

Project Title: Distinguished Major Project Supplemental Funding**Project Description:**

For this project, I would like to purchase further additions to my home studio and make repairs to existing equipment in order to create the best quality recordings and mixes possible for my upcoming distinguished major project. The distinguished major project will entail completion of a 35-40 minute album. The work will flow as a continuous piece of music, but would be divided into around 10 discrete tracks. Currently, the themes and concepts which the project will revolve around aren't entirely fleshed out. As of now, though, I plan on exploring the idea of defining oneself, particularly as it applies to the work culture of UVA. As I've continued to attend the University, I've noticed a particular culture which glorifies productivity over all other parts of life. It's somewhat normalized to be taking 17 credits per semester, while also being in multiple clubs, while also working an internship, etc. In many ways, students are constantly comparing themselves to their peers, surrounded by an ever escalating culture of one-upmanship in an attempt to distinguish themselves. Even in broader culture, stories of self-sacrifice for art like *Black Swan* and *Whiplash* instill a sense of awe as much as they act as cautionary tales. Within my life, a prioritization of work over self has resulted in negative consequences for my mental and physical health, which implores me to explore how one can define themselves as an artist and a person in a way which avoids these negative outcomes.

Much of the compositional material of the distinguished major project will come from the collection and processing of samples, whether to create MIDI instruments to play or to act as contextual or textural elements in the work. These samples will either come from vinyl records, field recordings I take, or audio recorded directly into my DAW. Unlike in the past, I would like to more deeply integrate my voice into the project, using it to sing, insert elements of spoken word, and rap. I'd additionally like to integrate more of my own instrumental playing in the work, specifically viola. I would also mix and master the entire album myself in Logic and Izotope, as I've always done in the past. I will release this album on Spotify, Apple Music, and other major streaming services. In the lead up to this release, I will promote this album primarily on Instagram and TikTok, discussing both my process of creation and the themes present in the work, especially as they relate UVA.

I will create an outcome report based on how I used the equipment purchased/repaired, detailing the differences that it made in my recordings, mixes, and more. For examples, I would take particular sections of the piece and demonstrated where and how I created specific effects using certain plugins, a particular microphone, etc. Additionally, I would use the presentation as another opportunity to showcase completed sections of my distinguished major project.

Objectives:

The overall objective of this project is to utilize newly purchased/repaired equipment and plugins to:

- Create and complete a full length album.
- Increase efficiency of my work process with a working computer screen.
- Create higher quality vocal and string recordings.
- Acoustically treat my home studio, creating an environment more conducive to home recording.

- Create compelling textures and timbres in my samples and newly recorded material.

Limitations:

Ribbon microphones are notoriously sensitive, so transport of them always carries a risk of damaging the internal components. Because of this, it would be difficult to travel between recording spaces on Grounds, warranting the purchase of one to keep stationary in my home. Additionally, though acoustically treated rooms are available to undergraduate students, they are available in a limited capacity, so to best utilize my new and old equipment for my distinguished major project, I will need consistent access to it over the course of the next year. Another limitation is that my current laptop screen is shaky in its functionality, flickering and going blank every once in a while. This prevents me from working properly on my projects while I'm on the move.

Statement of Need:

In order to complete my project, I will need a ribbon microphone, acoustic treatment foam, bass traps, money to repair my computer screen, and the SoundToys plugin collection. I need these things for the following reasons, respectively:

- Ribbon microphones are exceptional for recording sounds with a detailed upper frequency range, capturing delicate sounds that would be subdued in other microphones. This project will involve many recordings of my voice and my viola, both of which benefit from being captured on a ribbon microphone.
- My room suffers from amplification and muting of particular frequencies, making mixing within it inaccurate at times. Installing acoustic treatment foam and bass traps will greatly increase the quality of both my recordings and my mixes.
- My computer screen has been suffering from hardware-related flickering, making use of it when I'm away from my monitor annoying at best and non-functional at worst. Repairing this would greatly increase my efficiency when I am travelling.
- The SoundToys plugin collection not only provides professional level versions of essential plugins such as delay and saturation, but additionally gives high levels of creative control of such elements. It especially shines in the realm of timbre, which I consider to be the focus of my compositional style.

Schedule for Completion:

Summer:

June 18 — Move into new apartment, bringing my old equipment and newly ordered acoustic foam, bass traps, and ribbon microphone with me.

July — Work with faculty mentor to determine best design for installation of acoustic treatment, bring my computer in to Apple Repair store, turn in laptop for screen repair

August — Receive repaired laptop, begin to experiment with SoundToys, search for interesting and unusual vinyl to sample

Fall:

August 22 - Classes begin; Begin work on tracks for the Distinguished Major Project

October 7 – Reading Days; Self-check #1 (What’s going well? What can I improve? Am I on track?)

November 22 – Thanksgiving Recess; Complete mixing half of the tracks by the end of the break.

December 5 – Classes End; Self-check #2

Spring:

January 17 – Classes Begin; Self-check #3

March 2 – Spring Recess; Complete mixing all of the tracks by the end of break.

April – Presentation of Outcome; Have album mastered by Outcome Presentation

April 30 — Final day of classes; Distinguished Major Project due (Publish on streaming services before this point)

Budget:

Item	Quantity	Price	Description
13-inch Macbook Pro 2019 Screen Repair	1	\$755	As the computer is not covered under AppleCare and is no longer under warranty, the cost to repair the screen will be approximately 755 dollars.
SoundToys 5 Plugin Collection	1	\$499	Set of 21 professional plugins, used for mixing, blending, distorting, and more.
Royer Labs R-121 Studio Ribbon Microphone	1	\$1295	Ribbon microphone used to record instruments and sounds with a delicate and detailed upper register (voice, viola, etc)
Primacoustic London 8 Acoustic Room Kit	1	\$319	Acoustic treatment foam used to line a room and create a sonically neutral space ideal for recording and mixing.
Auralex LENRD 1x1x2 foot Studiofoam Bass Trap 4-pack	1	\$172.79	Acoustic treatment foam used on the corners of rooms to absorb and define lower end frequencies in your mixing space.
Total (Tax not included)	N/A	\$3040.79	N/A

Note: The budget for the project slightly exceeds the maximum grant allowance (\$3000), but I shall cover the excess fees required to purchase the items.