



SUNSET RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 29

525 Sunset Ridge Road • Northfield, Illinois • 60093
847 881 9400 • Fax: 847 446 6388 • www.sunsetridge29.net

Cultivating a learning community that engages the hearts and minds of students, one child at a time

February 25, 2014

To whom it May Concern,

Although I am now retired, I am very pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Jesse Nolan. I was the District 29 Superintendent of Schools in 2009 when Mr. Nolan was hired to instruct orchestra students at Sunset Ridge School. I knew I was taking a chance hiring a percussionist to teach violin and cello, but Mr. Nolan far exceeded my expectations for the strings program and went on to transform our entire music curriculum into the impressive program it is today.

At the time when he was hired, the orchestra program consisted of a very small number of string students who played along with the school band. Mr. Nolan was given the challenge to “grow the program.” In three short years the number of students playing string instruments more than tripled, the skill of individual students increased, and the level and complexity of musical selections expanded. Mr. Nolan not only “grew the program,” but he transformed it into an outstanding orchestra, rivaling any other 4th through 8th grade string program in a larger district.

During this time, Mr. Nolan also contributed in many other ways to the District. He taught a junior high exploratory class on the history and commercial production of music, and worked with the band director, teaching student lessons and assisting with jazz band. He also created and led an after school “Bucket Band”. This exciting program was open to all students, and gave those not in the band or orchestra an opportunity to experience the joy and fun of being part of a unique musical group.

Mr. Nolan also directed the annual school musical for four years. Under his skillful direction the musical grew into an outstanding showcase of student singing, dancing and acting. His most recent productions of *Beauty and the Beast, Jr.* and *Fame, Jr.* drew accolades and rave reviews from parents, staff and students.

Although Mr. Nolan is an accomplished professional percussionist, his true gift as an educator is his ability to interact with and relate to students. He not only taught them how to play musical instruments, but more importantly, he shared the joy of playing an instrument and helped them realize that being part of a musical group is fun--- even “cool.” Mr. Nolan is an excellent role model for students. They perceive him as friendly and approachable, but they still respect his authority as the teacher.

A highlight from Mr. Nolan’s tenure in the District was the music department’s first ever Disney World fieldtrip, which he envisioned, championed, organized and led. Mr. Nolan oversaw every

detail of the trip, including fundraising activities, transportation arrangements, student room assignments, safety procedures and Disney clinics. The trip was a considered a huge success by parents, staff, and most importantly the students.

In addition to his work with students, Mr. Nolan created a parent organization and initiated a newsletter for the parents of music students. He also created online student practice logs and redesigned the music department web site. He garnered strong support and praise from the parents within the community and earned their respect, admiration and trust. This was an impressive accomplishment, especially given the high expectations held by the local community.

Mr. Nolan has expressed interest in pursuing a doctoral degree. I highly recommend him as a doctoral candidate. He would be a serious, conscientious, and dedicated doctoral student. I am confident he would put forth the same energy, enthusiasm, and passion for learning that he demonstrated while teaching at Sunset Ridge.

Mr. Nolan also possesses the skills necessary to be an extremely effective college instructor in a music program. While he is a talented musician, has a very strong work ethic and demonstrates good organizational skills, it is Mr. Nolan's professional work with Sunset Ridge, Blue Man Group and MashPlant that sets him apart from others. His experiences performing and teaching have given him an authentic perspective that would enhance his role as a college professor. Equally significant, Mr. Nolan possesses a sincere desire to guide young people as they grow in their musical or teaching careers. Even though he has left Sunset Ridge, he continues to work with students, serving as a positive role model and mentoring students while leading high school and college music clinics.

I strongly recommend Mr. Nolan as a doctoral candidate, college professor, instrumental music teacher, or musical director without reservation. He brings vision, enthusiasm, talent, passion and dedication to all that he undertakes. If I can be of any assistance in providing further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Linda J. Vieth".

Linda J. Vieth, Ed.D.
Retired Sunset Ridge District 29 Superintendent of Schools

School of Music and Theatre

February 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of my music colleague, good friend, and former student Jesse Nolan in support of his search for a position in higher education. I have known Jesse for the past 13 years and he would be an asset to any institution of which he is a member.

