

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR TERRY BARTO

I have worked with Terry Barto, and let me say immediately that this has been one of the most creative and significant collaborations of my artistic career. Terry is a brilliant choreographer and director. He is also an imaginative, highly accomplished theatre artist and a wonderful colleague.

My work with Terry has been on creating four World Première musicals for Shakespeare Santa Cruz: Cinderella, Gretel and Hansel, The Princess and the Pea, and Sleeping Beauty. These original scripts by Kate Hawley combine elements of the British Pantomime tradition and the American musical. They have been highly successful. Terry's work as a choreographer and director has been an integral part of this success.

Terry's choreographic range is extraordinary. He is equally skilled at staging a deceptively simple ballad or a huge complicated Waltz. His sense of staging for large numbers or small is exquisite. Terry has a wide frame of reference for his work, and his breadth of knowledge of the musical never ceases to astonish me.

Terry's work is never self-consciously clever but conceptually, he can create magic and wonder. Two examples of many I could have selected: his great Ball in Cinderella is a thrilling, emotional experience that we experience from other points of view at different times. Prince Charming, Cinderella, the step sisters, the wicked stepmother, Baron Hardup, the King and the Queen, and Buttons all have their own stories, but all are caught up in the wonder of the event. In the second half of Sleeping Beauty, Terry creates a dream sequence that represents the emotional education of the sleeping Princess. Whirling sleep-waltzing courtiers combined with a washing machine sequence and snippets from other fairy tales flitted through Sleeping Beauty's mind and our own as we watched.

Story-telling, feeling, wit, and character are beautifully blended in Terry's work. He has a wonderful imagination: I have watched him find a physical vocabulary for a dancing bear, a night club of stray cats, fairies, witches, rats, and crows so that we instinctively understand their feelings - as well as those of straightforward mortals. Terry is hugely inventive and witty - but his work always furthers the story and allows us access to the emotional truth of every moment. His range and taste as an artist are first-rate.

Terry is also extraordinarily gifted at dealing with people. I have watched him work with soloists, huge ensembles, seasoned professionals, and students. Terry's rehearsals are beautifully run: he is always perfectly prepared and quickly wins the cast's respect, trust, and affection. I am astonished at his ability to hold the attention of large numbers of people and to get such quick results from them.

It is unusual that such a talented and accomplished artist as Terry should also be that rarest of things: a true collaborator. In creating these new works, Terry has worked with composers, costume and set designers, and performers. Terry's ability to work with others and find creative ways to combine excellence with expediency has delighted me in every situation. Our work together has been not only a great pleasure, it has been something from which I continue to learn a great deal. And, finally, as well as being a first-rate artist, you could not find a nicer and more honorable man.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

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