



January 18th, 2022

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Tony-nominated La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts (a 1,250-seat house 35 mins. East of L.A.), I would like to share my enthusiastic endorsement of *So Now You Know*, a surprising production created by the dance/theater company Mixed eMotion Theatrix. This storytelling/movement work brought together members of our La Mirada community and professional performers from MeMT. Among other things, it provided an amazing opportunity for our local residents to learn from Director/Choreographer Janet Roston and Story Coach Ryan Bergmann as they deftly worked with each person, discovering and shaping their personal stories through beautiful movement and choreography.

The show was originally scheduled for March 2020. A week before performance, the pandemic hit and our theatre closed down. Finally, two years later, the cast re-grouped and I was lucky enough to observe some of their rehearsal process. Most of our community members (two senior citizens and three teens) had never performed in front of a live audience before. Janet and Ryan worked gently, constructively, and professionally with everyone. They were encouraging -- yet pushed the group to deliver their narratives using beautiful dance and strong storytelling. It was a joy to see the multi-generational La Mirada cast not only rehearse but truly connect with one another with interest and laughter, creating a genuinely powerful bond. And when the La Mirada and MeMT casts finally joined together, the interaction became even more meaningful.

Janet and Ryan are skilled, enthusiastic, and extremely organized. Watching unseen from the rear of the theatre, I could see how Janet kept the energy positive as she expertly led the full cast from one sequence to another. The show occurred during the height of the Omicron variant and Janet and Ryan were very diligent about the safety of not only their performers, but our community members and theatre staff as well. Everyone tested for COVID before every rehearsal in the final weeks prior to performance. They strove to keep the cast calm, energized, and focused on the work. They succeeded admirably.

The performance, I can tell you, was magical. This diverse and multi-generational cast told stories that were personal and true -- deep, funny, and touching. The audience was completely enthralled. Audience members after the show approached me to express their gratitude for a "fresh, celebratory, and insightful" presentation to which they felt an inexplicable but very human connection. They recognized themselves in the stories and were transported by the engaging choreography. They all confessed to alternatively being moved to laughter and choked up with tears throughout. It was a performance filled with positivity, providing an uplifting experience we all could use right now.

I was so impressed with *So Now You Know* that I have already invited Janet and Ryan back to La Mirada Theater for the 2023/24 season. Why? Because the process brings together disparate members of our community for an exciting and meaningful experience and the final production was something radiant and powerful that the audience loved. I suspect every community will have the same experience with this unique combination of outreach, artistry, and impressive theatrical know-how.

Sincerely,

BT McNicholl  
Artistic Director  
La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts