

To Whom It May Concern:

The first day I set foot into Kelley Schoger's classroom (Acting I, Fall 2016), there were many things I didn't know. I didn't know about kinespheres or about objectives or about Alexander technique; the things I didn't know could have filled several books. What I also didn't know was that my first learning experience with Kelley would be, to this day, the most transformative class of my life. Kelley taught me articulation in my body, mind, and heart and showed me the door to what I consider to be my life's goal: connecting with the people around me. Kelley's class was run with integrity, specificity, safety, and most importantly, play. College is a tumultuous time for all, and for students in the arts, the emotional wear and tear of classwork and rehearsals and transitioning into adulthood is exhausting and terrifying. Kelley is among the few people I have met in my time at University, who understands that time of life and seeks to ease the burden of anxiety, not through false words and pats on the head, but through investigation, kindness, and relentless curiosity.

Since that first semester, I've had the pleasure to work with Kelley in her Beginning Movement course (Spring 2019) as well as with her as a movement/intimacy coach in many rehearsal processes over the years. I do not exaggerate when I say that whenever a company of actors enters a rehearsal space to see Kelley, there is a collective sigh of relief and surge of joy. Kelley's language and composure transforms the space around her into one of safety and exploration.

I had the incredible opportunity to work with Kelley as intimacy coach on a recent production of *The River*. *The River* is an intimate show and sexual tension plays a big part of the narrative. Sexual tension that we, as young actors, weren't sure how to accurately and safely portray. Kelley boldly took the space and gave us permission as well as language to create repeatable movement that felt safe, comfortable, but not overly staged. She encouraged our voices, and championed our comfortability, reminding us that we always maintain agency over our bodies, a concept that many actors struggle to believe, as many directors and professors do not grant us that same right.

Kelley Schoger is the walking embodiment of grace. She moves with grace, she speaks with grace, she treats the world around her with grace. She is a shining example of what it means to be an artist: she looks at the world and draws from it beauty, and dedicates her life to teaching others how to find that same beauty. The beauty of what we can learn, what our bodies can do, and how deeply our hearts can feel. I strive to emulate her spirit in my own life, and I will forever be grateful for the time that I have had to learn from and work with her.

If you have any further comments or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My email address is emilyehhaynes@gmail.com and my phone number is 404-934-9937

Thank you very much,

Emily Haynes

BA Musical Theatre/Acting, Class of 2020, University of Alabama