



THEATRE DEPARTMENT

TRI-CITIES HIGH SCHOOL
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS
MAGNET PROGRAM

Dr. Ethel Lett
PRINCIPAL

Shondra Evans
VPA MAGNET DIRECTOR

Jade Lambert-Smith
THEATRE DIRECTOR

To Whom It May Concern:

Nicholas Alexander Wilkinson is an undeniably excellent choice for admission into your upcoming first year class. In my twenty years of instruction, I have only met a handful of students who have the innate gifts that Nicholas has. And although it seems that those gifts may be related to his artistic ability, it is actually his resilience, tenacity and determination that have led to him becoming the burgeoning artist that he is today. Nicholas' moniker should read, "The Come Back Kid" or better yet, "The Come-Up Kid," because he has done NOTHING but soar since arriving at Tri-Cities High School.

I have been Nicholas' instructor for the past four years and I have personally witnessed his evolution. He arrived in our program as a dance major, with no acting or singing training. He was mistakenly placed in one of our musical theatre classes as an elective and asked to stay. It was a challenging experience, but Nicholas would not be deterred by the fact that he was considered the "weakest link" by the vocal instructor at the time. And despite many personal and social hiccups that first year, he buckled down and fought to maintain excellence in his academic and artistic classes, which led to a growing respect for his perseverance. The following year, Nicholas announced that he wanted to pursue Musical Theatre as a career. And because of his economic status, he decided to get a part-time job at a local fast-food restaurant to pay for personal vocal instruction. This distinct choice, coupled with intensified acting training at school, allowed him to skyrocket past his peers.

I have had the pleasure of directing Nicholas in *Into The Woods*, *FELA: The Musical*, *Too Heavy For Your Pocket*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In rehearsal, Nicholas is one of the rare students who immediately applies the techniques taught in acting and script analysis without having to be prompted to make the connection. Because of this, he is an avid storyteller eager to explore a character's fully realized arc. This skill has led to Nicholas being elected as the actor representative for our department. Furthermore, he is sought after by many of his peers in the magnet department at large for peer tutorial in acting and dance. This work ethic has also led to Nicholas being chosen to receive fellowships to study outside of our school. The most recent being a full fellowship to study at the Southeastern Summer Theatre Institute in Hilton Head, South Carolina and The Musical Theatre College Prep Intensive at the New England Music Camp in Sidney, Maine.

Outside of the arts, Nicholas has persevered during his high school career to now stand out in his honors and AP courses. Despite his dyslexia, he is an eager learner, and consistently employs tutoring and coaching outside of school to improve his academic standing. He is heralded by his instructors based on his merit, character, and leadership. This has led to him being the only student on the School Governance Council for Tri-Cities. This board consists of parents, superintendents, administration, and business partners. He also exhibits his love for serving the community as an officer in the International Thespian Society and the Dance Honor Society.

Nicholas' senior year has been nothing short of astounding. While other students were still considering their options, Nicholas had already submitted his college applications by mid-September. He was Tri-Cities only Young Arts Finalists, winning him a prestigious scholarship and a week-long residency with arts leaders all over the country. While he was top contender at the Musical Theatre unified in Dallas Texas in November, he was also balancing a lead role in the school's fall play, for which he won a major award. He reprised his role of FELA to critical acclaim this spring, garnering the attention of tv personality Saycon Sengbloh, Tri-Cities Alum and original Broadway cast member. Most



2575 HARRIS STREET
DUNWOODY, GEORGIA 30344
FAX: (470) 254 - 8158
TELEPHONE: (470) 254 - 1845



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recently he has been accepted into his top college choice, The University of Michigan, who accepts 1% of their applicants.

Many assume that it is luck or favor, but Nicholas Wilkinson's exponential growth is the result of the choice to immediately apply any direction he's given, the personal desire to grow in character and integrity every day, and an uncanny willingness to ask for help repeatedly until he achieves his goals. I am so honored to have worked with Nicholas over the past four years. And I am confident that the choice to study in a collegiate environment will allow him the opportunity to hone his craft and fully develop his gifts as a professional performer. Do not hesitate to award him the highest monetary award you have available.

With Gratitude,

Jade M. Lambert-Smith, Theatre Director

Tri-Cities High School

lambertjm@fultonschools.org



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