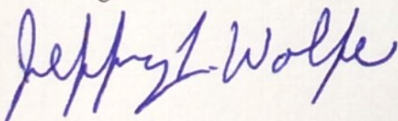
First, Jesse is a world-class percussionist, arranger, and all-around musician. As you can read (and hear) on his online portfolio (<http://www.jessenolan.com/portfolio.html>), he has extensive international and national tours to his credit with some of the most recognized names in musical theatre, jazz, classical, and popular music genres. I have witnessed firsthand his work as the music director of the world famous Blue Man Group, and am thoroughly impressed with the level of organization, spontaneity, improvisation, nuance, and leadership he possesses as the chief musical decision maker. This is a rare combination of musical talent, management skills, problem-solving ability, and decisiveness. Not only does Jesse "get the job done," he thrives and excels in this environment.

Second, he is a fabulous educator. He has extensive teaching experience from elementary to the collegiate level. He has been successful at each, having dramatically improved every program in which he has been employed, both in terms of numbers ("growing the program") and musicianship. For example, Jesse conducted a clinic for my jazz ensemble at Marshall University in the fall of 2013. Having only one short rehearsal (and no preparation time) to impart his musical wisdom with the group, he provided tremendous insights that raised the performance level of the entire ensemble and the students had a great time learning in the process. More importantly, Mr. Nolan instills a passion and love for music in his students and presents an example of success to all under his tutelage.

Finally, Mr. Nolan's strongest attribute is his versatility. From being an outstanding percussionist, to arranging for large jazz ensemble, to music education (both within and outside his primary concentration), to professional audio production, Jesse is outstanding in all of these disciplines and is able to seamlessly move between them with ease. He is able to fill many roles and needs, which is evidenced by his extensive performance, education, production, and personal achievements. With Jesse, you get an expert with extensive professional experience in all of these areas.

Jesse Nolan would be a fantastic addition to any institution of higher education. He has the professional experience as a musical artist, as well as an exemplary record as an educator. Where he goes, success follows. Most importantly, Jesse is a terrific person. He is trustworthy, reliable, professional, and affable. Furthermore, he is articulate, erudite, and hard-working. He has my highest recommendation. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at wolfeg@marshall.edu or by phone at 304-696-3613.

Best Regards,



Jeffrey L. Wolfe, M.M.
Jazz Studies/Music Technology
Marshall University School of Music and Theatre

WE ARE... MARSHALL.

February 11, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Jesse Nolan who is seeking a position in higher education. I have known Jesse for nine years and it is an honor for me to write on behalf of a truly gifted performer and educator.

Jesse is a highly diverse percussionist and musician who has the experience and knowledge to thrive in any musical situation, from the concert hall to the recording studio, Jesse provides a sense of professionalism and creativity that makes every musical endeavor a pleasurable and rewarding experience. His presence and ability to collaborate with colleagues and students through his positive and optimistic attitude is infectious and greatly enhances every project he is involved with.

Hearing Jesse perform, whether sharing the stage with an ensemble or in a solo recital, he offers some of the most creative and memorable performances I have witnessed. His treatment of musical styles, creativity, expression, technique, and attention to detail make Jesse stand out among other musicians; he is truly a gifted performer and consummate professional. His passion for creative performance does not stop when he leaves the stage; his creativity and innovative ideas are reflected in his dynamic abilities as an educator.

As an educator, Jesse possesses the ability to engage and captivate his students' and is always searching for new and innovative approaches to connect with students' through music. Jesse takes into consideration the twenty-first century student and presents material through many different avenues of audio, video, and multi-media outlets. Constantly stressing the importance of pedagogy and education Jesse finds ways to make musical connections and relevance in all genres of music from marching percussion to contemporary music; for Jesse, there are strong educational values and lessons in every musical experience available to young percussionists.

