

March 31, 2026

To whom it concern:

I am writing in support of Michael Fitzgerald's proposed documentary film on the history of popular music in Jacksonville, Florida. I am a professor of music at York University in Toronto and have written extensively on Southern music. My book, *Soulsville U.S.A.: The Story of Stax Records*, was recently adapted into a four-part series on HBO.

I have previously worked with Michael on a proposal for a film on Jacksonville Civil Rights activist Kitty Oliver. Unfortunately, we were outbid for this project by another production company.

The story of music from Jacksonville is rich, ranging from stars in the blues scene in the 1920s to later rock heroes such as Lynyrd Skynyrd and Molly Hatchet. It is a story that needs to be told and given the names of the musicians involved should have a substantial audience.

As the author of *Jacksonville and the Roots of Southern Rock*, (University Press of Florida, 2020), Michael Fitzgerald is perfectly positioned to put together such a documentary film. He knows the history and is in touch with all the key players still alive. I recommend this project with no reservations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Bowman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Rob Bowman
York University: Department of Music