

Enhancing the Violin Sound Through an Intentionally Matched Bow**Faculty Mentor:** Professor Daniel Sender (dls8kb@virginia.edu)**Project Overview**

I propose to utilize Miller Arts Award funding to invest in an intentionally matched, higher-quality violin bow that will allow me to elevate my sound on the instrument and my playing as a whole. I have played with my current bow since the start of high school, which has been sufficient for my violin studies thus far. However, I believe that upgrading to a higher-quality bow specifically chosen for the sound it allows me to produce on my violin will allow me to take my playing to the next level and serve me well for the rest of my musical career. I plan to conduct research by evaluating various bows at local violin shops in Charlottesville, such as Vacanti Violins, as well as locations such as Potter Violins and Foxes Music near my home in Northern Virginia, to allow me to ultimately purchase a bow that is well-suited for my instrument and enhances my sound.

Detailed Project Proposal

Ever since starting private lessons in elementary school, I have enjoyed playing the violin, especially for its versatility both as a solo instrument and as an integral part of both large and small ensembles, such as orchestras and string quartets. Over the years, as I dedicated more time to my violin studies and improved in my abilities and sound, I have also progressed from using violins intended for beginner students to a higher calibre instrument that has served me well in my musical endeavors thus far, ranging from solo performances with orchestra to. Specifically, using the higher calibre instrument has allowed me to bring my violin sound in particular to a level I would not have been able to achieve using my previous student violin. With my current violin, I can keep up with the demands of college-level playing.

However, although my current bow was adequate for my violin studies during high school when I originally purchased it, given my current level of playing and improvement since starting at UVA, I believe that a higher quality violin bow would allow me to take my sound to the next level. In addition, I originally chose my violin bow based on a general recommendation from my private teacher. I have now transitioned into college-level playing, and I believe that choosing a bow based on the sound it produces on my specific instrument, which I plan to use for the rest of my life, is a worthy investment of both time and money spent testing and investing into an upgraded bow. Therefore, I am requesting Miller Arts Award funding to support the research process and purchase of a higher quality and intentionally matched violin bow, which will allow me to continue to grow as a violinist, especially in terms of sound quality and tone, which are factors greatly affected by the specific equipment used.

My faculty member mentor will be Professor Daniel Sender, an associate professor in the McIntire Department of Music performance faculty and concertmaster of the Charlottesville Symphony. During my first year, I received a merit scholarship for a full year of private lessons with Professor Sender. Through these private lessons, I have been able to significantly improve

in my playing, especially in terms of reducing tension and adapting my technique to allow me to adequately express musical ideas through focusing on two specific areas as bow weight distribution and vibrato. I have also gained musical insights through private violin lessons, such as how to plan for phrasing in Baroque violin music, in particular through studying Bach's Sonata No. 1 Adagio in G Minor. I have also played in the Charlottesville Symphony as a violinist with Professor Sender as my section leader, which has also allowed me to improve in my orchestral playing through weekly sectionals coachings that he leads.

This summer, I will spend most of my time working in Charlottesville but also plan to spend several weeks at my home in Northern Virginia before starting my work. This will allow me to adequately conduct my research through testing bow options in a wide variety of violin shops across Virginia. Specifically, I intend to assess potential bow options at violin shops such as Potter Violins and Foxes Music in Northern Virginia, which have previously provided me with the instruments and equipment I have used since I began learning the violin in elementary school. These locations have assisted me in choosing my violin and previous bows as they will recommend the best options in the price range and help me evaluate the quality of sound I can produce with each bow on my instrument and if a bow is well-suited for my violin. I will also explore the options available to me near Charlottesville, such as Vacanti Violins. After researching my options by visiting violin shops throughout Virginia, by the end of the summer, I will purchase the bow that I have concluded best enhances my sound and suits my instrument.

From this point, I will use this bow in private violin lessons with Professor Sender and studio recitals, as well as for the Charlottesville Symphony during rehearsals and in concerts. Through continuing my involvement in both solo and ensemble playing, I will become familiar with the bow and learn how to best utilize it to elevate my sound. The distribution of weight between the fingers, wrist, and arm while playing the violin is slightly different for the specific bow used, and I believe that through my independent study and the guidance of Professor Sender in private lessons and orchestra, I will be able to take my violin playing to the next level using my upgraded bow.

