

Jack Ireland
Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Proposal
Fall 2024

Advanced MIDI Controller for Composition and Production

OVERVIEW:

In my composition and production through my Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) Logic Pro X, I make frequent use of Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI). Through MIDI, I am able to control and encode musical instructions directly into my DAW. Over the last three years, I've come to realize the need for an advanced MIDI Controller: one that is more easily portable while still being quality built. Since 2018, I have registered MIDI in a variety of inefficient ways: the Musical Typing feature on GarageBand, a small, cheap 32-key MIDI controller from Amazon, and my large Yamaha keyboard. The Arturia KeyLab 61 mk3 61-key Keyboard Controller would not only speed up and streamline my production and compositional workflow, but it would also be a sustainable investment through the end of my time at UVA and beyond.

The key features that this MIDI Controller possesses is what I am looking for in my workflow. The Arturia MIDI Controller has an advanced keybed with aftertouch, a feature that neither my cheap MIDI keyboard nor Yamaha possess. It features dynamic controls like encoder knobs and sliders and, most notably, 12 pressure pads for percussion, also absent on my current boards. These sort of dynamic controls would elevate my production by unlocking new ways for me to control the dynamics of my sound in real time rather than painstakingly mixing in post effects. I would also be able to write out and play drum parts with the pressure pads rather than arranging parts in the DAW piano roll. This controller comes bundled with a variety of instrument libraries and presets—specifically all-access to Arturia's Analog Lab Pro software, which contains over 2,000 instrument presets. With this access, I would be able to incorporate a host of new sounds into my music that are directly integrated with the Arturia Controller itself. I also opted for the 61-key model, as I felt that 49-keys would be limiting for the kind of music I like to compose and for my background as a jazz piano/keyboard player.

Currently, I am enrolled in DRAM 2620: Sound Design, where I am experimenting with production equipment, the DAW Reaper, and a MIDI controller. An option for the final project is to produce a piece of music, and the Arturia MIDI Controller would be a perfect supplement to working on the project outside of the classroom. I am looking to take the skills gained this semester and apply them to future composition and production classes, particularly MUSI 3390: Intro to Music and Computers and MUSI 4543: Sound Studio. The Arturia KeyLab 61 mk3 61-key Keyboard Controller would greatly assist in preparing me for these classes and my continuation of my remixing project, "Snivys". Additionally, as I look to an eventual Distinguished Major Project (DMP) proposal of a composed and produced album of music, the Arturia KeyLab MIDI Controller would be the first step in this process as it would provide a foundational aspect of my composition and production process.

The assistance of this Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant would further enhance my work and my skills as a composer and producer by broadening my sound and compositional techniques. I am extremely grateful for this potential opportunity!

TIMELINE:

Now—rest of October 2024:

- Purchase Arturia KeyLab 61 mk3 61-key Keyboard Controller
- Begin experimenting with Logic Pro X integration

November 7th—December 5th 2024:

- Utilize Arturia MIDI Controller in conjunction with final project in DRAM 2620: Sound Design to compose and produce a piece of music
- Through LogicPro X integration, work on and complete “Snivys” projects

December 2024:

- Set up Arturia MIDI Controller at home studio over Winter Break to continue to work on “Snivys” projects, finishing some for release to streaming platforms

January 2024 and beyond:

- Incorporate Arturia MIDI Controller into future classes like MUSI 4543: Sound Studio
- Propose a DMP of collection/album of fully produced compositions/songs
- Build up proficiency with the MIDI Controller for use within my intended DMP
- Continue “Snivys” projects with intention to release another album within the next year

BUDGET:

[Arturia KeyLab 61 mk3 61-key Keyboard Controller - White: \\$549.00*](#)

**I am aware that the Minigrant only covers up to \$500; the remaining \$49 will come out of pocket.*

Total: \$549.00 (remaining \$49) paid out of pocket