

May 10, 2014

Dear Sir or Madame of The Promotion Committee:

I am a proud alumnus of the MFA Graduate Acting Program at the University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance, and it is my privilege to write this letter in support of the fine work of Professor Seth Panitch. The guidance and leadership of Professor Panitch over my creative development as an actor and a teacher has been outstanding, and I am truly thankful for the opportunity to study under him.

Professor Panitch greatly improved and increased my skills as a performer and professor by sharing the wealth of knowledge that he has accumulated during the course of his own academic and professional career in theatre and film. He has a superb talent for communicating various approaches and techniques to the craft of acting to his students. I personally experienced an unfathomable amount of growth as an actor during my time as one of Professor Panitch's students at the University of Alabama.

This artistic and professional growth has led directly to a steady stream of professional opportunities since my recent graduation. I immediately secured an assistant professor position within the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies at Kennesaw State University as well as challenging acting roles at multiple professional theatres in Atlanta where I now reside, including the Alliance Theatre, Georgia Ensemble, Dad's Garage, Fabrefaction, and Stage Door. I have no doubt these many opportunities are a direct result of the training I received from Mr. Panitch.

Not only have I found great benefits from my time in Mr. Panitch's efforts in the classroom, but also from his diligent attention to my continued professional success as well. It is a testament to the breadth of his professional career that a recommendation from Mr. Panitch can open so many doors for his students. His direct efforts resulted in multiple employment opportunities at Texas Shakespeare Festival, Colorado Shakespeare Festival, and Utah Shakespeare Festival, which are each widely considered to be among the best Shakespeare Festivals in the nation. I currently have the pleasure of returning for my second season as a member of the Resident Acting Company at the Texas Shakespeare Festival, due entirely to the training I received at the University of Alabama from Mr. Panitch. Furthermore, because Professor Panitch was able to bring Philip Sneed, the Executive Director of Denver, CO's largest regional theatre, the Arvada Center, to campus as a guest director of our 2009 production of *The Time of Your Life*, I have been able maintain a professional connection with Mr. Sneed that has and will continue to provide me further professional acting opportunities.

His professional dedication to continued success for the University of Alabama and his students also made it possible for me to make my Off-Broadway debut in a lead role in 2012 at the world-renowned 59E59 Theatre. This is a highly coveted achievement for any actor, and the fact that

Professor Panitch put forth the limitless effort required to make this opportunity possible for me is but another example of how deeply he cares for the continuing growth of his students. This opportunity has in turn led to even more professional opportunities for me, including being recently cast in a lead understudy role in *Warrior Class* at the Alliance Theatre, winner of the 2007 Regional Theatre Tony Award.

I have also recently gained profession representation with one of Atlanta's top talent agencies, Atlanta Models and Talent, through which I've been invited to numerous auditions including the Cartoon Network, the Lifetime Network series *Devious Maids*, and several major motion pictures. I have no doubt that I continue to be held in high esteem by my agency because of the skill set I acquired in the classroom of Mr. Panitch.

Mr. Panitch is a valuable asset to the academic community at the University of Alabama, and successfully fosters a wonderful environment for students to learn, grow, and simultaneously feel challenged and nurtured. Please feel free to call me at (678) 361-8560 with any further questions regarding this recommendation.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Lewis
Assistant Professor of Acting and Arts in Society: Theatre and Performance
Kennesaw State University
Department of Theatre and Performance Studies
mlewis59@kennesaw.edu
(678) 361-8560