Given Jesse's experience in both performing and teaching, I feel he would be a tremendous asset to any institution of higher education. I highly recommend Jesse Nolan in his pursuit for a position within higher education and have no reservations about his abilities in the classroom and on stage. He is a tremendous musician and colleague and would only enhance the musical experience for anyone who has the opportunity to work with him. I thank you for time in reading this letter. Should any additional information be needed, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joshua Bowman
Instructor of percussion
Christopher Newport University

FROM THE DESK OF

DONALD GOLDEN

March 2, 2014

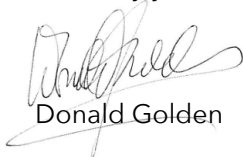
To whom it may concern,

I can recommend Jesse Nolan for your available position without hesitation. I worked closely with him for four years, and found him to be an invaluable asset to our staff at Sunset Ridge School. From day one I felt as if he had always been a part of our team. I have worked with many colleagues since 1976, but none have connected with both students and faculty as well as he did.

Jesse is the consummate professional. He brings a multitude of skills to the table that few individuals can match. Not only does he have the pedagogical skills necessary to teach strings, winds and percussion, but he also has a highly advanced set of technology skills. He put together our school musicals for four years which included teaching acting, vocals, tech and more. Due to the size of the school, he did much of this himself including programming light boards, sound boards, wiring the stage, setting up projectors, building sets etc. He came to our school to initiate a full blown string program, which culminated in the school's first ever trip out of the district to Orlando Florida. The trip was a huge success, but Jesse's behind the scenes work was what made it so. In four months he helped initiate the trip, manage five fundraisers, collect funds for the trip, manage parents and administration, and still have time to rehearse students for a successful performance. His professional network was also invaluable to his success in the program. He was able to bring professionals to work on staff for the musical, a Beatle cover band (where he was Ringo) as one of the fundraisers for the trip, and many others as private tutors. A program that came about due to Jesse's work at Sunset Ridge is the Mashplant Studio website. This program allows students to work on video arts projects and have the help of professionals in the field. Jesse began perfecting this at Sunset Ridge, and brought it to many more schools as well. These are but a few of his accomplishments and give an idea of his knowledge, dedication, innovation and creativity that help a program excel at the very highest level possible.

I have never seen an individual work as hard, as fast and with as much enthusiasm as Jesse at Sunset Ridge School. I believe he would be a credit to any institution from middle school to the university level.

Sincerely yours,



Donald Golden



February 20, 2014

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing to offer my recommendation of Jesse Nolan for an academic position with your esteemed institution. I do so with the confidence of someone who has worked with Jesse and observed his skills across a range of occupational experiences, from educator to artist, entrepreneur to executive. And in all instances, he brings a level of talent, commitment and passion that is both inspirational, and aspirational.

I feel a kinship with Jesse, having begun my career in the theater with the founding of Chicago's Apollo Theater. As a producer of theater, film and television for thirty-five years, I've worked with some of the finest creative and performing artists in the world, and Jesse Nolan is world class. An exceptionally talented musician, composer and arranger, he possesses the collaborative instincts of an ensemble member, and the vision to lead the band.

A few years ago, I focused my entrepreneurial creativity on education technology and founded MashPlant.com, a website for middle school kids who are passionate about the entertainment arts. Not long after we launched, I heard from a middle school music teacher, who had discovered us online and had an idea for how we could modify our website and turn it into a social learning and multimedia sharing platform for the classroom. I remember thinking, "Is this an educator, an artist or an entrepreneur?" My first meeting with Jesse answered that question: he's all of the above.

Jesse collaborated with us in the development of MashPlant Studio, piloting it and beta testing the platform with his music classes for nearly a year. Over those many months, I spent a lot of time watching Jesse in the classroom, instructing and inspiring young learners, and marveled at his ability to blend executive management skills with empathy and compassion. I saw his students go from being hesitant and disinterested, to engaged and confident. Indeed, his teaching skills were so impressive, he was featured in an early news piece about MashPlant Studio on CBS-2 Morning News.

During our development, Jesse deftly balanced his teaching responsibilities with his work with MashPlant. And when MashPlant Studio debuted in 2013, Jesse officially joined our team as Director of Education and Business Development. Since then, MashPlant has spread to over 350 classrooms, worldwide, and with Jesse's entrepreneurial leadership and creative

oversight, has created exclusive classroom content in partnership with Peabody Award winner Bill McGlaughlin ("Exploring Music"), the Jazz Entertainment Network (JEN) and Chicago's Redmoon Theater (Great Chicago Fire Festival 2014).

