

Project Description:

Over the summer, I made it my goal to write a solo acoustic album, and I immediately got to work, spending many hours each day writing and creating new music. Furthermore, I've been playing live quite a lot and have recently even gotten into some notable venues like Miller's downtown and the Hops in the Park festival. I've been slowly working on improving the songs, and I currently have 7 demos that I am proud of. My end goal for the year is to have an album of songs professionally recorded and up on streaming services so I can start recording music videos and prepare for a mini-tour.

To aid in this process, I decided to take an independent study with Prof. Rasbury in order to learn about recording, mixing, and mastering as well as to take away skills that I can use to build my own studio after the independent study is over. However, I do not have any of the equipment required to replicate the recording setups we have been doing, and a huge part of the acoustic guitar sound revolves around a stereo mic setup.

I talked with Prof. Rasbury, and we both agreed that in order to even begin doing my own recordings I would need at least: 2 high-quality cardioid condenser microphones, 2 XLR cables, and 2 mic stands. We have been experimenting with different recording setups using different types of microphones, and the cardioids are not only the most versatile, but specifically the RODE NT5's have heads that can be switched out for other polar patterns. For example, in the independent study, we have used these mics in stereo with the omni heads in order to capture a stereo room sound. They can also be used in stereo to capture the guitar body as-is with the cardioid heads. This method, in conjunction with taking mono outputs from my two interior guitar pickups, has resulted in the best sound so far. With the two mics, cables, and stands, I would be able to replicate this sound in my residence wherever I go.

It may sound like overkill to utilize four different sound sources just to record one instrument. However, for my style of playing, I try to utilize the entire guitar including body percussion, harmonics, playing behind the nut, tapping, and even human percussion (i.e. snaps and claps). To show this, I have selected a demo that I recorded that displays the variety of techniques that I use:

<https://youtu.be/cOzNf4qRUsM>

For comparison, here is one of the fingerstyle masters we have been looking at for reference:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00RgZOID0DI>

I tried to pick a song where he shows off some of the techniques that I use in my demo. For reference, I recorded my demo on my iPhone, and the sound is obviously not even close to the sound he gets. With the mics, I'm confident I can get a relatively comparable sound, and with enough practice (and assistance from Prof. Rasbury), I think I can feel good putting my own material into the world.

Here is a short sample of my mix for Week 4 of the independent study:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W7FwdnxZcnQIZjLTWiSjvAxsZDHYcIKX/view?usp=drive_link

This recording also doesn't include the neck pickup on the guitar itself because the cable that we used had some static noise. With that other pickup in the mix, I could bring out the harmonics more and further crisp the sound. Overall, there is so much more to do and learn, but my progress in just 4 weeks gives me hope that with the right practice materials, I can create a beautiful sounding mix like Antoine Dufour.

Timeline:

October 14th- Funding Received

October 15th- Buy mics, stands, and cables from a Sweetwater bundle

October 22nd- Equipment arrives, begin recording

Budget:

Item	Price (not including tax)
Sweetwater RODE NT5 Mics (Matched Pair), 2 Stands, and 2 15ft. XLR cables https://www.sweetwater.com/store/detail/NT5Bundle1--rode-nt5-matched-pair-compact-condenser-microphones-bundle-with-stands-and-cables	\$589
	Total: \$589 (remainder will be covered out of pocket)