**Excerpts from Letters in Support of Professor’s Contini’s Scholarship, Creative Resarch, Teaching, and Service.**

*“If you walk past Professor Contini’s door on any given day on officer hours you will find students who seek out his help and advice. And if the line is any indication, he has no trouble taking a good portion of his day to give it. Professor Contini has sat and talked to me about my life, my career, my goals, my job prospects, and my fears. He critiqued a thesis I had to write for another class, serverd as faculty sponsor for a play I directed, and helped me to develop a project for my Fulbright proposal. Through he had no academic obligation to do these thing as they were not related to classes I was currently taking with him, he was happy to help. To him, a relationship with a studen does not end once finals are over”*

Former Student, Susana Baker

*“ It was through George’s guidance that I produced a new student theeatre troup (The Justice Agents) and directed fellow students in the development of public , socialy conscious theater performances. George was the professor who taught me how to teach, to direct, to conduct qualitative research, and to faciliate collaboration among my peers, all of which are skills I continue to use today.”*

Former Student, Kelly Nielson

“*Since we started our Apprentice Program at Aurora a few years ago, Professor Contini has sent several of his Graduating Seniors to audition for us. Without fail, his students continue to stand out as the best prepared and most mature that we work with. We have hired more UGA graduates to be a part of the apprenticeship than any other school. Throughout the year it is obvious what stellar training they received in their time with him. They also speak incredibly high of him, and clearly are inspired by his work. I’ve also had the privilege of directing Professor Contini in one of our Mainstage Shows at Aurora. He played a challenging role in The Explorer’s Club, but made it look easy! The nuance and skill he brought to his character showed that he practices what he preaches.”*

Jaclyn Hoffman Director of the Aurora Theatre Apprentice Program

“*The mentorship that he provided helped (the student) to achieve beyond expectations. His end of semester presentation showed what he had learned; and subsequently won him the top Young Dawgs presentation award. …it was obvious that (Contini’s) commitment was not just to help (the student) reach his full potential, but that he had a passion for teaching and inspiring all his students. (He) is an excellent example of a professor who enhances the academic achievement of students at UGA, while at the same time reaching out to engage the larger community.”*

Jim Geiser, the Senior Consultant for the Young Dawgs Program

“*I'll never forget the Psycho Beach Party opening night when you told me, 'Marvel Ann doesn't have to BE sexy, she IS sexy.' Realizing what you're already bringing to the table is so important, especially on camera, and it has caused me to be more self-aware (and self-confident!). Your advice to me years ago has stuck with me more than any other lesson I've been taught, and I've applied it to so much. Thank you for being the professor to probably best understand, and most appreciate me and my antics, I am forever grateful!! And I’m doing it!* “

Former Student Jamie Gray Hyder, “*True Blood”, “Graceland”*

*“I think a great instructor learns, as well as guides, during his student’s discovery process. As a student, I was always impressed with George’s ability to draw the best from his students. For example, my one person show started as an experiment in character building. Learning the Michael Chekhov Technique, as George directed, became the foundation for my actor training. The life of my one person show grew into a feature film titled, The Little Tin Man. The success of the film has been overwhelming, with eleven festival invitations in 2013 and 2014, awards for Best Feature and Indie Spirit, Time Warner Cable distribution, iTunes sales, and worldwide Video on Demand starting October, 2014.”*

Former Student, Aaron Beelner

“*George Contini is the single greatest teacher I have ever had in my life. George encourages us to ask tough questions about life and art and to develop fearlessness in our work. I am currently a graduate student in the American Repertory Theatre/ Moscow Art Theatre MFA Acting program at Harvard University, and it baffles me how many people in this profession George Contini has impacted. I recently met a young playwright named Emily Bohannon in New York via a program at graduate school, and I was amazed to learn that she had studied at the the University of Goergia with George Contini, and had recently been started studying playwrighting at The Juilliard School. George is such a great mentor! He doesn't sugar-coat he industry in any way. He tells us the truth because he wants to see us succeed.”*

