

January 5, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to recommend Matt Lewis for the open position in your department. Mr. Lewis was an exceptional graduate student in the MFA Acting Program at the University of Alabama, where he developed into a supremely confident actor, as well as a highly proficient teacher in a wide range of subjects.

As director of the MFA Acting program, I taught Matt in multiple Graduate Acting classes, and I have closely observed his work as an actor under me in production (*An Enemy of the People*, *Saint Joan*, *Moby-Dick* and *Animal Crackers*). I have also observed his talent as a director during his production/direction of *Fat Pig* this summer. I have not encountered another graduate actor with a firmer grasp on the process of acting, nor have I seen one with a finer work ethic. In every production, he led the company not merely through the example of his extraordinary preparation for a role, but in the courageousness he displayed in its development and performance. His signature performance here at the University of Alabama of Dr Stockman in *Enemy of the People* was both humorous and deeply felt- a delicate balance, which I feel Matt managed exceptionally well. Matt's adeptness with the demands of comedy were put to an extreme test in his final year, when I cast him as Dr. Spaulding (Groucho Marx), in our production of *Animal Crackers*. Not only did Matt successfully channel Groucho for the role, as one must, he more importantly tempered the mask to himself, creating a true hybrid of "Marx and Lewis"- a remarkable achievement, and one that resulted in a truly spectacular performance.

Matt's professionalism is of such a high level that I instinctively turned to him whenever outside entities requested our assistance. I nominated Matt to fill a vacant Visiting Professor position at nearby Stillman College, a position he successfully filled even with a full class and production schedule here in the department. I have sent him out into local schools to teach acting classes, stage combat demonstrations, and be the face of the department for a myriad of recruiting events. In every instance, he excelled beyond expectations.

As an instructor of theatre, Matt's fascination with the development of an individual artist's technique is highly infectious in the classroom. He possesses the rare ability to teach with a firm hand, while also allowing students the space to come to their own conclusions on complex topics.

Matt's direction of actors is, like his demeanor in the classroom, precise, thoughtful and always supportive. He has an innate ability to work with actors of varying levels of proficiency. His sense of story is both clear and passionate, and his development of theatrical action is sharp and precise. He possesses an enviable balance of intellectualism and the ability to successfully communicate that thoughtful process to actors.

Personally, Matt has a sharp wit, and a seemingly infinite reservoir of humor. He is a model of collegiality and possesses a strong sense of artistic and academic morality. I do not know the exact character of your department, but feel certain that he will be a supremely positive force in whichever faculty he joins because of those very qualities.

I cannot recommend Matt any higher to you. If you have any questions regarding his candidacy or his character, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Very Sincerely Yours,

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