

Tina Hashemi  
Rising 4th Year Arts Award Outcome

## **Preparing and Recording a DMP Jazz Album**

As part of the performance concentration and distinguished major program (DMP) within the music major, each fourth year presents a recital or project that showcases the culmination of their musical development over their time in college. In lieu of an in-person recital, I will be presenting the many components of my jazz studies at UVA in a jazz album recording to be released virtually on April 24th. Thanks to the Miller Arts Scholars program, I was able to prepare for and record this album.

The album will feature my original compositions for piano trio and big band, and a collection of seldom-performed jazz standards. The list of artists providing inspiration for my project include Rosemary Clooney, Blossom Dearie, Doris Day, and Billie Holiday. I will also be singing the original compositions and collaborative arrangements of and with my mentors John D'earth and graduate student Rami Stucky. The recording will be done with undergraduate musicians and friends Thomas Kehoe on piano, Ami Falk on bass, and Peter Wellman on drums as well as with the UVA Jazz Ensemble. John D'earth, the director of Jazz Performance within the music department, has been my mentor throughout this project. I chose him as he has been my primary instructor and advisor for jazz improvisation and language and I have had the opportunity to develop a close relationship with him over the past few years.

With the funding provided, I was able to purchase Sibelius, a music notation software that enabled me to create arrangements and compositions virtually and get a sense of their sound. I was also able to have biweekly virtual voice lessons and advising sessions with Danielle Wertz, a jazz singer whose vocal technique is aligned with my own and has helped me greatly to properly access my breath support and develop a healthy head voice sound. My lessons with Danielle proved to be incredibly helpful to developing the vocal timbre and phrasing style that I wanted to use on my recording. She has also been very helpful in programming the setlist and advising for the overall project. At the moment of writing this outcome report, I have not gone into the studio yet to record these pieces but they are scheduled for early April at The Sound LLC with Mark Graham, a recording engineer who is producing the UVA Jazz Ensemble album as well.

Working on this project has not been what I expected. I was obviously hoping to do a recital but COVID forced me to change my plan and pursue recording, which is not my particular interest nor do I have much experience but doing this project has allowed me to learn a lot about the process and to appreciate recording music. Not being able to rehearse with a band for a full year also provided an obstacle as I had to practice and program this project without knowing how it would sound or being able to practice with my fellow musicians. These restrictions led me to shift my musical focus from improvisation and technical ability to lyricism, phrasing, and emotion, the components of jazz singing that drew me to the art form in the first

place. It was a welcome return in the face of losing such a major component of my love for jazz: live performance. In diving into these aspects, my album's program is rich with ballads and obscure jazz standards that aren't necessarily technically impressive by any stretch but contain a lot of personal meaning and expressivity for me at this moment. My weekly meetings with John D'earth and Danielle Wertz were instrumental in helping me focus on my musical strengths and performing the music that I actually wanted to and connected with.

In creating my first big band chart, I faced a lot of challenges, from not knowing the correct ranges and instrumentation of our current band to not being able to try out the composition as I was creating it since we were completely virtual. I worked closely with Rami Stucky to help me with the piece *Love's Ship*, which I had created entirely in Sibelius using the MIDI instrument playback software but I had no idea or conceptualization of how it would actually sound. Rami helped me develop my motivic ideas into more concrete arranged parts for the horns and helped me delegate parts to certain sections based on what we had in the band and to create a more contrasting sound within the piece.

Having these recordings will be helpful as I leave the UVA jazz program and begin my music career in a new city, and will also be personally meaningful to capture my sound and style at this point in my life. For the outcome report in April, I plan to present the recordings of my completed album. I am extremely grateful to have been surrounded by such amazing friends and musicians and am especially grateful to her UVA mentors Stephanie Nakasian, John D'earth, and Rami Stucky, and to vocalist Danielle Wertz. This is my last grant as I am now graduating, and I am so deeply grateful to the Miller Arts Scholar program and the J Sanford Miller family to have supported me in my musical endeavors at UVA.

*Budget:*

\$300 - Student Sibelius Software  
\$860 - Voice lessons with Danielle Wertz  
\$20 - Sheet music

*Planned:*

\$150 - Photographer  
\$1500 - Recording and mixing  
\$170 - Voice lessons with Danielle Wertz

Total: \$3000