

## **Distinguished Creative Faculty Award Narrative – Dr. Robert S. Trent**

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

I am honored to be considered for the Distinguished Creative Professor Award and would like to present some comments that may help you in your selection process. Underlying my teaching philosophy is the belief that instruction is informed by scholarship which in turn reinforces the teaching process. Scholarly inquiries and professional activities have direct impact on student learning, achievements, community service and engagement, and success in their careers. This is perhaps best illustrated by citing a few examples of the professional successes of many of my students:

1. Kristopher Hale – who is a musical entrepreneur having started his own “Hale School of Music” where he is the sole proprietor, music retailer. In addition, he employs numerous RU music graduates and current students, each of whom teaches music lessons in his school. As an active classical guitarist, Kristopher regularly provides music for special events throughout Virginia and surrounding states. He has been faculty at Lynchburg College, Emory and Henry, and currently, is adjunct faculty at Radford University where he teaches beginning guitar class to Music Therapy and Music Education students (required courses). B.M & M.A. Radford University.
2. Munkh-Orgil Turbold – is music director for The Voice (Asia), proprietor and producer of his professional recording studio in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbataar, has been featured in Rolling Stone (as touring guitarist with Lauryn Hill). B.M. & M.A. Radford University.
3. Valerie Hartzell – a UK -based classical guitarist, is a recording artist and artistic director of the British music festival “Classical Minds”. [Valeriehartzell.co.uk](http://Valeriehartzell.co.uk). M.A. Radford University.
4. Ryan Book – Fine Arts Department chair of Sandhills Community College, NC, and is also a composer, performer, and a member of its music faculty. B.M. & M.A. Radford University.
5. Justin Craig – Director of Suzuki Guitar Studies – The Renaissance Academy. Prolific freelance classical and jazz guitarist throughout Virginia. B.M. & M.A. Radford University.

**Current students** serve our communities as active artists: teaching guitar in their own private studios and in local music stores in our communities; writing grants for, producing, and running the annual RU International Guitar Festival which serves our local community, but also draws an audience from as far north at New York state and as far south as Georgia; invites school children from around the state, notably, those schools with guitar programs, who perform on stage and participate in the festival workshops; all of which are free of charge to the community due to grants written and garnered by the RU-sanctioned student club (Southwestern Virginia Classical Guitar Society). These are a few among many (for a fuller list of current student and alumni successes and their employment please see my CV).

**Scholarship** informs my teaching in that I learn from my students as they problem solve right in front of me, in their lessons, and other classes which I teach. Their own challenges and interests drive many decisions made as to my own inquiry into issues involving: healthy, ergonomic approaches to technique, injury avoidance, the psychology of musical performance, kinesiology as it relates to performance, performance anxiety, and application of the interpretative apparatus, emotion and meaning in music, and the importance of outreach in the community. I have invited students to join me and perform with me in professional venues here and abroad, including: a) securing funding from a multitude of resources, prepared the honors guitar ensemble for a six (6) city professional concert tour of Brazil (2015) which also included a

concert broadcast on Brazilian national TV with that student group, "The Highlander Honors Guitar Ensemble". That ensemble included a student, on the ASD spectrum, who afterwards went on to obtain a scholarship to the GPD in guitar and M.M program in composition at the Lamont School of Music, University of Denver; b) (2017) included a tour of Thailand and Vietnam (invited to perform on the Saigon International Guitar Festival) and was similarly planned and implemented with the student group, "The Highlander Honors Guitar Ensemble". Students and I learned much in both cultural exchanges, which were integral to these study-abroad activities/professional concert tour (they studied the regional music with masters of each country, while I taught the students of our hosts' institutions). I am in the middle of a commission to write a major concert piece to be premiered at the Saigon International Guitar Festival (Fall 2020), which I will also conduct. The Naxos label, which is the largest producer/distributor of classical music in the world will release an album on which I am the sole solo performer (Spring 2020).

The Committee is invited to view video comments on my teaching and the guitar studies program submitted by Radford University Students, each less than two minutes in length, at: [www.roberttrentguitarist.com](http://www.roberttrentguitarist.com)

**Creative contributions** to the field, their scope, originality, and application include:

1. Significant impact on teaching.  
Recording, performing, editing, publishing, teaching, and travel, are all consistently a part of my mentoring and teaching. I am continually cognizant of the fact that I am to be a model/exemplar of the field so as to manifest the relevancy of the many pathways open to students; and so, I strive to excel in as many facets of the profession as possible, e.g. to be a current and respected practitioner in each of these disciplines listed here and below.
2. Publications – CDs, arranging, editing, contributing to an annotated scholarly edition. [Please see my CV].
3. Commissions – Ho Chi Minh Conservatory and the Saigon International Guitar Festival
4. Invited Performances – [More an exhaustive list please see my CV].
5. Awards – \*Two (2) Peabody Career Awards – (The Johns Hopkins University).  
\*Distinguished Alumni Award (The College of New Jersey).
6. Promotion of dialogue among scholars in the field – Chief Editor (at its inception) of "Soundboard Scholar", the scholarly publication of the Guitar Foundation of America [GFA]. Continue as a peer reviewer. Lecturer at GFA conventions. Masterclasses in guitar and on pedagogy in Europe, South America, Asia, and the US.
7. I continue to be a resource for public schools throughout VA - (January 28, 2020- Fairfax County Schools – in-service specialist in guitar pedagogy).

As can be seen, I see a symbiotic relationship between my teaching, my scholarly work, my professional performances and collaborative professional endeavors with my students. It is demanding for both me and my students, but incredibly rewarding to see the professional development of these emerging artists.

Many thanks for your consideration and to the anonymous person who nominated me for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

*Robert Trent*

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