

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

Approved by the
Regents
May 21, 2015

Cynthia L. Westphal, assistant professor of music, Department of Musical Theatre, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, Department of Musical Theatre, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

M.M. 1994 Western Michigan University (piano performance)
B.M. 1993 Hope College (piano performance)

Professional Record:

2004 – present Assistant Professor, Musical Theatre, University of Michigan
2004 – present Broadway theatre, New York, NY
1996 Music Director/Faculty, New York Youth Theatre
1994 – 1995 Staff Accompanist, Kalamazoo College
1994 – 1995 Adjunct Faculty, Kellogg Community College
1993 – 1995 Graduate Assistant/Staff Accompanist, Western Michigan University
1993 – 1995 Private Piano Instructor

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Student evaluations for Professor Westphal affirm that she is an effective and greatly admired teacher. Her sheer dedication to her students and willingness to give of her time practically leaps off the pages of such evaluations and of the many effusive letters written by students on her behalf. Her pedagogical approach appears to be defined by just the right balance of high expectations, constructive criticism, and helpful encouragement. Furthermore, she effectively draws upon both her background as a classical pianist and her deep knowledge of and experience with contemporary popular music and musical theatre repertoire. This combination is rare among her peers, and it affords her students the opportunity to learn a variety of techniques across a range of diverse musical genres. Professor Westphal consistently offers training and professional development opportunities for her students by bringing renowned Broadway stage performers to campus. Indeed, her continued engagement with the world of Broadway and her successful teaching in a university setting provide her students with an inspiring example of the potential richness of a career that combines academic and professional endeavors.

Creative Activities: Professor Westphal's list of professional achievements is extraordinary. Her decade-long involvement with theatre on Broadway has included work on such productions as *Miss Saigon* (keyboardist), *The Lion King* (associate music director, assistant conductor, and keyboardist), *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (assistant conductor and keyboardist), and the Tony Awards ceremony (associate music director and keyboardist). Professor Westphal has also conducted and performed in several Broadway national tours, including productions of *Sister Act*, *Les Misérables*, *Legally Blonde*, *Wicked*, *Peter Pan*, *Annie*, *The King and I*, and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, among others. She can also be heard as a keyboardist on recordings associated with certain of these productions and, in that same role, has made television appearances on *Good Morning America* and *The Rosie Show* with Rosie O'Donnell. In addition, Professor Westphal lent her talents to the 1998 Grammy Award-winning cast album of *The Lion King* (Buena Vista Records) and to the 2002 Telarc release of *Celluloid Copland*, which received a Grammy nomination for Best Classical Crossover Album. She has also been featured as music director and pianist on several student recordings,

including *Dance With Me*, which features the music of the rock group Air Supply. Professor Westphal has been active close to home, performing in several concerts at the Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor and in concerts put on by the Department of Musical Theatre and the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Service: Professor Westphal's record of service at the School of Music, Theatre & Dance includes membership on several faculty search committees, a three-year term as an alternate to the Council of Departmental Representatives, and the presentation of an annual guest lecture as part of the MPulse Musical Theatre Program. In addition, she frequently serves as pianist for fundraising events, such as the Friends of Musical Theatre Donor Event, and for university-wide events, including the Martin Luther King Day celebration at the Power Center and commencement exercises, both for SMTD and the university as a whole. Extending her commitment to service beyond the university, Professor Westphal has given volunteer performances and benefit concerts at, among other organizations, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, Safe House of Ann Arbor, and the Ann Arbor Hebrew Day School. She is a member of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 802 (New York City) and Local 5 (Detroit), and is also a member of the Theatre Musicians Association and the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "A musical director for a national Broadway musical is among the most important and significant jobs in the world of musical theatre and shows that Ms. Westphal is working at the top of her field. She is also extremely unique in that she is a highly skilled musician who delivers her expertise to her students while continuing to do professional work at the highest level of the musical theatre field."

Reviewer B: "Cynthia Westphal is one of the top music directors currently working in an academic setting. Cynthia Westphal's professional accomplishments are substantial. Through her vita, one can easily measure the progress of her creative activity while serving on the University of Michigan faculty. Cynthia Westphal has achieved a high level of professional experience as an artist that is a rich resource to her students."

Reviewer C: "It is clear that Professor Westphal invests significant time and energy in artistic creativity, but it appears to be always in service of her role as master teacher. Not only does she serve as music director and vocal coach for many departmental productions but her individual coaching makes possible the development of each student across time with personal attention to their trajectory of improvement."

Reviewer D: "Westphal's performance meets the highest standard in the very demanding fields of musical theatre and New York orchestral freelancing. Her capabilities go well beyond the practical and specially advanced skills required. She has demonstrated her generosity and dedication to the school, students, and the world at large many times over."

Reviewer E: "She exhibits the skills of a true leader: in control yet open, exuding positive vibes and wielding a great sense of humor, self-effacing and smart."

Reviewer F: "She is an exemplary faculty member, a purposeful, imaginative, and talented individual who is making a difference in your renowned school. Her professional achievements are excellent, plentiful, and bring to her teaching a validation of the curricula and pedagogy she invokes."

Professor Westphal manages to flourish living the double life of an academic and an active professional musician.”

Reviewer G: “She has vast areas of knowledge in the area of musical theatre repertoire and literature. She is a highly qualified professional, who continues to be a part of the musical theatre community on a national level. She participates in university life to a surprising degree, contributing her service to students, faculty, and events again and again. Her work as a teacher evokes some of the most passionately positive and heartfelt comments I’ve ever read from students.”

Reviewer H: “She is unfailingly attentive, patient, warm, and supportive, offering sound advice. I have never heard any opinion other than total love and respect for having the privilege to work with, learn from, and collaborate with Cynthia Westphal.”

Reviewer I: “Cynthia’s accomplishments are truly impressive by any measure. She has maintained an upward trajectory, capped off by her recent stint back on Broadway. Cynthia’s work at Michigan has been tireless and exemplary. Cynthia’s accomplishments put her in the top tier of academic theater music directors.”

Internal Review:

Professor Westphal is a respected and admired member of the department. Her continuing success on the national Broadway stage, combined with her warm and generous spirit, make her a valuable member of the department and the school. She is regarded as a successful and engaging teacher who is able to elicit the best from her students. Given her teaching and performance obligations, her service to the university and the school has been more than adequate, occurring frequently in the form of musical performances, directing, and coaching.

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Westphal is an imaginative and inspiring teacher. She is a highly respected pianist and music director whose work on the Broadway stage continues to bring acclaim to her department, to the School, and to the university. It is with great enthusiasm and with the full support of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance Executive Committee that I recommend Cynthia L. Westphal for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, Department of Musical Theatre, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



Christopher W. Kendall
Paul Boylan Collegiate Professor of Music
and Dean, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

May 2015