



Conservatory of
Performing Arts

April 25, 2021

**Canada Council for the Arts
Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts**

Re: Nomination of Bruce Gandy for the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts

I am writing in support of the nomination of Bruce Gandy for the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. As a life-time professional artist who remains actively involved in performing arts nationally and internationally, Bruce's achievements in creating, interpreting, teaching and publishing music have brought distinction to the Canadian arts scene.

Bruce is a former World Pipe Band Champion, a Gold Medal soloist, and a regular invitee to the Glenfiddich Piping Championships, which annually features the top ten solo pipers in the World. He has won the most prestigious bagpipe competitions in the World, some multiple times. His performance record is phenomenal. Recently, Bruce won the prestigious MacCrimmon Cairn for Piobaireachd for the 8th time and tied a record for having won the award at least once in five different decades!

As a teacher of bagpipes, Bruce has for many years led the teaching at the Halifax Citadel. He teaches many students in Nova Scotia, having single-handedly helped to raise the standard and expectations for players in the area. As well, Bruce was an early adopter of technology, and from his home in Dartmouth has for years been teaching students in all parts of the World: the USA, Canada, Hong Kong, Scotland, Austria and many more. Bruce is sought after as a workshop instructor, and he travels across North America and Europe, bringing skills and inspiration to pipers from beginner to elite levels.

As a young piper, Bruce became interested in composition, and he has been in the forefront of innovative composers for the Highland bagpipes. His compositions are played around the World by soloists and pipe bands, and his four books of published music sell consistently well. In 2020, Bruce published a book entitled *Performance: Delivering Your Own Awesome* which is an excellent aid for anyone trying to achieve excellence, regardless of the field of endeavour. Combining his teaching and publishing interests, Bruce has an extensive online library of tunes and lessons available to pipers around the globe.

Bruce consults with reeds and bagpipe makers on their products, and McCallum Bagpipes, perhaps the World's largest bagpipe maker, produces an instrument designed and refined by Bruce.

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While Bruce Gandy has achieved amazing success in these areas, he has also made a point of acknowledging that he had a lot of help along the way, and he started a charity dedicated to providing opportunities to young musicians. The Bruce Gandy Bagpiping Development Society runs fundraiser events to build a scholarship fund, which over the past few years has assisted young Canadian pipers to attend lessons, workshops and special events to help further their experience.

In summary, I fully support Bruce's nomination for the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. Bruce's achievements and contributions to the Canadian music scene are immense and have helped to bring other Canadian bands and soloists onto the World stage.

Bruce has been a major contributor to Canada's international reputation as a centre of excellence in piping.

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