



Hope College Bands

3/25/15

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this recommendation on behalf of Melissa Johnson, whom I have known for four years in my capacity as Director of Bands and Head of the Wind Area at Hope College.

Melissa is easily one of the finest students that I have worked with here at Hope. As a young musician, her work is first-rate. She has striven for excellence on her primary instrument, the oboe, in a number of capacities including lessons, Orchestra, and Wind Ensemble. In each of these instances, Melissa has proven herself as a leader both musically and personally.

Melissa applied herself equally intensely to her academic music studies. She took advanced conducting with me and was one of the top students in that class. In her desire to excel even more with conducting, she enrolled in an Independent Study with me, a sign that she took her conducting very seriously. Her work in that class has earned her praise not only in her rehearsals on campus, but also in her student teaching, which she is currently doing this semester. Furthermore, her conducting abilities have led me to give her additional responsibilities and opportunities, such as assisting in conducting and running rehearsals with the Concert Band and Wind Ensemble. As for her other classes, I know her other instructors feel that she is conscientious, dedicated, and a truly fine student.

As a person, Melissa has shown herself to be of good character. She is very reliable and contributed above and beyond my expectations for the Wind Ensemble. She volunteered to go to the Michigan Music Conference to staff our booth, has been a member of the band council, aided in the tour planning for the Wind Ensemble, and has been instrumental in assisting me at our annual high school Honors Band. If I needed someone to cover a rehearsal or run a sectional, Melissa was one of the first people I would ask. She has a pleasant personality and is honest and trustworthy, as her many friends will attest to.

As for her recent student teaching, it has been reported to me that Melissa truly shone at Northview High School. While there she worked closely with the concert bands and earned the trust and respect of her cooperating teacher.

I highly recommend Melissa for your position because I strongly believe your program would benefit by having an educator of her caliber. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Gabe Southard, Director of Bands
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