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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to offer my unreserved support to Ben Maerkle. Upon meeting Ben, you will realize his commitment to being a well-rounded person is very strong. Ben's commitment to achieving a high level of musical aptitude is evident by his membership in the Thames Valley Youth Symphony.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ben for seven years. He was shy and quiet when he auditioned for me. Ben was offered a position into the highly selective Thames Valley Youth Symphony on second violin. Since his acceptance, Ben has made improvement every year. He is a well-rounded individual with excellent musical skill, focus, and determination. He used the above-mentioned tools to become the concertmaster of the Thames Valley Youth Symphony this year.

He has worked well with others in the ensemble setting, not only in a leadership role, but also in a supporting role. He has performed Bizet's *Carmen Suite*, Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*, Schubert's *Symphony Number 8*, Strauss' *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* as a section member, as well as Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije* and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture* as concertmaster. Ben has prepared diligently and performed beautifully on all of these original versions of the above-mentioned works, and as his conductor I can say without reservation that he is a very talented performer.

Ben has led by example. He has been great communicator, an excellent team player, and a vital link of the orchestra's success. Ben takes his music and academics very seriously, and I believe him to be a competitive applicant. He is a great example of the positive role models present amongst our young people today

Sincerely,



James Edward Jackson, III
Music Director and Conductor
Thames Valley Youth Symphony