

Letters of Recommendation: moira & VOCO's TEACHING

April 19, 2010

moira smiley & VOCO gave a workshop for me and my students in the International Vocal Ensemble at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. The group's skill with a myriad of vocal colors and qualities was so impressive, but even more impressive was the connection Moira made with my students. She provided accessible and challenging vocal exercises, sang for us, and encouraged my students to love all the ways that humans can sing. We found her to be a great inspiration!

Katy Strand
Associate Professor of Music
Director, International Vocal Ensemble
Jacobs School of Music
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
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January 30, 2010

Dear Moira and VOCO,

I wanted to let you know how much we appreciated your visit to Adams State College. You provided a very gracious and professional model for our students and they appreciated your warm and genuine interaction. One of the activities during the workshop that they enjoyed the most was when you had them experiment with vocal sounds – the human voice is such a versatile instrument and VOCO takes full advantage of that. They also had a wonderful time with the body percussion you taught them and we will be including that in our one of our concerts this semester.

Thank you so much for sharing your expertise and joy of music with our students. They are still talking about their experience with you. I look forward to our paths crossing again!

Best wishes,
Dr. Beth Wagstrom
Director of Choral Activities
Adams State College

January 24, 2010

To Whom It May Concern;

I would like to highly recommend VOCO for any educational purposes related to music you may have in mind. the group's spirit, depth of knowledge, dynamism, and exquisite vocal talents brought our K-5 students attending the concert an experience they will never forget. The students were enamored, and said it was probably the best in a long line of programs we have brought to them. The workshops for 3rd to 5th grade were close-up and personal, and brought to life the beauty of Roots Music for our students. A treat to have at a school, and a day your students will remember always. Thank you VOCO!

Julius Adams
Music Teacher/Arts Coordinator
PS98Q, Queens, NY

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

As a middle school choir director who appreciates quality guest artists, I give my highest recommendation to Moira Smiley and VOCO. The entire process from the initial contact through post-visit questions was very professional and personal. The ensemble was accommodating of schedule issues within the school day and timely on their communication to set up a successful event.

The workshop was well planned and very effective for middle school students. The material covered a majority of the national music standards such as music of other cultures and improvisation. They were great vocal models and highlighted vocal techniques discussed in class. The class period was so engaging and captivating that it was a disappointment when it had to end.

Likely the best gift from Moira Smiley and VOCO is the spirit of music they left behind. Kids still talk about how much they enjoyed the workshop and as a teacher I can reference many of the lessons and models from the event. Furthermore, our choir wished to perform one of Moira's fabulous arrangements. This piece became the pride of the class. Among the numerous performances of the piece was a middle level choir festival in which the choir received a superior rating.

Please consider working with moira smiley & VOCO in the future. I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

Sincerely,
Karen Keeler Hannahoe, Choir Director
Nevin Platt Middle School
Boulder, Colorado

January 28, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

For the past three year's, Moira has been the "glue" at our large, and very successful Rocky Mountain Song School, leading both the opening and closing sessions, weaving connections and creating community through voice and rhythm.

Moira brings a multi-cultural approach to teaching vocals and movement at the Song School. Over the past three years she has consistently inspired participants with her traditional and freeform exercises that expand vocal and performance possibilities in a fun and supportive environment. Students love it!

Sincerely,
Steve Szymanski -- Co-Founder/CEO
Planet Bluegrass (Home of Festivals: Telluride, RockyGrass, FolksFest & Rocky Mountain Song School)
500 West Main St., Lyons Colorado 80540
Email: steve@bluegrass.com
Web: www.bluegrass.com

November 14, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

It is such a pleasure to work with moira smiley & VOCO. They present a compelling mix of lush *a cappella* harmony along with the rich, percussive combination of cello, banjo and accordion. Their school program and workshop content is grounded in a multiplex of global and American cultural traditions to modern and original songs. Their lively body percussion never fails to delight our students and educators. Their remarkable program educates, inspires and entertains all audiences. Our community public performance was vivid, moving and powerful. I highly recommend moira smiley & VOCO and would be happy to respond to any queries.

Sincerely,
Terry Yagura
Founder/Retired Executive Director
Arts For the Schools, North Lake Tahoe
Email: tyagura@artsfortheschools.org
Website: artsfortheschools.org

November 2, 2008

To whom it may concern...

I had the pleasure to meet Moira Smiley at Grass Valley festival in this summer. It was hearing the sound of her band, VOCO from afar that impelled me leave what I was doing and make my feet find who was making that beautiful sound! Not only consummate performers with a great warmth of personality behind the rich blend of voices but I soon learned, equally fine teachers.

Moira led a workshop which would beguile the beginner and practiced singer and creates an atmosphere where all felt empowered and able to join in. The deep knowledge she has of the music which inspires her, combined with an infectious sense of humour made the workshop time fly by and left us wanting more. She teaches with intelligence and warmth and builds up the the layers of what she imparts so clearly that people can surpass what they feel is their limit. This is a great confidence booster and raises the spirits. When teaching with VOCO there is a great sense of all four women being able to share and support each other which also comes across in their music.

My reaction was to want Moira to come and teach my choir in the UK straight away so they too could benefit from her wonderful skills and infectious enthusiasm. Her steadfast and focused approach wins hearts over, in teaching and in performance, she has a voice that can communicate so many emotions, from tender to tough and many shades between.

Sincerely,

Su Hart (co-founder Baka Beyond, UK Educator)

4 Thomas St.

Bath England BA15NW England

Email: su@baka.co.uk

Web: www.baka.co.uk

April 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

moira smiley & VOCO are truly masterful teachers. Within minutes they had everyone, including the shyest in our group, singing in glorious harmony, and feeling the music in our bodies and souls!

I have taught with Moira in various settings, and hired her several times to teach at Warren Wilson College's "Swannanoah Gathering". I find her to be a skilled and sensitive team-teacher, with a thorough grasp of several vocal traditions, and an extraordinary ability to inspire singers towards greater understanding and breadth.

I've seen VOCO create the same ecstatic response in high school students, professional choruses and in our Conference of Teachers – they are versatile, flexible and so fun to work with!

Sincerely,

Elise Witt

North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching

Email: emworld@mindspring.com Website <http://www.elisewitt.com>