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Class of 2025
Miller Arts Scholars

Funding for a New Viola Bow

Last semester, I was fortunate enough to receive one of the Rising 3rd Year Awards which enabled me to purchase and learn how to play the viola. While I have faced many challenges (such as learning a new clef, getting used to the size of the instrument, etc), I have worked hard to learn the viola and have improved to the point where I can successfully play in a chamber group at UVA. With the Art Award, I invested most of the money into the actual viola itself, with the hopes of upgrading the bow and case later on. To continue my improvement in learning the viola, I am requesting a minigrant to buy a better quality bow, which will in turn enhance my playing.

The bow is an essential part of creating music for any stringed instrument. My experience with the violin has shown me this, as the level of quality of the bow is almost as important as the actual instrument itself. It has a significant influence on playability and comfort, as well as the sound production of the instrument. While I have been able to produce a somewhat decent sound on the viola with my current bow (which was the cheapest one I could find at Vacanti Violins) my progress has been hindered by the quality of the bow itself, as it is difficult to create a clean, vibrant tone.

I am currently in a piano quintet, and we are working on Shostakovich's Piano Quintet in G Minor, Op 57. It is an extremely complex, passionate piece, which requires a lot of bow pressure and movement at certain moments. While rehearsing, I have found that it is difficult to create a clean yet heavy tone, and I end up having to sacrifice weight/pressure in order to prevent the sound from becoming scratchy (which shouldn't be the case). Professor Baliija (the current Associate Professor of Viola at UVA) is my current chamber ensemble coach and has also agreed that it would be extremely worthwhile to invest in a better option.

Good quality viola strings and rosin are also extremely important components of tone production and overall sound but can be pricey. The strings I have currently are also quite cheap, which could also be playing a role in the "scratchy" sound. As for rosin, I have been using my violin rosin for my viola, but it can become tedious, as I have two separate cases for my individual instruments and thus I don't always have rosin on hand for my viola (as I keep the rosin in my violin case). Being able to purchase a new set of strings and a rosin for my viola would be extremely preferable, but it isn't as necessary as purchasing a new bow. I talked to Vacanti Violins and have also been looking online for bows, and the prices range heavily. If I were to receive the grant, I would prioritize finding a good quality bow, and in the case that I was able to get one that I like (on the cheaper side), I would also invest in a better set of strings and rosin.

Playing the viola is something that I hope to continue for the rest of my life (alongside my violin playing), and I have really enjoyed learning a new instrument. I believe getting a new bow will be a long-term investment, as I can use it to produce an even richer tone. Any aid towards purchasing a new bow (and possibly strings and rosin) would be extremely beneficial to my music-making on the viola, whether it be in solo or collaborative environments. My outcome report will document such improvements in detail. Please reach out if there are any questions, and thank you for taking the time to consider my proposal!

Proposal Timeline:

October 2023

- Purchase bow (either at Vacanti Violins or online), continue to play in Chamber Ensemble and improve in the viola
- Switch out strings (only applicable if I end up purchasing new strings)
- Work on composing outcome statement comparing the difference in tone quality

November 2023

- Continue to play in Chamber Ensemble, prepare for the December Chamber Recital
- Submit outcome statement

December 2023

- Perform alongside quintet in the December Chamber Recital
- Continue to practice the viola in preparation for next year’s chamber group/any future performances

Budget:

Note: this is a list of potential items- the actual bow I pick will largely depend on being able to test potential ones out (in the case that I receive a minigrant). If I find a bow that I like but it goes over the budget, I will dedicate the entire \$500 towards the bow and cover the difference on my own. If I find a bow that I like that is under the budget, I will dedicate the remaining money towards buying better strings and rosin for my viola.

(Potential) Items	Cost	Details
Arcos Bow	\$300	Pricing provided by Vacanti Violins. If I am awarded the funding, then I will go back and test out all the bows in the \$300-\$1000 price range, then pick the one that I like the most.

Ferreira Bow	\$750	Pricing provided by Vacanti Violins
Evah Pirazzi Viola Gold String Set	\$135.30	https://www.amazon.com/Pirastro-Pirazzi-Viola-String-Medium/dp/B00JLKIV0G/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=musical-instruments&ie=UTF8&qid=1461985070&sr=1-1&keywords=Pirastro+%E2%80%93+Evah+Pirazzi+viola&linkCode=s11&tag=violacentral-20&linkId=dcac687e12e9fb2d1e946b61213801ca
Jade L'Opera Rosin for Viola	\$18.95 (list price)	https://www.amazon.com/Jade-LOpera-Rosin-Violin-Viola/dp/B002Q0WT6U?th=1
Total:	~\$500	n/a