MIAMI UNIVERSITY
REGIONALS

BEKKA EATON; BS / MFA

Studio 307A.•Miami University Hamilton•1601 University Blvd.•45011
513-330-1503
eatonrl@miamioh.edu

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you today about my friend and colleague, Susan Moser. I have known Susan personally and professionally for around 15 years. In those years, we have worked together on each other's creative endeavors and have team taught professional, community and university students. I have also seen a lot of Susan's work as a choreographer.

I consider Susan to be one of the best artists and educators I have ever known. What follows is support of that supposition.

- **Susan as performer and choreographer:**
  - Before becoming a university professor, I enjoyed many years as a live performing artist and musician, so I have known and worked with many outstandingly talent people. The least obvious thing about watching a very talented artist is her preparation and process. This may be Susan's "super-power." She is a tireless researcher and a meticulous rehearsal strategist. Any subject she basis a piece upon—any process her choreographers have utilized when she dances for other choreographers—she digs deeply into via research and contemplation. By the time she is in the rehearsal hall, whether as a choreographer or dancer, she has not only filled her mind with information and process philosophies, but also has internalized and physicalized them. She is not just prepared, she is transformed. When she is creating a piece (I have been in a couple of her pieces), she exudes and communicates what we are doing, why we are doing and how we are doing in detail and with contagious passion. Every time I have been under her direction, I have left the experience a better, more educated and broadened performer.
- **Susan as an educator**
  - Susan spent many years working with all ages of dancers, performers and school children in enhancement programs. She educated herself with processes and philosophies about how students learn. Through this research, she created programs that aim toward students learning with their whole selves. Her approach is that the entire body needs to be engaged in order for real learning to take place. I have been her student in many classes, utilizing a variety of her techniques—she has a lot of them—and all I can say is that they work. I use quite a few of her exercises every day in my classes, not just my acting classes, but my lecture classes as well.
  - Susan and I have taught together on several occasions. I will tell you about our favorite workshop. It took place over several months, meeting once per week. Our students ranged in experience and ages; however, their work improved across the board. Some of those students are now professionals in "the biz," by the way. I would like to think that Susan and I played at least a bit of a role in their successes. Our goal for the workshop was to explore the gap between an actor's ability to delve and thrive in physical theatre exercises and activities only to have that excellent work escape them when they get texts in their hands (lines to say). We

created a series of activities aimed at helping students bridge the gap between the body and the mind. The idea being to help them create their own processes that allow the body and the mind work together as they create characters inside a play. Susan and I planned out each session but remained open to student need and reaction as we tag-teamed our way through each session. I learned a lot from Susan during this work, but the one thing that strikes me today is that I saw just how profoundly ego-less she is as an educator. For instance, she would abandon the planned activity and pass students on to me, if they needed my expertise in the moment. To Susan, the work, the creativity and the heart is always king of the classroom.
    - Susan makes herself as expert as she can about every population she teaches. This is obvious in the success she has had at CCM with two very different types of students—beginning acting students and opera graduate students.
- Susan, the person:
    - Susan is always learning, always striving—never done. This means that she will continue to not only be an excellent artist and educator, but a more and more realized human being.
    - Susan built a state of the art performance studio that has housed hundreds of students and performers. As a business woman, she has managed the place so well that it is now completely paid for, in excellent condition and still utilized by every kind of artist imaginable.
    - Susan has done all this, created so many pieces, taught hundreds of children and adults, keeps educating herself, is a wonderful friend, a passionate and caring member of our community while raising two outstanding, talented and just plain good sons.

In conclusion, this long letter may seem a bit too much—too glowing. It is not. Susan is a treasure. Every student of hers that I have encountered, when you say her name, they gush. In a world that values artists less and less, Susan hangs in, remains passionate, keeps believing and learning and making a difference for so many, many people. She would be an asset to any endeavor she undertakes.

If you have any questions or wish for clarification on anything beyond this letter, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bekka Eaton

Bekka Eaton, Associate Professor / Director of Theatre Engagement
Studio 307 (307 Phelps Hall)
Miami University Regionals Theatre
1601 University Blvd.
Hamilton, OH 45011
c—513.330.1503
'Like' us on Facebook—www.facebook.com/MUHTheatre