

Enhancing Violin Sound Quality and Technique

Emily Williams

Project Overview

For a long time, I have been thinking about how I want to incorporate my love for music into a career. I want to pursue my musical interests by teaching violin lessons. To do this, I will need to maintain and improve my violin technique as well as learn diverse repertoire across different time periods and styles so that I will effectively be able to give feedback for future students and recommend pieces or composers that fit their style of playing.

I intend to perform a senior recital in March of 2020 as a culmination of my experiences and work that I have done at the University of Virginia. This recital will be approximately an hour of violin playing. I have never played a full solo recital before and I want to develop the confidence and stamina that it takes to play such a program. With this recital, I want to challenge myself by playing difficult pieces as well as types of pieces that I have not played before. For example, I intend to play a sonata by Mozart as part of my program. Not only are Mozart sonatas difficult, but a sonata is a unique type of piece where the piano is not an accompaniment, but a duet with the violin. This will require me to have more frequent rehearsals with a pianist instead of bringing them in for a few rehearsals right before the performance. Additionally, I plan on playing other classical pieces, some without accompaniment, and a few shorter Romantic-era showpieces.

The faculty member that will be my mentor throughout this process is David Sariti who is an Associate Professor of Violin. I have worked with Professor Sariti since my first year- first in Chamber Ensembles (a violin duet and a violin quartet) then taking private lessons starting in the fall of my second year. He has been pivotal in my growth as a violin player and musician in general as he has pushed me to get out of my comfort zone and explore styles and techniques that I was previously unfamiliar with. By continuing to study with him, I will keep expanding on my technical abilities and knowledge of the standard violin repertoire.

An obstacle that I have encountered in preparation for the recital is the deficiencies in my equipment. I have been working incredibly hard on my technique and physicality of playing to improve my quality of sound. Though I have a great instrument, the bow that I use prohibits any more progress in improving my sound as it is of significantly lower quality than my instrument. Also, I have difficulty playing my instrument whenever my bow needs routine repairs like a rehair as I do not have a backup bow to use for those two or so weeks every six months when the bow needs to be shipped off to a luthier. Most higher-quality players have two bows- a main and a backup- but I have been limited financially and have not been able to buy a second bow. Having a quality bow and

This summer, I plan on going to the Carriage House Violins of Johnson String Instruments store in Newton Upper Falls, Massachusetts, which is right outside of Boston. I have been to them to get violin accessories in the past and their bows have been recommended to me as high quality. There, I will test out a few bows that I have found on their website that are in my price range by seeing how compatible they sound with my instrument. After getting a new bow, I will continue to work on the repertoire I have selected for my recital and prepare for the recital which I anticipate happening at the end of February or early March of 2020.

After performing this recital, I will have performed a longer violin recital that will force me to improve my technique. All of the elements of funding that I have requested (a new bow, lesson fees, accompanist fees, recital hall fees, etc.) will help me put on the best performance possible and accomplish the larger goals of improving my technique and sound quality that will be crucial for success in my career.

Timeline

Summer 2019

Early June 2019

- Trip to Carriage House Violins
 - Test out different bows, buy the one that works best with my instrument.

August 2019

- Begin preparation for Senior Recital.
 - Practice violin pieces.

Fall 2019

- Book rehearsal hall for day of concert.
- Confirm pianist availability for day of concert and rehearsals for the winter and spring.
- Continue taking lessons and preparing for recital.

Spring 2020

January 2020

- Start having rehearsals with pianist
- Continue lessons with Professor Sariti

End of February/Early March 2020

- Have Senior recital

Budget

Carriage House bow	\$2,000
Private Lesson Costs	\$800
Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters ~ \$400 per semester	
Currently on half scholarship (Would be \$750 a semester)	
Accompanist Fees	\$280
\$35 per hour: 2 hours on day of concert, 6 hours of rehearsal before	
Hall Rental	\$200
Rent the space for 3 hours including set up, concert, and clean-up	
Total	\$3,280

I recognize that this total is above the highest amount we can possibly request, but I would be grateful for any support that I can get from the Arts Awards program!

Participation in the Arts

I have been very involved in the arts during my time at the University of Virginia. Besides being a music major, I am in the University Singers, Chamber Singers, and have played in Chamber Ensembles through the music department. Currently, I am the fundraising chair for the University Singers as well. I have also taken private violin lessons with Professor David Sariti since fall semester of my second year and have recently applied for a Distinguished Major Project in violin performance and conducting. Both semesters last year I took Choral Conducting I and II with Professor Michael Slon and I am currently enrolled in Instrumental Conducting II with Professor Ben Rous in order to develop my conducting experience. Additionally, taking courses such as Choral Arranging, Jazz Studies, Musicianship II, and Music Theory I, II, and III will help me lead rehearsals as they have expanded my musical knowledge and helped me analyze scores.

Beyond University ensembles, I have played first violin in pit orchestras for “The Addams Family”, “Into the Woods”, and “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” for First Year Players, and I vocal directed their production of “Anything Goes” in the spring of 2018. Additionally, every summer I have played in the first violin section of the Farmington Valley Symphony Orchestra in Farmington, CT in their pops concerts. I am one of the three student members on the UVA Arts Council spearheaded by Vice Provost of the Arts Jody Kielbasa and I have been the Chair of the Student Council Arts Committee for the past two years. Under my leadership, the committee has increased funding to student artists through the Student Arts Fund, increased

awareness of arts events on grounds through the Arts CIO Spotlight, hung student artwork across Newcomb Hall, and have started other initiatives to advocate for the arts on grounds. I am a choreographer for the Virginia Dance Company and have been a company member since fall of 2016.

I have also been very supportive of my fellow Miller Arts Scholars and the arts at UVA in general. Last semester, I took CASS 1010 and I am currently enrolled in CASS 1011. I composed a piece for drama scholar Jakob Cansler's play "Constellations." I brought the issues of continued letter grading for music ensembles and music minor up to parties that have capabilities of addressing them at the request of fellow scholars. I consistently attend arts events put on by UVA departments as well as other student-run groups that other scholars are involved with. I consider myself an active arts advocate at UVA and I am thankful for the Miller Arts Scholars for helping me have a voice in this community.

Example of work:

<https://vimeo.com/user95571877/review/320042405/a744798b4e>

Password: Emily Williams Miller Arts