

Lauren Schmidt
Class of 2022
Miller Arts Scholar

Violin Resources Funding Proposal

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I have spent the past few semesters studying the music of prominent early 20th-century Hungarian composers such as Kodály, Bartók, and Székely with Professor Dan Sender. My interest in this music began when I joined Professor Sender's violin studio in the Fall of 2019. Since then, I have taken the study of this music increasingly seriously and am now planning on audition for the music Distinguished Majors Project (DMP) program that the music department offers to exceptional rising 4th-year students. Through this program, I hope to complete a thesis analyzing this music and perform a recital during the Spring semester of my 4th year that highlights some of the compositions I have been studying. In order to help me prepare for this audition process, I am requesting a Miller Arts Artist Minigrant to cover the cost of sheet music, a new shoulder rest, a black stand, and a new set of violin strings. All of these resources will help me prepare for my upcoming DMP audition, recital preparations, and other performances so that I am able to reach my highest potential during my last year of study while at UVa.

The piece I am currently preparing for my DMP audition this coming April is Béla Bartók's Second Violin Concerto, written in 1938. I have been using my violin professor's part, as he has studied and performed this work a number of times. That being said, as I begin to get more serious about studying the music of Bartók and other composers, I realize the value of owning my own edition of this part as well as the piano accompaniment part for performance purposes. Because of the copyright laws and the fact that Bartók only sold the copyright laws for this piece to one publisher for U.S. distribution, the cost for the sheet music of this concerto is higher than average. I would use part of this minigrant to fund the purchase of the sheet music for this concerto so that I can own a copy of this music for performance and analysis during my thesis writing.

My first exposure to this concerto was in the spring of 2019, when Joseph Lin, the former first violinist of the Juilliard Quartet, performed this piece with the Charlottesville Symphony. I was awed by the intricacy and power of the music. But what I was even more impressed by was Lin's set-up; that is, how he was actually holding the violin. Most violinists, including myself, play with a chin rest and a shoulder rest to help with comfort and posture. Lin performed without either of these, citing the improved acoustics of the instrument as his reasoning. Since then, I have been interested in finding ways to change the acoustics of my instrument simply by changing the accessories I use. I have been using the same shoulder rest for around 5 years now, and have found that the legs on my shoulder rest tend to dampen the sound of my instrument. Therefore, I plan on using another portion of this minigrant to fund the purchase of the KorfkerRest Violin Shoulder Rest, which is a shoulder rest designed to minimize contact with the violin and improve the acoustics of the instrument. This shoulder rest has been recommended to me by a number of musicians, but the high price has meant that up until now I have been unable to afford investing in such a high-quality accessory. As I begin to prepare for a 4th-year recital, acoustic quality is imperative and this shoulder rest would help me in preparation.

The added struggle of studying music during a pandemic has meant that I spend much of my time practicing at home as opposed to utilizing the music resources that the University has for students. When practicing at home, I use a metal stand that I have had since I first started playing violin 11 years ago. The stand is crooked and doesn't have a hard back, meaning that my music will slip off the stand and I am unable to write notes and fingerings in my music while practicing. The inconvenience of this has become apparent to me while taking lessons from home and trying to make significant progress while practicing. Therefore, I am planning on purchasing a Peak black music stand to replace my current metal wire stand. This stand has a hard back that will allow me to notate music, but it is also collapsible, meaning that I will be able to use it for gigs and other events that require me to travel.

Finally, I am requesting to use the last portion of this minigrant to fund the purchase of a new set of strings for my instrument. I have been having problems with the resonance of one string in particular, and my violin professor informed me that changing the other strings may help with the resonance of my instrument overall. Therefore, I am planning on purchasing an Evah Pirazzi set, which I currently use, but with a custom E string, which should change the resonance of the lower strings that are currently having resonance issues.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my request. Any aid in the funding of the purchase of these resources would be greatly appreciated and would allow me to feel more comfortable with future performances and other violin-related endeavors. Please contact me with any questions or concerns about this proposal.

I. Proposed Outcome Schedule

March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase music, shoulder rest, music stand, and string set - Replace old violin strings with new strings and break in sufficiently in preparation for recital audition - Work on copying markings from current Bartók part to new Bartók sheet music
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audition for the DMP recital program in early April 2021 - Utilize accessories for performances during this month such as my violin studio's recital and the chamber music recital
Summer 2021 & Academic Year 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to use accessories for practice throughout the summer and into the new academic year - Use the Bartók sheet music for musical analysis as part of thesis research

II. Proposed Budget

Item	Cost	Justification
Sheet Music for Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2	\$50	This sheet music for the violin concerto, published by the company Boosey and Hawkes, is the only edition currently published and sold in the U.S.
KorfkerRest Violin Shoulder Rest	\$351.19	This shoulder rest has been highly recommended to me. It minimizes the contact between the shoulder rest and the instrument to enhance the acoustic quality of the violin.
Peak Black Music Stand	\$34.95	This music stand has a hard back, which will make taking notes during lessons and practice much easier. It is also collapsible and portable, meaning it will be put to use both at home and for gigs and other events.
Evah Pirazzi Custom String Set	\$61.59	I have used Evah Pirazzi strings for a number of years and am very pleased with the quality of these strings. The custom E string will allow me to change the overall tension on the bridge of the violin, hopefully solving the resonance issue I am having.
Total	\$497.73	