

Project Title: Acoustic Guitar Revival

Project Outcome:

The goal of this project was to fix up my Taylor 314ce acoustic guitar that was starting to sound bad due to exposure to heat and humidity throughout a summer of gigging. My first goal was to get the guitar sounding better acoustically by taking it to a professional, Taylor certified, technician. My second goal was to get it sounding better electronically by installing a new pickup/mic system into the guitar.

To get the guitar sounding better acoustically, I first called Taylor and got them to provide me with the closest certified technician. Unfortunately, he was all the way in Warrenton, VA, at a music store called Drum & Strum. Regardless, I drove an hour and a half after classes one day to go meet him, and he completely restrung and cleaned my guitar. He also tied up some loose wires on the inside of my guitar, and gave me some good information on how to clean it in the future. He also recommended using different strings to match the tonal quality of the guitar, and to give the guitar longer life. While he was working on it, I tried out another 314ce that they had at the store and saw that the wood on mine was much darker after being exposed to lots of sunlight. After he gave it back to me, it ended up sounding amazing, but I still felt like there was something missing from the one I tried in the store. Alas, he had no recommendations for the short term, but said it might still be suffering from high humidity, and I should store it in my case for a couple more months to dry it out. Regardless, the guitar sounds almost brand new again, and it has sparkle and brightness that makes me want to play for days. This is what the guitar sounds like now: <https://youtube.com/shorts/ueBb1ytBXnl?feature=share>

Electrically, I had 2 pickups and one mic inside the guitar previously: One soundhole pickup, one kick drum transducer, and one piezo. However, a lot of my high frequencies were getting cut out due to the nature of the setup, and my live sound was very robotic. To fix this, I installed an LR Baggs Anthem system. However, the first one I bought ended up not fitting properly in my guitar, so I had to switch to the LR Baggs Anthem SL, which has less functionality, but the same mic and pickup. It's just my luck, however, that this one ended up being defective, with the screw to adjust mic level only setting the mic to 100% or 0%, and turning well past the points it was supposed to turn. After calling Sweetwater and getting two return labels and refunds, I finally ordered another Anthem SL that worked perfectly. After installing it, replacing the old piezo, and mixing it into my new system, my guitar sounded beautifully amplified for the first time. I was blown away by the difference that the extra mic made for picking up percussive sounds and the high end string sounds to bring out the subtleties and brightness in my playing with crystal clarity. Unfortunately, I don't have a live recording since I got the new system put in because it's hard to record myself while playing at venues, but soon, I will be doing a tiny desk recording at WXTJ showing off my playing through the sound system.

With the money I had leftover, I bought a few packs of the new strings that were recommended to me, sheet music, and other accessories for live performance listed in the budget below. I am inspired to play more, when I love the sound of my guitar, and I have much more confidence playing at venues when my mics and pickups are bringing out all the subtleties that I put into my playing. Overall, I am very thankful for the migrant for giving me inspiration to play and practice without being upset at how I sound. With this, I have an upcoming tiny desk performance at WXTJ Radio, and lots of other performances at vineyards and restaurants over the holidays. I know now that I have a reliable system that I am confident will give me the best possible sound in any situation, and I look forward to the road ahead!

Project Budget:

| Name | Price |
|---|---------------|
| Drum & Strum, Set Up and Cleaning | 93.94 |
| LR Baggs Anthem SL | 209.55 |
| Elixir Phosphor Bronze 12-56 Nanoweb Guitar Strings (9 packs) | 113.67 |
| Sheet Music for "Farewell" - Calum Graham | 7.71 |
| Sheet Music for "Iris- Fingerstyle Cover" - Goo Goo Dolls | 11.03 |
| Kindle Holder for Mic Stand | 20.00 |
| | Total: 455.90 |

Upcoming Purchases:

| Name | Price |
|---|--------------------|
| Keith Locking Banjo Tuners (for E and B strings) | \$226 (\$113 each) |
| Elixir Phosphor Bronze 12-56 Nanoweb Guitar Strings | \$16 each |
| Sheet Music | \$5-10 each |