



**COLLEGE OF  
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

**Theatre Arts Department**

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Dear Clary:

When we first met last summer 2005, I was greatly impressed by everything that I saw at your studio. Mahogany is a vital organization and an integral part of the community that thoroughly involves a wonderfully diverse group of people in its work. And, your designs are awe-inspiring! This year I was able to work with you for Carnival 2006 and witness even more wonders. Each time I spend time with Mahogany I admire, more and more, the wonderful things that you do -- both artistically and educationally. I find the level of artistry to be consistently high and I congratulate you and your organization on the stellar quality of the work.

In my opinion, a great deal of Mahogany's success is due to the strength, beauty, and boldness of your designs. They burst onto an audience in all their glory and the excitement that a Mahogany appearance engenders is palatable. Your art is always alive, kinetic, and spellbinding. When the group appeared at the Alexander Hall Gala this year the energy in the room shifted. I could feel a change in the audience when the Mahogany performers came onto the stage. They "oohed and aaahed" and leaned forward, drawn to the visual feast before them. They clapped and danced along with the music, their eyes never leaving the staging area. They had fun. They were transported. This was carnival as it always should be! Your performers engaged the audience, seeming to pull them into the action with them, playing to them and encouraging them to share in the furious joy of the moment. Mahogany's presentation was disciplined and well timed, culminating in a crescendo of visual elements, color, and movement. The action built slowly from the beginning with the striking but smaller scaled costumes and then smoothly transitioned into the more stunningly voluminous kings and queens costumes. Each figure flowed out from the backstage area and filled the space, a visual feast for the eyes, impossible to ignore. The hall became suffused with a profusion of brilliant colors, shapes, and forms. It is obvious that you are like a maestro or fine theatrical director/choreographer who excels in creating exciting carnival ballets and lively staged spectacles.

After Gala I was extremely eager to see Mahogany's full presentation on carnival day. It was all that the Gala performance had been and more. Each section of the band was unique, yet everything came together to form a stunning cohesive whole. The performers were all thoroughly invested in what they are doing. More importantly, they encouraged and supported one another, creating a oneness in spirit that strengthened and supported the visual unity of the band. Each individual in the band looked fantastic. It was lovely to see the care that you took to make sure that the performers were comfortable and beautiful, which then was reflected back in the pride and joy that they showed when they performed.

I find that your designs are continuously highly imaginative. They are bold and striking but also reflect a simple beauty of rhythmic forms. The costumes don't overwhelm the performers' bodies but rather work in concert with their movements. Each costume is a unified whole, from head to toe,