



25 August 2025

Letter of Reference: Mark Cheyne

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this reference on behalf of **Mr. Mark Cheyne**, whom I had the privilege of working with as the composer for Joburg Ballet's world premiere ballet of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which premiered at the Mandela Stage at Joburg Theatre in October 2024.

Mark's contribution to this landmark production was nothing short of extraordinary. His original score not only captured the imagination of audiences but also elevated the production into a truly memorable theatrical event. Performed live and recorded by the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, his music was experienced by thousands of audience members and was integral to the success of the work's premiere.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements, Mark was honoured at the recent **20th Annual Naledi Theatre Awards** in June 2025. Not only did *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* win in the category of **Best Production: Dance, Physical Theatre and Ballet**, Mark was received the **Special Award for Achievement in Theatre** to specifically acknowledge his original score for Joburg Ballet's *Charlie*. This accolade is a testament to both his exceptional talent and the esteem in which he is held within the South African theatre and performing arts industry.

Throughout the process of developing and staging this production, Mark demonstrated unwavering professionalism, diligence, and creativity. He worked consistently and collaboratively with the choreographer, Mario Gaglione, and our artistic team, often going above and beyond to ensure that the music not only served the narrative but also created a rich and immersive experience for both performers and audiences. He fulfilled the role of Musical Director for this production's premiere and worked tirelessly to turn around the orchestral recording, for it to be used within 48 hours of being recorded. His ability to balance artistic innovation with the practical demands of a large-scale production makes him a uniquely gifted and reliable creative partner.

I hold Mark in the highest regard and recommend him unreservedly for any future opportunities that may come his way. His artistry, work ethic, and dedication to excellence would be an asset to any production or institution.

Yours sincerely,

Elroy Fillis-Bell

Chief Executive Officer

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