

Project Title: Acoustic Guitar Revival

Project Description:

I've owned my Taylor 314ce acoustic guitar for over 4 years, and although I have been gigging with it since I first purchased it, this summer has been especially tough on the wood. I've been playing roughly once or twice a week for months now, and the humid Virginia summer has taken a toll on it, as I am usually playing outside- even on very hot days. As a result, the guitar has become dull and lifeless even though I keep it well cleaned, and I change the strings weekly. To attempt to solve this problem, I have contacted support online, and it appears to be a problem with over-humidification throughout an extended period of time. I purchased a dehumidifier for the guitar case, and I have kept it locked away for weeks waiting for the wood to dry out a bit. I have only taken it out when I desperately needed to practice or when I had a gig, but the guitar continues to sound lackluster.

With the Miller Arts Minigrant, I would like to take the guitar to a professional guitar technician to not only get it professionally set up and analyzed, but also to install a different piezo pickup and internal mic into the underside of the bridge in order to achieve better amplified sound. Although there are already two pickups in the guitar that I wired myself, for the piezo/internal mix twin pairing, I would like the ability to have a stereo or mono option so I can split the signals from the pickup and mic, or, in an emergency situation, I can just plug a guitar cable in and have both signals sent through as one. This requires some knowledge of wiring and precise handiwork that I do not trust in my own hands, especially with the guitar already sounding weak acoustically and amplified.

For amplified comparison, this is a video of one of my recent performances at The Garage in Charlottesville: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-rsCv8B3pI>. And this is a video of Mike Dawes, one of my favorite acoustic guitar players of all time: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3WbEDBSjD0>. Even though I'm playing through brand new strings (the same strings he is using), and 2 of the same pickups (Black Angel DiMarzio soundhole pickup, Schatten transducer soundhole mic), my sound is very weak and lacks character compared to his. I believe that I can get a very comparable sound with the combination of a good guitar setup and a piezo/internal mic combo similar to that of which Mike Dawes uses.

Acoustically, the guitar shows an even greater disparity. This link is a video of me playing on a friend's \$200 Yamaha guitar: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/K-8EsoPMJZg>. And here I am playing the exact same song on my guitar: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/FboImRDYh0c>. It's worth noting that the strings on my guitar are less than 1 week old, but still lack volume and sparkle compared to that of a \$200 guitar with months old strings. Some notes struggle to come out, and the lower strings especially lack punch or clarity. There is absolutely no doubt that the guitar has lost a lot of character, and it makes it difficult to practice, advertise myself, and perform live at the best of my abilities when my guitar detracts from the sound so much.

The Miller Arts Minigrant would greatly help me diagnose the problem with my guitar and allow me to play at the best of my ability again, acoustically and amplified.

Limitations:

Due to the guitar being potentially over-humidified, even a professional setup wouldn't do much to help dry out the wood. However, the problem may not be over-humidification, that is simply a suspicion based on my phone calls with Taylor guitar support, so a professional technician would be able to tell me what the problem is. Regardless, the guitar hasn't been properly set up since I bought it 4 years

ago, and I have most definitely put over 1000 hours of playing time on it in that timespan, so it is due up for a setup anyways.

The Taylor guitar has a plastic endpin cover which only has one output, so I created my own endpin cover out of some plastic material (and very careful drilling) to create a dual output system. Since I wired everything inside as well, some of it might be in the way of the piezo, and may have to be rewired. Also, the technician might recommend I buy a new endpin cover.

Finally, I usually play solo gigs multiple times a week, and the job might take a technician a few weeks to do, especially if there are other guitars for them to look at before mine. This may mean having to cancel some performances or perhaps find someone who can do a rush order.

Timeline:

October 14th- Funding Received

October 15th- Buy piezo/internal mic, Locate potential technicians and get quotes/analyses of problems

October 24th- Piezo/internal mic arrives, Drop guitar off with technician

November 7th- Pick guitar up from technician

Budget:

Item	Price (not including tax)
Trance Audio Amulet M-V	\$299
Professional Guitar Setup	\$75
Pickup Installation	\$150
	Total: \$524 (remainder will be covered out of pocket)