

To the Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Committee:

This is a letter of recommendation for Seth Panitch.

Knowing Mr. Panitch as a teacher, director, and University Fellows mentor for nearly eight semesters has made it clear to me just how dedicated he is to inspiring and fostering excellence in his students. The time I have spent with him in classes and in rehearsal has made me a better actor, challenged me as a student, helped define my career aspirations, and provided numerous extracurricular opportunities that not only expanded my artistic sensibilities, but my personal horizons as well.

Seth Panitch makes it clear to his students that he expects nothing less than professionalism from them: that they leave their personal baggage at the door and commit to class with a constructive attitude towards not only their own work, but also the work of their classmates. He creates a supportive but challenging environment where I have always felt comfortable working openly and honestly with my fellow actors; my own sense of professionalism has grown enormously from watching his interactions with his students. His positive and insightful classroom critiques have consistently helped me identify areas where I need improvement without ever making me feel as though my work were being disparaged in any way. His classroom exercises and improvs are frequently tailored personally to the student and have led to several personal artistic breakthroughs both in the classroom and in preparing for work on the stage. In his office, Mr. Panitch is intensely candid and attentive. He spent nearly forty minutes helping me find an appropriate monologue for an important audition, and he has used his personal time to read and critique my playwriting. In fact, I've noticed theatre majors going into one of Seth Panitch's classes without any interest in writing, and ending the semester naming writing as one of their career goals. He recognizes the importance of writing in an acting career and impresses it upon his students—writing skills create opportunities. He's right. Since Seth Panitch stayed on me about writing, two of my writing projects will be produced at the University this semester. His passion for his art is infectious; his respect for his students inspires their respect for him.

Very recently, I had the pleasure of working on Mr. Panitch's production of *Moby-Dick*. The rehearsal process for this show was reminiscent of his classroom—actors were compelled to explore the boundaries of the sometimes-frightening world created on the stage, and they felt comfortable doing so. More importantly, as a director, Mr. Panitch exhibited the ability to simultaneously assess the “big picture” on the stage and address questions and concerns from individual actors. The same has held true in every Panitch production I have been a part of, no matter the size of my role. The end product always speaks for itself—shows of his I've had the pleasure of observing from the audience, such as *Saint Joan* and *The Heiress*, have been true works of art: telling compelling tales because they sound the depths of his actors' souls. In my opinion, some of my classmates' strongest work has been onstage during a “Seth show”; while I can't speak objectively for

my own work, I can definitively say that Seth Panitch has presented me with all of the most exciting opportunities in my undergraduate experience.

His professional connections have afforded the department both a guest director and a guest actor, both professionals themselves, in the past two years. These professionals were valuable resources in and of themselves, and it was Seth Panitch who brought them to us. His work with the UA Cuba Initiative has likewise proved a breeding ground for mind-blowing artistic and cultural opportunities. I was lucky enough to have been a part of both projects involving guest artists *and* the first Cuban-American theatrical production on American soil since the embargo. Seth Panitch is the greatest teacher I've had. His dedication, passion, and insight—and his ability to craft life-changing, career-building experiences both in- and outside of the classroom—make him worth every award, distinction, and honor I can imagine.

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