

Saturday March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Reference Letter for Dr. Gerard Yun

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Greer Schatz and I am a fourth-year student at Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Music. Throughout my entire education here at the university I have had the privilege of knowing and learning from Dr. Gerard Yun. I can say with absolute conviction that without his tutelage I would not be the musician I am today, as he has been a key figure in my personal growth and development. Dr. Yun has been an infallible resource of extensive conducting and leadership knowledge and has heavily influenced my own conducting technique and philosophy. Furthermore, he is a living library of global sacred and secular music. Finally, he is a compassionate educator that cares about his students' needs and well being. If the Community Music Masters degree is going to continue growing our Laurier Music community, I can think of no one better suited to grooming community leaders than Dr. Gerard Yun.

I have worked closely with Dr. Yun for several years, most notably as one of the student conductors for the WLU Concert Choir between 2013 and 2016. In my first year of comprehensive studies, I approached Dr. Yun after a Concert Choir rehearsal and asked if he would help me select my music courses for my next years at the university. I explained that I was gaining interest in choral conducting, and that I thought he would know which courses would help me work towards my goal of directing. He immediately responded "I'll do you one better: how about you conduct a piece in the next concert?". With that leap of faith in me and my ability, Dr. Yun effectively changed the course of my life in the span of three weeks. In return for taking on an additional leadership role within Concert Choir, Dr. Yun met with me privately to enhance my conducting technique and musicality – at no extra cost – and has provided me with some of the most valuable music lessons of my lifetime. Throughout the process he has supported me and challenged me to give him my best work, has taught me the value of leading through kindness, love, and a sense of community, and has faced every obstacle with a smile on his face and faith in his heart. He works tirelessly to bring the joy and community back to choir and music making – prioritizing that just as much as the music. His teaching philosophy and the learning opportunities that he has provided me has helped prepare me for a career in directing, and has greatly shaped my musicality and leadership.

In addition to his work at the Faculty of Music, Dr. Yun also teaches multi-disciplinary courses that look at the way music intersects with other global phenomena – in particular how music affects group and individual spiritual experience. The two courses I have taken with him, "Global Sacred Music" and "Sacred Music and Healing" have been incredibly instrumental in my scholarly and personal development. Dr. Yun's experiential teaching style encourages discovery and academic agency. It is a teaching style that is completely different to the expectation at the undergraduate level, but through it I learned from not just Dr. Yun's wealth of knowledge but from the knowledge of my peers as well. "Sacred Music and Healing" was very powerful in particular because through conversation with him and the other members of the class I was able to deepen my faith and use what we had learned to support my own healing journey. When Dr. Yun teaches these courses it is obvious that his humility is what sets him apart from other professors in his level – he recognizes that he does not know everything, and he is as excited and willing to learn as his students. He inspires interest in the subject matter and

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encourages his students to take risks, exploring topics that might not be well-researched and difficult to understand. He is also a huge advocate of learning from multiple viewpoint, and often brought in other experts to our classes. It is clear that he loves to learn as much as he loves to teach.

This year my role within the Faculty of Music has grown from music student to music student leader, attributed in part to my volunteer experience as a Teaching Assistant to Dr. Yun and Dr. Kirsten Yri for MU100 – Music and its Contexts. Working as a TA cemented my belief that this is an incredibly necessary course for first year students. Many young musicians have not experienced any music beyond the Western Classical tradition, and are therefore ignorant to the wealth of musical knowledge present around the globe. Dr. Yun teaches this global music course material with incredible sensitivity and authority, acknowledging disadvantaged and oppressed peoples and including in the course curriculum discussion about cultural ethics in music. It is a course that not only widens musical horizons, but teaches the mostly white populace of the Faculty of Music how to ethically interact with art from diverse and otherwise ignored traditions. Dr. Yun is an influential part of what makes this course so special and important. Without his personal experience, understanding, and deep respect for other musical traditions MU100 would not be as effective or authentic.

Finally – but I would argue most importantly – Dr. Yun truly, honestly, and deeply cares for students and their experience. He is well known amongst the student population as a person to turn to for guidance in times of trouble, and has helped not only myself but my peers navigate difficult life decisions. He is not only concerned with the musical development of his students but with our emotional development as well. He models daily the ease and necessity of treating all people with kindness and fairness. To Dr. Yun it does not matter if you speak with him for two seconds or two hours, because he communicates the same level of consideration and empathy for his students regardless.

Although I still have one more semester to complete for my undergraduate degree, I intend to apply for the Community Music Masters for Fall 2018. One of the most attractive parts of this program is that it is also currently taught by Dr. Gerard Yun. He is a person who embodies the goals of this program in his teaching and his day to day life. While I have learned valuable lessons from him for the past four years, I know that his position as educator with the Faculty of Music is what helps make this learning environment so unique and supportive. He has inspired me to live a life of leadership and purpose – the very goal this institution holds for its students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about the influence of Dr. Gerard Yun on my musicianship and my life. I would be more than happy to answer additional queries.

Sincerely,

Greer Schatz  
Honours BMus. Education

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