

To the Canada Council for the Arts,

The **Walter Carsen Prize** recognizes the highest level of artistic excellence, distinguished career achievement, and outstanding contribution by a Canadian professional artist in music, theater and dance. As a career jazz musician myself, I have seen some of the best in the country over the years, having grown up in Toronto and making frequent trips to the local jazz clubs. But when I was a kid, no jazz band thrilled me more than the **Shuffle Demons** -- their irresistible madness, their irreverent dress, their eccentric on-stage antics, and most of all -- their incredible musicianship -- were everything every (or at least THIS) young jazz musician wanted to be. My senior jazz combo even performed "Spadina Bus" when it was making its rounds on MTV in 1985! And sitting behind the drums, the driving force for the Demons -- was **Stich Wynston**, the most one-of-a-kind drummer I'd ever heard then -- and now. 40+ years later, with an incredible career to show for it -- that term still applies, but is now just the tip of that ice-berg.

I am of the belief that deeply deserving of this honor is drummer, composer, bandleader, sideman, and long-time friend **Stich Wynston** -- an individual I, and many others, consider a national treasure, whose contributions to the Canadian musical landscape over his 4 decades as a professional makes him aptly suited for this prize.

As a truly unique artistic voice, Stich has constantly pushed the boundaries of creativity with his playing as a drummer and his various projects. I strongly feel he is one of the most organic, genuine musicians and pure improvisers that this country has ever produced, making him -- I believe -- one of Canada's most acclaimed and innovative musical artists.

As a drummer, Stich has long had the ability to lay down a deep rhythmic pocket while at the same time dialoguing with the other musicians on stage, and pushing soloists to greater heights with his rhythmic and melodic inventiveness. I speak from first hand knowledge, having shared the stage with him many times over the years. His interactivity and soloist support is truly world-class (and a seemingly dying art in many of the younger drummers I've heard in modern times).

As an avant-garde artist his ability to utilize space and timbral contrast to create an aesthetic wrought with new and unusual experimental ideas is simultaneously compelling and challenging for both the listener and his ensemble members. This is the fiber of true artistry, and this characteristic is on display most often when he's in the role of band leader. In the late 1990's Stich formed his own ensemble -- **Modern Surfaces** -- a unique group embracing free-improvisation, 20th-century Classical music, acoustic & electronic textures, and ethereal landscapes. Modern Surfaces also showcases Stich's skill set as an accomplished composer with his original pieces acting as a platform for exploration and creative improvisation.

However, most of the world, myself, included, discovered Stich Wynston as the dynamic drummer for the now legendary **Shuffle Demons** (a group I grew up on, and whose music every student in my high school knew cold). He is a co-founding member and co-leader of this iconic Canadian music group, who have been recording and touring internationally for over three and a half decades. I hope this committee gleans how extremely rare it is for a band to attain this kind of longevity and success. It should be noted that much of this group's accomplishments can be attributed to Stich's ground-breaking, ever-searching drumset approach, coupled with inspired artistic concepts and deep business acumen, as evidenced by his work as the group's booking agent, having taken over that role in 2005. Since taking the reigns as booking agent, Stich has propelled The Shuffle Demons all over the world and turned the group into an international phenomenon, and in doing so, elevated the The Shuffle

Demons to the status of Canadian Ambassadors for Art and Culture. Their tours often include collaborations with Canadian Embassies and High Commissions all over the globe in order to help promote Canadian culture through their extensive international performance schedule. Stich has been lauded by keynote speakers at music industry conferences as a prototypical musician who takes his band's business into his own hands by creating performance opportunities all over the world for his group, and those he works on behalf of.

Beyond the Demons, as a sideman, Stich has been widely sought after throughout his career working with numerous artists in every musical genre imaginable including jazz, blues, pop, rock, soul, RnB, funk, country, jump blues/swing, big band, folk, latin, reggae, socca, calypso, Brazilian, African, AfroCuban, AfroCaribbean, Indian, classical, avant-garde and more – a true testament to his versatility as a musician. (StichWynston.com for more).

Stich has also been an important contributor to the field of dance in Canada for the past 25 years as one of the top call musical accompanists for dance in Toronto working as a regular employee at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre, Dancemakers, Ballet Creole, National Ballet of Canada School, Walter Carsen Dance Studios, York University Dance Department, Ryerson University Dance Department, George Brown College Dance Department and too many more to list here, affording him the opportunity to work with some of the best dance teachers and choreographers from all over the world. There are very few musicians who have this kind of pedigree and skillset.

In summary -- Stich Wynston's accomplishments in the world of jazz drumming; through his work as a leader & sideman; from the drum chair with the ambassadorial Shuffle Demons; and coupled with his achievements as a top-tier dance accompanist -- has made him a quintessential contributor to the arts in Canada and abroad for 4 decades, and why I feel that he is most deserving of this prize.

I have mentioned much of Stich's accomplishments without reference -- but please visit www.StichWynston.com under FULL RESUME to see the full extent of his work.

Thank you.



Brownman Ali – trumpeter / composer / bandleader
w w w . b r o w n m a n . c o m



BROWNMAN ALI -- BIO

"... one of the next great voices in the new generation of jazz improvisers"
-- Randy Brecker, grammy award winning trumpet legend

Heralded as "Canada's preeminent Jazz trumpeter" by NYC's Village Voice, Brownman Ali - born on the small Caribbean island of Trinidad, & schooled in NYC - is a multiple award-winning NYC-schooled protégé to his teacher, Grammy-winning trumpet legend, Randy Brecker. He tirelessly leads 8 unique ensembles of his own including the internationally acclaimed Miles Davis influenced BROWNMAN ELECTRYC TRIO, and the award-winning CRUZAO latin-jazz quintet. In high demand in the studio world with over 300 CD appearances to date, Brownman delivers stylistically authentic horn playing over a wide range of styles from bebop to hip-hop. He is considered to be one of the most unique and provocative improvising trumpet players on the scene today and is widely regarded as a vanguard for the evolution of Jazz in Canada. A highly decorated player, his accolades include several National Jazz Awards, a CBC Galaxie Rising Star award, a SOCAN composers award, an International Independent Music Award, 3 Toronto Independent Music Awards, 6 Global Music Awards, an induction into the WHO'S WHO IN BLACK CANADA, a Canadian Black Music Award nomination, a BRAVO! channel documentary on his life, NOW magazine named him "Jazz Artist of the Year", CBC Radio Canada named him "one of the most recorded trumpet players in Canadian history", the Trinidad & Tobago Consulate General awarded him with a citation for being a "Distinguished National of Trinidad", and is listed by Air Canada as one of the "Top 10 reasons to visit Toronto". In 2010 Brownman launched his own record label - Brownasaurus Records - as a home for his substantial musical output. In 2015 he began signing other artists to his award-winning label which now sports a veritable who's who of young visionaries, all redefining modern jazz with their own visions.