Henry Boland
Miller Arts Scholar, Music
March 29th, 2024
Arts Scholar Third-Year Award Application

<div align="center">Self-Produced Pop E.P.</div>

Summary:

I will write, record, and produce a pop E.P. (a collection of 4-6 pop songs) and release it on all streaming services in January 2025. The primary focus of this project will be to further develop my skills as a producer, which include curating unique sonic palettes, creating impactful mixes, recording live instrumentation, and optimizing my workflow. Additionally, I want to elevate my songwriting by incorporating jazz vocabulary into my chord progressions and melodies and writing lyrics that present authentic narratives. I am requesting funding for equipment that will enhance my ability to make songs from home.

Background:

I have been singing for most of my life and have been producing pop songs ever since receiving a Shure SM58 microphone for my birthday in 8th grade. However, it was not until I moved to El Salvador in the fall of 2020 that music became my main passion above all else.

Over the course of my junior and senior years of high school, I learned everything I could about guitar and vocal technique, music theory, songwriting, and production through a variety of online resources/books and my school's limited music program. I've released six singles on all streaming services since 2022, one of which, ("more than friends") was signed to a compilation deal with the label Unity Records.

Since arriving at the University, I've experienced immense growth as a musician through lessons, ensembles, classes, and live performance opportunities. I'm excited to showcase the progress I've made as an artist with this project.

Goals/Methodology:

I will record, produce, and mix the E.P. in my home studio as opposed to a professional studio setting because it is more cost-effective and sustainable, and I believe it will deliver the best results. Given my current skill set (which I continue to develop every day), I know I am more than capable of making songs that can compete with professionally produced and mixed tracks. I've studied with local mix engineers and producers at the Music Resource Center in Charlottesville, and I've spent years learning from books and online resources. I am by no means claiming that my skills are equivalent to those of life-long mix engineers, but I am poised to produce songs that can compete in the modern pop landscape, often dominated by at-home producers and imperfect mixes.

Producing and mixing each song myself also allows me to make my work more cohesive and potent because I am capable of reinforcing my lyrical messages with my production

decisions. While the home studio method may come with some limitations, these restrictions can often lead to more unique results that could never be achieved in a professional studio.

There are a variety of skills I want to improve upon as a producer, and working with my mentor, Professor Rasbury, will be extremely valuable for my development. He has an extensive background in sound design for theater, many years of experience with audio production, and a substantial self-produced discography. His experience with sonic textures in both theatrical and traditional pop contexts is extremely relevant to my own endeavors as I work to curate a unique sonic palette for each of my songs. Additionally, his audio production skills will allow him to provide valuable insight as I practice mixing and recording live instrumentation for this project.

Lastly, I want to improve my workflow because I will need to become more efficient as a producer if I want to pursue a career in this role. In practice, this looks like: organizing my sample library and presets so I can draw upon them quickly and maintaining perspective of the entire song so I don't get stuck obsessing over details. Professor Rasbury has had experience completing sound design projects with strict deadlines, and I'm excited to learn more about his productivity practices that have allowed him to do this. Next semester, I will enroll in an independent study with him, where we will meet once a week and practice the different skills that are required of elite producers.

While the primary focus of this project is audio production, I'd also like to progress as a songwriter. I will continue to enhance my chord progressions and melodies by drawing upon the ideas I've learned in music theory classes and in my jazz guitar and vocal studies. I discovered the boundless potential of these music theory tools in my songwriting last semester when I wrote a song inspired by jazz standards for a vocal performance project. The song titled "The Feelings You Give" features a more substantial range of chords than others I've written and is able to convey new emotions as a result. I will further develop my knowledge of music theory next semester by studying jazz guitar with Michael Rosensky, playing in a small jazz combo, and taking classes in the music department.

Additionally, I will refine my lyricism by reaching out to staff in both the music and English departments such as Stephen Hager. I took Mr. Hager's ENWR class Writing About Music, and it was one of the most valuable and enjoyable academic experiences I've ever had. We will engage in fruitful discussions about what makes a narrative authentic and how to create a story the listener can truly buy into.

Given the dual nature of the scope of this project (producing and songwriting), I will prioritize my development as a producer to avoid overextending myself. It is imperative to give attention to both areas though, because I need to fine-tune my skills both in production and songwriting to be a successful independent artist.

For my outcome presentation, I will share the full track list, cover art/promotional media, and play a few songs depending on how much time is allotted.

Project Timeline:

May - June 2024:
- Write songs, make demos, and generate a large pool of songs to eventually select from for the E.P.
- Practice producing, recording live instrumentation, mixing, and songwriting

July 2024:
- Consider the material I have and start forming a rough tracklist and some thematic and musical throughlines for the E.P.
- Continue to generate material

August 2024:
- Present my rough draft E.P. to Professor Rasbruy for feedback
- Meet with English department faculty and music department faculty to refine the narrative and compositional aspects of the songs

September 2024:
- Establish a final tracklist of 4-6 songs to complete for the project

October 2024:
- Continue to collaborate with Professor Rasbury, other faculty, and peers to receive feedback and finish the songs
- Start creation of promotional materials (cover art and promotional video teasers for the E.P)

December 2024:
- Complete all songs on the E.P. by December 5th
- Finalize all promotional materials for the album by December 22nd

January:
- Release E.P. to all streaming services

Budget:

Item:	Price After Tax (factoring in student discounts)	Description/Purpose:
Macbook Pro M3Pro 14 inch	$1978.43	I produce and mix everything on my laptop and my current computer has become increasingly unreliable. It often crashes, freezes, or deletes work in its entirety which severely inhibits my workflow and productivity. The Macbook Pro M3Pro is a powerful computer that will solve these issues.
Sonarworks SoundID Reference for Headphones	$100.00	SoundID reference is software that uses calibrated EQ curves to provide a more accurate frequency response when mixing on headphones. This superior accuracy translates to mixes that sound better on a variety of listening devices.
Yamaha HS5 5 inch Powered Studio Monitor Pair	$421.18	A pair of studio monitors is incredibly valuable for mixing because it allows for crossfeed and provides a better bass frequency response than headphones.
Monitor Stands	$49.99	Monitor stands enable you to position the monitors in the position that is best for the acoustics of the room. It also prevents the monitors from vibrating on a desk and providing an inaccurate sound representation.
Izotope Ozone 11 Standard	$212.93	I want to become better at mastering songs on my own and the Izotope software provides a comprehensive set of tools to do this.
Focusrite Scarlett 2i2	$213.99	Audio interfaces convert analog signal from microphones or guitars into digital information to be edited on a computer. This audio interface has a greater number of inputs and outputs than my current setup. This will allow me to experiment with new recording techniques and better facilitate collaboration.
Total After Tax:	$2,976.52	
Funding Requested	$2,800.00	