Former Student, Mario Haynes

*“The training I received at George’s hands has produced real world results. I was chosen from a nation wide pool of auditionees to join the American Theatre Wing’s Springboard NYC program—an honor due in no small part to George’s sharp coaching of my audition and review of my personal statements. I now assist the creative director of Fox Stage Productions in NYC as he develops titles from the 20th Century Fox film catalog for the Broadway stage. My current fortunate situation would not exist without George’s direct influence on my development as an artist and a professional.”*

Connor Brockmeier, Former Student

“*I have studied theatre for fifteen years, working with many directors on many different projects. Working with George was by far the most rewarding experience for me to date. George never stops pushing you. Mr. Contini was also a mentor. He proactively took opportunities to discuss my future goals and my plans to achieve those goals. He guided me along the way. Since graduating, I have had the opportunity to start an independent film studio in Atlanta. We’ve produced several projects, including an internationally recognized and award winning web series. George directly impacted my professional career, and for that I am forever grateful.*

Former Student, Nathaniel Collum

“*I was immediately impressed by his obvious profiency and depth of experience in the methods he was teaching. Furthermore, I have been able to observe Professor Contini in a performance of his one man show and his clear application onstage of the techniques he taught so confidently was a powerful testimony both to their value and to the integrity of his teaching.”*

Former Student, Ruth Crews Nelson

*“George is a master actor whose ability to model techniques enriches his teaching. One day, George described how a single gesture can communicate an entire frame of mind to an audience. In the middle of a sentence, he slammed his hand on the table and was absolutely furious. He then seamlessly continued the discussion as his usual cheerful self, without any residue of the fury that had just poured out of him. It was fascinating. I was hooked. From that point through the rest of the semester it became my goal to learn to use a psychological gesture to create a performance like his performance in that moment. As a gifted practitioner, George is able to at once instruct and inspire.”*

Former Student, Wyatt Geist

“*The reason George stands out in my educational experience on such a personal level however, is that he taught me to be a better colleague, friend and global citizen. In a meeting, when I was upset about the behavior of a group member, George stayed positive and constructive asking only "What did you learn from this?" Many of the finer points he made about the integrity, joys and responsibilities of being an artist, I know I will continue to understand in deeper and deeper ways throughout my adult life. That is why George is such an exceptional teacher. I continue to learn from him every day.”*

Former Student, Chloe Zeitounian

“*He is the kind of educator that inspires his students to try new things and to think outside the box while also giving them goals and challenges that he knows that they can achieve. No one in his classes ever feel inferior or ostracized because he gives us all a feeling of community and family. His grace and wisdom help him to connect with us, he makes us fell that we are equals who all have something to learn from one another. George is simply the best. He has a beautiful ability to make all of his students feel that they are his number one priority at all times. He would gladly give up his free time to help a student in need. In fact, he has done so many times for me. He is always willing to help guide me through whatever tumultuous or confusing situation that I find myself encumbered with. George is the greatest mentor because he tells you the truth. He wants me, and all of his students, to succeed. He has a personal investment in our success because he values his relationships more than anything else.”*

Former Student, Nathan Cowling

*“I can’t imagine having created my show without George’s guidance. He is a wonderful teacher and inspiring artist. The arts community of Georgia is lucky to have him”*

Amber Nash (Cartoon Network’s hit show *Archer*)

“*Without Professor Contini’s guidance, I honestly do not see how the show would ever have come to exist. I had no experience with crafting a solo show. Professor Contini introduced me to the art form and for that I’m so grateful. He gave us homework exercises that were perfect for uncovering what stories were important to me and the stories that I had to tell. Professor Contini was great to work with because he communicates with all different genres and styles. He had artists from diverse backgrounds all making different one-person shows. Professor Contini was able to speak everyone’s individual language. This was amazing.”*

Mark Kendall, “The Magic Negro”

