



Gregory Newton

26 January 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in reference to Ms. Avril Kinsey and her application to fund the recording of her orchestral ballet suite. It has been my privilege to know Avril both personally and professionally for over ten years, and I am very pleased and honored to recommend her.

I first learned of Avril via an article on her in *Classical Guitar* magazine while I was living in the UK during the early to mid 1980s. Although my performing focus at the time was American and North American music, I was also developing a strong interest in guitar works inspired by the native musics of Asia and Africa, and managed to collect some pieces along the way and for two decades after. The article on Avril was so fascinating that I flagged it and set the magazine issue aside for future attention. Some years later another article appeared, which received the same treatment.

After returning to the USA in 1987, I immediately began a performing and teaching career here. In 2002, with a swift kick from my wife, I embarked upon a DMA degree program in guitar performance at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). It was with the second of three required recitals that I finally decided it was time to develop a programme of Asian and African-inspired music – indeed, it was long overdue. I was able to successfully find Avril in early 2004, and our enduring colleagueship and friendship began. In this second DMA recital (2005) I performed several of her works, and I continued to perform and broadcast them locally and internationally for several years after. At long last (and again, overdue) I am currently working on a second Asian and African programme, which includes a three-movement suite of Avril's.

Over the years I have come to know much of Avril's catalog, and I can say that her music – in its entirety, including guitar, chamber and orchestral – is of the highest quality. I have learned much from studying and playing her work, for which I am most grateful. Hers is a unique and powerful voice, demonstrating rock-solid construction with extraordinary inspiration. Her formidable output is truly a gift to the music world.

In 2010 I had the pleasure of working with Avril at the annual Hermoupolis Guitar Festival in Syros, Greece. It was there that I finally had the opportunity to hear her in concert. To put my reaction succinctly, as I remarked to a colleague at the beginning of her performance, from the first phrase you know your listening experience is in the hands of a master. I was also able to observe her teaching, which was thoroughly insightful and much appreciated by the students.

In the summer of 2011 Avril organised the First Cape Town International Guitar Festival, in which I had the privilege of taking part in a performing capacity (including playing her duo arrangements of South African songs) and as a member of the competition jury. It was a hugely successful festival, which gave a substantial shot of adrenalin to the classical guitar throughout South Africa. As the director of the American Guitar Society

Concert Series for over 20 years, and having co-directed the Guitar Foundation of America Festival in 1995, I can attest to Avril's stunningly high degree of organisational skills. Her management of the festival was superb.

As a person I find Avril to be one of the hardest working individuals I know. She has an inexhaustible supply of energy and boundless enthusiasm. She is delightful to work with and a joy to be around. As a performer and professor for over 30 years, I can say that it has been a privilege and a continuing source of pleasure to be her colleague and friend.

Avril is a performer, teacher, researcher, scholar and professor of the highest order. She is a consummate professional, and a valuable member of the world's music community. It is my sincere hope that you will grant her your highest consideration. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

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