

Fourth Year Preparation: MAS DMP Proposal

Project Overview

I humbly request \$3,000 for the preparation and execution of my Distinguished Majors Program (DMP) project through the Music Department, set to be completed by May 2025. At present, I am planning to unpack the musical *Hadestown* using vocal and guitar performance, academic research, and critical analysis to present the relationship between speaking *about* and speaking *to* within the arts. Majoring in both Music and Classics, I find myself utterly fascinated with intersections between mythological and musical worlds. Having studied voice with Professor Ferguson since the Fall of 2023 after extensive previous experience, I hold dear the art of embodied performance as a means by which to convey stories unable to be as effectively shared through other avenues. Thus, combining these interests, I will craft a performance-thesis of my study of *Hadestown*, depicting the efforts I have taken towards academic and performance excellence during my time at the University of Virginia. For more details about the project itself, feel free to review my [application](#) or my written [proposal](#), a one page addendum elaborating on my methods and goals for this project.

- ❖ A guitar for self-led performances has been covered by the Spring 2024 Minigrant.
- ❖ Academic and Creative Research

Voice Lessons. I am currently enrolled in voice lessons while transitioning from my soprano past to my baritone/tenor present. Since Fall 2023, I have paid for my lessons using Miller Arts' Minigrant and by relying on the half-scholarship provided by the vocal performance studio of the Music Department. Due to their steep costs and my other financial obligations of rent, gender-affirming surgical costs, and mental health support, I ask for support for two more semesters of lessons, each semester of Advanced Voice being \$850.

Mythological Research. With the help of my professors and mentors, I will pursue research on the tales of Orpheus, Eurydice, Hades, and Persephone depicted by classical authors juxtaposed with their modern reinterpretations, especially their translation onto the stage of *Hadestown*. Within the Classical subculture of reception studies, I will track changes over time of audiences' receptions of the identity, actions, and moral culpability of characters portrayed on stage.¹

Structural project research. In the handful of meetings I've held with professors and experts, I've already received much methodological guidance as to how to craft my thesis: composing a work which combines embodied and written arts must be approached with thoughtful consideration of medium. Further, I have yet to conduct research regarding how to best approach reception studies, musical theater, academic gender and sexuality theory, and many other concepts interwoven in character portrayals within *Hadestown*.¹

- ❖ New York Field Research

A crucial part of this research includes viewing and studying performances of *Hadestown* over varying stages of research. **First**, I plan to attend the show as I begin research sometime in the summer or early fall to shape my initial paths. **Second**, I plan to attend the show in the midst of my research as I weigh study, analysis, and performance, providing more perspective as I continue to clarify priorities within my analysis. **Lastly**, I plan to attend the show as my project nears completion to firmly cement my conclusions and confirm my performance goals.

¹ It is essential that I own these books rather than borrow them from libraries because of study habits required given my learning difficulties. To mitigate memory loss and related issues caused by depression and anxiety, it is crucial that I have a physical relationship with the texts I read and possess the freedom to annotate and mark passages for future reference. These liberties are not afforded with the temporary custody of library books.

During these brief trips, I will concoct concrete agendae which revolve around further immersing myself in relevant site-specific resources, potentially speaking with the cast, creatives, or those previously involved in *Hadestown*.

❖ **Performance**

I am hopeful that this portion of my DMP will not require funding outside of the Music department. Because my DMP does not fit neatly within the mold of previously-completed projects, I am not confident that I will receive ample funding for the aforementioned aspects of my proposal. However, according to my knowledge, they generally support recitals and other performances; thus, whatever expenses I incur in this area I anticipate can be covered by their resources. However, my other requests, in being more expansive and having less clear funding precedents, likely fall outside of their budget. It is for this reason that I turn to Miller Arts.

Timeline

<i>Item</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>
Purchase a new guitar for future Orpheus performances	MAS Spring 2024 Minigrant	<i>Richmond, VA</i>	March 13, 2024	May 12, 2024
Draft a timeline for completing my thesis	Fred Maus, Jane Alison	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	March 22, 2024	May 10, 2024
Practice guitar; continue to conduct vocal work/lessons	New guitar, William Ferguson	<i>TBD</i>	Once guitar is purchased	April 2025
Purchase research books; begin research	MAS Award, thriftbooks , AbeBooks	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	Once funding is provided	June 1, 2024
Conduct meetings; purchase recommendations	MAS Award, thriftbooks , AbeBooks	<i>Charlottesville, VA; New York City, NY</i>	Once funding is provided	Winter 2024/5
Plan NYC trips	MAS Award, interactions with <i>Hadestown's</i> Creative Team	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	May 2024	
Carry out NYC trip #1	MAS Award, trip agenda	<i>New York City, NY</i>	Summer/Fall 2024	
Write thesis	MAS Award, thriftbooks , AbeBooks , faculty advisors and mentors	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	August 2024	April 2025
Outline and design performance program	New guitar, William Ferguson, faculty advisors, student and community artists	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	August 2024	April 2025
Carry out NYC trip #2	MAS Award, trip agenda	<i>New York City, NY</i>	Fall Break 2024 or Winter 2024/5	
Carry out NYC trip #3	MAS Award, trip agenda	<i>New York City, NY</i>	Early Spring 2025	
Present performance-thesis	New guitar, William Ferguson, faculty advisors, student and community artists	<i>Charlottesville, VA</i>	April 2025	

Budget

Item	Per Unit	Unit	Amt	Total
Voice Lessons	\$850.00	smstr.	2	<i>\$1,700.00</i>
<i>Working on a Song: The Lyrics of Hadda Brown, Anaïs Mitchell</i>	\$16.63	1 book	1	\$16.63
<i>Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening, Christopher Small</i>	\$20.09	1 book	1	\$20.09
<i>Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human, Alexander G. Weheliye</i>	\$26.95	1 book	1	\$26.95
<i>Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity, Alexander G. Weheliye</i>	\$17.49	1 book	1	\$17.49
<i>The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, Hal Foster</i>	\$7.69	1 book	1	\$7.69
<i>Reception Studies: New Surveys in the Classics, Lorna Hardwick</i>	\$35.26	1 book	1	\$35.26
<i>Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical, Stacy Wolf</i>	\$43.99	1 book	1	\$43.99
<i>A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical, Stacy Wolf</i>	\$13.39	1 book	1	\$13.39
<i>Preliminary book total</i>				<i>\$181.49</i>
Train ticket to NYC from <i>location TBD</i>	\$69.00- \$89.00	USD	2-3	\$138.00 - \$267.00
Train ticket from NYC to <i>location TBD</i>	\$69.00- \$89.00	USD	2-3	\$138.00 - \$267.00
MTA subway fare (4 per trip x 3 trips)	\$2.90	USD	12	\$34.80
Room and board	\$0.00	USD	2-3	\$0.00
Food, trip #1 (Friday evening - Sunday morning)	\$15.00	1 meal	4	\$60.00
Food, trip #2 (Friday evening - Sunday morning)	\$15.00	1 meal	4	\$60.00
Food, trip #3 (Friday evening - Sunday morning)	\$15.00	1 meal	4	\$60.00
<i>Hadda Brown</i> ticket, if bought in advance	\$65.46	1 tkt.	3	\$196.38
<i>Trip total for all 3 trips (\$411.18 + \$138.00 OR \$411.18+\$267.00)</i>				<i>\$549.18 – \$678.18</i>
<i>TOTAL SUM</i>				<i>\$2,430.67 – \$2,559.67</i>

The \$440.33 remainder will be used to balance calculation/estimation errors as well as rising costs, likely applicable to Hadda Brown tickets, train fares, and public transit costs.