



4/8/22

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is John Hill, and it is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support of my friend and colleague, Erin Carigan. I have known Erin since her arrival as the Costume Director for the CSU Theatre Arts Program, and in that time I have found her to be a creative, committed professional, striving for the highest standards in her work and instilling those qualities in her students.

I have recently retired as the head of the theatre program at Front Range Community College in Ft. Collins, CO where I taught for 23 years. I hold a BA in Performance from Loretto Heights College in Denver, CO and a MFA in Costume Design from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For the more than thirty years, I have served the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival as a Regional Respondent, Board Member and Clinician. In part, it is through our mutual work with KCACTF that I have come to know and greatly respect Erin's work, she currently serves as the Vice Chair of Design, Technology and Management for Region 7 (encompassing nine western states) of this national program, and she continues to show leadership and balance with her teaching/design work and her service.

Specifically, I have been asked to address her creative work as the costume designer on the recent CSU Opera Program production of Mozart's Cossi Fan Tutte, presented on April 3, 2022 in the Griffin Concert Hall.

Of Mozart's works, Cossi is a small ensemble chamber opera, inspired by, or possibly based on a Comedia del Arte scenario. So each character and how they are represented is critical to the overall success of the production. Erin and the creative team set the opera in Italy during WWI. The women's fashion of the age was perfect for the two ingenues who's frivolity and self-absorbed lives were reflected in the design choices made by Erin. Obtaining the specific period silhouettes was a bit of a challenge as the two female leads were full figured individuals. It speaks to Erin's artistry that she was able to reflect the period and create costumes that worked on the singer's bodies, and that they enjoyed wearing. The male counterparts to the ladies had the challenge of presenting as themselves, then in disguise (meant to be ridiculous, yet fool the ladies). Erin achieved success working with a rather limited budget, by adapting uniforms from stock, and heightening the comedic aspects of those 'disguises'. The final two characters who were the 'puppet masters' of the deception were cleverly rendered, and perfectly represented for their roles in the story. The Don served as the instigator of the comedy, and in Comedia would have been a Pantalone or Doctore. Erin chose a puffed up appearance, creating a sense of great self-importance. Despina the maid, was the facilitator that helped create the chaos that fed the comedy at the lover's expense. She too had to assume a series of disguises that were very brilliantly designed by Erin.

The depth of Erin's knowledge and experience is clear and recognizable in her work and in her engagement with students and colleagues. She is detail oriented, and fastidious in planning projects, yet flexible when circumstances call for adjustments. This project presents many challenges, yet she was able to create a cohesive, beautifully presented world that helped make this production a success. Erin is a top flight designer and creative artist, as well as a thoughtful and committed educator.

Please feel free to contact me should have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hill', written in a cursive style.

John Hill, MFA
Emeritus Faculty, Theatre & Humanities
Liberal Arts, Communication & Design

Front Range Community College
4616 South Shields Street
Fort Collins, CO 80526
John.hill@frontrange.edu
907-691-4296 cell