

Theatre Department



Performing Arts Center 262
Albany, New York 12222

(518) 442-4200
Fax: (518) 442-4203

January 26, 2014

Dear Prospective Employer:

Please consider this a letter of highest possible recommendation for Marnie Andrews to become your next teacher of acting and/or voice, to direct your next production, or to excite and motivate even the most jaded students in introductory courses. I have known Marnie for about a decade, and during that time, I have had the opportunity to work with her in several capacities and to observe her in several others. Marnie is an exceptional colleague who clearly possesses strong actor training, along with decades of experience in theatre, film, and television. During her time at the University at Albany, she brought a conservatory-level work ethic back to our liberal arts-based program, which had always worked to find the proper balance between preparing students for a life in the arts and creating liberally educated citizens who could succeed in any career chosen. Through her passion for the art form and her dedication to educating students, she found that perfect balance for our program. At a time when adjuncts taught most of our performance courses, Marnie was a major force in keeping our acting sequence on a very positive trajectory so that it continued on her momentum for several years, despite the eventual loss of our major.

In 2010, the University at Albany announced its intention to eliminate several majors in order to address severe budget cuts within the SUNY system. Theatre was among those programs, so we had to begin phasing out most of our offerings and all of our adjuncts. During that period, Marnie stepped up to direct a very successful production of *Fifth of July*, during which time I had the chance to collaborate with her much more closely as the lighting designer for the production. Despite all the unrest and uncertainty that surrounded our department at that time, Marnie somehow managed to remain calm and focused, and provided both her students and professional colleagues with an extremely positive and safe space in which to work creatively.

I should note that Marnie left UAlbany on excellent terms, and if I had the opportunity to hire her again I would do so instantly. We valued Marnie so highly that we even found special funds to hire her as a vocal coach to help our students prepare for performance. Unfortunately, as resources continued to dwindle on our campus, we were unable to continue benefitting from her tremendous vocal and acting expertise.

Other more qualified referees will surely enumerate her substantial abilities in actor training, along with her significant skill and background in vocal work. As a design and technology person, I would like to address another much more rare capacity that Marnie possesses: she works as a true team player and genuinely cares about the greater good. Through all my interactions with Marnie, I have found her to be exceptionally talented, patient, resourceful, responsible, empathetic, passionate, and fun. I have seen her do many things for her students though it meant more work and stress for her. She volunteered repeatedly to work harder to help both our program and our students thrive. She was willing to step in to direct at a most difficult time, and she worked incredibly creatively to get the entire cast and crew moving in the same direction. No doubt, the fact that she is also a kind and gentle human being went a long way toward helping her succeed in a difficult environment, and I remain certain she will be successful at any task or assignment given to her.

Marnie was also an often-cited top reason why students became majors and minors; they all wanted a chance to work with her. As an aside, I was recently working on a production in western Massachusetts, where it came up that I had hired Marnie to teach at UAlbany and that we had worked together on a production she directed and I designed. The lead, an Equity actor with years of experience, immediately began to tell me at length about how wonderful Marnie Andrews is, and how terrific and generous she is as a member of any cast or show. This was a completely unsolicited and glowing endorsement from a fellow acting professional, and I offer it as one small example of Marnie's ability to command the appreciation and respect of everyone with whom she comes into contact.

While I could go on for pages singing Marnie's praises, I fear you might begin to think there may be some hyperbole here. Therefore, let me end by respectfully suggesting that you really do want to interview Marnie Andrews. I have no doubt you will find her highly capable, extremely intelligent, and tremendously motivated to succeed in any position involving acting or directing, or general teaching and coaching assignments. If you have specific questions or would like any additional information about Marnie, do not hesitate to email me at Andi@albany.edu or telephone me at 518-442-4210. Please take her candidacy seriously; you will not be disappointed!

Sincerely,



Andi Lyons
Professor/Resident Designer/Chair of Theatre