Unfortunately, like many multi-talented people, Jesse can sometimes end up with too much on his plate. However, how someone deals with the stress of multiple



responsibilities is often an indicator of their emotional intelligence. Few things are as stressful as a start-up, and as someone who has walked through that fire with Jesse Nolan, I can say unequivocally, that he is as reliable and unflinching as he is creative and visional.

I think Jesse Nolan would be a fine addition to any faculty, and a source of pride for any academic institution, and it is my honor to recommend him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'JB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason Brett
(847)778.8989
Jason@MashPlant.com

JB/kb



February 25, 2014

It is a pleasure to write a recommendation for **Jesse Nolan**, and I strongly support him in his quest for a position in higher education. I have had the honor and privilege to work along side Jesse as a colleague for two years while employed at Sunset Ridge School as the General Music Teacher, Choral Director and Musical Director. While at Sunset Ridge, Jesse had made a sizable, positive impact on the school and our department by spearheading many new initiatives. He is an educator that comes with a rare and diverse skill set. Jesse demonstrates instinctual teaching techniques that far outshine many experienced educators. His approach is as solid as that of a veteran—his musicianship is superior.

When I first met Jesse, I was immediately impressed by his tireless work ethic. In his four-year tenure at Sunset Ridge, Jesse was able to build a 4th – 8th grade orchestra program from the ground up. Starting with zero members, the orchestra program grew as big as 200 members in just three years. Simultaneously, Jesse revitalized and restructured a theatre program to such success that it is now the highlight of our school year. While Jesse may be gone, his legacy remains. Because they are superior, we consistently use his models, methods and documents for concert planning, budgeting, fundraising, auditions, equipment acquisition, website management and parent-teacher communication through our Music Parent Organization, of which Jesse was the founder. Jesse has a gifted mind for big picture thinking and backward design. His innate instincts allow him to devise a process to his goals that is not only logical and fair, but also staggeringly efficient. There is no hiding the fact that Sunset Ridge's Performing Arts Department would be nothing if not for Jesse.

Jesse conducted and rehearsed several orchestras of different personnel and abilities, integrated and piloted new software, created and developed new curriculum for electives, coached students in a one-on-one lesson situation, aided in auditions and had an invaluable fluency for A/V equipment. He was consistently prepared, enthusiastic and excited about the lessons he taught and the lessons he learned. Warm, friendly, and sensitive to the students and their changing moods, Jesse knew how to balance familiarity with professionalism. He was punctual, responsible, courteous, and sported a contagious and wonderful sense of humor.

Jesse's deep love of people is going to make a difference wherever he may work or study. Although he brings with him professional expertise and knowledge, it is also obvious that he cherishes the relationships between members of the educational community. He is trusting and trustworthy; he mentors as well as teaches students and colleagues who want to learn. Jesse goes above and beyond what is expected of him. He understands the benefit of striving for excellence and yet is never afraid to do the small job that might not be as glamorous in order to get everyone where they need to be.

I have recently seen Jesse's work as a music director and performer with the Blue Man Group. I am consistently impressed and inspired by his ability to achieve high standards in a world-class organization. In his desire to become excellent, he perseveres, seeks counsel, and puts into action any suggestions he is given. He continues to recognize his strengths and victories while never falling into complacency. Because of this, Jesse has made himself into one of the finest musicians, educators and leaders around. He is of the highest moral character, and he will be an inspiring and dedicated member for the school fortunate enough to have him aboard. I recommend him most whole-heartedly, and I would welcome additional inquiries regarding his character and capabilities.

Sincerely,

Andrew Toniolo
630.415.5219 – tonioloa@sunsetridge29.org

John Engle

407 Annaberg Drive, Youngsville LA 70592

(337) 230-1361 Cell

jengle2183@gmail.com

To Whom it may concern:

I have known Jesse Nolan for 2 years, professionally and personally. I'm proud to have the opportunity to write a recommendation letter on his behalf. I'm happy to count Jesse among my friends as well as one of my children's mentors.

