

Ryan Lee
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Class of 2023
Miller Arts Scholars

Viola Case and A String Funding Proposal

After successfully auditioning into the Performance Concentration, I have been able to gain greater exposure to performance in front of my peers, while also intensifying the continuation of my private studies with instructor, Professor Ayn Baliya. In addition to Performance Concentration, I am participating in the Charlottesville Symphony and playing in a string quintet through the UVA Chamber Ensembles program. This semester has been a dramatic reentering into live performance for me and therefore, I have to bring my viola almost everywhere with me almost every day of the week. My viola case, in particular, however, has posed significant difficulties that have negatively affected not only my instrument, but also my posture and bodily tension. Therefore, I am requesting a minigrant this semester to fund the purchase of a new viola case and additionally, a new A string due to my last one breaking. In the meantime, I am currently using an older A string.

My current viola case has 4 slots for bows, however, the case is designed in such a way that makes it impossible to fit up to all 4 bows. There is tight spacing between the slots and the top corners of the case and an obstructive fastening ribbon near the bows, rendering half of the slots unusable. The pocket for the shoulder rest also does not properly fit mine and is always left slightly ajar, crushing my shoulder rest pad. Most pressing, however, is that the case itself is extremely heavy and has no attachable backpack straps, causing a severe strain on my shoulders when carrying it and thus, increasing tension in my playing and negatively affecting my posture. The viola itself is already a heavier instrument, therefore, a lighter weight case would provide some relief on my shoulders and decrease the overall weight I have to carry when transporting my instrument from place to place. I have included photo attachments below to provide further reference on these various elements.

With the funding of a new, lighter-weight case, I will be able to transport my viola with more ease without compromising protection and durability. Additionally, the extra equipment such as the bows and shoulder rest will be able to be stored properly without interference from the case itself. A new case would significantly assist in my day-to-day participation in various music activities around Grounds while also ensuring I have healthier posture with less physical tension. I have struggled in the past and continue to work on relaxing while playing and decreasing tension in order to enhance my sound and tone. I have learned during my private study that relaxation and bodily comfort play a large role in creating a fuller and more robust sound. While this is a long-term project and goal, I hope to consistently cultivate and enhance my tone through physical relaxation and decreasing as much tension as possible while playing.

My outcome statement will be in a written account documenting the improvements of my case and equipment, along with my posture and bodily tension. Thank you so much for your time and consideration and please reach out if there are any questions.

Photos for reference:

Absence of backpack straps, clips



Unusable bow slots (L) and obstructive fastening ribbon (R)



Shoulder rest pocket



Proposal Timeline:



Proposal Budget Outline:

Item	Price	Quantity	Total
Pedi NiteFlash Oblong Viola Case Brown	\$309	1	\$309
Evah Pirazzi Gold Viola A String	\$27.83	1	\$27.83
Total			\$336.83