

JACOB FRUEND

970 West Cuyler Avenue • Unit 1 • Chicago, IL, 60613 • Cell: (314)-761-3282 • JLFruend@gmail.com

January 17, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

There are days—many, in fact—when I wake up in my full-size bed, blocks away from Wrigley Field on the southern bit of Chicago’s north side, and think, “Do I *really* want to call myself an artist today?”

The answer, more often than not, is an unyielding and resounding, “No.”

It is easy to run away from the challenges presented to the theatre artist. The pressure to connect with every viewer on a philosophical and sometimes political level can be intimidating. However, there are a few individual performers, directors, designers, and companies that can embrace the challenge, embrace the work, and create something sincerely unique and inspiring. St. Louis’s own New Line Theatre is one of those companies. And I firmly believe that my artistic education truly began with my introduction to New Line and the work of its artistic director Scott Miller.

I really came into contact with New Line’s core ideas when I was given the opportunity to work as Assistant Director for their 2010 production of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s *EVITA*. Through the application of Brechtian dramaturgical principles—stop me if I’m talking too fast—which have for too long eluded the musical theatre form, Scott is able to transform these classic, sometimes stale pieces into charmingly funny, provocative, volatile, socially and politically relevant works of living, breathing art.

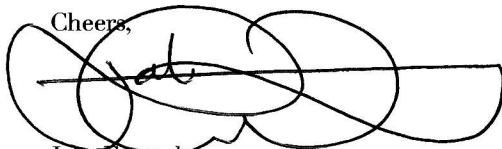
At a New Line show, we are not presented with a casually frivolous stroll through the musical days of yesteryear. Instead, we are invited to take part in a musical reflection of where we, as a society both political and theatrical, are collectively headed.

New Line also supports St. Louis’s aspiring young artists by offering a musical theatre scholarship each year to a graduating High School senior. I was the first student ever to receive this gift in 2009, and I suspect that New Line’s generosity is partially to blame for my journey to this city that I now lovingly call my home.

Mr. Miller talks a lot (in his books, on his blog, and in his exhaustive program notes) about a “new golden age of musical theatre” happening right here, right now. I believe that this golden age can never really be experienced in a Broadway theater. Instead, it can be found in cities like Chicago and St. Louis, Seattle and Minneapolis, in basements and storefronts, on the streets, in classrooms, and bathtubs all across this country. Musical Theatre is returning to the people. New Line has been leading this charge for nearly 21 years now, and they’ve been changing the lives and opening the eyes of young artists for just as long.

So it is with a grateful heart, a sometimes artistically reluctant mind, and absolutely no shame that I ask you to give generously to this unquestionably authentic force for good. Because this morning, thanks to New Line Theatre, I am proud to call myself an artist, an advocate, and an ambassador to Chicago for the brilliant theatre of St. Louis.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jake', is written over a large, circular scribble. The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Jake Freund
Directing Student
Columbia College Chicago Undergraduate Class of 2013