

12/28/17

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a designer and director who has been creating original theater in New Orleans for over 25 years and am writing in reference to Diane Baas. I have known Diane for over 10 years as a colleague and friend. Her exceptional work as a lighting designer is well known throughout New Orleans and beyond. I first worked with her in 2007 on a show titled "Turning of the Bones" by local playwright Jan Villarubia and have seen her design in numerous professional productions as well as her work with the students at UNO. Her skill and artistry is of the highest caliber and has helped elevate the design work of local productions to new level.

Most recently I worked with Diane on a co production of our new touring show "Sea of Common Catastrophe" which has received national recognition through Creative Capital, New England Foundations of the Arts and The National Performance Network. This show premiered at The Nims Theater at UNO last January and Diane's skill and assistance was instrumental in getting this new show on its feet for its premiere and preparing it's for it's national tour.

Diane is a first rate artist and teacher and I feel she has been a backbone of the UNO Technical theater program for several years. Her commitment to both UNO and to the NOLA theater community has been a tremendous asset to our city and I would recommend her as designer without reservation.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jeff Becker

ArtSpot Productions

[jeff@artspotproductions.org](mailto:jeff@artspotproductions.org)

504-669-2686

To Whom It May Concern:  
A Letter of Support for:  
Diane Baas

To whom this may concern,

My name is Trenton Mynatt. I graduated with an MFA in Film Production in May 2016. Regardless of the fact that I was a film student and did not take any theater classes with Diane. I spent a great amount of time communicating and working with her on student films and other departmental projects. I have no reserve in recommending Diane for tenure at the University of New Orleans.

Diane is a respectable, patient, and most importantly is a helpful faculty member to the student body at large. Representing multiple thesis films, over a course of several years I have come to Diane for help and she has never failed to assist in any way she can. Often going above and beyond what is necessary. She has assisted with set construction, construction of props, and helping me with lighting design for various student films. We have had several conversations on lighting and she has aided me in rewiring theater instruments for on set usage. She has granted access to tools and equipment that has made the departments annual film festival possible for every year that I was in school.

I only hope that Diane's example will lead others to be the best educational leaders possible, because I know she is one of them. Diane made my experience at UNO better and she has proved she is a pillar of the Department of Film and Theater unifying both sides creatively and productivity. I again recommend Diana Baas for tenure at University of New Orleans and I feel it would be a crime to lose such a great creative influence.

Thank you,

Trenton Mynatt

The Last Bluebird LLC  
<http://trentonmynatt.com>  
trentonmynatt@gmail.com



January 4, 2018

Recommendation For: Ms. Diane Baas  
From: Diane Laizer Carney, MFA, MSW, ADBH

The expertise in Lighting Design of Ms. Baas is an integral part of Ballet Hysell productions. The Company received numerous Big Easy Awards for Classical Dance and my reception of the Lifetime Achievement Award in the Classical Arts.

Ms. Baas has the professional experience which includes the willingness to carefully listen to director's abstract ideas and transplant them in a ballet or modern dance reality.

She is well-liked and respected in the community for her excellent working relationships with stage managers, tech crews, and interns allowing for a calm pleasant atmosphere for productions. She is an excellent teacher for the interns and volunteers who work tech, props, and costumes on these productions.

Ms. Baas's knowledge of styles of historical periods is especially important for the many period ballets and modern dance productions, which are a basis of the Ballet Hysell Company.

I highly recommend Ms. Baas.

Diane L. Carney, MFA, MSW,  
Artistic Director of Ballet Hysell  
(504)296-8017

Wednesday, June 7, 2017

To whom it may concern:

I met Diane Baas two years ago when I transferred to the University of New Orleans for my sophomore year. In the time I have known her, she has proved herself passionate about her lighting design work and willing to help her students learn and grow. When I volunteered for my first ever stage managing position for UNO's production of *Agnes of God* and others told me I was failing, Diane gave me a stage management handbook and was the only one who kindly helped me learn my role, which I appreciated. Instead of being judgmental or disrespectful, she trusted me and made me feel like I could speak to her when I ran into issues, be it with the show or the theatre department in general. She is genuine, humble, down to earth, hardworking, and acts like a real human being with you, qualities I find are sadly lacking in most theatre artists.

In lighting design class, I remember how she would bring us into the dance studio or thrust theater and let us watch her experiment with different gels and gobos on all kinds of lighting instruments: this was the most beneficial part of class for me as a designer. She regaled us with stories of her father working in the theater as she grew up, as well as with stories of her childhood "in the lights"—that is, sitting in the dark with a flashlight and shining it through her homemade gobos. Needless to say, Diane's love of lighting runs deep.

