

To: Jennifer Cherniack

Program Officer, Prizes

waltercarsen-prizes@canadacouncil.ca

Dear M. Cherniack

I am writing this letter in support of a very worthy candidate for the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, Mr. Bruce Gandy. I have known Mr. Gandy since the mid 1970's when he lived in his birth town of Victoria, BC. We both played with Scottish pipe bands at the time. Upon his move to Ontario in the 1980's, we had the opportunity to play in the same pipe band together for a number of years – the 78th Fraser Highlanders (Ontario), World Champions in 1987. I followed Bruce's career to the College of Piping in Summerside, PEI (1997), where he was the principle-piping instructor and finally to Halifax in 2001, where he established himself at the Halifax Citadel, once again as piping instructor. My history with him pales in comparison to the accolades that Bruce has brought upon himself and to the Province of Nova Scotia.

He came to the province with an internationally known piping competitor, teacher, and composer pedigree. His many years at the Halifax Citadel have allowed him to greatly enhance these credentials. Not only being a former world pipe band champion, he has since won the highest awards in Scotland – twice earning the coveted Gold medal for classical music and winning prizes at the annual world solo piping event sponsored by Glenfiddich at Blair Castle.

He has published several books of music of his own tunes that are distributed worldwide. I have been fortunate to write the preface and proofread much of Bruce's work over the years. I continue to do this with many of Bruce's new compositions, acting more as mentor.

Through his website, he has a worldwide following in the piping field. In fact, he has attracted many to visit and stay in the Halifax area to play in the renowned 78th Highlanders (The Citadel) of Halifax. His good will and expertise have personally assisted in making the 78th Highlanders (The Citadel) a world-class Grade 1 competing band. His teaching is wide spread through the band, province and even overseas.

Perhaps one of his more outstanding accomplishments has been the establishment of the Bruce Gandy Bagpipe Development Society and Foundation – a charity created to assist amateur musicians with tuition and direction going forward in their careers. This charity alone has produced several great players in Nova Scotia that would otherwise not have received financial assistance or first class tuition. With all his

world success, this charity has afforded Bruce the opportunity to “give back” to Nova Scotia’s musical youth.

Bruce Gandy in many ways can be considered the godfather of the bagpiping arts in Nova Scotia. His arrival sparked a new generation of players as well as revitalized the energies of those already in the art! He has been a musical ambassador for the province with his travels to the USA and overseas. As he continues this career path, there is no doubt that he will promote the musical traditions of Nova Scotia wherever he travels.

I strongly recommend Mr. Bruce Gandy for the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts.

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Sincerely,

Ken Eller, BA (HON), MSc, Professor: Niagara College (ret’d)

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