



**SHAKES
PEARE
FESTIVAL**

PRESENTED BY
BLUE MOUNTAIN ARTS

A PROFESSIONAL THEATRE COMPANY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH



University of Colorado
Boulder

May 3, 2014

Promotion Committee
University of Alabama

Dear Promotion Committee,

I am writing this letter in full support of Associate Professor Seth Panitch's application for Full Professor at the University of Alabama. I have known Seth since 2010 and I have nothing but the highest regard for him as an actor, a theatre artist, and an educator.

Seth and I first worked together as actors in the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's (CSF) 2010 season: we performed in *Measure for Measure* and *The Fantasticks*. Seth carried lead roles in these productions and was a gentle, brilliant leader in rehearsal. I was instantly struck by how quickly Seth made deft, insightful acting choices that supported the director's vision, while agreeing with what was being created around him. CSF's production of *The Fantasticks* was particularly fraught with leadership problems, and Seth gently inspired a cohesion in the company with his strength of performance, his comic choices, and his complete command of his character. The result was an outstanding production and the audiences loved him.

My next experience with Seth was in my subsequent role with Colorado Shakespeare Festival as the Associate Producing Director. In 2011, of his own invention, Seth created a brilliant partnership between the University of Colorado and the University of Alabama. This partnership allows for UA graduate students to work as acting interns with CSF and has been an unmatched success for both organizations. Seth has created an incredible training opportunity for Alabama students; he prepares them beautifully for their audition with CSF, and they arrive in Boulder with a level of dedication—and expectations of themselves—that I consider to be irreplaceable to our success. Their skill, training, and work ethic consistently exceed expectations. Every summer an Alabama student proves to be a hero that saves the day and I attribute this extraordinary behavior to their mentor. Seth is an excellent supervisor of his students, staying in communication with me during the summer about their work and progress. Some of his students have been so excellent, I have hired them back in later seasons as full members of the acting company; and others have gone on to leadership positions in the American theatre industry via the connections they have made through Seth and

CSF. This is a TRUE testament to Seth's abilities as a professor; he is not only training his students, he is helping them start careers after graduation.

Finally, based upon these experiences with Seth and my regard for his skills, I hired him to direct our mainstage production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at CSF in the summer of 2014. Seth is bringing several of his graduate students with him from the University of Alabama, helping to launch their professional careers and introducing them to a large group of professional American and British theatre artists. While continuing to mentor his students this summer, Seth will be overseeing a professional company of 30 actors and six designers, he will be participating in auditions and design meetings (and has been since December), he will be guiding a large scenery and costume budget, leading an army of interns, doing press ten times a week while in rehearsal, and all of this with my complete confidence. Seth not only has the talent and spark to lead our flagship comedy this season, I know he has the humanity to do it with class and respect—something I value highly. Seth is the perfect blend of professional artist, innovative teacher, and insightful scholar.

I cannot a better prepared or more accomplished candidate for Full Professor than Seth Panitch. He has brought the name of the University of Alabama to Colorado every summer for the past four years, and our audience of 36,000 has come to associate that name with quality. Having him here as a director is going to be a highpoint in our partnership, and we cannot wait to see the creation of this brilliant artist.

Yours very truly,



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