

Stacy,

I want you to know how much your presence at the University of Alabama as both a teacher and a mentor impacted my four years of training and my professional career. Coming into school with absolutely no dance training, the thought of trying to become a dancer was extremely intimidating. My first couple of dance classes with you were very challenging, but the learning environment you created made me and all of my classmates comfortable enough to put ourselves out there and grow. Your instructing style is disciplined and structured, but you also encourage your students to have fun and live and be ourselves. You were somehow able to see a glimpse of potential in me, and you nurtured it into a skill and an art form that I never knew I was capable of embodying. Whether it's grounding myself, traveling and using the dance space, being aware of music and style, or making specific character choices, the notes I've gotten from you in class are in my head every time I dance, and it has truly paid off. I've been lucky enough to work across the U.S. and internationally as a dancer and to collaborate with directors and choreographers of Broadway shows and Hollywood movies, none of which would have been possible without the training you and the university gave me. Outside of dance, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your guidance, support, and genuine interest and care for me as a performer and a person. You always made time for me whenever I needed feedback or career (or life) advice in school and still do, despite my being hundreds of miles away. Our department is beyond fortunate to have you. Our program now has such an edge because of the current and relevant knowledge and expertise that you bring to the table, and is now recognized by so many of my theatre and dance colleagues here in New York City. Your support and belief in me set me on a life path that amazes me every day, and I'm elated to know that you'll always be in my corner.

Love,

Adam Vanek