

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

Olukola Paul Owolabi, associate professor of music, without tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for the granting of tenure to be held with his title of associate professor of music, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

D.M.A.	2007	Eastman School of Music
M.M.	2003	Yale University (organ performance and choral conducting)
B.M.	2000	McGill University (organ performance)

Professional Record:

2014 - present	Associate Professor (without tenure), University of Michigan
2013 - 2014	Associate Professor (with tenure), and University Organist, Syracuse University
2007 - 2013	Assistant Professor and University Organist, Syracuse University
2006 - 2007	Interim Organ Instructor and University Organist, Syracuse University
2005 - 2006	Teaching Assistant, Eastman School of Music
2003 - 2005	Graduate Assistant in Early Music, Eastman School of Music
2002 - 2003	Choir Director, Yale Divinity School Chapel
2003	Organist and Choir Director, St. James Roman Catholic Church, Rochester, New York
2001	Assistant Conductor, Yale Camerata, Yale University
2000	University Chapel Organist, Yale University
1996 - 2000	Assistant Organist, Church of St. Andrew & St. Paul, Montreal, Canada

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: The combination of Professor Owolabi's extensive teaching experience, advanced knowledge of music theory and history, and his own exquisite performances, make him a formidable, sought-after, and gifted teacher. Professor Owolabi has an innate ability to tailor his instruction to meet the varying needs of his students. He has received high rankings from student evaluations and students speak to his deep knowledge base, supportive and encouraging nature, and his generosity of his time and mentorship. Professor Owolabi was instrumental in reshaping the department's much-needed sacred music curriculum by creating five new graduate-level courses and two new undergraduate courses. In May 2017, Professor Owolabi was responsible for the success of the annual organ study-tour to Europe which provided students the priceless opportunity to visit and perform on numerous historical and significant instruments across Europe.

Professional Activities: Professor Owolabi is a published composer and has received commissions from the Royal Canadian College of Organists and the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. His solo organ composition, *Dance*, was selected for the Royal Canadian College of Organists National Competition in August 2013, where all of the finalists performed this composition. As a solo recitalist, he has performed across Canada, the United States, Mexico, Jamaica, and Europe, including venues such as St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue in New York, Methuen Memorial Music Hall in Massachusetts, Cornell University, and the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He also

performs regularly as organist and harpsichordist with the Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire, Firebird Chamber Orchestra, and the Grand Rapids Symphony. Since his arrival at Michigan only two years ago, he has performed an impressive number of solo works locally, nationally and internationally among these, the Conservatory of Strasbourg, France. He enjoys performing new works and world music, including by composers from under-represented groups. In 2016, he completed a major research project in the form of a CD in which he recorded four organ suites by the French composer Jacques Boyvin; this release included historically significant material relevant to the project in both French and English. His national profile is prominent as is apparent from the number of repeated invitations to perform at the annual conventions of both the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society, the two major professional organizations in the field.

Service: Professor Owolabi's contributions to the field are significant; he was invited by the editor of *The Diapason* magazine (devoted to organ, harpsichord and church music) to contribute to reviews of newly released CD recordings on an ongoing basis. He is also an active participant on the National Executive Committee of the American Guild of Organists. More locally, he provides leadership at the annual Organ Improvisation Conference held at the University of Michigan, and coordinates the Brown Bag Recital Series in partnership with the School of Public Health. Within our school, he serves on the Council for Departmental Representatives and the Faculty Council on Graduate Studies. He is a talented administrator providing service on the recent Carillon Search Committee, as well as serving as the interim chair of the Department of Organ for one term during the chair's sabbatical absence.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Professor Owolabi is very well thought of in the American organ world. He has a very positive reputation as a player and teacher. Among the members of his generation, he would be considered one of the leaders of our profession in the academic American organ world. He brings a great skill set to the university including his dual proclivity for playing and teaching, and his work with organ literature and improvisation."

Reviewer B: "Professor Owolabi is a person with a gracious demeanor, an immense intellect, and instrumental capabilities allowing him to execute the most demanding challenges in the literature with apparent ease. His professional work has always stood out to me as being of very high quality. His compositions and performances have won awards and recognition for their excellence."

Reviewer C: "Professor Owolabi plays with ease and fluency, even in the most virtuosic music. He plays with complete technical and musical assurance, and he has a rare ability communicate a kind of visceral excitement in his playing that commands attention. There is ample evidence - musical and pedagogical - that Professor Owolabi is a serious and effective teacher."

Reviewer D: "His attention to detail, his thoroughness in researching repertoire to study, and the manner in which improvisation is approach are all exceptional. Professor Owolabi's standing in relation to others in his peer group working in the same field is eminently excellent. The range of his performing repertoire, the quality of his teaching, and the depth of planning his courses are excellent."

Reviewer E: "Kola Owolabi is clearly among the more extraordinary performer/scholar artists in the world today. Kola has a top-level reputation among his colleagues, and he is extremely well-liked."

His career could not possibly be more outstanding. There is no one active in our field today for whom I could have more admiration, or in whom I invest greater confidence.”

Reviewer F: “His academic output is well beyond what is normally expected in academia. The quality and quantity of his work is outstanding. It is exemplary that he has organized many recitals for the students and run the improvisation competition.”

Reviewer G: “Professor Owolabi’s CDs are a healthy contribution of depth and breadth. Performing and recording lesser-known but artistically significant music would seem to be part of the mission of a musician in an academic institution and Professor Owolabi has made a salient contribution here.”

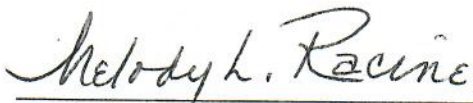
Reviewer H: “Kola Owolabi is emerging as a leader in the profession, professionally keeping pace with and outdistancing most organists who came of age with him.”

Reviewer I: “He impresses me with his thoughtful approach to student success. Student evaluations from his classes speak well for his teaching approach. Dr. Owolabi’s creative and professional activities are advanced and varied. His standing in the organ profession is high, and will continue to grow.”

Reviewer J: “His professional standing amongst colleagues is solid; he is an active performer at a high level and has been recognized and invited to perform by the two American organist associations, and he is most certainly on the map.”

Internal Review: Professor Owolabi is a valuable and contributing member of the faculty. He is well-liked and respected among his colleagues and students alike. This admiration is earned not only through his dedication and hard work, but also his unique aptitudes both as a stellar performer and scholar. The Executive Committee’s review of the promotion of Professor Owolabi was evenly enthusiastic and supportive. His presence and contributions in the department and the school are described as deeply appreciated and transformative.

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Owolabi is a fair-minded, collaborative and supportive colleague. He is an extremely dedicated and innovative teacher who has already gained the support and admiration of our students. His artistry is recognized and appreciated at all levels—locally, nationally and internationally. It is with great enthusiasm, and with the support of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance Executive Committee, that I recommend Olukola Paul Owolabi for the granting of tenure to be held with his title of associate professor of music, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



Melody L. Racine
Interim Dean
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

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