



21 March 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I write you today with my wholehearted endorsement of the multihyphenate artist Lezlie Wade.

I am a current board member and former president of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) and was dramaturg and literary manager of Disney Theatrical Productions from 2003-2019, where I worked on over 70 titles, including *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Newsies*, *The Little Mermaid*, *High School Musical*, and *Tarzan*. My dramaturgy is currently represented on Broadway in *Hadestown* and Disney's *Aladdin*.

I met Lezlie over a decade ago, when she was just beginning her theatrical adaptation of Lloyd Alexander's *The Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen* with composer Dan Green, with whom I had worked on the Broadway production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. I was immediately struck by Lezlie's incredible wit in dialogue and some of the best lyrics I'd ever heard.

A few years later, after Lezlie and Dan had turned the handful of scenes and songs they had generated in the BMI Workshop into a full-length musical, they invited me to join their project, now titled *The Tale of the Gifted Prince*, as dramaturg. As with most musicals, this has been a long journey through drafts, readings, and workshops to full production, which after pandemic pause is thankfully around the corner.

A silver lining of walking this extended developmental road with Lezlie has been getting to know the astounding depth and breadth of her artistry, particularly in musical theatre, where women are still woefully underrepresented on our stages as dramatists and directors. Lezlie's talent already stands toe-to-toe with leading lyricists and librettists, and I firmly believe that her best work is yet to come. However, continuing to do that work requires both opportunity and financial support.

Whether through grant, fellowship, award, employment, or continuing education, I urge you to uplift Lezlie Wade so her work can continue to uplift our art and generations of audiences to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kenneth J. Cerniglia

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