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To the Search Committee:

I am writing to give my (incredibly) enthusiastic recommendation that you allow David Barg to audition (and hopefully hire him) as the new conductor for your Youth Orchestra. I have known Mr. Barg for years as a student and friend, and I cannot think of any greater privilege you could give your young musicians than the chance to work with him.

David Barg transforms the lives of those fortunate enough to work with him. He certainly changed my life, both as a musician and as a person. As a musician, I learned lessons from Mr. Barg that I still carry with me today, 7 years after the last time I played under him at a summer music camp (Sound Encounters). I learned about how to practice ("Never play anything faster than you can control it"), how to rehearse ("Think, play, listen"), how to conduct (I was lucky enough to take some conducting classes from him), and how to perform.

He helped me discover a new joy in deeply focusing on music and ensemble-while I deeply love music and have had many amazing musical experiences throughout my life, I still think back to Mr. Barg's orchestra as the most profound orchestral and ensemble experiences I have ever been a part of. Whenever I hear the pieces we performed, or even snippets of music that remind me of them, I still feel that part of my heart leap, that hope and joy bursting forth.

Personally, David Barg helped me discover what it feels like to believe that I am capable of anything; he showed me what it feels like to have someone believe in you absolutely, without qualification. I will never cease to draw inspiration from the support he has given me over the years, as a teacher, mentor, and friend. My interactions with Mr. Barg have continually given me confidence and hope in developing myself as a musician, as a person, and (now) as an educator. This inspiration helped take me from a small town in Kansas to the University of Chicago, where I graduated with honors, and helped fuel my decision to join Teach for America upon graduation, as well as my future aspirations as an educator and policy maker.

Amazingly, as charismatic as David Barg is, he does not create an atmosphere where students are competing for his attention. Rather, he makes every single member of the orchestra feel valued and respected, and within this structure they root for each other. In the conducting classes I took with him he pushed us to develop as leaders, and I found myself taking great joy not only in my own development but also in the development of the other students - I will never forget the moment when, after Mr. Barg spent a solid week patiently drawing a shy student out of his shell, the student gave a beautiful, confident cut-off, and he smiled with the delight of feeling his own capacity to lead. The entire class was thrilled at this student's accomplishment-as both a student and a teacher, I have in no other classroom seen an environment where the students took so much joy in each others' success.

David Barg is a rare caliber of conductor, and for that matter, human being. His generosity of spirit and dedication to his students are unparalleled, and his gifts as a musician and a conductor are extraordinary. Your young musicians will be some of the luckiest youth in the nation if given the opportunity to work with Mr. Barg; he will give so much to them, showing them their strengths as musicians and as people, pushing them to grow, guiding them to discover new heights of beauty in music and ensemble. I cannot imagine a person better suited for this position.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions whatsoever. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kate Lammers