



March 15, 2024

Dr. Jeanmarie Higgins, Department Chair
Tenure and Promotion Committee
Department of Theatre Arts and Dance
University of Texas at Arlington

Dear Dr. Higgins and members of the committee:

It is my pleasure to submit a peer review for Assistant Professor J. Austin Eyer in support of his tenure and promotion file. I attended *Head Over Heels* on Friday, March 1, 2024. The production was directed and choreographed by Eyer. The production demonstrated a clear conceptualization, attention to detail, and high production values. Based on the performance and my knowledge of his preproduction work, I recommend Eyer for continued support and recognition for his outstanding research in his tenure-track assistant professor position.

I observed extensive research into the show's themes, characters, music, style, and particularly exploration into the representation of trans and non-binary characters in musical theatre. Eyer shared his thorough dramaturgical research with the production team, cast, and crew. He effectively incorporated his research findings into his directorial approach, casting, direction, and choreography, all of which was evident in the final presentation. As our offices share a common vestibule, I personally witnessed the many individual and group meetings with actors where they explored in-depth both text and characterization, all outside of the normal rehearsal hours. This effort clearly demonstrates a commitment to student skill-building to create a successful learning experience.


As director/choreographer, Eyer's artistic vision was clear and cohesive. The set captured Eyer's vision of a fluid and fantastical world where characters spoke in verse, sang in the songs of the Go-Gos, all while telling the story of an imaginary kingdom doomed unless everyone can find tolerance, acceptance, and love. Both set and costumes reflected hints of Greece and England, infused with a deliberate modern twist. The lights created focus on the dramatic action as well as emphasis to the music through light changes cued through music. Eyer's vision created cohesion between all the elements.

Onstage, Eyer created clear and motivated storytelling through his specific blocking and the detailed, creative choreography. His ability to work with students of all skill levels is impressive. Eyer has the unique ability to bring out the best performances from all actors, despite many challenges, and all while maintaining a clear research focus that serves the

profession, his research agenda, and the educational needs of the students. The students are unanimously enthusiastic about their participation in a show directed by Eyer. Concurrently, they do not hesitate to speak of all that they have learned throughout the process and how appreciative they are for Eyer's heartfelt and professional artistic contributions to their educations.

J. Austin Eyer continues to make outstanding contributions to the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, and it was a pleasure to see those contributions manifest in such a significant way on our MainStage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Healy". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Anne Healy".

Anne Healy

Anne Healy, PhD.
Associate Professor
Associate Department Chair for Academics
Department of Theatre Arts and Dance
University of Texas at Arlington