

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Michael Luwoye and I am a recent graduate of the University of Alabama with a major in Musical Theatre. Throughout my four years I had the privilege of working under the instruction of the university's Associate Professor of Acting, Seth Panitch. Every student understands what a privilege it is to have Mr. Panitch as a professor. His classes are always filled with eager individuals ready to glean any information from his courses. We are all trained to find the constructive aspects of our peer's work and to utilize them in our own work. This is useful measure Mr. Panitch employs in order to build a better learning environment which invites creative play to enhance our acting abilities. Mr. Panitch makes a point of instilling the importance of preparation in our work. He does not tolerate excuses for a lack of preparation or a negligence of respect for other actors or the space (the stage or the rehearsal area). This approach is not a ploy to intimidate or come off cross to his students, but rather to help us understand the vitality of culturing a strong work ethic in an extremely precarious career path.

Seth Panitch conducts his classroom and directs his shows with the necessary honor and respect for a craft that has been survived throughout the world for over 2,500 years. His passion for the craft is truly unmatched to any instructor I have worked under. Mr. Panitch is patient when it comes to aiding his students toward overcoming personal hurdles that may stunt the growth of their work and nurturing any breakthroughs that a student may experience. As a director, Mr. Panitch takes his time with managing his students and crew in order to help us produce our best work. The real work comes from honoring the text and the world created by each individual involved in every production. With his actors, Mr. Panitch is open to collaborating to try and discover the best choices to make on stage. While we rehearse and are credited under the label of educational theatre, Mr. Panitch holds his actors and creative team to conduct themselves under professional standards. There is no such thing as a perfect show, but Mr. Panitch always emphasizes the importance for everyone to strive for perfection leaving no room for regret while creating an honest atmosphere.

Seth Panitch has also been an integral factor in my post-collegiate endeavors and decisions for my career. During my early years at the university I found theatre to be a useful tool of expression but never solidified it as something that would be fulfilling after I graduate. My initial plans after college - during my Freshman and Sophomore years - included a non-practical pursuit somewhere in Europe to further explore my interests for music composition, production, and performance (nothing pertaining to theatre). At that point, I had no substantial guidance for what career I wanted to engage in once I left the university. By my Junior year I began having sessions with Mr. Panitch that touched on in-class work but, more importantly, what I could do with theatre as a career. Mr. Panitch helped to advise me for the next two years over the various options I had available to me - interpolating his own personal experiences in school to open a relatable avenue for me. We weighed many different options from graduate schools to regional theatre work and also sifted through the various cities now abundant with opportunities in the world of theatre. Before my Senior year I was having a difficult time deciding on a place to move to pursue theatre. After a lot of debate and ambivalence on my end,

Mr. Panitch advised me to move to New York. Despite my initial aversions and prejudices to the fast pace of New York City, I have successfully made my move and, with the help of Mr. Panitch, found an agency that has helped me make valuable steps to begin my career in theatre.

There is a quotation from the American actress Stella Adler which states, "Growth as an actor and growth as a human being are synonymous." Under the tutelage of Mr. Panitch I feel that I have grown into a proper actor, but he has also made me into a greater man. Because of his instruction, direction, and wisdom I am now armed with a stronger mindset and an incessant drive to better my craft. With the help of Seth Panitch I have just finished my first professional job outside of college and, in a few weeks, I will begin rehearsals in a main role for a new musical making its debut at the American Repertory Theatre next year in Cambridge, Massachusetts under the direction of recent Tony Award winner for Best Direction of a Musical, Diane Pallus. Seth Panitch is one of the most important mentors I've encountered in my lifetime and I believe that he is the most deserving professor for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Luwoye" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Luwoye
University of Alabama Alumnus 2013
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