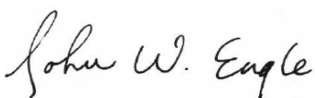
Professionally, in his role at Sunset Ridge Jesse left his imprint on two of my three daughters during their middle school years. I choose that sentence deliberately, as Jesse impacted them much more than as an instructor. Although his technical skill as an educator is beyond question, it is the intangibles that Jesse brings that stuck with my daughters. Exhibiting teamwork, preparation, and the value of enthusiasm. If you have had your initial meeting with Jesse then I'm sure you felt the energy that he brings into a room. I watched him maintain this energy level even through some nagging physical nicks that would have slowed down someone else. The quality of the musical productions at the school improved dramatically under Jesse's tenure - with progressively challenging performances from the children and inclusive casts. He shows the students that in life, you truly do get out of it what you put into it.

Personally, I spent several evenings with Jesse and his wife on occasions at their home. As a hobby musician, I received the benefit of Jesse's technical expertise and facility with cutting edge performance and recording technology. The pride that he takes in the care and maintenance of his and the school's equipment is impressive. His love of all genres of music, with a particular focus on music that inspires the upcoming generation, shows his desire not just to gratify himself but to give back to the musical community.

In my seventeen year management career, I've hired and fired more than my share of personnel. Jesse would be added to my team in a heartbeat, as you can intuitively feel the infectiousness of his energy and passion for his work. An important distinction, from my perspective, is his ability to make the people around him better. I watched him take a lethargic program and improve the performance of the instructors around him, who had to elevate their game to keep up with him! The result was a department that the school and community could be proud of.

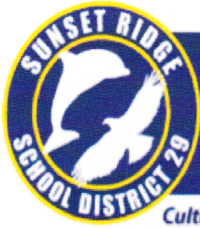
I write this letter from a manager's viewpoint. These are my considered opinions and not platitudes. I am constructing this letter as if I were evaluating Jesse for hire, with the benefit of having observed his work. With that in mind, consider it a "no-brainer". **I recommend Jesse Nolan without reservation for any position and/or challenge you are considering him for.** Please contact me at your convenience if you have any further questions for me.

Sincerely,



John Engle

337-230-1361 Cell



SUNSET RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 29

525 Sunset Ridge Road • Northfield, Illinois • 60093

847 881 9400 • Fax: 847 446 6388

Cultivating a learning community that engages the hearts and minds of students, one child at a time

April 7, 2011

I am honored to write a recommendation for **JESSE NOLAN**. He has been a teacher at Sunset Ridge School District #29 for the past two years. His enthusiasm and creative attitude has set him apart from the rest of the staff. He conducts the string orchestra, the seventh grade exploratory classes, jazz band, "bucket" bands, choirs, and is the director of the all-school show. To have someone step into all these activities and do all of them well is quite an accomplishment.

He has brought the level of musicianship to such a high standard and all in the short time of under two years. His professionalism is of the highest order and his positive attitude is contagious. He takes a personal interest of each student, tailoring his lessons to involve a personal experience. He has developed the string program from nothing, to a performing group of the highest order. I stepped down as the director of the all-school musical and Mr. Nolan stepped in without a problem, advancing the program to a higher level.

Professionally, he has performed with variety of top notch musicians across the country and had conducted a vast amount of presentations for other teachers and studio musicians.

He would be a valued educator on your staff. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. I would welcome the opportunity.

Always,

Mrs. Carol Broos

Music Teacher

Sunset Ridge School

Golden Apple Fellow

Google Teacher Academy

Apple Distinguished Educator

**Reference for Jesse Nolan
June, 2012**

I have known Jesse Nolan since the Fall of 2009, when he joined the faculty at Sunset Ridge School where my daughter was in fifth grade. Mr. Nolan teaches music classes and group string lessons and he serves as the organizer and director of the school musical. In these roles, he has had significant interaction with my student for the past three years. In addition, he and I have frequently interacted at many school events.

