



Ahmad Mazboudi  
*2004 Mark David Jones Scholarship Recipient*

**"How I plan to integrate my love of music into my professional career."**

Four years ago I would've never thought that I would be majoring in something I simply enjoy doing, being in a city I only heard and read about its music scenes, and actually being in one of its home based bands. Living in San Francisco and going to school with people I share the love of music with might be just an ordinary and enjoyable thing for most people, but when I stop and think about it and how I integrated something I always enjoyed doing into a possible career, it seems like a dream. Four years ago if somebody would've made me look into a crystal ball and see my present I would've never believed it.

I was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. Although none of my parents and family members had any artistic background, I was fortunate enough to have two brothers that showed lots of interest in music. My earliest memories are of my two brothers bringing me over to watch their band shows. I would just sit there between all the people that showed up watching my two brothers and listening carefully to their beats that made my body moves and to their melodies that penetrated my inner self. From those moments I fell in love with music, and I noticed how people would pay more interest in you when you are in a band. I felt such pride in my brothers. At the age of 12 and coming from two parent who didn't encourage music I asked my

eldest brother to teach me how to play the guitar. Immediately I loved playing and creating music, I would spend endless hours daily in my room playing to my favorites rock bands, sarcastic enough a number of them were from San Francisco. With years my taste evolved to embrace anything from rock, classical, jazz, and my Middle Eastern music. Not only that, but activities evolved to include everything from not playing in bands, organizing events, recording, and producing others. I did this for years till I finished high school and it was time to face reality when my father told that "its time to go to college and chose a career". My options were limited and none of the programs in Lebanon offered something close enough and as good as to keep me close to music. I knew what I was looking for wasn't there so I decided to follow my dreams and come to San Francisco without my father support. I had never had a job in my whole life and I was expected to support myself totally. Not only that but I had to be in school from the first week I arrived in San Francisco. Four years now and I feel like I'm just starting.

During the four years I spent in San Francisco I realized that the goals i set for myself are not actually out of reach; I'm taking the Audio classes that I like, I'm meeting classmates and instructors that are motivated by the same love of music that we all share, and I'm getting hands on experience from working on state of the art equipments at school and local studios. I've expanded my horizons more than I would've done back home. My interests are not limited only to playing and capturing music on tape, but it also extended into audio for video, sound design, special effects and helping new young musicians get through the complex procedures of the music industry. Right now I feel I can do it all, I don't feel restricted to one area or another in audio, to me it is all one area that is connected together and waiting for me to explore more and more of its inner secrets. When I first came to San Francisco was working more than 40 hrs a week in order to support myself, at that moment I had doubts about having a real career in the music industry that will pay the bills, and I remembered my father words about having a "real career". Now

these fears seems to fade away knowing all the aspects of this big industry and focusing on the thing I love the most: music.

I still want to focus on the music part in my studies and career. Although I'm always going to create my own music with various bands and projects; I did record and produce a number of albums independently and with other bands, I feel greater pleasure in helping other bands as well. Producing & recording for bands and guiding them on how to copyright their songs and getting royalties fills my heart with warmth. Maybe I always remember myself young in a band when I wished somebody was there to guide and speed up the process for me and my band mates. Bands over here don't realize sometime how lucky they are and that's what I'll be there for.

Recently and thanks to Evelyn Miller-Mack who is currently the internship coordinator for the Music/ Recording Industry (MRI) program at San Francisco State University I got an internship at Universal Record Label & Music Management in San Francisco. This will be a true test for me as how to make sure my goals don't clash with real life realities of the music business. I'm confident that as long as I enjoy what I'm doing and I'm working with my music, that I'll find a way to keep doing it while helping other people make their music. I might not have inherited the love of music from my dad, I had to discover that myself, but for sure i did inherit from him and from my culture the values of "hard work". Another goal I'm working on right now is to get a paid internship at "The Recording Academy" known for The GRAMMY AWARDS with the help of Dr. Vinay Shirvastava. They are dedicated to improve the quality of life and cultural conditions for music and its makers. Such a job will make me more confident seeing that I'm able to support myself totally through a music related job and will for sure push the limits of my performance and creativity.

I'm so excited about the future right now, I have no idea what it carries for me or where I would be another four years from now, but I'm sure of one thing; that I will continue to be involved in various musical projects, productions, and sound design. Although sometimes I have doubts about how I can continue to make this for living and I think of all the other competition that exist right now in the job market, I calm myself down thinking about how lucky I am to have made it this far doing something that involves music. Four years ago I was just a dreamer of a musical career on the other side of the hemisphere speaking a totally different language, and here I am right now writing this letter in another language expressing my accomplishments and dreams showing there is no limits for what we can do.