

UCSB Academic Senate
Academic Senate Council on Research and Instructional Resources

Application for 2021-22 Faculty Research Grant

APPLICANT INFORMATION

NAME

Benjamin Brecher

RANK

Professor

DEPARTMENT

Music

EMAIL ADDRESS

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PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT TITLE

"Three Centuries of Thomas Moore"

Amount Requested

\$19710.00

The Department/Unit that will be receiving/administering the funds:

Financial Coordinator

David Farrar

EMAIL ADDRESS

dfarrar@music.ucsb.edu

DEPARTMENT

Previous Funding Record for this Project

This is a new project that has not received previous funding support.

Subvention

Yes, and the publisher contract will be submitted to the Academic Senate on a later date. I understand the contract is required for the subvention fund to be paid to the publisher.

Past Funding Support from the Academic Senate for Other Projects

I have not received funding from the Senate within the past three fiscal years.

Other Research Support

I do not have start-up funds.

I do not have other extramural research support.

I do not have other research support.

Recent Publications

I do not have recent publications.

Use of Human Subjects

This project does not involve the use of human subjects.

Pearl Chase Funds

This proposal is not a request for the Pearl Chase Funds.

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**Benjamin Brecher
Professor of Music**

March 25, 2021

“Three Centuries of Thomas Moore”

1. Statement of research project

My research/creative activity has been focused in classical operatic and concert repertoire as a tenor. I have performed with many of the world’s finest opera and orchestral organizations. In fact, I have performed over fifty operatic roles and performed with over fifty symphonies world-wide since 1994. Throughout my career I have recorded 10 CD and DVD recordings.

The Project that I would like to fund is a new audio/CD recording of texts written by Thomas Moore. The Irish poet and lyricist has had his music reimagined after his death in 1852, by a few composers from the British Isles in the late 19th Century, but commonly thought of as the pinnacle of these were written/arranged by Benjamin Britten with piano accompaniment in the early 20th Century. These pieces were the spark to my idea of a new recording entitled “Three Centuries of Thomas Moore” (working title). After doing research over the past few years I found that many English composers have set his texts to music, however the most interesting and surprising were songs translated to French and set by Hector Berlioz. The French Romantic composer and conductor mostly known for his orchestral works, also wrote French ‘mélodies’. To my surprise, he also loved the genre of Irish folk songs and poetry! After finding copies of these rare songs, I would like to include them in this recording as examples of 19th century adaptations of Thomas Moore. When finished, my recordings of these songs in the original keys will be the only 1-2 recordings of these songs in world-wide circulation. Robert Koenig, Professor of Piano, and Chair of the Department of Music at UCSB has agreed to accompany me in these recordings. Professor Koenig is an Internationally known collaborative pianist with a Grammy nomination and a prolific recording library. He and I collaborated in a 2016 CD entitled “Forgotten Liszt” that has been received Internationally with glowing reviews for its artistry and importance in the field.

The last part of the CD, and quite possibly the most important will be 4 new world premiere songs written by Sarah Gibson, internationally known composer and pianist who only two years ago became a Teaching Professor in the Department of Music and Creative Studies here at UCSB. Professor Gibson is excited about re-imagining Thomas Moore texts from the viewpoint of a 21st Century woman. Her music is imaginative, full, and her knowledge of the singing voice made her my one and only choice for collaboration. Additionally, she is an acclaimed pianist, and will accompany me for the recording of her songs.

Lastly, the recording will include CD liner notes written by yet another UCSB faculty member. Associate Professor of Music, Derek Katz. He is thrilled about the repertoire and importance of this CD project, and has graciously agreed to write the extensive liner notes for this project. Professor Katz is known for his work on Opera, Nationalism and Modernism, as well as his program notes and pre-concert lectures with many of the country's most important arts organizations, including the San Francisco Opera, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and The Aspen Music Festival.

The majority of the recording project will take place in Santa Barbara. We plan to use The Music Academy of the West's Hahn Hall, which is arguably one of the country's finest recital halls and has access to a fantastic Steinway Hamburg B piano. The acoustics and the piano make Hahn Hall a perfect place for the recording site. Consultations with vocal pedagogue Patricia McCaffrey (Metropolitan Opera, New York), Steven Blier (New York Festival of Song), and Thomas Grubb (The Juilliard School and Curtis Institute), will aid in the interpretation and scholarly accuracy of the recording. Neither Professor's Koenig, Katz, Gibson nor I will be earning royalties. Professor Gibson and I also wish to publish her songs so the manuscripts can begin to be performed around the world.

Along with the recording project, the study and recording of these songs will also serve as repertoire for future recitals, tours, and presentations of these little-known and new works. Six universities have already expressed interest in our performance and lecture opportunities at their institutions.

In my 13 years at UCSB, I am not aware of such a collaborative research project involving 4 members of the Music Department. When speaking to my colleagues about this, they all spoke about how important these types of collaborations are, and how essential they are to the Department as a whole.

Although this project includes 3 other faculty members, I am applying for Grant in my name. The reasons are that the 3 others, although playing essential roles in this project, will not receive the top billing on the CD and I will be the top performer listed. I will also receive top billing in all publicity and reviews Internationally. Lastly, due to Covid-19 cancellations of all my live singing projects over the past year through late 2021, this project will be very important for my next merit review to Professor step IV.

Thank you very much for considering this proposal.

