

School Letters of Recommendation 2022

4/4/2022

To: South Carolina Arts Commission

Re: Mr. Charles Pettee

Dear SCAC Directors,

I was pleased to hear that you are considering professional musician, Charles Pettee, as a returning candidate for the South Carolina Arts Directory where he will find opportunities for family and educational performances and in-school residencies. I would like to offer my support for that decision with a few words about his ability to perform, educate, and connect with students, particularly as these relate to a classroom/residency situation.

First, Mr. Pettee's skill as a performance artist is superb. His talents both as a singer and a player of multiple instruments allows the lesson's message to be heard and enjoyed on different platforms. It gives students a variety of opportunities to learn and engage while Charles works to include every student. His knowledge of music and his awareness that some of his classroom audience may have never heard the genres he is presenting, are addressed with sensitivity and even help mold his presentations. Charles continually shows a level of confidence and encouragement when inviting students to be a valued part of the learning experience.

Second, Mr. Pettee's attention to detail and preparation is outstanding. He works directly with teachers to provide a mix of historic images and videos to support the lessons and he understands the pacing necessary for keeping students fully engaged. I have had the pleasure of working with Charles for multiple years now. While it would be easy for him to deliver the same "pre-packaged" unit each year, Charles has re-shaped each new visit's focus around a solid framework of live performances, musical history, social awareness and yes, even entertainment. All of this provides a unique chance for many students to find and share their own voice and make positive connections to their culture, their community and their world beyond the classroom.

On a personal note, I have had the opportunity to invite a number of speakers, performers and professionals into our school over the years. It isn't always easy to find someone with the right mix of message, management, and methodology, but Mr. Pettee has a way of getting kids excited about learning. Students always look forward to his next lesson and often can be heard singing or humming tunes from them long after Mr. Pettee's time with them has passed.

Simply put, Charles Pettee is an exceptional educational artist and would be an excellent choice for the SC Arts Directory.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Will Owens
Teacher 4th Grade
Grady A. Brown Elementary
Hillsborough, NC 27278

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"Paul Buksbazen [Music Specialist] said it well: we really enjoyed having you, listening to your music, and seeing the way you dealt with our kids. The time you spent in the classroom was very valuable, giving those students more us close and personal time. They were very interested in your instruments as many of them had never seen a banjo or mandolin before. They watched intently as you slayed great Blue Grass tunes. One of my 5th-grade students said that was the best music class ever. Oops. Ha! You made a big impression on them as you demonstrated different styles of music, talked about the influence of different cultures, and related history to give them a better understanding of the songs you taught. The students were involved in the music through singing and moving and they felt your passion for Blue Grass. Thank you for sharing your talents with us. It was a worthwhile week that will be remembered."

[*Karla Williams* Music Teacher (unedited email following 3 Day "Digging for the Roots of Bluegrass" residency, **Polo Ridge Elementary School**, March, 2018)

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"Bluegrass Stomp was wonderful!! The children and staff at Woodland Heights Elementary loved your performance this morning. What a treat!
Charles Pettee's program as part of the MUSE Machine performances is just the kind of experience we want for our students. He hooked us right in with an upbeat guitar song, followed by background info and Q & A, invitations to clap along, using tempo and dynamic variation to lead the student response. He taught us how to sing two responses in "Cluck Old Hen" and led right on into harmonica, mandolin and banjo. It was a great musical and educational 45 minute program that left us wanting more. . . . THANK YOU!!" -- June Sereque, Woodland Heights Elementary

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"Charles,
Thanks so much for a FANTASTIC performance today at Phillips. We really enjoyed it, and wow, what a reception you got from those kids. Really, really great...
It was really interesting to see how you talked about the history of the different instruments, what they sounded like when played as originally intended, and how different cultures have used the instrument differently, creating an entirely new sound from the same source.
What energy you created and what a great rapport with the audience. We will highly recommend you to other schools in our area.

Thanks again and for being so patient with making this happen.
Best," -- PTA contact for Phillips Middle School

17385 US Hwy 17 Hampstead, NC 28443

To Whom It May Concern,

I am an elementary Music teacher in Pender County, North Carolina. I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Mr. Charles Pettee in May of 2017. Mr. Pettee was able to complete a weeklong residency at our school through a Grassroots Grant funded by the North Carolina Arts Council. For me, as the Music teacher, it was the best week of the school year! The students were able to connect with traditional North Carolina folk music in a way that was meaningful to them through story, songs, and the introduction of a variety of instruments. Mr. Pettee was able to work with our 4th graders, 2nd graders, and 5th graders throughout the week. In addition, he ended the week with two culminating concerts for all of the students at our school.

Mr. Pettee was very flexible in accommodating our school schedule with its early start and in working with larger groups than he had in the past. He was able to work with approximately 100 4th graders to help them compose a song specific to our school and region. He worked to incorporate their ideas and words throughout the drafting process until the song was finalized. Then, the 4th grade students were able to present their composition to their peers at the final concert. The students were so proud!

In working with the different grade levels, Mr. Pettee varied the songs he shared and the way he presented the historical information in order to engage learners of differing ages. Mr. Pettee went above and beyond our expectations while he was here at our school, including presenting a special session for students who are in a self-contained classroom for students with exceptional needs. All of the students ended the week with a better understanding of North Carolina folk music and the instruments traditionally used to create it. After the Friday concerts, several classroom teachers approached me to share how much they personally enjoyed the concerts and how engaged their students had been all week.

In closing, I would highly recommend Mr. Charles Pettee for any school residency or music program. Topsail Elementary greatly benefitted from his visit this past year, and we would look forward to another residency in the future!

Sincerely, Laura Beth Payne, M.A., NBCT, Music Teacher, Topsail Elementary School