vocal artist that has been created using synths and cello.
- 4) By the next spring semester, my *fourth benchmark*, I will have created multiple songs, expanded my mastery of this new hardware and software, and will have worked with multiple artists to create new music. I will also connect with a student videographer to create a music video for one of my songs. If time allows, I hope to also work with other artistic fields to expand the explorative nature of this project. This timeline must remain quite general, as I do not know how quickly I will be able to master all of this new equipment. Many of my peers who use these types of instruments have already shown interest in tutoring me during my early learning stages.
- 5) My *fifth benchmark* will be reached when I have produced 4 tracks: one track focusing on each of the cellos and one track with the piano as the leading voice. In sum, I hope to complete a total of 10, fully edited and completed tracks through collaboration with other artists and intense focus on learning to fully utilize all of the software and equipment purchased.

**Budget:**

Practicello	\$1,450.00
Ableton Upgrade	\$369.00
Alesis Full Keyboard	\$278.00
Serum Synth Plugin	\$189.00
Serato DJ Pro	\$129.00
Carbon Fiber Cello	\$1,000.00
Anticipated Shipping Costs + 8% sales tax	\$35 + 276
<b>Anticipated Total Cost</b>	<b>\$ 3,726</b>

As stated above, I realize this amount is over the grant amount offered, but I have already started saving money to make the necessary purchases for this equipment.

**Conclusion:** I hope that my proposal is given thorough consideration, as I have worked many hours (researching and discussing with many peers) to determine what would be most effective to achieve my artistic goals of exploration with my cello and beyond. In short, this funding would provide me the opportunity to further expand my experience as a musician. Furthermore, I will be able to learn new ways of creating music, and gain a greater appreciation for my role as a musician in society. This project would truly transform the music I make, and I look forward to hearing back from the grant committee. Thank you.