

# Cohen / Grappel Recording Endowment Operating Guidelines

## A Program of the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering

July 1, 2025

### **The Vision**

The vision for this Endowment is to provide an opportunity for gifted autoharp players to reach a wide audience by making a recording which they would not be able to do without financial assistance. Lynda Cohen/Bob Grappel (hereinafter "Donors") view the award of this Endowment as a yearly event which will take place as part of the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering (hereinafter "Gathering"). Donors expect to fund a single monetary award of up to \$7,500 yearly, by making gifts to MLAG for this purpose. The previous year's recipient will have their recording released at the Gathering.

Donors allow the choice of recorded music to be as wide as possible. Individual performers, groups and bands are eligible, so long as the recipient for the Endowment is the featured autoharp player. Instrumentals and vocals (with autoharp accompaniment) are acceptable. Any musical genre (e.g., old time, rock and roll, classical) is acceptable. To be eligible for the Endowment, the applicant must propose a "full-fledged" autoharp recording. An applicant who has previously participated in a recording project with the autoharp in a minor role or on a recording viewed as insignificant due to the age or the limited availability of the recording may still be considered eligible at the discretion of the Endowment Committee. Any additional autoharp players performing in this project must assume a minor role and otherwise satisfy these same eligibility rules.

By "full-fledged," we mean a physical recording (i.e. a CD) with at least 12 cuts or 50 minutes of music, at least 75 percent of which will feature the autoharp. The recipient will be required to submit both a physical replication and a digital distribution plan for committee approval. Normally, at least 100 physical copies (CD's) of the recording will be included in the plan, which must also address other digital distribution and sales options.

### **Endowment Committee**

The Endowment Committee shall operate under the auspices of the MLAG Board to further the Mission of that Board.

A Committee of 3 members shall report to the MLAG board which will oversee the operation of the Endowment. The Committee may nominate new members from time to time and the MLAG board will make the final selection of Committee members, with input from Bob and Lynda. Committee members serve at the pleasure of the MLAG and may be removed as needed by the MLAG Board at any time.

One of the Committee members will serve as the Chairperson of the Committee to take responsibility for reporting to the MLAG Board and performing liaison functions as needed. The Committee will determine the assignment of this task internally. It is not necessary for the Chairperson to be a MLAG Board member.

The Endowment Committee will have full control over the evaluation of applicants and the choice of the applicant to receive the award (the "recipient"). Donors may have input into the management and operation of the Endowment process, but no input as to the recipient. This Committee will meet as deemed necessary, but two to three meetings a year are expected to disburse the year's applications,

review ongoing matters and to decide on that year's recipient. The Endowment Committee may communicate by physical meetings, e-mail, etc. as deemed appropriate. It will be up to the Endowment Committee to have the applications processed and the recipient chosen prior to the Gathering.

The Endowment Committee (along with the MLAG board) will review the process of the Endowment yearly and will recommend changes to that process if they are deemed desirable or necessary. Donors will have input into this process and will need to accept any proposed changes.

One Committee member will have the duties of treasurer/bookkeeper assigned to them and will work with the MLAG Board treasurer to manage the practical aspects of financial matters.

Note: no person serving on the MLAG Board, or the Endowment Committee may either be eligible for the Endowment award or benefit financially from the process.

## **Finances**

Donors will donate \$7,500 each year designated to fund the Endowment. This money will be managed by the Endowment Committee under the MLAG board. Any interest earned on this money while in the account and any potential additional donations will stay in the account to help perpetuate the award. Initially there will be a single recipient each year, so as not to dilute the impact of the Endowment award. (Note: if, over time, there are sufficient additional funds accumulated in the account to fund a second full award, this award may be made at the discretion of the MLAG Endowment Committee if it deems that there is more than one deserving applicant.)

Other donations may be accepted for this Endowment account as "designated gifts". Receipt for tax purposes will be provided by MLAG.

## **How to Apply**

An application form will be created, to be filled out either electronically or with a downloadable copy. The applicant will provide a description of the "concept" for the proposed recording project (e.g., my favorite gospel songs, rock and roll autoharp, etc.), as well as the expected audience for the recording. The applicant would provide a list of who will perform on the proposed recording and what instrumentation will be used. The applicant will list any previous recording experience. The applicant will also list the professional recording studio, the mixing/mastering resource, the sound replication company and the graphic design source to be used. Finally, the applicant will indicate what other funds beyond the Endowment would go into the proposed recording project. The Endowment Committee will note the monetary or other contribution to be made by the applicant toward completion of the project, in consideration of the resources available to the applicant.