“*I was impressed, and inspired by, Contini’s ability to overcome formalities and immediately engage his students on a level that was both intellectually and critically challenging, as well as deeply committed to the craft of acting and theater productions. The fundamental difference between Contini’s approach and what I see in most other teaching professionals, is that he is willing to take the same risks that he asks of his students. In other words, he inspires his students to push the boundaries of their own creative process and critical analysis, precisely because he demonstrates that he is willing to do so himself. The rehearsals for “Uncle McBuck” were an exercise in team-building, collaborative brainstorming, experimentation, and open peer review, all in a supportive, stimulating, and challenging atmosphere. Contini set the tone for this kind of learning environment from day one. He possesses that rare ability of imparting a deep knowledge of the subject matter (in this case – that of political theater and techniques associated with the theater of the oppressed) while also allowing students to arrive at their own discoveries and opinions. He seems to naturally understand that fine, but critical, distinction between top-down teaching and encouraging the student to become a protagonist of his or her own learning process. Contini has been an inspiration for my own teaching and general outlook on what it means to be an effective educator and scholar.”*

Dr. Robert Moser, UGA Portugese Dept., translator *The Misadventures of Uncle McBuck*

“*He is willing to take a chance on you and let you prove yourself, which is the most important thing to a theatre student. He has an incredibly creative midn and the vision to take anything ordinary and turn it into something extraordinary. For Trojan Women, Professor Contini was able to turn two sheets and a couple of sticks into a wedding ceremony, some people in masks into a raging battlefield, and a red cloth into a dying child. All the while, he makes his cast members feel like they are the creators and have an impact on everything. He is inclusive on everyone’s ideas, and he creates a safe and exciting space to create. He is an accomplice in our path to achievement, rather than someone who critiques it.”*

Former Student, Monica Padman

“*As a director, George is unparalleled in his comedic ability. In fall of 2011, I was lucky enough to be cast in his production of The 39 Steps. The comedy workshop that headed the rehearsal process taught me more in two hours than I have learned in years of my own work. The production required and incredible amount of physical precision. George employed exercises to help us craft movements so that we were able to develop a rhythm and timing that we were able to repeat for our eight performances. Every time we would run into a wall, George had a solution and always approached situations with a positive attitude in order to keep the performers striving for the best. I carried the clarity of movement I gleaned from the process to the Summer Training Congress at the American Conservatory Theater, where the director of the program immediately commented on what a great technique instructor I must have had. With no other director could we have constructed such a complex show in only three and half weeks”*

Former Student, Edward McCreary

**“***I was cast in Prof. Contini’s production of Trojan Women in my first year of graduate studies, which quickly became an unparalleled learning experience of its own. Prof. Contini utilized advanced methodologies in directing the production that not only expanded his actors’ connection with the text but also enfranchised them as participants in creating a unique and powerfully moving piece of art. Later, I had the immense honor of assistant directing (under Prof. Contini) the world English language premiere of Augusto Boal’s The Misadventures of Uncle McBuck where Prof. Contini once again worked with the actors to create one of the most astoundingly insightful and humorous pieces of theatre I have ever been involved with. In my 20 plus years of professional theatre, assisting Prof. Contini on McBuck was the most enriching, rewarding and fun job I have ever had. While working with him on McBuck, he was instrumental in putting me in touch with professors in the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute at UGA which led to me participating as a panelist at the 2008 Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference and then to an LACSI grant that allowed me to study with Nobel Peace Prize nominee Augusto Boal in Rio de Janeiro. Prof. Contini saw my particular interest in Theatre of the Oppressed, saw how it could dovetail with my already established career in professional improvisation and provided me with opportunities that allowed me to explore and expand on my interests. Far from being unique, the attention that Prof. Contini showed to me in presenting me with these opportunities is something I saw him do for every student under his tutelage.”*

Former Student, Cast Member Second City, Amy Roeder

“*I had the opportunity to observe Mr. Contini’s arresting colloquium presentation, which he gave at the Institute for Women’s Studies. In a manner that was both intellectual and theatrical, Mr. Contini told his personal story as a gay artist/performer. The engaging talk taught students U.S. gay history by way of Mr. Contini’s personal experiences, which he clearly connected to larger social movements and historical events. Furthermore, his talk caused students to see theatre from a new perspective, challenging them to question why heterosexual characters and roles dominate so many plays and performance opportunities. As a masterful teacher and performer, Mr. Contini pulled us in with his personal truths. His courage in telling his story was an inspiration for all of us in the audience.”*

Dr. Emily Sahakian, UGA