

DATE: March 3, 2022

TO: Cadets Hall of Fame Committee

FROM: Bob Morrison, Staff Member 1983-1985, Member Cadets Hall of Fame

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Bob "Chicky" Gross for the Cadets Hall of Fame

Please accept this letter of support for the induction of Bob "Chicky" Gross into the Cadets Hall of Fame.

It seems I have made a habit of following Chicky early in my career. When I join the Crossmen in 1979 Chicky had aged out the year before. He was a legend with the Crossmen based on his time with the Corps.

In 1979, Chicky was part of the percussion exodus from the Crossmen that went to the Garfield Cadets (which would also create the new Crossmen percussion staff which would join the Cadets in 1983). It was with the Cadets where Chicky displayed his arranging creativity and innovation. As various corps would experiment with grounded instruments during the late 70's and early 80's it was Chicky who first grounded everything. While many corps move their keyboards and timpani into the pit area (created in 1981) most still had keyboards that were carried by the player (even though there were stationary). Chicky took the instruments off of the harnesses in 1981 and used baritone cases for stands. Those of us who saw this first hand cannot forget this sight! As odd as it looked at the time, this was the first time an entire "Front Ensemble" was grounded.

But it was not just the act of grounding the instruments that set Chicky apart. It was what he did with them. Chicky's arrangements helped set the Cadets apart from others. He was no longer just doubling musical elements from the horn book (which was common during the 70s) he was creating a new "voice" for the activity.

In 1982 he took this idea to a new level by convincing the Cadets director to rent concert instruments from Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) in New York City. This was a brilliant idea since the Corps was in no condition to buy new instruments.

Chicky's work with the Cadets culminated in 1983 where he arranged parts of the World Championship Show. The opening keyboard running note pattern heard at the beginning of Rocky Point Holiday is emblematic of his writing style. This is something that I would include in my own approach to writing and arranging for the next decade.

Chicky's early innovations helped to transform the activity. The Cadets Front Ensemble would emerge as the gold standard as the Corps adopted a full percussion ensemble approach following Chicky's inspiration.

It is impossible to look at today's massive front ensembles without remembering the people whose early actions paved the pathway to today. It is upon the shoulders of Bob "Chicky" Gross which the rest of the activity stands.

It is for these reasons, and many more not addressed here, that I support the induction of Bob "Chicky" Gross into the Cadets Hall of Fame.

