

# **Project “Loop:” A Full-Length Album**

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Class of 2019**

## **Project Overview**

I propose a six-month project I have long dreamed of: a full-length album of my original music, entitled “Loop.” The album will include twelve original songs ranging in time from 2013 to 2018, thoroughly exhibiting the artistic work of my professional career so far. I have been a professional songwriter and performer since the age of fourteen and, as a current student of music at UVA, I would like to pursue my dream of being a professional songwriter and musician. This project is of the utmost importance to me because it compiles years of my trade into a professional and marketable product that I can share with the world and look back on in the years to come. By completing this project, I will accomplish everything necessary to bring the songs to a wide audience, including arranging, notating, recording, promoting, and publishing.

### **I. Composition**

The purpose of completing “Loop” is to both enhance and exhibit my work as an artist. I have written more than thirty songs, but I will be selecting twelve of the most successful to fully notate and arrange. This part of the project will be by far the most extensive and time consuming. I plan to spend at least thirty hours scoring these twelve songs, each with multiple melodic lines. To clarify the extent of this process, I will be notating not only the lyrics and the chords, but also the meter, time signature, and melodic lines for cello, trumpet, keyboard, and vocals. Ultimately, every utterance of sound on the album will be dictated by the composer, excluding the drum tracks. By completing “Loop,” I will have accomplished an invaluable task: creating a transcript of my entire album. Due to the thoroughness and difficulty of this phase of the project, Professor Ted Coffey and Professor Richard Will are both willing to aid me in this by providing oversight for the notation and composition of the songs, in addition to mentoring me throughout the whole project.

Formally composing my songs will be crucial to my growth as a musician and artist. I will learn how to distance myself from my personal art in a critical and constructive way. On the other hand, I will grow even closer to my work by learning more about myself and my stylistic traits. These two contrasting views are key to successful editing in any field, so I look forward to exercising these skills towards my music. In completing this phase of the project, I will develop my skills as a composer, producer, and leader, all the while furthering my artistic abilities in songwriting and performance.

### **II. Recording**

Equally or more important than composing an entire album is the process of immortalizing it through recording. Of the three components of this project, recording will synthesize composition with the process of performance. First, recording in a professional studio is challenging because of the price and because of the necessity of organization. The goal of this project is to be thoroughly prepared for both. Therefore, I will have my studio musicians

scheduled to come in at the appropriate time. This includes those who record the rhythm tracks alongside me, as well as the musicians who provide the role of harmonic and melodic overdubbing – that is, after a song has been recorded live, their track will be performed separately from the initial recording and added afterwards. Recording full-band arrangements in-studio with the aid of my transcriptions will be enlightening to me as a musician and a composer. In what ways did I succeed in my compositions? In what ways did I fail? Ultimately, my notations will not be finalized until after this portion of the project.

I want to record this album at Small World Audio located here in Charlottesville. The studio is owned by Bobby Read, the saxophonist for the Bruce Hornsby band, whose skill set includes engineering, mixing, and mastering. I have toured his studio before, and it is spacious with a professional interior and all of the resources I need for a recording session. Another aspect drawing me to Small World Audio is that Bobby Read has also recorded artists like Susan Munson, Charlie Pastorfield, and Jeff Vogelsang. Altogether, receiving this grant will give me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the machinations and etiquette of a professional recording studio and provide me with a creative space to further hone and elaborate my compositions.

### **III. Promotion**

Finally, this project will help me to develop further as a professional artist and business person in the music industry. I will be responsible for the legal registration, publishing, production, and distribution of “Loop.” I plan to work through CD Baby to register the UPC for the album, as well as produce the physical copies and distribute the physical and digital copies to partners. I will be responsible for providing all the necessary information and media components for the album, including artwork. I will also be responsible for managing any financial gains or losses that may result from publishing the album. I have not forgotten that successful albums must be promoted. With this in mind, I have already begun practicing with an all-female backing band with the expectation of playing at local venues to promote the album before and after its release as well as touring later in the summer. Additionally, I will be collecting data on the success and listenership of the album and reflecting on its various components in order to present its outcome and full transcription at the Annual Arts Outcome event in April of 2018. Altogether, this grant offers a rare and invaluable opportunity to become proficient and knowledgeable in these areas, while helping to strengthen my leadership, musical performances, and organization skills.

## Project Timeline

### Spring 2018

**January 28 – indefinite:** Begin practicing with backing band and preparing notation and arrangements.

Begin promoting “Loop” with backing band through venues like the Southern Café and Music Hall, the Ante Room, and WTJU’s Lambeth Live.

**February – May:** Notate the songs for the album, develop lyrics and song choices for the album, and organize the exact dates and schedules for recording.

### Summer 2018

**May 21 – 25:** Go to Small World Audio throughout a four-day period to record and finalize lyrics and arrangements.

**May 18 – 28:** Review and mix recorded material into final sequence and send out for mastering, which takes 3-6 weeks

**Mid-July:** Album release party at location and venue (tbd), and digital release to partners  
Establish online presence via social medias and official website

**July – August:** Travel with and without backing band to promote album, potentially across country and up and down the east coast.

### Fall 2018

**September – December:** Continue gigging and promoting “Loop”

Reflect on success and listenership in order to present the components and scope of project, collect data

### Spring 2019

**April 2019:** Finish outcome report and present outcome (“Loop” and transcription) for the Annual Arts Outcome event as well as my various challenges and accomplishments throughout the process of composing, recording, and promoting

## The Imperative Nature of Such a Project

This project is of the utmost importance to me because I am currently without any professionally recorded material or media presence. This grant would be invaluable to me as it offers an opportunity to amplify my professional career in a way that would otherwise not be possible because of financial constraints. I understand that rising 4<sup>th</sup> year grants are capped at \$3,000, but I am prepared to personally compensate for any excess fees in order to complete this project. After all, “Loop” would not only serve to record and display what I have been working on for a quarter of my life. It is a jumping off point.

With a full-length album on my resume, I can begin to book bigger, better shows. I can promote my music from a solid base, and work harder to pave the way for my future rather than picking up pieces from the past. Yes, “Loop” would legitimize me as a professional artist. “Loop” would make playing NPR’s Tiny Desk Series that much closer to a reality. It would even qualify me as an applicant to be a voting member of the Grammys. But, most importantly, “Loop” would be the beginning of my discography. I will never stop writing songs, and this project would provide me with the resources and experiences to improve and continue improving as a songwriter. The music is what is important for me, and if this grant helps me to play more music and better music, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## Budget

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Justification</b>
<b>Recording Studio</b>	<b>\$1920</b>	Bobby Read charges \$60 an hour for mixing/engineering at Small World Studio. I estimate that it will take me 32 hours to record all of the necessary content for the album.
<b>Studio Musicians</b>	<b>\$300</b>	I am minimizing these costs by having friends, family, and existing band members join me in the studio. However, at a rate of \$50 an hour, I am budgeting this expense for instruments that are not easily procured, i.e. fiddle, organ, trumpet.
<b>Mastering</b>	<b>\$720</b>	Mastering tracks can cost anywhere between \$50 to \$1500 a song, but I have budgeted \$60 per song to have mastered by Bobby Read himself.
<b>Production and Distribution</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	I would like to use CD baby as my physical and digital distributor. This would cover the UPC code, registration with ASCAP, physical CD production, and digital and physical distribution to their partners.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3940</b>	I expect this amount to fluctuate +/- \$1000.