

To whom it may concern:

I met Michael Ponella in 2013 and have worked with him ever since. Mike is a world class trumpet performer. As Band Director of Park Ridge High School for thirty-three years, having a Master's Degree, performing professional since 1970 to literally millions of people I know you will not find a better musician than Mike Ponella to fit your musical needs at the Playhouse.

I have been in the recording studio with Mike, to many of his performances with numerous professional groups including the "Nighthawks" one of if not the greatest classic jazz band in the world and witnessed his professionalism as well as heard his expertise and perfection while performing any style of music.

Mike is a world-renowned trumpet clinician who has traveled extensively sharing his knowledge and talent not only with my students but with other professional musicians in Japan and across the globe.

Mike has perfect pitch and immediately can tell when any musician in any group is out of tune or playing wrong notes, this is a God given gift that few people in the world possess.

Mike is one of the most level headed, punctual, patient, understand, humble and cooperative people you will ever encounter.

Mike has invited me and my wife to the Papermill Playhouse several times to enjoy the musicals. My wife and I have seen a wide variety of shows that cover many musical styles. In the theater Mr. Ponella's trumpet sound projects clearly, blends perfectly with the ensemble and is always stylistically correct.

I contend that the Tony Award that the theater won was due to the great contribution of the consistent high-level playing by Mike and the live orchestra that Papermill Playhouse should be very proud of. I know Mr. Ponella is proud to be there as well. Mike has given the theater his priority for many years.

I truly feel Mr. Ponella is an asset to any group he performs with and a huge benefit to the Papermill Playhouse.

Sincerely,

Richard Popolizio

Director of Bands

Park Ridge High School

Freelance musician/drummer/percussionist

Member of the popular band "Friends."