



Dr Christopher Coady
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RE: Letter of Support for Dr Nicole Cherry

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2016, Dr Nicole Cherry began her FORGEWITHGEORGE commissioning project in which rediscovered compositions of George Bridgetower, new compositions, companion pieces, and arrangements inspired by her research on Bridgetower are brought together in innovative programs that march toward the 200th Anniversary of the Slavery Abolition Act in England, the country Bridgetower called home. As Dr Cherry has developed this project, she has premiered works across the United States, Canada, and now Australia, in programmes that have drawn together a wide range of contemporary compositional voices including Jessie Cox, Yvette Janine Jackson, Philip Wharton, and Grammy-nominated composer, D. J. Sparr.

Dr Cherry's FORGEWITHGEORGE project presents a ground-breaking model of artistic research that seeks to both uncover and deliver new knowledge about the world through musical performance. The narrative design of Dr Cherry's programmes critique and deepen the way both Beethoven and Bridgetower's legacies are understood by drawing focus to those we remember, those we have forgotten, and why we remember those we do, in our retelling of music histories. The range of musical genres bound up in the FORGEWITHGEORGE project and the way Dr Cherry masterfully weaves these genres together in performance challenges the boundaries both nineteenth century audiences and even some contemporary audiences have sought to construct around musical sound worlds. In turn, Dr Cherry's innovative delivery of compositions charged by hip-hop, jazz, and blues make plain the way twentieth century Black American musical innovations have fundamentally shaped twenty-first century musical thought. In short, Dr Cherry's artistic research practice has delivered for her audiences new ways of hearing both the past and the present that foreground our agency as listeners, our capacity for understanding the



complexity and messiness of music history, and our ability to listen with more inclusive ears and more inquisitive minds.

On the basis of Dr Cherry's artistic research accomplishments, she was invited to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in November 2021 to deliver the keynote address for our Reimagining Musical Programming Symposium. This address was delivered under the auspices of our Alfred Hook Public Lecture— the University of Sydney's flagship public lecture delivered annually by an inspiring leader in the field of music. The Sydney Conservatorium of Music is Australia's premier institution for artistic research and we are currently undergoing a fresh recruitment round for performance staff with well-established artistic research track records. Dr Cherry's participation in the symposium provided an exceptional model of what our recruitment panel is looking for.

I note with excitement that Dr Cherry's visit has seeded an ongoing collaboration with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music that aims to deliver a co-edited special issue of the journal *Music & Practice* and future symposia on the topic of innovative and inclusive programming practices. I look forward to working with Dr Cherry on these projects and learning from her expertise as I seek to broaden both the scope of research practices at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the way core repertoire in conservatorium curriculums is conceptualised.

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