

May 17, 2007

**PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION**  
**The University of Michigan**  
**School of Music, Theatre & Dance**  
**Department of Dance**

Stephen J. Rush, associate professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

**Academic Degrees:**

D.M.A.	1985	Composition, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
M.M.	1983	Composition, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester
B.A.	1981	Composition and Theory, Michigan State University

**Professional Record:**

1998-present	Associate Professor of Music, Departments of Dance and Performing Arts Technology, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan
1990-1998	Assistant Professor of Music, School of Music, University of Michigan
1987-1990	Lecturer, School of Music, University of Michigan
1985-1987	Assistant Professor, Oklahoma State University
1984-1985	Assistant Professor, William Carey College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

**Summary of Evaluation:**

**Teaching:**

Professor Rush teaches courses in the Departments of Dance, Performing Arts Technology, Composition, Jazz, and Music Theory. Even though his teaching encompasses at least five disciplines, the student evaluations have certain elements in common: vibrancy, enthusiasm, creativity, and the ability to bend and transcend traditional lines of learning, crossing disciplines to embrace artistic creation in multifarious forms. Years after graduation, students fondly recall Professor Rush as being one of the most memorable and thought-provoking professors they encountered. He inspires his students to work collaboratively within and outside the boundaries of art. Many of his colleagues feel he is one of the most versatile, dynamic, creative, and enthusiastic teachers in our School.

**Professional and Scholarly Activity:**

Professor Rush's performance and compositional activities are diverse and unusually wide-ranging. Some of his latest and most ambitious projects have been large-scale collaborations—digital operas that have been well received by numerous audiences. His recent international projects in India, Japan, and Germany have expanded the reach of the School, and have provided invaluable performance experiences for our students. He has also been active in the avant-garde dance and music scene in New York City, performing jazz piano and composing for emerging choreographers. Professor Rush is an accomplished, published, and talented composer who works with a multitude of styles to create unique, inspiring, and impressive forms of art.

**Service:**

As evident from Professor Rush's service statement, his work in curriculum development, mentoring junior faculty, participating on various committees, and community involvement are an extension of his work as a creative artist. He has served as chair and representative on the School's Council of Departmental Representatives, Faculty Council on Graduate Studies Representative, Scholarship Committee, Dance Department Curriculum Committee, and numerous committees for the University. On a national level, he is a member of the American Music Center, a founding member of the International Guild of Musicians in Dance, a member of the International Computer Music Society, the Council for Dialogue on Ethics and Religion, and a member of the American Civil Liberties Union.

## **External Reviewers:**

### **Reviewer A**

“My feeling at this point is that Mr. Rush is fast becoming one of the finest contemporary composers in this country. It is his creativity and his ability to provide unexpected contrast and excitement in his compositions that sets him apart from other composers of his generation.”

### **Reviewer B**

“. . . I have consistently been impressed with his compositional skills and his depth of understanding in creating music for dance. Many dance composers are prolific but not necessarily interesting; Dr. Rush manages to maintain a very high level of inventiveness while creating a large body of work. Dr. Rush’s works are some of the most highly regarded and most often performed compositions in the field.”

### **Reviewer C**

“As a person Steven [sic] is impressionable, always intelligent and generates excitement around him. He always appears to be dedicated to his work and students and has a deep commitment to his music and even to the music of others. He approaches his composition in a very personal, thoughtful and creative manner that catches my attention and leaves me wanting to hear more.”

### **Reviewer D**

“He is dedicated, affable, extremely talented, driven, multi-faceted, engaging, nurturing, experimental, classical and an all-around genius of a nice guy. Stephen has exceptional knowledge in so many forms and styles of music; and at the same time is humble, approachable and plain speaking about this vast information and his impressive accomplishments. At once expert in jazz, classical, experimental media works and musical theatre, Stephen is the perennial MVP of both the dance and music departments.”

### **Reviewer E**

“Professor Rush’s contributions to curriculum development are far reaching, helping build the strong programs for which the University of Michigan Music and Dance programs are known. His work as mentor to junior faculty members and with students helps to build a cohesive educational environment. Professor Stephen Rush is an artist and educator of the highest caliber, whose interests span many disciplines and genres.”

### **Reviewer F**

“He has a superb ear for harmony, texture and detail and isn’t content to let the trappings of genre do the work for him. In all the works I listened to and watched, I had the sense of a very serious and conscientious composer at work, always prodding the limits of the context.”

### **Reviewer G**

“Steve Rush’s groundbreaking work as an experimentalist is cited as an original and unique contribution, and his institution and leadership of the University of Michigan’s “Digital Music Ensemble” is significant. There is no other continuing ensemble or class of this type that is known to me – it is really one of the defining aspects of what Professor Rush brings to the school and the profession.”

### **Reviewer H**

“I found Mr. Rush a pleasure to work with both during his recording session and my concert. Stephen Rush is an asset to your university. I strongly recommend him for promotion to the rank of Professor with tenure.”

**Reviewer I**

“I know no other person in the field who has his range and level of achievement, partly because each of these areas has a skill set that takes many years to develop. This makes him extremely useful as a teacher, who can connect with students’ interests at so many levels. Despite the fact that there is a great amount of variety in our field in terms of areas of expertise, Professor Rush is at the top of our field in any category.”

**Reviewer J**

“It was obvious to me that Rush had done incredible preparation to have the students perform my music. Once again I witnessed his ability to mentor students in a way that is impressive and lasting for them. It is excellent that you have a faculty member who can carry the ball concerning experimental music and be comfortable in the digital transformation of electronic music.”

**Reviewer K**

“He has built a solid body of work that equals the best of the best in those different disciplines not just on a national level but I would suggest on a global one as well. He possesses a fertile imagination and is highly motivated to continue his musical journey, expanding on his already formidable talents. I am looking forward to his future projects to see where those talents take him.”

**Reviewer L**

“One particular characteristic that shines through these materials in Professor Rush’s sense of play. His wit and his energy must be highly valued by his colleagues and students alike. The fact that the School has been so supportive of his vitality and diverse interests, I take to be a signal measure of the health of the entire program. . . . I was quite moved by the way in which he puts forth his value system as integral to his career path. Stephen is clearly committed to addressing the human condition, and this humanity comes forth not only in his service to the religious community at Michigan but in everything that he does.”

**Internal Review:**

Professor Rush’s contributions to the School are exemplary and vast. His colleagues in all of the disciplines he touches admire and respect his talent, energy, and devotion. He builds bridges between disciplines, allowing for new collaborations between students and faculty. His contributions on a national and international level are rising. He is a valued member of the faculty who continues to impress and amaze in everything he turns his attention to.

**Summary of Recommendation:**

Stephen Rush is clearly an enthusiastic, deeply creative, and extraordinarily versatile faculty member. He is a treasured colleague who participates in the creation of art in a variety of interesting and thought-provoking forms. It is with the strong support of the Executive Committee that I recommend him for promotion to professor of music, with tenure, in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



Christopher W. Kendall  
Dean, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

May 2007