

Project Title: Experimental Music Project (The Cello and Beyond)

Project Proposal: I am asking for \$1,466 in order to buy a cello pickup microphone, Ableton Standard Software, an Ableton Push MIDI Controller, a Focusrite Audio Interface, and an Akai mini-keyboard Controller. Each of these items will be used to expand my capacities as a musician to explore new, experimental music with my cello.

I have been a classically trained cellist for 13 years, enjoying every moment of my classical music journey. Over the past year, I have begun to explore different types of music, and have recently become a DJ at local bars and residential social events. This experience has been quite shocking, as I have seen the power of music in a much different way. Creating a positive social space through this mechanism 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 at least one new song before the semester is over, but also 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.

My outcome presentation will consist of me describing the process of learning and engaging with this new equipment and software, demonstrating how I was effectively able to move the cello away from the classical music sphere, and playing one of the songs I have created. If possible, I will do a live demonstration of the music creation process, demonstrating how I have used the hardware and software to create new music. My overall goal is to expand my passion for music through learning, and quite possibly often struggling, with new equipment and software. I understand that learning to effectively operate all of these devices and software will not be easy, but I know that careful, deliberate studying of manuals and online tutorials will allow me master each of these items. I hope to use my passion for cello to create music that is new, vibrant, and exciting.

Necessary Materials: Each item is hyperlinked to a website with the product listed for sale.

- 1) **Cello Pickup:** After some research, I have determined this pickup to be the best value for a high-quality piece of equipment. “The Realist Cello Pickup” will cost \$219.95. This pickup will allow me to amplify and record the sound of my cello and effectively integrate it with electronic sounds on my computer.
- 2) **Ableton Push and Software:** I compared multiple software and looping hardware devices, and with the education discount, this Ableton Push with Live 10 Standard was the best “bang for the buck” I found.
[Ableton Push](#) will cost \$799.00.

[The Ableton Standard Software](#) with the educational discount is \$269.

The controller will allow me to create electronic music, while the software will be the digital interface in which I work. In order to properly compose, both of these items are necessary.

- 3) [Focusrite Audio Interface](#): This will allow me to record all cello sounds and directly put them into the Ableton software. This interface ensures my computer can effectively translate the sound of the cello to digital audio files. This will cost \$159.99.
- 4) [Akai Mini-Keyboard Controller](#): This controller allows me to create further sounds and effects and thus will aid in the music creation process. The keyboard can be synced to any digital output, allowing for total control of a digital file. This will cost \$99.00.

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.”

Project Timeline:

- 1) During the spring semester, I hope to create my first song, utilizing the cello as a primary voice. 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. This will be my *second benchmark*.
- 3) My *third benchmark* will be a song made with collaborative effort, to be completed by the end of next year’s fall semester.
- 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.

Budget:

The Realist Cello Pickup	\$219.95
The Abelton Push 2 MIDI Controller	\$799.00
The Abelton Standard Software (w/ educational discount	\$269.00
Focusrite Audio Interface	\$159.99
Akai Mini-Keyboard Controller	\$99.99
Anticipated 8% Sales Tax	\$101.20
Anticipated Shipping Costs	\$100
Anticipated Total Cost	\$1,746

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 expand my experience as a musician, challenging me to use the cello beyond the world of classical music. 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.