

1077 Jones Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
February 15, 2021

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to nominate the River Raisin Ragtime Revue (R4) for the Outstanding Achievement Award in Ragtime. R4 is a thirteen piece ragtime orchestra dedicated to educating and entertaining audiences of all ages through the performance and preservation of America's original style of music. I served as R4's first music director until my retirement from that position. I have continued to arrange and compose music for the orchestra and serve on its board as Vice Chairman.

R4 has been a consistent contributor to ragtime excellence since its inception in 2002. The orchestra collaborates with major cultural organizations including the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village (Dearborn, Michigan), the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, bringing ragtime music to thousands of new listeners annually.

R4 partners with major universities to present master classes, workshops, public community concerts and produces recording projects documenting never-before-recorded ragtime compositions. R4 is committed to expanding the genre of ragtime by commissioning many new ragtime compositions and orchestrations. Most recently, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom composed "River Raisin Rag" for R4 and retired music director, William Pemberton.

R4 oversees an extensive collection of thousands of vintage ragtime orchestrations, piano sheet music, and historical documents. In 2020, Dr. Karl Koenig, a leading scholar of the early music of New Orleans, gifted his entire historical collection to R4. R4 has been working with the University of Michigan School of Information to organize this extensive collection.

R4 is committed to diversity in the presentation of this incredible diverse and vibrant music. Ragtime music represents the "melting pot" of America. The music has its roots firmly in the African American experience. It blends Western European musical structures with Eastern European harmonies and African and Latin rhythms. R4 has partnered with the Sphinx Organization to contract exceptionally talented Black and Latino musicians. R4 regularly features Black guest artists and two of their three directors (including newly-appointed music director, Kelsee Vandervall) have been/are Black.

R4 performs for diverse audiences and believes that the richly diverse history of this music is best presented by a diverse orchestra. R4 continually develops fresh programming that couples engaging music performed at a very high level with meticulously researched history. Please consider the ensemble for this award. A partial list of the organization's accomplishments include:

- The first and only complete recording of *The Red Back Book*, published by John Stark.
- The first recording of a collection of original ragtime orchestrations composed and orchestrated by African Americans, since the ragtime era (*The Music of Reginald R. Robinson*).
- Development of a major annual ragtime festival at Greenfield Village (with venue programmers) that introduced ragtime music to thousands of visitors.
- Production of annual Ragtime Extravaganzas that bring together national and international performers with the R4 orchestra to recreate a vaudeville-burlesque-ragtime show. Shows have included dancers, vocalists, instrumentalists, magicians, circus acts, and burlesque.
- Planning and presenting music for The Henry Ford Museum's 100th Anniversary exhibition of *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition*.
- Developing music to open the Detroit Institute of Arts' *Annie Leibovitz: American Music* exhibition.
- Documentation of Detroit's contribution to ragtime with its *Ragtime Detroit!* CD.
- Recording *Nobody is Somebody*, a coupling of African American popular songs and spirituals. This project was funded by a University of Michigan grant. Fanfare Magazine wrote "*Nobody is Somebody* is one of the most important albums I've reviewed in my years at Fanfare. This collection of spirituals and African-American theater songs from the turn of the last century provides a missing link in the development of American musical culture."
- Commissioning and recording new ragtime works by William Bolcom, Catherine McMichael, Evan Christopher, and myself.
- Development of many thematic programs (listed at www.ragtimeband.org) for audiences of all ages.
- Preservation of thousands of orchestrations and written histories.
- Recording *Animal Fair*, a children's album of ragtime and early jazz animal songs.
- Opening for multiple "Salute to America" 4th of July concerts for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, in front of audiences of more than 10,000 each night.
- Master classes, workshops and college lectures at Central Michigan University and a recording of *Blaze of Glory* on the CMU White Pine Record label.
- Production of multiple virtual orchestra performances of never-before-recorded ragtime works during the pandemic.
- Weekly airing of free Respite with Ragtime concerts featuring R4 musicians and guest artists during the pandemic.
- Master classes and lectures and a CD recording in collaboration with Eastern Michigan University.

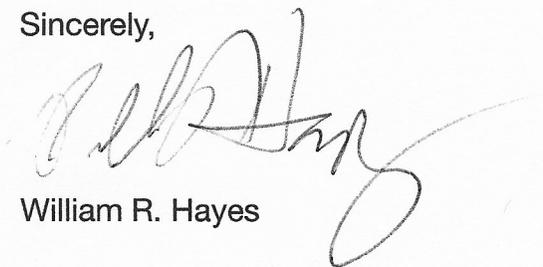
This is but a very partial list of accomplishments, but my hope is that it gives you an idea of the creative work that R4 has contributed consistently over the last 20 years. R4's new music director, Kelsee Vandervall is already making plans to lead the

orchestra to an even higher level. The 8th Annual Ragtime Extravaganza is scheduled for August and more virtual recordings are underway, until live performances return. It has been both an honor and my pleasure to donate many, many hours to the success of this ensemble.

I appreciate your consideration of the ensemble's recognition for this award.

The mailing address for the River Raisin Ragtime Revue is 411 E. Logan St., Tecumseh, MI 49286. Emails can be sent to music director Kelsee Vandervall at director@r4ragtime.org. Her phone number is (630) 715 5910.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William R. Hayes', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

William R. Hayes