

21<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**To the selection committee for the Keesing Studio residency at Cité internationale des arts, Creative Victoria:**

I am writing with a recommendation for Catherine Deveny for the grant for the above residency.

I own and manage a live classical music venue in Brunswick, Victoria, called Tempo Rubato. We are independent and the business idea was met with trepidation by many when we started. I believed in it because I believed that any spaces, both figurative and literal, where the arts meet community on a level playing field, are important and valuable.

Catherine Deveny's approach to the arts, in her field of writing, has a very similar spirit to Tempo and extends to all arms of the arts. Her early interaction with us, and her support of the audaciousness of what we were doing, was pivotal for us. It speaks volumes about her influence on arts projects in her community and why supporting her would result in the support of many others as well.

Catherine came Tempo in the first week we opened, to a beautiful concert, that we all still talk about now. We had a fairly low profile at the time but she had sniffed us out. She is always acutely aware of what is happening in her community, and she engages, explores. She is open to experience, to art, to being moved by things. When she is moved, she amplifies and promotes. She did these things for us, with her characteristic enthusiasm and effect, because she saw value in what we were doing. In particular, she moves with grass-roots reach, it is an approach to the arts that is inclusive and broad, honing straight on the core of why they are so important, and why their value needs to reach all corners.

In my years of creating an arts organisation, I now understand that her approach is rare, and how lucky we were that she came in to our fold. She has supported and inspired us, in effusive, unique and effective ways.

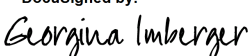
In the years since, I have observed her doing the same with other arts organisations and projects, with the same wonderful authenticity and heart.

And then there is her own artform, her work with words. Her own writing is productive and much loved, as you will already know. It is her work beyond this, however, that I think is particularly relevant to highlight here. Through her workshops and retreats, including in healthcare settings, she has helped literally thousands of people to find their voice. What an extraordinary thing! Her approach is practical and achievable, it is far from the sometimes exclusive realm of established literature, rather for the far more important realm of everyday people telling their stories, with ink, with confidence, laying it down. The arts at their best.

This residency would be a wonderful thing for Catherine, and a wonderful thing for all of us in her community as a result. The learning of a second language as an adult – enlightening and telling – will be like fuel for her, in her own writing and in how she teaches and inspires others. She would not be casual about this opportunity, she would drink it all up, make the most of every turn. And she would bring it all home with her, share it, layer it on all her passions and the new ones she finds.

Clearly, I recommend Catherine to you highly for this opportunity. If you need any further information from me, please feel free to get in contact.

With thanks,  
Georgie

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