

Suzette Mayr
Department of English
University of Calgary
2500 University Dr. NW
Calgary, AB
T2N 1N4

11 January 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of Dave Clark, whom I had as an instructor during a week-long music/conducting workshop with Theatre Junction, Calgary, in December 2007. The workshop group was a diverse one -- in our group of twelve adults, some of us had considerable music training, while others (such as myself) had little or no musical training at all. What was remarkable about Dave Clark was that our differing levels of familiarity with the music medium had little or no impact on the workshop and what we all ultimately learned in the workshop. Dave's approach was to encourage us all to think outside the borders of what constitutes "music," and this very original approach helped the less musically-inclined members feel comfortable with the idea of making music, while at the same time still challenged the experienced musicians. We played traditional instruments, but we also learned that traditional instruments are not the only way to create music. We were asked to create our own instruments from everyday household objects, and by the end of the week had formed an accomplished improvisational "orchestra." Many of us played the piano and the trumpet, for example, but in the end all of us also learned how to play Coca-Cola cans, milk crates, plastic tubes, our voices, and our bodies, and we were all entertaining musicians no matter what our musical backgrounds.

Dave Clark also taught us conducting skills -- these helped me get past my self-consciousness about my lack of music skills even more because each one of us was put in the position of conducting the group. I must say that one of my favourite experiences was getting up in front of the group during a cabaret that was open to the public, and conducting the musicians and the audience on their various instruments to play a song that I created. I felt connected with the group and the audience, I felt a surge of confidence I had never before experienced, and I felt more connected with the music that is in the everyday objects that surround us.

Dave Clark is a gifted, inspired, and engaging teacher. His manner is such that he is able to put an entire group of people at ease in a learning environment that is stimulating, but also entertaining. I can easily see him working equally well with groups of children or adults and this is indeed a gift.

Sincerely,
Suzette Mayr