

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Music

Jerry O. Blackstone, Associate Professor of Music (Conducting) with tenure, School of Music, is recommended for promotion to Professor of Music (Conducting), with tenure, School of Music.

Academic Degrees:

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| D.M.A. | 1986 | University of Southern California |
| M.M. | 1975 | Indiana University School of Music |
| B.M. | 1974 | College Conservatory of Music, Wheaton, Illinois |

Professional Record:

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| 1998 to present | Associate Professor of Conducting/Director of Choirs, Chair of Conducting Department – University of Michigan, Ann Arbor |
| 1988-1998 | Assistant Professor of Conducting, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching:

Jerry Blackstone is a distinguished choral conductor and teacher of conducting. His knowledge of repertoire, genres, and languages, requisites for accomplished choral conductors, are exceptional. He is a wonderful resource to students at all levels, working actively in ensembles with undergraduate music majors and non-majors from across the University, and with advanced graduate students in ensembles and curriculum for choral conductors. The combination of outstanding musicianship and conducting technique, personal integrity and a true teacher's grasp of how students learn make him an ideal leader of choral ensembles and in his classroom teaching. An important sign of the quality of his work with young singers in choral ensembles is the support he enjoys from his colleagues on the voice faculty. This is an area of common tension having to do with the healthy use of young voices. Professor Blackstone is enthusiastically supported and thoroughly respected by his voice colleagues. He brings an enormous background of high-level, national experience to the podium and classroom. One of the highest acknowledgements of accomplishment in the field of choral conducting is an invitation to perform at the national conference of the American Choral Directors Association. Jerry Blackstone has twice earned this affirmation – in 1997 with the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, and in 2003 with the elite Chamber Choir. This past year he conducted one of the finest festival choirs in the country, the 340-voice Music Educators Conference All-Eastern Chorus.

Creative Activity:

Jerry Blackstone is one the nation's most sought-after choral clinicians and guest

conductors. He is widely recognized as a leader in the choral field, and in his years at Michigan, has helped direct its conducting program into the national spotlight. He has been innovative diligent in establishing the choral conducting curriculum of the School of Music, and is recognized as an important mentor and guide to young conductors. He has established high standards for acceptance into the program, which is currently among the most competitive choral conducting programs in the country. His choirs are recognized for their musicality and vibrance. His leadership of the UM All-State program at Interlochen, the Michigan Youth Chorale, in addition to his development of the Male Vocal Arts Day in association with the Men's Glee Club, are all impressive examples of his commitment to recruiting and outreach, and of his energetic leadership in the field of choral experience. Dr. Blackstone is Music Director of the University Musical Society Choral Union, which he conducts annually in performances of Handel's Messiah. His preparation of the choir for the recent performance and recording of William Bolcom's "Songs of Innocence and Experience" earned him the 2006 Grammy Award for best recorded choral performance, an extraordinary distinction for any conductor.

Service:

Professor Blackstone is recognized as an exemplary citizen of the School and University. He is Chair of the Conducting Department, involving the considerable complexities of the various graduate degrees in conducting. He works tirelessly as an adjudicator for vocal auditions across the School, serving in that capacity each year as students are chosen for ensemble participation, and is a frequent member and chair of important searches. His outstanding leadership as Director of the School's summer programs, his work with the Michigan Youth Ensembles Program and MPulse, and his conducting of the All State program have all been critical for the School, supporting musical activity in the state and attracting gifted performing arts students to the University.

External Review:

Reviewer A

"Given his national reputation and visibility, I was frankly surprised that he had not been promoted previously."

"Dr. Blackstone's creative and scholarly contributions encompass a variety of activities, ranging from performance to editing a choral series. His performances within the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club brought him well-deserved professional recognition with appearances at national ACDA conventions and widespread touring."

Reviewer B

"I find his ensemble work to be of a world-class caliber. His teaching evaluations are also extremely impressive, thus his students appear to enjoy his rehearsals as well as their performances. . . . the graduate choral program that he runs is among the top five in the country, largely as a result of his fine teaching, but also because of the fine curriculum. His guest conducting appearances seem both numerous and important, as are his collaborations with the Detroit Symphony; and his choral series with Santa Barbara Publishing seems to be very successful."

“As to a comparison of him with other Associate Professors in the field, I would venture he is quite surely the best in the rank at the moment, and from what I know of the profession would give many a full Professor moments of insecurity because of his skill, gifts, and hard work.”

Reviewer C

“He is highly regarded by his colleagues in that group. In that I continue to travel extensively, I am well aware of his reputation throughout this country and abroad.”

“I assure you that Jerry Blackstone meets all the requirements that committee considered necessary for a positive vote for a performing artist’s promotion to Full Professor.”

Reviewer D

“Blackstone’s teaching evaluations are strong and support his effectiveness in working with ensembles in both rehearsal and performance. His repertoire choices are diverse, challenging, and appealing.

Jerry Blackstone’s record of teaching, creative work, and service is excellent.”

Reviewer E

“Dr. Blackstone is one of the foremost authorities in the US in the development of male choirs. The frequency and receptions of his presentations at national and state choral conventions reflect a broadly based respect for his work with the University of Michigan Men’s Glee Club. The University of Michigan’s Chamber Choir is enjoying a rejuvenated national presence under his guidance. The invitation for the U of M’s Chamber Choir to be featured on the first national convention of the newly founded National Collegiate Choral Organization reflects a remarkably high level of respect by his peers.”

Reviewer F

“His creative achievement as a conductor can be assessed by the quality and quantity of the performances of ensembles under his director or prepared by him and by the number of invitations to serve as guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician that he receives.”

“In each of these areas, Dr. Blackstone excels.”

“ . . . his work as chorus master for the Detroit Symphony is also significant because of the level of excellence demanded by a professional orchestra and because of the size of the audiences who hear the performances live and on subsequent radio broadcasts.”

“ . . . Dr. Blackstone is one of the most respected university choral conductors in the country. I would place him in the ranks of the top 10 or 15 university choral conductors. He has done high quality work at the University of Michigan and as a guest conductor and has made significant contributions to our profession.”

Reviewer G

“Dr. Blackstone’s ensembles appear to have excellent command of all the choral elements which would dictate continued performances for the National Convention of the American Choral Director’s Association.”

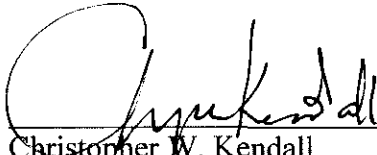
Reviewer H

“His work was highly energized and effective. The students were clearly engaged in the process, and the results were excellent. He consistently achieves a healthy and natural vocal sound from his ensembles, coupled with expressive, dynamic singing.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Jerry Blackstone is simply one of the nation’s leading choral conductors and educators. He is an outstanding teacher who creates a beautiful choral sound while teaching students at all levels to sing musically and healthily. Dr. Blackstone’s professional prominence is a great credit to the School of Music and a magnet for talented young singers and choral conductors. He is a sought-after performer, and has been regularly invited to conduct choral festivals all over the world.

He has been invited to serve as chorus master on eight separate occasions for a variety of works and choral ensembles with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. His list of achievements, both internal and external to the University, is extraordinary. It is with the unanimous support of the Executive Committee that I recommend him for promotion to Professor of Music (Conducting), with tenure, School of Music.



Christopher W. Kendall
Dean, School of Music

May 2006