

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

The University of Michigan
School of Music
Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation

Dennis E. Wilson, Assistant Professor of Music (Jazz), School of Music, is recommended for promotion to Associate Professor of Music (Jazz), with tenure, School of Music.

Academic Degrees:

M.M.	1997	Hamilton University, Evanston, WY
B.M.	1974	Berklee College of Music, Boston, MA

Professional Record:

2000 – present	Assistant Professor of Music, University of Michigan School of Music
1998 – 2000	Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas
1994 – 1999	Assistant Director of Bands, Director of Jazz Studies, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas
1976 – 1977	Music Teacher, West Babylon Jr. High School, West Babylon, New York
1971 – 1976	University Of Vermont Summer Session for High School Students, Burlington, Vermont

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching:

Dennis Wilson's teaching philosophy continues to evolve with each additional year of teaching experience. He constantly seeks out and, if necessary, creates teaching opportunities to benefit his students. Professor Wilson remains open-minded, giving every student an opportunity to strive for proficiency, creativity, and confidence. He has created occasions for students to interact with other well-known professional musicians. Professor Wilson views all these interactions as opportunities to gain a greater understanding about his students and their needs – not only during school, but also after graduation. He seeks ways to improve his teaching method by attending CRLT Workshops, and utilizing C-Tools. He selflessly shares his professional experiences to encourage, nurture, counsel, and support his students.

Professional and Creative Activity:

Professor Wilson is heavily involved in numerous professional activities. These include regular performances at the Firefly Jazz Club in Ann Arbor, Michigan as the solo trombonist for the Paul Klinger Easy Street Jazz Band; musical director, arranger and solo trombonist for a performance at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; and several performances as the lead trombonist at the McCarter Theater, Princeton, New Jersey. He continues to perform regularly with Nnenna Freelon and the Count Basie Orchestra at events nationwide, as well as at jazz festivals around the country. Professor Wilson has several recordings that will be released in early 2006. He is involved in several international musical associations, and routinely participates as a clinician, speaker, and soloist at educational presentations nationwide.

Service:

Professor Wilson has a long history of participating with service-oriented groups and activities in a variety of capacities. He is the acting president, and on the board of directors for the Ann Arbor Blues

and Jazz Festival (non-profit). Last spring, he helped organize the Trombone Symposium at the University of Michigan which brought together jazz and classical trombonists. Professor Wilson routinely participates in numerous statewide outreach musical programs for student organizations. He is a member of the Artist and Clinician for Edwards Instruments, Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences, International Association for Jazz Education, and American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers.

External Review:

Reviewer (A)

“Dennis is one of the best known and highly respected educators in the jazz field today. His major reputation as a performer, composer, arranger, and bandleader sets him apart in many ways from numerous other educators. He possesses one of only a handful of original voices on today’s scene. I have been constantly impressed with his knowledge of his field; his organizational skills; and his collegiality, wisdom, and leadership abilities.”

Reviewer (B)

“Mr. Wilson is a world known and respected jazz trombonist. His performance experience with the legendary Count Basie Band, alone, has brought him the stature as one of the highest profile trombonists in the world. His uniqueness is his diversity; jazz performer, lead trombonist, bandleader, composer/arranger, promoter/business manager, jazz historian.”

Reviewer (C)

“Dennis is blessed with the rarest of gifts – one that combines intelligence, integrity and compassion. He possesses a keen intellect, depth of knowledge; he is an absolutely wonderful communicator. He understands this music both intellectually and as the art of pure feeling.”

Reviewer (D)

“The Manhattan Transfer/Count Basie Orch. Association, while under Dennis’ direction proved fruitful. My experiences with Dennis Wilson were enough to give me a very strong sense of his abilities, both as a musician, and as a leader of musical projects. I am also impressed with the dedication he has to his work as a teacher. He approaches teaching like he approaches his musical work in general, and the word that comes to mind is passion.”

Reviewer (E)

“Dennis is a man who is extremely talented and knowledgeable. He has lived as a jazz musician and has performed with the legends; this is invaluable for a teacher. There is no one more qualified than Mr. Wilson since he has such a broad understanding of the genre.”

Reviewer (F)

“I’ve found him to be creative, resourceful and an insightful educator/musician who handles himself in a very professional manner. His ability to organize his thoughts, plan, and follow through on short and long-term goals is exceptional. In addition, his musical contributions, on a regional, national and international basis, are irreprehensible.”

Reviewer (G)

“His brass creativity unites jazz and symphonic players; I think this is a unique slant, and very positive. Dennis has been creative and enterprising in making sure that our NPR jazz program has good reason to travel to the Midwest. His lifelong career in American music, his first-hand experience in great orchestras past and present, his performance for recording credentials, showcasing student ensembles and exposing them to top artists are great qualities and hard to find, especially in one person.”

Reviewer (H)

“Mr. Wilson is an exceptionally creative and talented artist and scholar with boundless energy and enthusiasm. Mr. Wilson has successfully demonstrated a unique ability for combining historical and cultural aspects of America’s art form, jazz.”

Reviewer (I)

“I marvel at his leadership abilities, putting together music festivals, playing lead trombone for Count Basie for 12 years, organizing educational programs, arranging/composing for The Manhattan Transfer, Ray Charles, and others. He is always willing to go the extra mile for students. In essence, he is part of jazz history.”

Internal Review:

Professor Wilson is an exemplary colleague who is always willing to help. He brings strong and diverse musicianship skills, extraordinary enthusiasm for his work, a great devotion to the School of Music and the University, and an entrepreneurial flair that has helped to increase our in-state visibility. Professor Wilson continues to work on his commitment to improve his organizational abilities within his studio. His colleagues remain hopeful that strengthening his organizational skills by continuing to attend training workshops will carry over into other areas of his professional career.

Summary of Recommendation:

Dennis Wilson is an exceptionally talented musician with a national reputation. He brings a plethora of extraordinary life experiences that enhance his teaching and service. He shows a great devotion to his students and colleagues. He has performed with musical legends. He is a valued colleague who has much to share. It is with the support of the Executive Committee that I recommend him for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor of Music (Jazz), with tenure.



Christopher W. Kendall
Dean, School of Music

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