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Dear esteemed colleagues of the Awards for Faculty/Student Mentored Research committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write this statement in support of candidate and gifted flautist Ethan Nylander, a WVU College of Creative Arts, School of Music, undergraduate student with a bright future ahead of him.

In August 2021, when I was invited to serve in the cohort of Creative Consultants at West Virginia University, as an outstanding alumnus of the College of Creative Arts, I was selected as Ethan's mentor for the academic year of 2021-2022. As part of this mentorship, I guided Ethan in conducting research related to recording, producing, and building the foundation to release his debut album as an independent artist. Ethan's first album as an emerging soloist is dedicated to championing new music written for the alto and bass flute by living composers hailing from France, making it an asset as he auditions to study in Paris and establish blossoming partnerships with composers, flautists, and acclaimed teachers in Europe.

The core of my work with Ethan was providing him with insight regarding both the administrative and creative tasks one must fulfill to reach the completion of a final product, such as a solo CD. First, he initiated professional contact with the featured composers and their respective publishers in France. Through this correspondence, Ethan learned how to collect pertinent information about the compositional process and story behind the selected works. In this process, he discovered that the compositions paid homage to other artists or significant figures of early 20th century France, motivating him to become further acquainted with the inspiration and conception behind these works.

His research gave him the opportunity to practice his French through the means of translation, allowing him to dive deeper than expected into the oeuvre and lifestyle of the forementioned personas. The wealth of information he was accessing accelerated our conversations associated with the overall aesthetic of the digital album, such as the title and the visuals. Using his findings as the axis to support his artistic vision, our discussions generated a plethora of ideas, including the pursuit of a cross-collaboration with the School of Art and Design during which Ethan and an arts student will work together to create original artwork for the album cover.

For the legal purposes of a successful album release, Ethan was exposed and educated himself upon the importance of obtaining mechanical licenses when recording music by living composers or under the law of copyright. He became accustomed to professionally retrieving permission to record a work or being contractually bound by a publisher-performer agreement. Sharing with him my knowledge and personal experience as a recording artist, I helped him organize his recording dates and architect an exact timeline to follow while he is in the studio recording. Being proactive in this manner, aims to facilitate his efforts to be industrious and focused under the pressure of recording demanding works in a limited amount of time. For the final stage of this endeavor, I intent to be with Ethan in May, when he enters the studio, as I wish to ensure that his first time recording an album is a positive experience that will give him the confidence to continue this path of producing meaningful and informed work.

A vital component to Ethan's album release and distribution is drumming up audience that aligns with his mission as an artist, while increasing his visibility in the broader flute world. For this reason, Ethan and I also worked on preparing the promotion of his CD by developing marketing strategies that will allow him to spread the news on a national and international level. Ethan has already begun documenting his preparation process and creating content in order to implement and set in motion the plan we designed for his media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and his professional website. Drawing upon my professional experience as a social media recruiter and ambassador for the WVU College of Creative Arts, brand curator and social media manager for BETA Quartet, and my own social media platforms as a recording and performing artist, teacher and professor at the college level, I have ensured that Ethan's objective is to represent his work in an authentic way that will open up space for others to connect and engage with his art in a genuine way.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eftihia V. Arkondis

Ethan Nylander Faculty/Student Mentored Research Statement

Dear Faculty/Student Mentored Research Awards Committee,

This letter is to accompany the application of Ethan Nylander for the Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award. Ethan is a third-year flute performance major and French minor at West Virginia University with an overall GPA of 4.0. I find him to be a great pleasure to teach and have enjoyed mentoring him throughout his studies and in his research project.

Our collaboration has been centered on the preparation to record and publish a Compact Disc album of solo alto and bass flute music by French composers. A CD of this nature, consisting of only pieces for low flutes written by French composers that feature contemporary extended playing techniques, has never be released by any artist to date. It will bring awareness, education, and representation of new music in the flute community on an international scale and is a highly significant contribution to the field. The recording will be published through Mon Hills Records.

As Ethan's private instructor at WVU, I challenged him with the idea of pursuing a CD project. From there I guided him towards a product that would stand out and he could connect with, as he is a great performer on low flutes as well as very interested in French culture and the music of France. I further provided my instruction and approval in the decision-making process of the 8 works, which were each selected with careful planning and examination.

A main element of our work together has been my instruction in the preparation of the 8 pieces included on this album. Our mentorship has consisted of weekly lessons, where we meet in a one-on-one, individualized environment and focus on the works in question. He has made significant progress from our work together, keeping a very organized and goal-oriented practice plan. He has made preliminary research recordings for his reference.

Ethan's practice consists of crafting a daily log in which I provide feedback. As per my instruction, these logs employ techniques used by professional athletes in order to institute healthy and productive habits. His training logs have developed into very well-formulated, professional, and fruitful journals that stem from topic-based practice blocks and are directed towards achieving a target objective.

Throughout our work together I have observed Ethan to be extremely professional, hard-working, driven, and thorough in all that he does. He has demonstrated passion for his creative research and will no doubt experience a great future in the field of research.

Sincerely,
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