

January 5, 2014

David, Serge, Jacob and Lorna,

It is my pleasure to recommend Hope Villanueva to you for the position of Resident AEA Production Stage Manager at Studio Theater. It has been my pleasure to work with and know Hope for the last three years, since first meeting on Studio's production of *The Big Meal*. Since that time Hope has proven to be a consummate Stage Manager, a true theater professional, and an asset to whatever project or company that is lucky enough to get her.

Over the last three years, I have had the privilege to work with Hope in a variety of circumstances; first as her ASM, then as a colleague and finally as Production Manager to a PSM. In all of these roles, Hope has proven not only her skill but her passion for the work we do.

As a Stage Manager, Hope gives clear instructions and always takes the time to teach or listen to suggestions. I have found her to be a collaborative leader, never asking of her team more than she gives herself. She trusts the people working for her, while maintaining high expectations, and thereby earns the respect and best efforts of her team in return. She consistently maintains a light, humor filled atmosphere which makes even the most stressful parts of a tech or rehearsal into an enjoyable environment. I see Hope being a great complement to the status of Studio as a place for young professionals to learn and improve their craft both on and backstage. With a background as both a performer and a director, Hope has a great sense of what is needed by each part of the artistic team and anticipates how best to facilitate the work around her, a skill that will only grown when given the opportunity to work with the same artistic team on multiple projects.

An asset of working with Hope that might not be immediately apparent is the additional skill sets you gain when adding her to a team. Not only a distinguished stage manager, Hope brings the knowledge base of a talented playwright, experienced dancer and a solid electrician to the table. This allows her to communicate at a higher level with her creative team and pitch in during moments of crisis.

As a colleague, Hope is the type of collaborator that we all relish working with. She has an infectious energy and drive that spreads gracefully to all parts of the team. Her intelligence, both intellectually and emotionally is ever present, and proves an invaluable asset when confronting time sensitive problems. In my experience, she has always demonstrated a deft hand at negotiating through conflict, be it creative or in matters of personality, while carefully respecting departmental boundaries. This was particularly true on an occasion where I got the opportunity to shadow Hope while on the *Rock of Ages* tour. I was particularly impressed how she handled a lead performer who had become obviously toxic to the show both on and off stage. Despite the tight confines of the tour, with the aid of her company manager, Hope insulated the rest of the company from the disruption and tirelessly worked with the performer to fix the issues, maintaining both overall moral and the artistic integrity of the show.

One regret that I have as a production manager is not being able to secure Hope on more of our projects at Theater J, mostly due to her being on tour. I have been lucky enough to secure her on special events such as our Theater J benefit concert *Stars of David* last spring, and some of our other higher profile rental events where lack of time requires having a true professional at the helm. By having Hope on a project, I can be assured that the process will be smooth and the final product professionally executed.

I can think of no better way for Studio to continue your legacy of successful and ambitious theater in 2015 then by making Hope the newest member of the Studio team. I'd be happy to elaborate on any of my statements by phone or in person.

Best wishes in the New Year,


Ryan Breen- Theater J Production Manager

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