In the years that I have known Mr. Nolan, I have seen that he is a person of high integrity. He is both honest and ethical. The life he lives in the school classroom is consistent with his personal life – both are marked by a strong commitment to relationships, the creative process, and a passion for the joy that music brings. I am impressed by Mr. Nolan's ability to use humor and a cheerful spirit without sacrificing discipline and musical growth. He has a calm approach to even the most disordered situations. Mr. Nolan is hard-working, enthusiastic, and realistic – a rare combination. He is known for being forthright, respectful, and dependable. He is someone who consistently models a caring spirit. Most importantly, perhaps, he has the ability to see the world through the eyes of his students, who admire and respect him. Mr. Nolan has shown great interest in his students, far beyond that of a typical teacher; his visit to our church on a December Sunday morning to hear our daughter sing a solo is a clear example of this. He is interested in the growth of the whole person as evidenced by his ability to set high expectations while also exercising flexibility and understanding.

The combination of Mr. Nolan's educational background, skills, and charismatic personality make him a unique and very special teacher. It is rare to find a music teacher who has this level of teaching skill in combination with the ability to build and nurture relationships. His is highly qualified, bringing significant energy to the music program at our school.

While I would personally be very sorry to see Mr. Nolan depart from our district, I can assure the reader of this reference that he would be an asset and a deep breath of fresh air to any music program where his unique set of gifts and qualifications would be appreciated.

**Robin E. Magnusson
283 Churchill Street
Northfield, IL 60093
847.446.3552 home**



BENET ACADEMY

2200 MAPLE AVENUE

LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532

630.719.2811

March 11, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Jesse Nolan, to offer my recommendation for the position of music director. I am the music department chair at Benet Academy. I hired and had the pleasure of working with him for the 2007-2008 academic year. I found Jesse to be a very talented musician who related well with his students. He was versatile in his abilities to teach marching, concert, pep, jazz and direct the orchestra for the musical. His gregarious personality, love of performing and intellect made him a good fit for our program.

The position of band director at Benet Academy is a very demanding job. One quarter of the student population is involved in music and our program has two professionals doing the work that three or four professionals do in other programs our size. In spite of some bouts with illness, Jesse was able to accomplish a smooth transition from the previous director, get the students motivated and excited about performing, and raise the level of excellence from our students.

It was Jesse's first time in charge of a program. At times, he may have felt overwhelmed by the scope and expectations of the position as well as finding a balance with his personal performance projects. However, he accepted guidance and responded well to suggestions and the end result was excellence in student performance. He spent countless hours outside of school working to clean up the filing system, organize pep folders, and plan for his classes.

Jesse was offered a contract for the current academic year, and would have been re-hired if he hadn't chosen to pursue a touring opportunity. My only regret is that he was only with us for one year, but he brought a fresh perspective and great ideas with him that will shape the path of the department in the next few years. He has intimated to me that he now knows he wants to teach and he will make a great band director for whatever program is lucky enough to get him.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.
Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brian A. Wand".

Brian A. Wand
Music Department Chair
Benet Academy
bwand@benet.org

March 4, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

During the 2007-2008 school year, while our son was a junior at Benet Academy in Lisle, Illinois, Mr. Jesse Nolan served as our son's director of the Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Pep Band, and Musical Pit Orchestra. Although this was Mr. Nolan's first full-time teaching assignment, he assumed the position with an incredible sense of maturity and professionalism. Beginning with late summer marching band drills through the final spring band concerts, he found a way to bring out the best in his students and get them excited about playing their instruments. His ability to relate to them musically and personally resulted in upbeat kids and beautiful music. His ability to effectively communicate with parents face to face, via email, or through school correspondence resulted in happy parents and a willingness to volunteer wherever needed.

In addition to the ensembles mentioned above, Mr. Nolan was also responsible for teaching the Concert Band, Chamber Orchestra, and Jazz Band. Since Mr. Nolan's departure, the school has hired a band director, a jazz director, and an orchestra director to do what essentially Mr. Nolan accomplished on his own. Despite the overwhelming responsibilities required of Mr. Nolan, he always presented himself with confidence and enthusiasm.

Since our son is an accomplished trumpet player with a penchant for jazz, we were elated to have a director with a Master's in Jazz Studies who challenged him with difficult classical and jazz literature and provided him the opportunity to be a featured soloist. Mr. Nolan is undeniably responsible for cultivating our son's desire to pursue trumpet performance in college.

