

To Whom It May Concern:

I am absolutely thrilled to be writing on behalf of Seth Panitch for his outstanding dedication to teaching, his tremendous effect on my training and career, and his tireless dedication to his students far beyond campus boundaries, which in my mind sets him apart from any other professor I have ever had. I am a graduate of the University of Alabama and I had the privilege of being instructed by Professor Panitch for four years in classes that thrilled me and in productions he directed, which challenged me to improve beyond the point I would have thought possible. He always set the bar a good distance beyond my level of comfort, but with him beside me I was always confident that I could make up the difference. In all my years at UA, and in all the years since, there is not another professor or teacher at any level to whom I am more grateful, and I truly feel I am forever indebted to him for the road he set me on.

When I got to UA I was eager about beginning my studies there, as, up to that point, I had never had any official acting training. Needless to say, I was absolutely lost, and feeling a good distance behind many of the other students at UA. I was lucky enough to take Professor Panitch's Advanced Acting 2 class in my freshman year and from then on, both my confidence and my outlook on this art form completely changed. Under Mr. Panitch's guidance I was able to access emotions and techniques, and even sides of myself, that I had never even thought to explore. One amazing exercise I remember in particular (and one that I still use today in my professional work) from Professor Panitch's class is using my favorite music as a connective guide to what was going on in a scene. The series of techniques he took us through was simply astonishing in its range of influences. There is no material I come across today which I do not have something powerful to apply. If basic image connection or music improvisation do not work, I use Asian movement training, or contact improv, or mask characterization, or Shakespearean verse work, or even Vaudeville punch line construction (for a young man from Tuscaloosa, that one was a revelation).

Best of all, Mr. Panitch cast me in one of his Cuban productions here in the United States, and I played alongside professional actors from Havana in a Spanish language production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That single experience will be something I will cherish forever. To be able to earn those actors trust onstage, to build a world together with artists from a completely different background, was absolutely priceless in terms of my development as an actor, and as a human being. The outcome of these experiences was unreal: a completely new level of awareness of possibilities that I would never have been able to access without the guidance of Mr. Panitch.

Most importantly, Professor Panitch instilled in me the importance of professionalism and hard work, which has transcended every technique I could have learned, and also the one that I hold most valuable. There are literally millions of hopefuls yearning to be actors and actresses and without that armor, it would be extremely easy to fall by the wayside. Professor Panitch developed this quality in me every day for four years and it is almost solely due to this, that, soon after my departure from his lessons at UA, I can proudly say that I have performed on Broadway in *Rock of Ages*, played a leading role in the Broadway National tour of *Oklahoma!*, co-starred on the CBS series *Blue Bloods* starring Tom Selleck and Donnie Wahlburg, guest starred for three episodes on the TBS sitcom *Are We There Yet?*, played young Alec Baldwin on *30 Rock* on NBC, performed in recent Off Broadway musicals *Carrie* and *The Last Smoker In America*, and most exciting of all, performed live on Television in NBC's *The Sound of Music*.

I know that without Seth Panitch's guidance I would not have had the skills, professionalism, and dedication I needed to perform these amazing accomplishments in such a short time. I am truly grateful to this man, who has helped me to turn what I thought might always be dreams into a profession and a reality. Seth Panitch is an amazing confidant to his students; however, he is an even greater mentor. Because of all these things, it is my honor to support Professor Panitch in his

even greater mentor. Because of all these things, it is my honor to support Professor Panitch in his application for Full Professor at the University of Alabama.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Boyd
University of Alabama Alumni 2010
thejakeboyd@gmail.com