That said, I would describe her work as dramatic but also playful, ranging to include really interesting textured light and shadow, and bright colors flooding her spaces: deep blues, hot pinks, vibrant purples! As a performer I've so enjoyed playing in her design, and as a designer I'm simply floored watching her work. In UNO's production of *Twelfth Night*, which was ultimately a weak show, Diane's lighting design heightened the work to look like a much better show than it actually was. Without being on the nose, she captured the essence of seasons changing, from winter to early summer, and how that played on character affect throughout our show. She is a skilled designer and knows her content well, which is why her resume is extensive and impressive. Just last summer she did lighting design for *eight shows*, which is unheard of. This spring also proved fruitful for Diane when she was nominated for New Orleans's Big Easy Theater Awards, for her lighting design on Southern Repertory Theatre's *Colossal* and the University of New Orleans's *The Aliens* (as Best University Production, she was a major part of this nomination). At the Kennedy Center Annual College Theater Festival in San Angelo, Texas, her *Aliens* lighting won her Distinguished Lighting Design in the region of all other colleges and universities in competition with us. And the aforementioned honors are just a few of Diane's many accolades in this business. She has worked with *many* theatre companies, big and small. She strongly believes in her students, women as artists, artistic expression, and ensemble and devised theater, though these are just a handful of her stances as a theater artist.

In closing, I respectfully and humbly ask your consideration of Diane Baas as a tenure recipient at the University of New Orleans. We need more theatre artists like Diane. She makes UNO's theatre department better.

**Samantha Eroche**

University of New Orleans '17

BA Film & Theatre Arts (Theatre concentration)

Northwestern State University MAT Secondary English 6-12 candidate



To the University of New Orleans,

I am writing to voice my support, admiration, and gratitude for Professor Diane K. Baas. As a manager, she instills discipline and respect for stagecraft. As a professional, she prolifically contributes to the artistic vitality of her community. As an instructor, she employs empathy to create an environment that fosters creativity, ingenuity, and joy. I am so grateful for the education I received from the University of New Orleans, and no small part of that is due to Professor Baas.

I entered into my assistantship under Professor Baas as a veteran of theatre production. And yet, so often as I listened to Diane talk to me about the vital details that help make theatre possible, I felt like a complete novice. Yet with truly admirable grace she instilled confidence and excitement about the work we were doing. She is an excellent coordinator and earns the respect of the students under her instruction. She encourages humor, attention to detail, and patience, qualities that serve her and those lucky enough to work under her extremely well.

Professor Baas is an artist of the first caliber and her contributions both at the University of New Orleans and with numerous companies throughout the city win accolades. This year alone her work on *The Aliens* garnered national acclaim and her design for *Colossal* was nominated for a Big Easy Award. Her work is respected in the community; her passion and knowledge are unquestionable. She is dedicated to enriching her students' perspectives through instruction and example. She is a credit to the University and a needed addition to the community that surrounds it.

I was fortunate enough to assist Professor Baas in a class and still marvel at how calmly she instructed complete novices in stagecraft. I then marvel further at how quickly they grasped the basics and ultimately how far they journeyed in their own achievement. She engages students to be open and curious and challenges them to strive for accuracy. She brings a deep understanding of both the history and the current practice of her art form to her lessons and provides a welcoming space to the students studying at UNO.

As an employee, I commend Professor Baas's patience and confidence. As a theatre maker in New Orleans I am grateful for her contributions. As a student under her instruction I grew tremendously in my knowledge and application. Professor Baas enables those around her to learn, grow, and accomplish. I am deeply thankful to have learned from her.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Andy Vaught'.

Andy Vaught  
Co-Artistic Director  
Cripple Creek Theatre Co.

I worked closely with Diane Baas during my last three years at UNO and was consistently impressed by her capacity as a teacher and a theatre artist. Her classes were exactly what I had hoped for and expected when I came to college- thought provoking and discussion heavy. We were given the vocabulary and technical knowledge we needed to succeed without ever being spoon-fed the information. She created a very encouraging environment for students to be creative while forming their own opinions and articulating their thoughts, and because of that, I found that I was able to draw more meaningful conclusions about the material. As a result, Diane's classes have stuck with me longer than the curriculum from any lecture-based course. I remember watching students who were initially stymied and frustrated by the idea that there was no "right answer" quickly learn to think more broadly and creatively and express their ideas in extremely striking, memorable projects.

Both in shop hours and when working on a show, I found that she always maintained the fine balance (imperative in educational theatre) between letting students push boundaries and make the kind of theatre that excites them while keeping them safe and the show true to concept. She is generous with her time and knowledge, and I have been (and continue to be) served well by everything she taught me in my time at UNO.

Sincerely,  
Kit Sternberger

Aug. 2017

To Whom It May Concern

I have had the great pleasure of working with Lighting Designer Diane Baas four times at Summer Lyric Theatre at Tulane University.

For various reasons the administration was rather adverse to letting new designers into the fold. I had seen Diane work tirelessly on the lighting crews and knew she had worked other theatres around town and so I repeatedly requested she be given a chance to design a show. Eventually she was needed to fill a vacancy on the design team and proved herself with a beautiful design and was easy to work with as a colleague.

I am always amazed that the lighting designers, in particular, are able to 'pull it off' in what is basically a 'stock' situation of a full production in ten days when often no one has seen a complete 'run-through', especially Act II, until the night before the tech rehearsal! Sometimes scenic pieces and drops are not only not finished but not even there and whole numbers are still being choreographed.

Yet from this mosaic they're able to tie it all together, make it coherent and beautiful.

