

Michael McNulty
Rising Fourth Year Award
Faculty Advisor: John Dearth
Funds Towards Distinguished Major Recital In Music

Proposal

I began my studies of jazz guitar at UVA in my first semester at the university. In that semester I auditioned into the UVA Jazz Ensemble on guitar and began playing in a jazz small group. I have been involved continuously with the jazz department ever since. In my time with the UVA jazz department I have participated in multiple live performances, performed on four jazz albums recorded while the university was remote, and written four pieces that have been performed by the UVA Jazz Ensemble. Outside of the music department I wrote a big band jazz ensemble score for a two hour student podcast in my second year. In my third year I started my own jazz quintet, "The Michael McNulty Jazz Quintet" that frequently performs around Charlottesville and at UVA events. I was just accepted into the distinguished major program in music. This means I will have my own recital next spring that will be the culmination of my music experience at UVA. In this grant I am applying for **a new guitar** as well as funding for **lessons over the summer/fall** which will help me perform a professional recital and help make my career in music after school a reality. John Dearth is my advisor for this recital which will make him well suited to advise me on this project as well.

In my guitar career over the past 11 years I have used the same instrument. This instrument was purchased in the early 90s by my dad and is a Fender Squire. While this instrument has been very reliable over my music career and has remarkably good intonation for how cheap it is, it is certainly not a professional instrument and not an instrument that is well suited for playing jazz. The instrument I currently play on is what is known as a solid body guitar. These instruments are particularly good for rock because of their high volume output and better control of feedback at high volumes. However, in the jazz world most players play on a different type of guitar called a hollow body guitar. These instruments have a resonant cavity and f-holes like a violin, producing a much richer and warmer sound. This type of instrument can be heard on many seminal jazz guitar albums including "Smokin at the Half Note" by Wes Montgomery and "Virtuoso" by Joe Pass. Although I have played in many performances at UVA with my current guitar, I am very aware of the fact that I never have a true jazz tone when I play. Recently I have been collaborating with vocalist Tina Hashemi, a Miller Arts Scholar alumna, and have been considering borrowing a hollow body guitar from someone for our upcoming performances because my current instrument just isn't cutting it.

In Lauren Schmidt's Arts Award proposal for a new viola I really liked how she asked for time to try out different instruments and really do research before choosing an instrument to buy. I have a general idea of the price range of a good quality instrument from my own research - about \$2000 - but would also appreciate the time to really do my homework, talking to professionals, and try different instruments out before picking out one in particular. John Dearth, who has been my jazz mentor in my time at UVA, knows a lot of professional guitar players who have had successful careers and I think will do a great job advising me who to talk to. Having

been a professional jazz musician for almost five decades I think he will also give me valuable insight into purchasing an instrument that would last me my career.

In addition to purchasing a new guitar I would also like to spend the remainder of the grant on lessons to help me prepare for my recital. In the past I have been awarded several minigrants to take performance and composition lessons with a variety of different professionals. This process has been great because it has allowed me to identify who I learn best from and who will offer the most guidance for a recital like my distinguished major project. In terms of all the people I have studied guitar with in the past three years, I have found the most useful lessons have come from Ron Petrides, a prominent guitar player in New York City. I would like to take 5 lessons with Ron over the summer. Seeing him regularly will really keep my development consistent while I am not at school.

In the fall I also want to take 5 lessons with Doug Richards from Richmond who is the most prominent big band jazz composer in central Virginia. As part of my recital I plan to have an original big band jazz ensemble component and studying arranging with Doug, while also studying performance in the fall with John, will together allow me to perform and write for my recital in the spring to the best of my ability.

Budget

Item	Cost
New Hollowbody Guitar	\$2000
Ron Petrides Guitar Lessons	$\$100 \times 5 = \500
Doug Richards Arranging Lessons	$\$100 \times 5 = \500
Total	\$3000

Timeline

Summer 2022:

- Spend time consulting with John Dearth, Ron Petrides, and other professional guitar players to pick out, get a good deal on, and purchase the best hollow body guitar in my price range.
- Take 5 Lessons with Ron Petrides (about 1 every three weeks). This will give me consistent feedback throughout the course of my time away from Charlottesville this summer.

Fall 2022:

- Take 5 composition lessons with Doug Richards (about 1 every three weeks) to have consistent professional composition lessons as I do the majority of the writing for my recital in the fall.
- Study Performance with John Dearth weekly and help plan repertoire for spring recital

Winter Break 2022/2023:

- Finish editing my big band charts so they can be ready to go at the start of spring semester (for the UVA Jazz Ensemble to learn my charts it will take the entirety of the spring semester up until the time of my recital)
- Continue integrating what I've learned in my lessons into my recital material

Spring 2023:

- Continue and developing my recital, rehearse big band charts with UVA Jazz Ensemble, and perform recital in March/April

Conclusion

The Miller Arts Scholars Program has been incredibly generous with their support of my music career in my time at UVA. I am very grateful for this support and would be sure to spend the money granted to me in the meaningful way outlined above. I look forward to hearing from the committee. Attached to this application are links to two music examples that demonstrate my guitar playing. The first is on the standard "There Will Never Be Another You" by Harry Warren. The second is a clip from a recent performance I did in the music library on "Ornithology" by Charlie Parker.

Involvement in the Arts

ENSEMBLE PARTICIPATION

- UVA Jazz Ensemble (guitar) Fall 2019 - present
- UVA Jazz Small Group (guitar) Fall 2019 - present
- “Work In Progress” Rock Band (guitar) Fall 2021 - present
- “Michael McNulty Jazz Quintet” (guitar) Fall 2021 - present
- Charlottesville Symphony (bassoon) Spring 2020 - Spring 2021

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Composition

- Orchestration I and II Fall 2020, Fall 2021
- Theory II and III Spring 2021, Summer 2021
- Independent Study on Digital Orchestra Fall 2021

Musicology

- Studies of Nineteenth Century Music Spring 2021
- Jazz Studies Spring 2020
- Music and Discourse Fall 2019

Skills

- Musicianship II (ear training) Spring 2020

COMPOSITION

UVA Jazz Ensemble

- Composed four original pieces Fall 2019 - present

Film

- Wrote scores for three student produced films Spring 2021 - present

Student Radio Show

- Composed original theme music for full two hour long production Fall 2020

MILLER ARTS SCHOLARS

- Received 3 minigrants Fall 2020/2021, Spring 2022
- Rising Third Year Award Spring 2021
- Social Chair of Miller Arts Scholars Fall 2021 - Spring 2022