

Individual Artist Award Application

Project Award in Music Folk and Traditional Arts



Plan

Project Description:

As Alaska's only active Uilleann Piper (Irish Bagpipes), I am seeking to advance my playing skills and knowledge. I plan on weekly online lessons with an All-Ireland Champion piper, and plan on traveling to Tionól's (Piper Gatherings) and Alaskan festivals to network with musicians and gain additional knowledge.

Narrative:

1. Describe what do you plan to do if you receive an award. Activities should begin after June 1 and end by May 31.

There are three activities that I would pursue if awarded a grant.

The first and most important activity is weekly uilleann piping lessons from All-Ireland Champion uilleann piper Joey Abarta to help me progress to an advanced level of playing. Mr. Abarta is considered a master piper and is fully qualified to develop my playing to a professional level. He has already agreed to help me with this project and has a timeline for activities over the course of the year. The lessons would start the week of June 1 and would continue for the full year for a total of 52 one-hour lessons.

The second activity is to spend time with other pipers at Tionóls, which are gatherings of Irish pipers. I have chosen two tionóls to attend; the first in Seattle, Washington in February 2020, and the second in St. Louis, Missouri in April 2020. These gatherings are a great place to meet other pipers and are facilitated by two to three excellent piping instructors. Tionóls happen over a long weekend, and include all day workshops.

The third activity is to attend music festivals in Alaska with a goal of meeting and networking with Irish and folk musicians in the state. I am proposing attendance at two festivals; the Anchorage Folk Festival in January 2020 and the Alaska Folk Festival in Juneau in April 2020. I have had communications with many Alaska musicians, but have not met many in person, and believe this to be an essential activity.

2. Describe how will your plan advance/enrich your artistic development and/or career.

The uilleann pipes are played by less than 6,000 players worldwide, and many of these players are beginning and intermediate level players. I am the only active piper in Alaska, and currently would consider myself an intermediate level player.

Using this award to get to an advanced or professional level of playing would help advance my artistic development and career by giving me a skill set that is only shared by a small percentage Irish pipers, especially those outside of Ireland. With the instruction of

Joey Abarta, and my own hard work, I will be able to progress quickly and reach my goal of advanced level playing in a year's time. I believe this instruction will help me stand out as a traditional Irish musician, not only in Alaska, but in the Irish traditional music community.

My private lessons will help create opportunities as a player of uilleann pipes and of traditional Irish music, and my proposed networking activities will allow me to make connections that I wouldn't be able to make without this Emerging Artist award. It could possibly open the door for opportunities to play music, both within the state of Alaska and in locations outside the state. The three activities of my proposal will work in harmony to advance my artistic development as I evolve as a player. I believe I will be able to expand my career prospects as I network with other players and Irish musicians in both Alaska and on a worldwide stage.

3. Why is it important for you to undertake this opportunity at this point in your career?

To me music is a lifelong activity and I am always looking to improve and develop as a musician, but I feel as though I have hit a plateau. I believe at this point in my career it is important that I get help from expert players, and from the community of musicians. I am at a point of realization that my progress forward will be non-existent without that help. In my career I have found that learning by yourself can be slow, and that path has many unanswered questions, and "I don't know what I don't know!" Since moving to Alaska I have received a great deal of encouragement from others, and it feels as though this grant opportunity came at just the right moment.

I feel that I am finally emerging as an Irish musician, and this is an opportunity to really advance my skill and knowledge with traditional Irish music and the playing of the uilleann pipes. The benefits of this grant to me are, access to a community of musicians to learn from, and getting individual attention in my playing from an All-Ireland Champion piper. This will help me achieve a high level of playing that I could never achieve otherwise.

As someone who already looks at being a musician as a way of life, I want to take the step of becoming a select player, and to make connections to both uilleann pipers and other Irish musicians, especially those musicians in the state of Alaska.

Timeline:

Private Lessons – As an intermediate level player, Parts 1 and 2 will be a review ensuring a solid foundation.

Joey Abarta will deliver the following Instruction (5 Part lesson plan) over a 52 week period beginning June 1, 2019:

PART 1:

- Fundamentals of Air Supply
- Scales
- Tone Building: Using the Bag to Draw Out Tone/Intonation
- Basis of Ornamentation: Grace notes

PART 2:

- Ornamentation Fundamentals
- Building on Scales
- Regulating Bag Pressure: Second octave exercises
- Repertoire: Jigs, Hornpipes, Reels

Part 3:

- Intermediate Ornamentation: Variations of rolls in Playing, Staccato playing
- Vibrato: Changing tone and Intonation
- Tuning and Maintaining Drones
- Repertoire: Slipjigs, Intermediate Reels and Jigs, Hop Jigs
- Irish History and It's Relation to Music: History of the Music Played

Part 4

- Repertoire: Marches, Polkas, Multipart Reels/Jigs
- Regulators, Tuning, Care, and Maintenance
- Diving into Masters Specific Versions
- Finding your own style
- Variations in Irish Traditional Dance Music
- Tempos, Rhythm, Lilt

Part 5:

- Airs
- Regulator Accompaniment
- Advanced Ornamentation
- Advanced Repertoire
- Performance and Competition Tips

Tionóls – Purpose is to network and grow my skills and knowledge within the community of uilleann pipers and piping instructors

- Seattle February 15-17 2020
- St Louis April 10-12 2020

Festivals – Purpose is to make connections to the network of traditional Irish musicians in the state of Alaska

- Anchorage Folk Festival January 24-26, 2020
- Juneau Folk Festival April 6-9, 2020

Budget:

Item Description	Cost
Weekly Piping Lessons from All Ireland Champion Joey Abarta (52 one hour lessons @ \$50 per lesson)	\$2,600
Tionól (Uilleann Piper Gathering) February 2020, Seattle, WA (Workshop Fee \$125 - Airfare \$500 - Hotel \$800)	\$1,425
Tionól (Uilleann Piper Gathering) April 2020, St. Louis, MO (Workshop Fee \$185 - Airfare \$800 - Hotel \$800)	\$1,785
Anchorage Folk Festival - January 2020, Anchorage AK (Airfare \$440 - Hotel \$450)	\$890
Alaska Folk Festival - April 2020, Juneau, AK (Airfare \$200 - Hotel \$600)	\$800
Total	\$7,500

Work Samples

Madam MaxwellVideo -2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B7cyN95Mp8>

In this video I play Irish composer Turlough O'Carolan's (1670–1738) piece titled Madame Maxwell. This solo was recorded on July 29, 2016. Total length of this video is 1:32.

Green Fields of Canada/Brendan Mulvihills JigVideo -2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBiKhe1egPI>

Video from the "Monthly Grind" in Sitka, recorded February 2, 2019. There are two selections in this live performance. The first is a lament titled the Green Fields of Canada. The second tune is Brendan Mulvihill's Jig. The group I am playing with is Ceoltoíri, of which I am a member. Total length of this video is 4:34.

Wandering MinstrelVideo -2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2Ohhn6b-gA>

This video is a Irish traditional tune called The Wandering Minstrel. It is an uilleann pipe solo recorded February 24, 2019. Total length of this video is 2:04.

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