



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

School for Classical  
& Contemporary Dance

27 November 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I have the distinct honor of writing to you in support of Faith Wood, a Senior BFA Ballet major in the TCU School for Classical & Contemporary Dance (SCCDance). I have worked closely with Wood since her arrival at TCU in the fall of 2020, in studio-based ballet and repertory courses, in classroom-based courses in Dance History and Ballet Teaching Methods, and as her academic advisor. Based on our work together, I'm certain she'll bring the same depth of contribution to the profession that she has to the SCCDance. Any company would be fortunate to have her as part of their community.

Faith Wood consistently rises in the face of a challenge. The SCCDance faculty has been eager to work with her in our own restagings and new works; and we've cast her in guest artist works with the complete trust that she'll be able to easily handle any expectation. Having worked with her for nearly four years, I've been most profoundly struck by how she engages with feedback and unfamiliar concepts both in the studio and in academic courses: she is inquisitive, curious, and open-minded to new ideas; seeking to fully embody the style and technical elements required of any role. She experiments freely and openly in ballet classes and rehearsals, immerses herself fully into every experience, and takes imaginative—and smart—risks. Wood is a thinking, versatile dancer: the combination of her sharp intellect, powerful artistry, and ability to self-direct make her a dancer everyone should want to work with.

As a dance artist, Wood is compelling to watch. She brings a certain electricity to dance works of any style or genre—she understands embodied presence regardless of the shape it takes. Last year, I worked with her on the role of Fairy Candide in our restaging of excerpts from *The Sleeping Beauty*. In acknowledging that she'd been cast against type, she immediately took the reins; studying the material with depth and laser-focus; stepping into an iconic role with all the studiousness of the most elite ballerinas. What began as run-on sentences became well-punctuated poetry; she took each section apart, found her own coordination, dynamics, and musical clarity; and strung them together in a way that showed both technical prowess and artistic depth. I watched her grow, exponentially, through this process over several weeks—a testament to her dedication and her ability to reach new heights when given the opportunity.

Wood has a multitude of talents beyond just her dancing; in addition to her academic prowess evidenced by several university scholarships and extracurricular leadership roles, she's

a talented teacher—a skillset I saw firsthand in our Ballet Teaching Methods course. She set high expectations for her class while demonstrating a deep understanding of the work and compassion for the students she worked with; I imagine she does the same in her work as a Pilates instructor. Well-respected by both her peers and the faculty in the SCCDance for her consistently excellent work and willingness to step up and contribute, I expect that Wood will make an equally strong contribution to the culture of any ballet company wise enough to hire her into their ranks.

Faith Wood has my most enthusiastic recommendation. She is a shining example of what it means to be a dance artist in the 21st century. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Zeller". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

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