Looking ahead, I plan to use my bow throughout the rest of my time at UVA, where I plan to stay involved in private lessons, chamber ensembles, and the Charlottesville Symphony. I also intend to perform solo and chamber violin works as a part of a fourth-year recital that will be a culmination of my musical studies at UVA. After graduation, the bow would allow me to play at a higher level, as I plan to play in a local community orchestra as well as in chamber groups. Overall, an upgraded violin bow will allow me to take my playing to the next level and

For my outcome report and presentation, I plan to include violin bow trial recordings, notes on the factors I liked and disliked about the bows tested, and the reasoning behind the bow I ultimately decided on. It will also include specific video examples of my playing in practice and performance both with my current violin bow as well as the new violin bow over the 2025-2026 school year as I become familiar with using it and begin enhancing my violin sound, along with a detailed descriptions highlighting the tangible improvements and changes I was able to observe.

Proposed Project Timeline

Summer 2025:

- In June of 2025, I will visit Foxes Violins, Potter Violins, and other violin shops near my home in Northern Virginia to assess potential bow options during my time visiting home over
- In July of 2025, I will visit Vacanti Violins and other violin shops near Charlottesville to assess potential bow options during my time working in Charlottesville over the summer.
- In August of 2025, I will evaluate all bow options I have tested and purchase the bow that is best suited for my instrument and enhances my sound, which I will have determined through my research in the preceding months.

Fall 2025:

- I will begin using and optimizing my playing with my new violin bow for private violin lessons, recitals, and the Charlottesville Symphony rehearsals and concerts.

Spring 2026:

- I will continue utilizing my new violin bow to improve my sound during private violin lessons and recitals, as well as for the Charlottesville Symphony rehearsals and concerts.
- In April of 2026, I will give an outcome presentation at the Miller Arts Scholars Annual Awards Outcome event.

Proposed Budget

Item	Price	Additional Information
Violin Bow	\$3000	I plan to look for the best quality and well-suited bow available at or around \$3000, and I will consider both carbon fiber and wood bow options at this price point.
Total	\$3000	

Evidence of Participation in the Arts

I have been highly involved in the UVA Music Department since my first semester at UVA. I have played as a violinist in the Charlottesville Symphony since my first semester and took private violin lessons with Professor Sender during my first year. I have also been taking private piano lessons with Professor Mayhood since my first semester at UVA and competed in the first inaugural Charlottesville Symphony Concerto Competition during my first semester at UVA in the Fall of 2023. I was also a violinist in a string quartet through the UVA Strings Chamber Ensemble class in the Fall of 2024. I have performed on piano and violin both individually and in ensembles in masterclasses, tea time, and studio recitals and have served as a piano accompanist to fellow students at these performances as well. I am so grateful to have been a Miller Arts Scholar since February of 2024, and I thoroughly enjoyed taking the CASS 1010 seminar. It was so wonderful to learn about all the work of other scholars in different disciplines

through portfolio presentations, and it was interesting to observe the similarities and differences between the more interpretive art form of playing classical music and more creative art forms such as the visual arts and to see how there are still many shared processes between the art forms.

Music Portfolio Examples

1. Dvorak Romance for Violin, excerpt:
https://soundcloud.com/sophia-go-484360459/sophia-go-dvorak-romance-for?si=d3be28c8944a47eca1260ba3c4fbadac&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing
 - a. Solo violin work from the Romantic Period performed at Professor Sender's Spring 2024 Studio Recital.
2. Smetana String Quartet No. 1: I. Allegro vivo appassionato, excerpt:
https://soundcloud.com/sophia-go-484360459/smetana-string-quartet-no-1-i-allegro-vivo-appassionato?si=5ab677c341b1494aa03f334db003c077&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing
 - a. First violin in a string quartet through the UVA Strings Chamber Ensembles class in the Fall 2024 semester at a performance of this piece from the Romantic Period.