The applicant will also provide a sample recording of the music they propose to be on the recording. This will entail two to three sample cuts illustrating the range of music to be included on the recording. These could be rough versions or previously recorded samples. Any format for these sample recordings, (e.g., MP3, cassette tapes, CDs, etc.) will be accepted. All submitted recordings become the property of MLAG to duplicate and distribute as necessary.

Unless stipulated by the Applicant, each entry will be considered valid for three years.

## Criteria for Selection

The Endowment Committee will evaluate each applicant's supplied material considering the following criteria:

1. Quality of the music
2. Completeness of the project
3. Seriousness of the applicant
4. Extent to which autoharp is featured
5. Previous recording experience

## Process for Awarding Funds

It is important that the Endowment results in a completed recording. The one-year time span between the selection of the recipient (at the Gathering) and the next Gathering should be sufficient to complete a recording project. The incentives for timely completion of the recording project include having the release party at the Gathering; sales at the Gathering Autoharp Bazaar; valuable publicity entailed through the MLAG connection, e.g., mention on the MLAG website, etc.; and potential loss of funding for non-completion of the project (see below).

The Endowment Committee will issue payments to the recipient on receipt of applications for payment, in order that the recipient may make payments as needed to the professional recording studio, mixing/mastering resource, graphic designer, replication company, session musicians, etc., upon completion of each stage in the recording production process. The Endowment Committee will determine whether the project is being performed in an acceptable and timely manner. The Committee may withhold payments if it deems that the recording milestones are not being acceptably met. If the recording project is not completed by the next MLAG, the Endowment Committee shall have the option to terminate any further payments and to require that the outstanding amount already paid out be returned to the Endowment Fund. Any change from the project description or the estimated budget on the Application shall be submitted to and approved by the Grant Committee before payments are made.

The actual awarding of the Endowment shall be made at the Gathering each year. The previous year's recipient will have their recording released at the Gathering. Initially there would be a single recipient each year, so as not to dilute the impact of the Endowment award.

## Royalty Payments

It is the sole responsibility of the recipient to obtain all required licensing for music on the recording and to pay the amount of royalties required by the licensor. Endowment funds may be used for royalty payments. Neither Donors, MLAG, nor the Endowment Committee bear any responsibility for failure to properly license any copyrighted material. All licenses and copyrights become the property of the recipient.

## Marketing and Distribution

MLAG will provide information regarding the recording on the MLAG website. Otherwise, marketing and distribution of the music beyond the issuing of the recording is the responsibility of the recipient. Likewise, replication of additional copies of the recording is the procedural and financial responsibility of the recipient.

**Cohen/Grappel Recording Endowment Grant**  
**Application Rules and Guidelines July 26, 2023**

**Eligibility**

The Cohen/Grappel Recording Endowment provides a Grant of up to \$5,000.00 for producing an autoharp recording. Any autoharp player(s) or Group featuring the autoharp, that has not previously produced an autoharp featured recording, is eligible to apply for the Grant. An Applicant who has previously participated in a recording project with the autoharp in a minor role or a recording viewed as insignificant due to the age or limited availability of the recording, may still be considered eligible at the discretion of the Endowment Committee. Any additional autoharp players performing in this project must assume a minor role and otherwise satisfy these same eligibility rules.

**Recording Project**

The Recording Project will be professionally recorded and include at least 12 cuts or 50 minutes of music. The recipient will submit a replication and distribution plan for approval of the Endowment Committee which may be a mixture of physical and digital distribution methods. Normally, at least 100 physical copies (CDs) of the recording will be planned, and, along with planned digital distribution options, included as part of the recipient's application. The Recipient will have one year from the date of the Award notice to finish the Project. Any genre or style of music is eligible. Autoharp must be featured on at least 75% of the recording. Vocals and other instrumentation are eligible and encouraged. Attribution to MLAG and the recording grant must be included in the graphic material that accompanies the sound files, in whatever medium is used.