It is the hope of all parents to have good teachers for their kids. Every so often a teacher comes along who not only possesses excellent teaching skills, but who is also able to garner immense respect and instill a deep passion for creativity and excellence in his or her students. In Mr. Nolan's brief time at Benet Academy, he ably demonstrated those attributes to students and parents alike. In our opinion, he would certainly be a tremendous asset to any school's music program.

Sincerely,



Mr. and Mrs. Dennis J. Aukstik
21W134 Monticello Rd.
Lombard, Illinois 60148



WHEATON NORTH HIGH SCHOOL
FALCON BANDS
JON S. NOWORYTA, *DIRECTOR OF BANDS*

April 5, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in strong support of Mr. Jesse Nolan, a young music educator who has applied for a teaching position in your school district. I have known Mr. Nolan in several capacities for the last eight years. He has many strong attributes that will lead to musical success in your district.

Mr. Nolan is currently completing his first year as an extra-curricular assistant in the Band Department at Wheaton North High School where he is an instructor for the Marching Band's drumline and the Director of the Jazz Band and Jazz Combo program. Though these roles are both after-school coaching positions, they are diverse in nature. In the Marching Band, Mr. Nolan was one of two secondary instructors who worked under a primary staff member (caption head) in the percussion section. Mr. Nolan was a collaborative team player and the students and staff connected with him very well. He will, in fact, take over as the Percussion Caption Head this upcoming season, when the person formerly in that position moves-on. I have no reservations about this change in stature and the students are looking forward to it.

As the director of the entry-level Jazz Band and Combo Program, Mr. Nolan was the sole director responsible for the development of three extracurricular jazz groups. Jazz is, without question, Mr. Nolan's passion. It should be said that he started out very "green" but really grew into the position. His enthusiasm has infused our younger jazz groups with a competency in various jazz styles and given them a very strong foundation in improvisation, stronger, in fact, than I could have given them. Mr. Nolan's ensembles play not only intelligently, but they also play enthusiastically. I am pleased with the fact that Mr. Nolan has been able to accomplish this with my students.

I have known Mr. Nolan for eight years. When I first met him, he was "Jesse"; a senior in the band program that I took over in 1999 at another high school. We began our relationship as student/teacher and we have become colleagues/friends. But after reflection, the more things change, the more they stay the same. When I first knew him, he was the Marching Band drumline section leader and the lead drummer in the Jazz Ensemble. Over the years, I have had the chance to monitor his career and watch him grow. Of all my students who have gone into music, I believe that *Jesse is the most natural and gifted teacher*. It is very fulfilling for me to see him excel so much with my own current students - bringing everything full circle for us. What Mr. Nolan lacks in formal years of full-time experience, he more than makes up for in passion, desire, and an innate gift for connecting with kids. My students have stated that Mr. Nolan "makes the serious/hard work fun and we get a lot done. We play better after we work with him." This is high praise from high school students. I am very proud of him and endorse his application fully.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions of concerns.

Sincerely,

Jon S. Noworyta
Director of Bands
Wheaton North High School



(818) 244-7970 / (818) 244-5820 fax / 1341 Cleveland Road / Glendale, California 91202 U.S.A.
www.houghtonmusic.com / houghton@houghtonmusic.com

Date: February 20, 2005

Dear Pat and Justin,

I'm writing to you in support of Jesse Nolan, who is auditioning for the drumset chair for the Mancini Institute. I've been working with Jesse the past 3 years here at Indiana University, where I've seen him grow into a first-class musician. He has been a great student to work with, taking everything that is given to him and absorbing it quickly and effectively.

Working with the Mancini Institute all of these years, I've come to know exactly what type of drummer is needed for that important chair. His reading is excellent as he has played in David Baker's big band the past two years. David has thrown virtually everything in front of him and he has handled it with professionalism. His sensitivity, musicality, fire and solo ability will serve the band well, if chosen. He has also spent time in the orchestras and bands here, and has a sense of how that all works as well. I feel he will drive the studio orchestra with great care.

His small group experience is very thorough having been in 2 groups a semester for as long as I can remember. He has examined the music of John Zorn, Bill Evans, and Carlos Jobim to mention a few. He will bring a lot of fire and passion to the Mancini chamber groups.