Benjamin Brecher
Professor of Music

When considering the impact on the field of a musical recording, the two main items are distribution and uniqueness of the recording. Distribution of course is mostly led by the record label. MSR Classics is a proven powerhouse in classical music with world-wide distribution not only in actual CD product, but Digital formats as well. My last recording "Forgotten Liszt" (produced by MSR) has received excellent world-wide notice and our current communications about this project have been met with excitement for the uniqueness of repertoire and a perfectly themed recording.

MSR Classics also is influential in terms of making sure International music critics see this new offering and write about it. Over 40 periodicals and on-line platforms will most likely review this. That alone will reach thousands of music enthusiasts, academics, and arts organizations.

This repertoire also stands out in its style and uniqueness. With the new commissions of 4 songs by the acclaimed Sarah Gibson, this recording will not only reach the traditional classical world, but also the new music world. Those worlds do not always intersect easily. Professor Gibson is having major commissions now with such great organizations as The Seattle Symphony and The Atlanta Symphony, and her work in Los Angeles has met with rave reviews from The LA Times and other outlets.

Finally, I believe such a collaboration with 4 faculty at UCSB will not go unnoticed in the College, University, and Music Conservatory circles.

Thank you for your Consideration.

Benjamin Brecher
Professor of Music

Thomas Moore Recording Project Budget

A. Hahn Hall rental	\$750 x 4	\$3000.00
4 X 4 hour sessions		
B. Piano Tuning	\$250.00 x 4	\$1000.00
4 tunings before recording sessions		
C. Recording Engineer		\$4000.00
D. Post recording production	\$40.00 x 30	\$1200.00
30 hours mixing/production for final product		
E. Photographer/photos for CD		\$1500.00
Photos for CD cover, insert, and publicity package		
F. Estimate of Record Label (MSR Classics) Expenses Paid directly to them		
1. Package Design		\$1000.00
2. CD Replication		\$1350.00
3. CD Digital Release and Promotion		\$2600.00
4. Shipping		\$225.00
5. Upgrade to 12 Page Booklet		\$350.00
6. Cover Image License		\$50.00
7. Fanfare co-op advertisement		\$360.00
G. Travel for consultations/performance		
Airfare to New York City		\$450.00
Hotel for 6 nights		\$900.00
Meals		\$525.00
		<i>(Travel Subtotal \$1875)</i>
<u>Consultation fees</u>		
Patricia McCaffrey, \$150 per hour x 4		\$600.00
Corradina Caporello \$100 per hour x 2		\$200.00
Steven Blier, \$100 per hour x 2		\$200.00
Mark Goodrich, \$100 per hour x 2		\$200.00
		<i>(Consultation Subtotal \$1,200.00)</i>
Total		\$19,710.00

Justifications:

A. Hahn Hall at the Music Academy of the West is one of the best recital halls on the West Coast. It holds a world class Steinway Hamburg B piano. There is not a better place for this voice and piano recording.

B. Piano must be tuned before each recording session due to atmospheric changes.

C. The engineer will set up microphones and a sound mixing board. They will set levels and record the initial takes.

D. This estimate was made after speaking with MSR Classics and outlining the number of songs and the total time of recorded music.

F. After consultation with MSR Classics. (Contract will be sent to the faculty senate at a later date) Actual copies of CDs. Includes eight-panel folder, color all pages, clear tray, bar code, and poly wrap.

G. These consultations are of the utmost importance to the outcome and authenticity of the recording. Since the Berlioz manuscripts are extremely old and handwritten, it is critical that I meet with other formidable experts in the field who can aid in the interpretation and authenticity of my performance of these works. Along with my consultations, I will give a guest lecture at The Julliard School of Music, where I will perform and lecture about selections from the upcoming CD project.

Founded in 1998, MSR Classics is an independent recording label committed to a culture of excellence. For performers and ensembles with recording projects that meet only the highest professional artistic and technical standards, MSR facilitates world-class graphic design, annotation, licensing, replication and distribution of physical product and digital content in the global music marketplace. Extensive promotion in support of all releases leads to widespread exposure through broadcasts and critical review in leading publications. The label's team of professionals brings decades of experience to all aspects of its operation, ensuring an undisputed integrity of concept, design, content and realization. MSR is dedicated to bringing a diverse range of classical music to the widest possible audience, and has released more than 700 titles featuring artists and repertoire from across the globe. Guided by this commitment to excellence and diversity, MSR continues to build a fine catalog of critically acclaimed and award-winning releases.

MSR is under the ownership and direction of Robert LaPorta, a 33-year veteran of the Music Industry. Just prior to taking over the label in 2006, LaPorta was the Studio Manager of the renowned Squires Music Production in Elmsford, New York (2003-2006). Prior to his years at the Squires studio, he was Director of Classics at the Angel label group, which encompassed EMI Classics, Virgin Classics and Angel Records (1993-2001). At PolyGram Classics & Jazz (1989-1993), he was Marketing and Production Manager with London-Decca Records, Deutsche Grammophon and Philips Classics. Highlights of his years at PolyGram include working on the production and release of the Gold Record project Carreras Domingo Pavarotti - The Three Tenors In Concert, and with Wilma Cozart Fine on the Mercury Living Presence re-issue series. While at EMI, LaPorta was directly involved with the multi-Platinum Chant series and launched the Full Dimensional Sound and Seraphim Classics re-issue series. LaPorta began his career as a Publicity and Contracts Associate at ICM Artists (now Opus 3) management in New York (1987-1989), working directly with a roster of esteemed artists that included Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma and Jesse Norman.