The Endowment Grant can be used for all phases of the recording process. The Endowment Committee will issue payments to the recipient on receipt of applications for payment, in order that the recipient may make payments as needed to the professional recording studio, mixing/mastering resource, graphic designer, replication company, session musicians, etc., upon completion of each stage in the recording production process. Licensing fees will be eligible for Endowment funding, but it is the Recipient's responsibility to obtain the proper licenses where required. Neither MLAG nor the Endowment Committee will bear any responsibility for failure to properly license any copyrighted material.

The CD Graphics should include a credit for the MLAG Recording Endowment. Two copies of the finished CD should be provided to MLAG for our archives.

An early bird weekend ticket to the MLAG event (in the year following the reward) is an allowed expense if the Recipient wishes to participate in a release party and/or lead a workshop which will showcase the new recording and offer sales opportunities.

After production and all recording expenses are paid, advertising for the project is an allowed expense until the end of the Project year.

The Committee may withhold or terminate any further payments if it deems that the recording milestones are not being acceptably met. If the recording project is not completed by the next MLAG, the Endowment Committee shall have the option to terminate any further payments and to require that the outstanding amount already paid out be returned to the Endowment Fund.

## **Project Selection Criteria**

Each year, the Endowment Committee will consider awarding a Recording Project Grant from the Applications submitted. Applications not selected may be re-submitted for consideration in the following year. Of the current Applications, the Endowment Committee will decide who, if anyone, should receive the Award, based primarily on the Project that shows the most potential for showcasing the technical mastery and the musical artistry of the autoharp. While the most scrutiny will be given to the autoharp performance, technical and artistic criteria will also be applied to all elements of the recording project. For the Endowment Committee to make a fair and informed Award decision, it is in the best interest of the Applicant to provide as much detail as possible to reflect the full concept of their project.

While financial need is not a condition of Eligibility, an Applicant's resources (or lack of resources) may be considered by the Endowment Committee when deciding between two otherwise equal projects. By accepting the Grant Award, the Recipient agrees to the rules and conditions of the Recording Endowment. Unless stipulated by the Applicant, each Application will be considered eligible for three years from the original date.

## Cohen/Grappell Recording Endowment Application

Please provide a demo CD, MP3 or cassette tape with at least two cuts of your autoharp music. This does not have to be a professionally recorded sample. Please indicate what you are playing (title and instrumentation) on the sample and if it is part of your Project concept. Sample recordings become the property of the Endowment Committee.

Please complete the following application and email to: [doofusmusic@gmail.com](mailto:doofusmusic@gmail.com) or fill form out by hand and mail in your application. If the sound files are digital and not too large, please email them. If the demo recording is a CD or cassette, please mail to: Neal Walters, 12228 Hollowell Church Road, Greencastle, PA 17225. If you need more room or have additional information you would like to provide, please attach or include. As you type on this form, the field will expand to fit your contents.

Date:	
Name:	
Mailing Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

How long have you been playing autoharp?
How much performing do you currently do? (If you have a current bio, please attach)
How will this grant help you financially?
Do you have any financial resources to contribute to the project?
Describe any recording project in which you have already participated
Will any other musician play the autoharp in addition to you?
With as much detail as possible, describe your Recording Project. Include things such as: your music, instruments, arrangements, etc., and tell us why you think your Project should be chosen.
Name/Address of Recording Studio being considered
Name/Address of Session Musicians being considered
Name/Address of Graphics Design being considered
Name/Address of Replication Co. being considered

Your Estimated Budget	
Studio recording time:        hours @ \$	
Studio editing/mixing time: hours @ \$	
Studio mastering time:        hours @ \$	
Session musician fees	
Reasonable travel expenses	
Graphic design and artwork/photography	
CD Duplication: ___ CDS @ \$	
Licensing Mechanicals: ___ cuts @ \$___ x 500 plus fees <a href="http://www.harryfox.com/public/StatutoryReports.jsp">http://www.harryfox.com/public/StatutoryReports.jsp</a>	
Digital Distribution (description and estimate)	
Advertising	
Early Bird Weekend Ticket	
Miscellaneous expenses: (please specify)	
Total Budget for Project	
Amount you are prepared to contribute:	
Amount requested from the Cohen/Grappell Recording Endowment	

Applications received by May 1<sup>st</sup> will be considered for award in June of that year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Neal Walters, Chair of the Endowment Committee.

MLAG Recording Endowment  
c/o Neal Walters  
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Greencastle, PA 17225  
[doofusmusic@gmail.com](mailto:doofusmusic@gmail.com)