

1/182012

Dear WCDC Selection Committee,

It is my pleasure to have been asked to submit a letter of recommendation for Catherine Wilson for the WCDC. Cat is in her third year at Carnegie Mellon and is an extraordinary young artist. I will never forget my admissions interview with Cat. Through no fault of her own, Cat arrived late for her admissions interview. I had given her up as a no-show and had already started packing up. She arrived on the run, red in the face and asked if I could still see her. We no longer had an interview space so I found a piano closet where we sat on the floor in order to do the interview. We usually don't like to accept students straight out of undergraduate school and her resume demonstrated that she was pretty green so I thought it was going to be a courtesy interview and that I would be leaving her with advice on what to do to advance her career in preparation for grad school. From inauspicious beginnings....during the interview, I became more and more intrigued with Cat. She was smart: really smart. And there was a spark there that told me that this was an artist and a storyteller. There was a lot of talent and a blazing intellect buried in the green kid that was wedged in next to the grand piano with me. Something else became clear. She was generous and highly teachable, somebody who would be a great fit for CMU. I am now very glad that I had not packed my bag a little bit faster. Cat is a remarkable talent and that interview is the only time I can think of her ever being late in her Carnegie Mellon career.

Over the past three years I have had many interactions with Cat. I have watched her process as both Master Electrician and Designer. She has been in my Photoshop class and is one of my Thesis advisees. When she first got to CMU I think she felt a little like she was being fed lighting skills with a fire-hose. My first impression of her as being very bright and hard working was born out, however. Cat picked up a huge amount of nuts and bolts information at a remarkably rapid rate. Now, her paperwork, communication and understanding of the tools of lighting are outstanding, of a professional caliber.

I designed a large production of *Midsummer* last year for CMU. Cat was the ME. We interfaced on a number of issues from star drops, to a large custom practical, to issues with the hanging schedule. Her level of professionalism, knowledge and maturity surpassed many professional MEs with whom I have worked. She was also clearly an astoundingly good support for her designer who was also doing media. We some very complex issues that needed to be solved and Cat did a remarkable job. When we collaborated on some aspect of the production, I walked away confident that she understood the vision and had the skills to achieve the objectives. She was also very realistic about what could and couldn't been achieved within given resource parameters. Unlike many students when faced with the Head of

Design asking them for something, she wasn't afraid to tell me no and then to work with me on other solutions to achieve the vision of the artistic team.

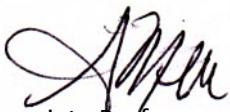
Cat took my Photoshop class, which is basically a drawing class. My objectives with Lighting Design students are to work with them on understanding and communicating how light reveals form and to give them a medium for storytelling as previsualization. It's always been a bit of a surprise to me at how good a predictor a simple Photoshop class is for who will be a good Lighting Designer. It was very clear to me from that class that Cat's innate understanding of light and story is quite sophisticated. She created a very evocative lighting storyboard with a great sense of how the world of the story, physically, conceptually and textually could be revealed with lighting.

One of the projects I advised scenically this fall was a pair of operas: Mahagonny Songspiel and Suor Angelica. Cat was designing the lighting for both projects. She had a very limited inventory and an equally restricted amount of time to develop these two projects that would be part of a single evening. She did a beautiful job. It was clear to me from the way that she approached these two pieces that she is the real deal: very much an artist and professional. Suor was initially a world that left Angelica nowhere to hide from the pain of her past. The world transformed as the mystical element of her son beckoning her to death was introduced. Mahagonny blew the confines of the theatrical space out to the walls of our Chosky Theater. It was dirty, hard- edged and dead on for Brecht. I am convinced that the director still has no idea how transformative Cat's work was for that project.

One of the most important things to highlight about Cat is that she is a great citizen of our school. She feels tremendous responsibility towards both her collaborators and those whom she is mentoring as assistants or on her crews. She has a generous spirit and watches out for everyone around her. She is a natural leader with high standards and a benevolent and intelligent approach to collaboration.

In short, Cat shows tremendous professional promise. I cannot understate the depth of her talent and dedication. She is the kind of person, professional and artist who embodies all of the positive things we like to see in a Carnegie Mellon graduate. I very much hope that you will give her application strong consideration. She is exceptional. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information.

Anne Mundell,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Anne Mundell', with a stylized, flowing script.

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January 20, 2012

IN RECOMMENDATION OF CAT WILSON:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Cat Wilson for a West Coast Drama Clan Award. I have known Cat for three years as a student in the MFA Lighting Design program at Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. As her mentor and academic advisor I have watched her mature as a designer in a variety of situations.

Cat came to graduate school with very articulated goals for herself. She wanted to strengthen her skills in drafting and lighting software programs, explore new forms of lighting technology and their use in design, and to achieve a greater depth of artistry in her design work. I think Cat has grown tremendously in three years. In her productions of *Suor Angelica* and *Mahagonny*, Cat demonstrated a sophistication of design ideas that exceeded the director's expectations. She sculpted the space in bold ways using angle and color most effectively. There was a strong connection to the visual research and renderings she did and the results onstage.

As a person, Cat is a bundle of positive energy. She has an amazing drive to take everything in coupled with a natural curiosity. She continues to take drawing classes even though they aren't required because she values their worth in training her eye. Cat is a most generous collaborator. She is truly all about the team vision and not her own individual contribution. She is sensitive to other people's needs and offers strong support. As a result she is loved by directors and the other designers. Cat has been a great role model for the younger students. She has assumed teaching and leadership positions while at school and has done both superbly. She also embodies all of the qualities of a great assistant: good listener, follows directions, takes initiative when asked to do so, great people skills, excellent skills in research, drafting and lighting software, anticipates what is needed in advance and is good at solving problems.

Cat has explored design for camera through the CMU TV workshops and using media design in theatrical productions. She has a good eye and I think will be extremely successful working in any area of the industry. Cat would love to work on the west coast pending job opportunities and is looking forward to the LA Showcase to expand her knowledge. In summary, Cat is well deserving of an award for everything she has achieved in the last three years.

Sincerely,



Cindy Limauro

Professor of Lighting Design