His hunger for knowledge is unbelievable as he is constantly transcribing and listening to old music, new music, anything he can get his hands on. He has really chased the great drummers like Mel Lewis, Shelly Manne and Max Roach, to see what makes them so special. At the same time, he is totally current with the latest styles and musical trends. He is a wonderful Latin and rock drummer.

I'm excited for you to have the opportunity to listen to Jesse's CD audition and hope that you give him every consideration for this summer. I've never recommended anyone so highly in all of my teaching.

Sincerely,

To whom it may concern:

As a senior at Benet Academy in Lisle, IL, I was honored to have Jesse Nolan as my band director and private instructor. I give him the highest level of recommendation as a music teacher.

Jesse Nolan is the best teacher I have ever had for several reasons. He is a role model, a guide, and a friend to all of his students. Everyone in the percussion section, or for that matter in the entire ensemble, looked up to him. His musicianship and personality were admired by everyone. One of my fellow students even told me, "My goal in life is to grow up to be just like Mr. Nolan."

Jesse is also a leader and guide for his students. He was always willing to answer questions and offer advice about anything from musical performance to a personal dilemma. He helped me select and learn my music for college auditions. Without him, I would not be where I am today: studying what I want to do with the rest of my life. Jesse wants to see all of his students succeed, and he does everything in his power to make sure they have the skills and assistance needed to do so.

Not only is Jesse a role model and a guide to his students, but he is also a friend. Finding the balance between these roles is one of the hardest things for a teacher to do, and Jesse does it perfectly. He was always easy to contact and willing to talk. He would stay after school to hang out and talk to students. He could relate to everyone and make anyone laugh.

That is what makes Jesse such a remarkable teacher. He is able to relate to his students as a friend while keeping their respect and guiding them to be the best they can be. I have never met or heard of a greater teacher than Jesse Nolan. As a student, I give him my highest recommendation for any position.

Sincerely,

Michael Sportiello

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Sportiello".



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

To Rod Gibson and the Jazz Club of Sarasota Scholarship Committee:

It gives me great pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Jesse Nolan. I had Jesse in my class "Introduction to Music Education" in his first semester at Indiana University. He was among the most intriguing group of students that I have taught. He has an unusual combination of talent, enthusiasm, and intellect. He questions, challenges and takes full responsibility and effort for his learning. Regarding his musical skills as a jazz musician, he begun playing jazz drum set at the age of two years old. He not only has been playing jazz for 17 years, but also has studied and developed an understanding of the history of Jazz music and the culture from which it sprang.

Jesse has been a private instructor of jazz percussion for 3 years and has taught students ranging in age from 7 to 20. He is part of a working quartet in the Chicagoland area that plays his original jazz compositions and arrangements and has played at places like the Chicago Music Mart and Fitzgerald's. He has participated in numerous jazz workshops and festivals at which he has been the #1 drummer and has worked with the likes of Wynton Marsalis, The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Ron Carter, Carl Allen, Joe Lovano, Buster Cooper, James Moody, Don Owens, and David Baker. He also performed in New York with his high school at the 2000 Essentially Ellington Festival at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center. At the completion of his senior year at Naperville High School, he received the Semper Fidelis award "In Recognition of diligence, dedication, and musical excellence, as a performing high school bandmen and soloist." from the United States Marines Youth Foundation, Inc. and the Marine Corps League.

I feel there is none other better suited for your award than Jesse. I retired 3 months ago as a faculty member at Indiana University School of Music where I was a Professor for 26 years. Since beginning as a high school band director in rural Virginia 44 years ago, I have been a choral teacher, private music teacher, and district Supervisor of Music in New York City, where I had also been Assistant Principal of a very large high school. I managed all that time to perform as a professional singer and as a workshop leader and conductor of All-city and All-State ensembles throughout the United States. I say all this to give some perspective as to the range of experiences I have had when I characterize Jesse as being among the 1% of the top students I have had the pleasure to recommend over all these years. It is with great pride and pleasure that I recommend him to you.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael V.W. Gordon".

Michael V.W. Gordon
Professor of Music Emeritus