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Miller Arts Scholars Mini Grant Application Fall 2022

Developing My Songwriting Skills

While I entered the Miller Arts Scholars program primarily as a flute player, I have recently been developing my skills in other musical areas through my electives within the music major. This semester, I have been taking MUSI 3370 and 3372 (*Songwriting* and *Writing Rap* respectively), which has been really pushing me as a musician. I'm combining my musical skills with the poetry I've been writing for years as a hobby to really take self-expression to a new level. It was in some ways my flute playing experience that took me in this direction, as attending the National Flute Association Convention (on a Miller Arts Scholar Arts Award) made me really reexamine music, why I create it, and how to do so in a meaningful way. The panels I attended encouraged me to play more music by living composers and to use my own voice. The area of music I have been getting the most fulfillment from the last two months has been in writing my own songs, both in class and on my own.

However, my ability to do this is extremely limited. Once I have lyrics written, I usually end up playing chords on a keyboard on my phone, where I have to pause frequently to scroll up and down because the keyboard doesn't fit on the screen. Thus I would like to write a grant proposal to request funds to purchase a portable keyboard. This would allow me to create demos of songs much more easily and of much higher quality. The model I propose is the Casio CT-X3000 61-key Portable Arranger Keyboard from sweetwater.com. I have had really great customer experiences with Sweetwater when purchasing equipment in the past, as in the fall of 2021 I received a mini grant to purchase a recording device, and they were extremely helpful in maximizing my use of the product. It is also within budget for me to get the essentials bundle, which would include a folding bench and sustain pedal.

This would be a really great investment, especially since as a young adult, I move around a lot. I go from my on-grounds residence at UVA to my home in North Carolina to usually an internship over the summer, which was in St. Louis most recently and could be anywhere around the country in the future. Having a portable keyboard would mean I would be able to continue my songwriting wherever I am, and also after I graduate, when I no longer have access to any of UVA's pianos.

To show that this is more than a passing interest, I have taken many courses that would support me in this endeavor. I took Beginning Keyboard Skills, which gave me the fundamental skills I would need to record demos and compose melodies. I have also taken Theory I and

Musicianship II. As I mentioned earlier, I am currently taking Songwriting and Writing Rap, and in the future I hope to take Composition I and Intro to Music and Computers. Hopefully, this would set me on my way to creating real songs. For this project, while I have no listed faculty advisor since graduate students do not count, I would continue to consult my songwriting professor, Corey Harris, a P.h.D student with decades of songwriting experience, for feedback on my songwriting skills.

I truly believe that getting equipment that would enable me to write my own songs would be a very important step in my musical development. I thank the Miller Arts Scholars program for their consideration of my proposal.

Timeline:

October: Order keyboard essentials pack.

November: Compose songs in conjunction with my coursework and develop demos.

December and beyond: Continue writing and eventually learn to mix and master the tracks I have written.

Budget:

Casio CT-X3000 61-key Portable Arranger Keyboard Essentials Bundle	\$449.99
Taxes and Shipping	Approximately \$50
Total	\$499.99

Link to Bundle:

<https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/CTX3000EssBun--casio-ct-x3000-61-key-portable-arranger-keyboard-essentials-bundle>