

Upgrading my DJ and Music Production Setup

I am requesting a total of \$500 to be used for the purchase of a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) and studio monitors.

Introduction

Last semester, I completed a live audio-based film project in my Intermediate Cinematography class with the help of funding from the Miller Arts minigrant. The project served as my first in-depth exploration of sound in film, giving me valuable experience in recording, mixing, and manipulating audio and music in a creative context. Already this semester, I have DJ'd for the First Year Council's First Year Formal and for the Inter-Comedy Group Formal, which have served as great first gig experiences.

As I enter my second-to-last semester of UVA, I would like to continue developing these skills with the help of the Miller Arts program. In my last proposal, I mentioned the purchase of a DAW: potentially a full license to Reaper or Ableton Live 12 (student pricing), but opted to not include them in the final budget as other expenses took priority. I have been using Reaper, for free, in my Sound Design class this semester which has been great for creating audio to be used in my other creative work. However, I have still found Ableton, which I was able to obtain a temporary free trial, to be my favorite workspace for creating DJ sets and musical work.

Since I am now earning income from DJ gigs and aiming to elevate the professional quality of my work, I am seeking to upgrade my audio production setup to enhance both performance and sound quality.

Project

I will be performing at the WXTJ "House House" show on April 5th, and presumably will have more gigs come up with the time remaining this semester. I would like to purchase the student license of Ableton Live 12 in order to curate my set(s) beforehand. Over this break and leading up until about a week and a half prior to the show, I will complete the song selection and basic transition ideas for the music. Then, I will then go into Ableton in order to put my ideas down concretely and add all of the necessary filter adjustments, reverb, and mastering.

In the past, when I've gone through this entire process I have relied on using my headphones to mix and master, however this is becoming less feasible. I have found that professionals prefer to hear their mixes through studio speakers/monitors. Now, I can understand why. It's an entirely different listening experience from headphones to speakers in a room, and when my final product is meant to be listened to on a speaker/PA system, I should be creating in that environment.

Because of this, I am seeing funding in order to purchase a pair of studio monitors. While I haven't decided on the exact kind, I will be looking into what the WTJU/WXTJ uses in the studios and what recommendations I can gather from professors/professionals and online. Preliminarily, I have determined that a budget of around \$250-300 should suffice.

As a deliverable for this project, I will be recording the entire set to be made available online. With this, I am hoping that it would serve as a piece to be included in my sound/music portfolio, which would hopefully lead to more work so I can continue to hone my skills and professionalism.

Timeline

March 12th-26th: curate DJ set through song selection, sample searching, and transition practice.

March 26 - April 3rd: purchase all the music I will be using, begin and complete mixing in Ableton.

April 5th: perform/release the mix during the DJ "House House" show.

April 15th: write the outcome report detailing my experience playing my first show gig.

Budget

Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Budget, Lucas Piette						
Audio Engineering Expenditure						
<i>Cost of Ableton Live 12 (student) and Monitors</i>						
Expenditure item:	~25 songs x \$1.29					\$33.57
Expenditure item:	Ableton Live 12					\$219.00
Expenditure item:	Pair of studio monitors					\$250.00 (+/- \$50)
Total						\$502.57
Budget Income, Funding, or Other Awards						
<i>Include income from private sources, the funding you're asking from Miller Arts Scholars, and income from other awards.</i>						
Income item:	MAS Minigrant					\$500.00
Total Over Budget						\$2.57

Note: I am still in the process of researching/experimenting with speakers/monitors

Participation in the Arts

Since my first semester, I have been involved with the studio art department and have been immersed in film and cinematography courses at UVA. During this time, I have completed three personal short film projects and contributed to a larger group production (*Mondo*). Each of these projects were shot on 16mm film, demanding thorough planning, time, and editing. The completion timelines for these projects varied from a few hours to several weeks. Additionally, I have been actively involved as a student DJ with WXTJ Student Radio since my first semester at UVA, and have performed DJ sets for various student organizations at UVA.

Reel Link: <https://vimeo.com/911674485>