

Rachel Guo

## Expanding Horizons: Bringing the Written Word to Film and Music

How can you bring a story into the real world? What is the process of turning a thousand words into a singular photograph, a singular film, a singular visual moment? How many different ways can we tell a story? When we read, our brains are able to create whole worlds out of text on a page. We understand the sound a character makes when they talk, not because of a physical sound we're hearing, but because a writer has described it with words. As both a writer and a filmmaker, this fascinates me.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about how different mediums can convey different things about the same subject matter. Much of my interest lately has been in trying to find the intersection between everything that I do. Some of my projects are meant to stay in their original form- either as a film, or as a story. With others, I aim to create works that stand both on their own and together; a story that can be read, or watched. Though I'm in the Miller Arts Program for creative writing, I love working in many different subjects. For example, music has always been a huge part of my life; I've been classically trained in piano since age six, did music theory in tandem with my piano education until the middle of high school, studied classical and popular voice, and I recently picked up guitar. This extends beyond playing music itself- many of the films I make I score myself, and I've started looking into composition and songwriting.

This semester, I'd like to apply the mini-grant for a project I'm working on a project that involves making book trailers for the stories I write. In essence, its combining music, writing, and filmmaking into a multi-media project that extends beyond the page. The three stories in question are part of a suite of short stories that revolve around narratives that take place in the same town. The atmosphere is quite specific, and it's something that I want to capture beyond the written word. The trailers would be short, 1-3 minute works that would capture the emotional core of the narratives through a combination of music and visual cues.

To do this, I would first like to purchase a baritone ukulele. I learned about it while diving into the world of stringed instruments, and the sonic quality and size fall between a standard guitar and a soprano or concert ukulele. In practical matters, this makes for an instrument that's more portable than a guitar or a piano. However, more importantly, this also creates a unique sound that's incredibly difficult to find elsewhere. The sound is warmer than the smaller ukuleles but brighter than the guitar's, which is a specific quality that I would love to be able to use both in the project I'm working on this semester, but also in future compositions. Music is a huge part of my art, and I'm taking every opportunity to expand upon what I can do with it.

On that note, I would also like to get a Zoom recorder. We use them in cinematography to record sound, and having one of my own would allow for greater accessibility to film projects in the future because I would always have one available. Currently, I am only able to access these audio recorders for very brief periods during the school year. Often, especially when I end up filming when traveling or when I'm far from the greater Charlottesville area, I end up recording audio on my phone. In doing that, the quality isn't great, and many editing and creative options are restricted later because of it. This is something that I would use for both my project this semester and for future projects.

In terms of greater access, the final thing I would like to buy is a gimble that supports iPhone. One amazing thing about the technological advancements of this age is that we all have cameras that are capable of filming fairly good quality footage in our pockets at all times. Whole films that have been played in huge film festivals have been shot on smartphones. While I do have a phone, the limits of the human hand mean that stabilization is difficult. I would like to buy an iPhone gimble to be able to shoot footage in a more accessible way. I would also use this for test footage, in case I'm scoping out a new location, or any situation where it's difficult to carry a full-sized camera.

Going forward, I would like to continue my creation of these book trailers, as well as use these new materials to expand my creative horizons. Although these purchases would be used to create a very specific project this semester, they're all things that I would no doubt use often far past this timeframe. Thank you for your time and consideration!

**Timeline:**

Purchasing all three requested items: early March (or as soon as the grant is approved)

Filming/Editing/Composing: April

Final Product Complete: End of April

**Budget:**

Name:	Cost:
Baritone Ukulele (including picks, strings, and case)	\$228.17
Zoom Recorder	\$213.93
Gimble	\$120.27
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$562.37</b>

\*\* remainder to be paid out of pocket