



## School of Music

July 15, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of deserving applicant, Mr. Jacob Taylor. I have had the esteemed pleasure of teaching Jacob in performance and academic settings in the School of Music at James Madison University. Through these positive interactions, I can attest to Jacob's maturity, reliability and attention to detail.

Jacob has a keen and calm demeanor. Being in his presence seems to help center his peers and professors when in a typically stressful or competitive environment. This personality trait has helped optimize Jacob's credulity as an academically strong student. His focus on classwork, discussion, and assignments always appear motivated by intentionality. His desire to meet or exceed expectations is sparked intrinsically, showing maturity in understanding the professor's purpose of providing opportunities for growth. When presenting, teaching, modeling, or turning in assigned work – I've often made note to keep Jacob's submissions as examples to show future students who seek to find similar success in my course.

Jacob is a perceptive student who inspires others with his actions moreso than his verbiage. He practices fervently, rehearses almost reverently, and engages in class deeply. He does not tout his own skills or knowledge, showing leadership in his humility. His quiet and humble nature would typically allow a student to fall into the background of a large program like ours at JMU; however, Jacob allows for his actions to propel the level of respect he well deserves from both his peers and professors.

Jacob has earned and accepted highly coveted roles of student leadership, including auditioning into top-tier ensembles, and being selected as a section leader in one of the premier athletic bands of the east coast – the JMU Marching Royal Dukes. Many students struggle to handle the vigorous schedule of marching band and leadership, finding themselves with issues of absenteeism and/or late, poor quality, or even missing assignments in their academic classes. Music education majors require a hefty course load every semester; and yet, Jacob has successfully managed to excel in both performance and academic realms.

I am thankful to work with someone who cares so deeply about his personal growth. Jacob is a strong and professional communicator who is willing to seek and hear advice from his professors and peers. Many students of Jacob's age-group lack the maturity to hear other people's perspectives, let alone consider those perspectives as valuable for his own insight regarding his personal and professional life-trajectory. Jacob breaks this mold and it will serve him well in life to seek mentorship from people with experiences they are willing to share.

In closing, I am thankful to have a student like Jacob Taylor in my classroom....someone reliable, who leads by example, serves others, and thrives on committing to a job well-done. I'm even more thankful that a young adult with Jacob's intellect, integrity and work-ethic is pursuing a career in public education. Teaching is a noble profession driven by service-minded people who want to help shape the future one child at a time. We need good teachers right now *more than ever* who are willing to sacrifice a glamorous career for the nurturing of the next generation. We in the education community feel blessed that Jacob has chosen this career path, and will support him enthusiastically!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy E. Birdsong". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Amy E. Birdsong  
Music Education Professor

Music Building  
880 S. Main Street, MSC 7301  
Harrisonburg, VA. 22807  
540.568.6714 Office  
[www.jmu.edu/music](http://www.jmu.edu/music)