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Class of 2021
Miller Arts Scholars

Strings and Bow Enhancement Fund Outcome Report

I am incredibly grateful to the Miller Arts Scholars program for generously funding a professional set of strings, the upgrade of the metal winding on my bow, and a professional bow re-hair for my cello. I am able to use these materials both in my free playing time and in my studies of chamber, orchestral, and solo music through practicing, rehearsing, and performing. Having received these materials, I am astounded by the difference in quality and complexity of the sound I can produce.

The new strings provide a brighter, denser sound that can project clearly and overcome the orchestrational challenges associated with chamber music. The cellist in a piano trio is often situated right in front of the piano lid opening, which is the loudest point of the piano sound. Combined with physical positioning, the cellist has a low register and can be lost in thick musical textures. The same challenges occur in music written for just cello and piano, which is the common arrangement for sonata repertoire. These Larsen Soloist Edition and Evah Pirazzi strings have allowed me to experience a louder, vibrant sound that cuts through thick textures. This provides for easier, more expressive playing.

The bow improvements and re-hair allow for a focused sound. When a bow needs to be re-haired, there tends to be a lot of excess “noise” that clouds the actual sound of playing for the listener. The metal winding and leather replacements for my bow also help make the production of this focused sound much easier. These parts of the bow were wearing down and made gripping the bow require significantly more effort, causing unnecessary tension that detracts from the actual playing. Reducing this tension helps the cellist focus on making music with what they are playing, adding phrasing, dynamics, and characters that make the music come alive.

While my DMP audition, Spring Recess performance trip to Hungary, and performances for the remainder of the Spring 2021 semester have been postponed or cancelled, these strings and bow upgrades will all last for at least the next eight months. I will end up being able to share my music with greater quality through video recordings, my re-scheduled audition, and the performances that next semester may hold.

As I mentioned in my proposal, the cello is like oxygen for me. I cannot thank the Miller Arts Scholars program enough for providing this generous funding to support my endeavors as a young artist. This funding will have a great impact on the rest of my time at the University of Virginia and allow me to achieve my goals, from the practice room to service through music to performances in Old Cabell Hall.

“Gratitude is the music of the heart, when its chords are swept by the breeze of kindness.”