Hi Ewan,

I need some help in a Masters degree funding application for a prospective student, Chris Zaworski. He finished his Physics degree here this spring and did a 4th-year project with me regarding the characterization of vinyl records. It was done in collaboration with Viryl Technologies, a Toronto company that makes new record presses. For his degree programme the focus is to study the quality of pressings as influenced by the operating parameters of the press. He is completing a Mitacs proposal and also an NSERC approach.

The application needs 6 names of potential reviewers, and we are having a hard time finding names. We need preferably Canadian PhDs that are outside of UW. These people need not be audio experts, it is also appropriate for them to be familiar with industrial processes. You certainly could be one of the names submitted, and perhaps you can suggest a few.

Below is a portion of the introduction I have written, to give you the flavour of the project. Chris is preparing more details himself as well.

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“The Renaissance of vinyl records in the marketplace has been remarkable. Reasons for this re-emergence are not clear; there are psychoacoustic, psychological, artistic and human factors involved. In some quarters there is lingering doubt that a digital signal with discrete numbers cannot represent an analogue audio stream, although this has long been proven false [res below LSB]. Perhaps the attractive record jacket, the gleaming reflective disc, and the ritual of putting the record carefully into play are important aspects. Whatever the reason, old cutting lathes and aging record presses are back in vogue. This project seeks to study the optimization of mastering and pressing of records *using new instruments and presses* manufactured by Viryl Technologies.”

“The quality of a record pressing is determined by the characteristic of the vinyl used, its temperature, the force used to stamp the record, the final thickness of the pressing, the cycle time of the press, the efficacy of the flash cooling incorporated in the press, and possibly other factors. It is the aim of this research to study the effects of such parameters on the final quality of the pressed discs. This quality will be assessed by the surface noise, the frequency and severity of clicks and pops, the bandwidth and distortion of the recovered audio, and the morphology and warping of the final product. It is hoped that Viryl Technologies will be able to supply a series of music or test pressings that span the range of parameters required for a reasonable statistical analysis of the quality factors.”

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Please let me know what you think about it, and perhaps it would be worth a telephone call. I was hoping to see you at the AES meeting recently on Hearing aids and Musicians, but London is a long way to come.

Kind Regards,

John