Adin Yager Arts Award Outcome Report

March, 2023

Original Proposal:

I applied for the creation and performance of an original lofi hip-hop album. I asked for $2400 to cover the performance aspect, and an additional $600 for music production tools. The performance aspect includes a Pioneer XDJ-XZ DJ controller, perfect for playing and mixing music live. The performance tools I bought were a software synthesizer, a digital instrument library, and some audio effect plugins.

Outcome:

As proposed, over the summer I began working on a second album. I continued working over the fall, and continue to work on it today. I have not yet finished the second album, however in the past two months, my debut album was released. This album took over much of my time, and led the project I proposed to a whole new direction. This project has gone from mainly focusing on the proposed album to mainly focusing on the performance aspect of my music.

In the past nine to ten months, I have begun performing my music live. I have currently performed all around UVA, online via live streams, and in Amsterdam (where I currently live for a study abroad program). For my Arts Award outcome presentation, I have recorded a live set that will be played during the awards ceremony. I've performed lofi music (the music I mainly create), as well as house music (another genre I produce) and popular music sets. Each one contains different levels of mixing and performing that I've had the pleasure of learning since I received this award.

Throughout the past almost year, I've transitioned my whole perspective with regards to my musical journey. This award allowed me to explore a side of music that I hadn't previously been able to, and I loved it. Prior to this, I had only been a producer and beatmaker. I hadn't really considered performing, as it was so expensive to obtain the equipment necessary and I wasn't sure if it was worth it.

Once the opportunity of the award presented itself, I started looking more into performance, and I quickly realized it was something I wished to do. Performing is one of the most rewarding feelings - especially performing my own music. I've gone from practicing in my home studio to playing shows for nearly a thousand people, and I hope to continue expanding and growing. I am now confident that I can continue the performance aspect of my musical journey as I grow as a producer, and I'm looking forward to coming back to UVA next fall and playing more shows all around the university!

While my original proposal contained an album, I really didn't go far with this part of the project. I've gotten four tracks of the proposed 8-12, however I am not in any rush to finish the album as performance has taken more of a front seat. I did however use the software I bought to help me finalize and perfect my debut album, which came out on January 27, 2023. Here is a link to that piece of work: https://lnk.dmsmusic.co/skyswimming_gentlememories

Perhaps one of the most beneficial parts of this arts award was my independent study work with my faculty mentor, Professor Michael Rasbury (Drama department). During the fall, we met every Monday to explore new topics in music production, sound design, and audio engineering. Our best day of study in my opinion was the day when we made music together! Professor Rasbury showed off his piano chops and we created a fun little beat. Another great "class" was spent analyzing the different sounds of different microphones - we got very detailed and it was incredibly helpful for me to see/hear! I am looking forward to hopefully continuing this next year as well. I chose to work with Professor Rasbury because of his extensive knowledge of music production and sound design, and I'm very glad that I did!

Budget Spent:

Software Synthesizer, Xfer Serum: $189.00
- I use this synthesizer widely in my production. It is perfect for airy pads, deep basses, and honestly anything in between.
- Here is an example: every melodic sound (including the basses) was made in Serum! https://virginia.box.com/s/f38ca2lcztmz042lh7qw704iu3qdkouu

Digital Software Bundle, Waves Abbey Road Collection: $197.99
- These tools are hard to hear outright in a song, however I use them constantly to make my tracks feel more vintage and analog.

Digital String Library, Felt Audio blisko collection: $354.85 (£269.00)
- These strings are beautiful - I use them mainly for light pads in my lofi songs. They feature heavily in the second album I'm producing!
- Here is an example in the album I am currently working on (the proposed second album): https://virginia.box.com/s/x709enfbuxitgb6c6bta7tkugd5p3sna

Live Performance Tool, Pioneer DJ XDJ-XZ Digital DJ System: $2399.00
- This tool is one of my most prized possessions right now. Performing is so straightforward and fun using the all-in-one capabilities of this system, and it allows for mixing on the go!

The budget was spent exactly as proposed!

A shot of me performing live at Sigma Pi in September, 2022 using the equipment I bought with the arts award

https://virginia.box.com/s/dkgxl1giskvgiqx97pu5sov2i5rpwj5y

A link to my set for the Miller Arts Scholars Award Ceremony