

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Stacy Alley. I've had the privilege of knowing Stacy for about a decade now, and yet I'm still continually impressed by her.

My job as a director/choreographer and as the Faculty Advisor for the Educational Programs at Broadway Dance Center in NYC takes me around the world where I work with many higher education institutions. This is what gives me the confidence to say Stacy is a rare gem of a faculty member and Head of Musical Theatre.

While many other professors have the same performance resume, they remain somewhat "frozen in time" of whatever era they performed. Once they transitioned into education, they stopped keeping up with current industry trends. Show business is a fast-paced, ever-changing field, and if you don't keep in step with it, you could be teaching not just outdated information, but actually *incorrect* information to your students. I've sadly seen this more times than I can count.

Stacy, on the other hand, has just as relevant info as anyone living in NYC. For example, one of the materials she included for my review was a Q&A she did with Camille A. Brown, who is going to be the next "it" director/choreographer on Broadway (if she's not already). Most programs bring in professionals who already have long-established careers and multiple Tony awards. The problem with that is those people already have their roster of usual people they like to work with. Stacy instead brought in someone on the cusp of breaking out, who is still developing their voice and finding the artists they want to collaborate with. Her students have a much better chance at making a genuine connection with someone like Camille. Plus, Camille is someone who is changing our industry, so the sooner the students get on board with her, the better.

The other impressive thing about their Q&A session to me was the questions Stacy asked. She didn't shy away from the sensitive topics of gender, race, and appropriation that our field is grappling with. It wasn't a "here's how you can be on Broadway" type of conversation. It was "how do we make the industry better" where she rightly recognized we are ALL part of this and need to work together. Again, these kinds of conversations are just not happening as much as they need to in higher education. I was really pleased to see the grace, humility, empathy, and curiosity Stacy maintained throughout the entire call.

As for Stacy's work, here again she's on top of it. I loved seeing her direct/choreograph *The Wild Party* overseas. It's so easy to get stuck working in America, especially since musical theater is considered an American art form, but breaking through the boundaries and creating art together with people around the world is what will truly bring the most humanity to our work. Art should be a reflection of life, right?

This is another example, too, of Stacy forging connections for her students not just in NYC, but around the world. So many other programs put their entire focus on preparing their students

for Broadway, as if that's the only place they could work. Stacy uses her own career to demonstrate to her students how there are limitless possibilities for how/where they can work in musical theater.

I really couldn't recommend Stacy enough to you. I don't say that lightly or with hyperbole. The University of Alabama is very lucky to have her.

If you have any questions for me, please do reach out. My email is Jim@JimCooney.me, and my phone number is 646-408-8415. I would be happy to chat with you further.

You may also visit my website JimCooney.me if you need any more background information on me.

Thank you for this opportunity to write on Stacy's behalf.

Sincerely,
Jim Cooney