Diane Baas has done that on all of the productions I have had the fun of collaborating with her on.

p.s. I've designed over 90 shows in New Orleans over a period of 41 years.

Sincerely Rick Paul  
847-256 0978  
1912 Central Wilmette IL

16 August 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Graduate Assistant at the University of New Orleans, I've known Diane Bass since August of 2012. Having worked closely with her for three years, I've had the opportunity to observe her conduct as a supervisor in many different aspects of her employment with the University. Although, I'm not certain what her primary responsibilities are as an employee, as a Graduate Assistant in the scene shop, I've witnessed her relentless commitment to the program's success in many ways.

I've seen her develop and implement light plots for every show presented by UNO during my tenure, as well as showcases and other events hosted in UNO's theaters. I've seen her work with shop personnel as a carpenter, doing everything from rearranging and cleaning stage drops to laying floors, in order to ensure set designs were realized by opening night. I have seen her often put aside her work or use her break time to work with students to resolve scheduling issues. When tools and supplies were needed to complete projects, Diane has made purchases with her personal money to ensure we had what we needed to complete our tasks. As a lighting designer, she is tremendously talented and heavily involved, often attending many, if not most of rehearsals to enrich the shows through lighting. She has organized every strike after every show I can recall during my time at the university, often organizing and delegating responsibilities so strikes were ran safely and efficiently.

Although it was obvious that Ms. Baas was given a great deal of responsibilities and tasks, she was often a source of encouragement for us when we felt we could not meet expectations and deadlines presented to us. Anytime there was a question about a project we were engaged in, whether it was confusion about a construction assignment or a question about the location of a tool, Diane either had an answer or she worked with us to find a solution. There was never a time I felt like she hadn't the time to help us reach our common goals in the shop. She was adamant about shop safety and determined to make sure the space was clean. Anytime she had a meeting, which was very often, she made sure to make us aware of where she was going, what our assignment was, and what time we could expect her return.

In the Spring of 2015, we were invited to attend the Kennedy Center Theatre Festival in San Angelo, Texas and Diane not only drove her own vehicle, she paid for our hotels and gas for the U-Haul truck with her own money. She continually kept us informed about the schedule of events and any changes that took place.

At a university that is steadily losing funding, faculty, and moral, Diane Baas has been a beacon of light. She is fully committed to the success of the program and its students.

Sincerely,

Samuel Malone  
(504) 329-5349

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of my supervisor, Diane Baas. I have been working with Diane in the UNO Film and Theatre Department scene shop for over two years, and have watched her navigate a large variety of circumstances and issues with grace and diplomacy. When I began my graduate assistantship in the scene shop, I was unskilled and lacked confidence. Because of the patience and abilities of Diane, I am very confident in my knowledge and skill set, and I am now able to instill that confidence in our new graduate assistants.

Diane has a long list of redeeming qualities. She is patient, understanding, knowledgeable, consistent, friendly, professional, intelligent, dedicated, highly skilled, articulate, energetic, savvy, resourceful, and diplomatic. She approaches her job with enthusiasm and a lighthearted optimism. Diane teaches a variety of classes, including Basic Visual Design, Lighting Design (three levels), Development of Style and Form, Theatre Appreciation, Methods and Materials of Stagecraft, Theatre Practicum (four sections), and Production Practicum, and I see her pouring most of her time and energy into her job as an instructor.

However, Diane has a lot of energy. She manages to carry a large class load while coordinating the scene shop and overseeing the usage of performance spaces. Her long list of job titles includes lighting design faculty, technical director, production manager, purchasing procurer, master carpenter, master electrician, shop supervisor, facilities coordinator, lighting designer, sound technician and engineer, and theatrical equipment manager. She is always working on something, and it is always something essential to the life and success of the Film and Theatre Department.

When everyone else has gone home for the day, Diane is likely still working. I have seen her work all hours to ensure that the task at hand is not just completed, but is done with a fine and specific craftsmanship. She will spend the extra hours necessary to ensure that a job is done the right way.

Diane's interactions with students are impressive. She is able to handle tricky situations with firmness and an encouraging spirit. I have seen her specifically working with practicum students in the scene shop, and no matter how many times they ask where a tool is or how to do something, she answers with patience and clarity. It is obvious that she enjoys teaching very much and has a deep love for sharing her craft with others. She goes above and beyond to ensure that each student is given all the necessary tools for success.

While Diane has a long list of admirable qualities, above all, she cares – immensely. If I know nothing else about Diane, I know she cares. She cares for her students in every regard – for their education, their safety, and their success. She cares immensely for the quality of her work and the quality of the work being put forth through UNO Theatre. She cares for her colleagues and goes out of her way to contribute to the betterment of the department. She cares for her craft and puts a great deal of thought into the artistic choices she makes.

I can tell you a lot about Diane. I can talk extensively about her contributions to the Film and Theatre Department as well as to my experience here at UNO, but everything I say can just as

easily be witnessed at any time, any day, in the lighting booth, the classroom, the tool room, the theatre, the office, the lab, or behind a little brown desk in the scene shop.

Sincerely,

Sarah Beth James