



To Whom it may Concern,

My name is Ron Pederson and I am an award winning, Edmonton born actor, improviser, theatre creator and producer. I have worked extensively across Canada, the U.S., Europe and Australia. As an actor, I have appeared on most of Canada's major stages and with its most important companies including; The Stratford Festival, The Royal Manitoba Theatre Center, Tarragon Theatre, Citadel Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, The Arts Club, Second City, Vancouver Playhouse and Soulpepper. As an Improviser and producer, I have founded and shaped Toronto's cheeky multiple Canadian Comedy Award-winning theatre company, The National Theatre of the World. I spent 5 years in Los Angeles, performing on Fox's MADtv and The Late Late Show for CBS. I co-founded The Dora Mavor Moore Award-nominated company The Theatre Department. I am currently appearing in a new show I conceived called *The Wonder Pageant* at Toronto's Coal Mine Theatre. I will move to NYC to perform in a new Off-Broadway Musical this spring.

I met Shannon Blanchet in 2006 when we were cast opposite each other in Stewart Lemoine's Hitchcockian mystery, *Evelyn Strange*. Shannon had just completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at The University of Alberta and was the production marked her professional debut. Since that time, I have had the pleasure of performing with her in several scripted productions as well as improvising with her in *Die Nasty: The Live Improvised Soap Opera*, a weekly long-form show, of which we are both members of the core cast. Most recently, we appeared as Algernon Moncrieff and Cecily Cardew in *The Importance of Being Earnest* for Teatro la Quindicina. Over the last decade, we have spent hundreds of hours performing, watching and discussing theatre together.

What strikes me most about Shannon is her continued dedication to growth and tireless pursuit of excellence in theatrical craft. She is a highly intelligent actor with strong analytical skills and comedic instincts. Shannon brings her intellect to every performance, including her improvisation. During a Shakespeare-themed performance of *Die Nasty* at the 2017 Fringe festival, she invoked *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet* within ten seconds of each other, delivering improvised iambic in a high-pitched honk that was both unintelligible and clear. She has used her passion for politics as improv fuel for her spot-on portrayal of Alberta Premier Rachel Notley several times. She is a committed learner and a meticulously detailed artist who sets the bar high for herself and those around her. She is, at the same time, an immensely supportive castmate. When challenges arise, people often turn to Shannon for insight. She is a natural leader.

Ms. Blanchet's radical passion questing curiosity make her an incomparable partner and collaborator. I can think of no other actor with the scope of Shannon's versatility, uncompromising integrity, probing inquisitiveness, keen instinct and daring spontaneity.

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