

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

The University of Michigan
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Jason P. DeBord, 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 Achievements:

2015 - 2018	Estill Voice Training, Levels One and Two
1990 - 1992	San Diego Civic Light Opera, Apprenticeship
1988	San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts
1985 - 1986	Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts
1980 - 1992	Private Piano and Organ Study

Professional Record:

2016 - present	Music Academy International, Mezzano, Trentino, Italy (Music Director, Conductor and Clinician, Musical Theatre Studio)
2014 – present	Assistant Professor, Musical Theatre, University of Michigan
2013, 2016, 2018	Guest Artist Residency, University of Colorado - Boulder
2010 - 2012	Teaching Artist, McCarter Theatre, Princeton, NJ
2009 - 2014	Private Piano Studio
1999 - 2014	Private Voice Studio
1998 - 2001	Musical Theatre and Choir Instructor, Immaculate Heart Academy, Washington Township, NJ
1993 - 1994	Accompanist, Vocal Music Department, University of San Diego
1992 - 1993	Voice Instructor, San Diego Junior Theater, San Diego, CA

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor DeBord teaches courses in Musical Theatre performance, and brings his extensive experience to bear on every aspect of the program, from the vocal preparation of individual students, to the direction the mainstage productions. He is indispensable to the Musical Theatre department's extraordinarily effective curriculum. Professor DeBord is at the center of the educational process for every Musical Theatre student. He fulfills multiple critical roles including preparing students to sing the repertoire with the appropriate style and inflection, and establishing the precise musical and theatrical parameters that define the genre or style of a particular work. Not least, he transmits and models professional expectations. His students have appeared in numerous Broadway shows including *Hamilton*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Frozen* and *Newsies*. Professor DeBord's teaching evaluations are superb, and students rave about the quality of his teaching, his care for their development, and the extra efforts he takes to connect students to the profession. Student comments often mention the depth of Professor DeBord's knowledge, and his willingness to address unique student concerns:

Professional Activities: Professor DeBord was well-established as one of Broadway's most successful musicians, with exceptional credentials as a keyboardist, music director, conductor, and

arranger. He has been associated with the development of many Broadway hits, and is highly regarded for his contributions during the developmental phase of new work. He has maintained his connections to the professional world, and continues to develop new off- and pre-Broadway projects. Most recently, he took the score of the musical *Bull Durham* through workshops and out-of-town tryouts, and continues to serve as the project's musical director; it is now projected to reach Broadway in 2021. Since coming to Michigan, Professor DeBord has been a resident guest artist in the Theatre Department at the University of Colorado – Boulder (2013, 2016, 2018), and from 2016 to the present, Professor DeBord has been music director and conductor of the Musical Theatre Studio at the Trentino Music Festival, in Mezzano, Italy.

Service: Professor DeBord has very strong record of service to his department, the School, and the campus community. For the department, Professor DeBord has been a key contributor to a recalibration of the unit's audition process – a major undertaking that methodically evaluates over 1400 applicants each year for just 22 spots. He was also one of the principal designers of the newly approved Minor in Musical Theatre Composition, a leading-edge program that will help keep the program at the leading edge, and capitalize on SMTD's broad expertise in musical theatre production and performance, composition, and music theory. Professor DeBord spends considerable time supporting auditions, master classes and has been exceptionally generous to students as an advisor for extra-curricular projects. Professor DeBord has performed and presented at many fundraising events on behalf of the Department, the School, and U-M. Professor DeBord is an uncommonly positive and proactive colleague, and is always eager to contribute to the greater good.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “The quality and breadth of his professional experience is impressive. He performed, conducted, or served as music supervisor and/or rehearsal pianist for 13 shows on Broadway, six off-Broadway, and seven national tours. Mr. DeBord's diverse experience as music director, clinician master class instructor, pianist, and voice teacher compare very highly with his peers in the field.”

Reviewer B: “He is truly an international figure in the field of musical theater. Jason has demonstrated, and continues to demonstrate, an astounding breadth of activity in the profession. As a multi-faceted musician, he was and *is* interested in teaching, in development of new works, and in keeping a foot in the world of the Broadway tradition as well. His professional development and service activities since his appointment at Michigan are meritorious, but his teaching is exceptional.”

Reviewer C: “Professor DeBord's professional career, prior to his appointment at Michigan, was stellar, and that he enjoyed a national recognition for excellence. Given that he has been able to maintain professional connections after taking an academic position, also speaks volumes as to his reputation in the industry. From the quality of his creative work, the professional placement of his students in the industry, and the curated student comments, it is apparent that this is a committed, talented, and giving artist and teacher. In addition, his prodigious service to the UM and the community speak to his generosity of spirit and collegiality.”

Reviewer D: “Mr. DeBord’s teaching represents the work of a highly skilled musician who can clearly and effectively demonstrate the tools necessary for aspiring performers and creators to pursue careers in the exceedingly competitive field of professional musical theatre. DeBord’s professional service, his strong commitment and contributions to external professional organizations and internal committees and organizations at the University of Michigan are appropriate and should be commended.”

Reviewer E: “Jason is so suited to be a teacher, for he is extremely passionate about his craft, and he communicates his thoughts clearly and in a way that makes you feel as if you're being valued and heard. I would still stack Jason up against any pianist or music director working on Broadway today, and this makes him such a valuable asset to the staff at UMich. Jason is a team player, an advocate for collaboration, and a listener. He is kind-hearted, warm, and genuinely concerned for the well-being of those around him.”

Reviewer F: “His docket reveals a depth of clinical and academic knowledge, an impressive ongoing professional career, and commitment to service within the Department of Musical Theatre as well as the academic institution as a whole. His immersion and commitment to his artistic journey serves to keep his skill set honed and his artistry at the highest level. Professor DeBord is invested in opportunities that allow access and moments of self-evaluation providing new insights, fresh perspectives on his art and innovative ways to train his students.”

Reviewer G: “No one works that many shows on Broadway without being to bring it, and the University productions videos were just as impressive. Jason DeBord is at or near the top of the field of academic theatre musician educators in 2019. His CV shows him to be tireless, creative and detail-oriented.”

Reviewer H: “His desire to coach and mentor is clearly evident from his activities even before he started at Michigan. His student evaluations are extremely high. His eagerness to jump in where needed and his desire to create new opportunities for students are commendable. He understands collaboration as a core element in theater and in life. My impression from his dossier is that he is totally committed to his role at the School.”

Summary of Recommendation:

With the support of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance Executive Committee, it is great pleasure to recommend Jason P. DeBord for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, Department of Musical Theatre, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



David Gier
Paul Boylan Collegiate Professor of Music
and Dean, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

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