

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

Christian Matijas-Mecca, associate professor of dance, with tenure, Department of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to professor of dance, with tenure, Department of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

M.M. 1993 University of Southern California, Harpsichord and Early Music Performance, School of Music Award for Outstanding Performance, Los Angeles, CA

B.A. 1988 University of Southern California, Harpsichord and Early Music Performance, Los Angeles, CA

Professional Record:

2005 - Present Associate Professor of Dance (with tenure), Department of Dance, University of Michigan

1999 - 2005 Assistant Professor of Dance, Department of Dance, University of Michigan

1998 – 1999 Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance, Department of Dance, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Matijas-Mecca has become known for teaching Dance 141 - *Music for Dance*, as well as Dance 291 - *Sophomore Seminar* (formerly Senior Seminar). These courses have become vital components of the undergraduate dance program. Because of his success, particularly in teaching the seminar which was one of SMTD's first professional preparatory courses, Professor Matijas-Mecca has become the central advisor and mentor to the undergraduate dance major on campus, working closely with some 60–70 majors each year. His student evaluation letters can only be described as rhapsodic in their praise of Professor Matijas-Mecca's pedagogical care, attention, and support. One student wrote of his Sophomore Seminar that Professor Matijas-Mecca "provided expansive, practical and forthright information regarding life beyond the University and crafted a thoughtfully strategic curriculum that ensured my peers and I assembled professional portfolios." Given the physical distance between our music and dance buildings, collaborations between students and faculty across the North–Central Campus divide have proven elusive. It is especially remarkable, therefore, that Professor Matijas-Mecca has had such a powerful impact on music students, often at the graduate levels. These collaborations are often sparked by his teaching of Dance 446/586 Accompanying Movement, a course that brings together dance and instrumental performance students, and can be used to fulfill the chamber music requirement in our performance program.

Professional Activities: Professor Matijas-Mecca fills a unique niche in our Department of Dance as an interdisciplinary musician and researcher. He is not trained as a dancer, nor is his creative activity limited to this field, although it ranges widely across dance history into classical concert

music and American popular music. He is also a multi-stylistic composer, improviser, and a very fine classical pianist. That he does not fit the typical disciplinary categories of dance is, in fact, his strength as a member of the Dance Department faculty, as well as a diplomat for the department's interdisciplinary activities in music. Professor Matijas-Mecca's research takes on three distinct forms: as a composer, as a performer, and as a researcher. The alloy of these three separate professional activities give his work a rare depth. As a composer, Professor Matijas-Mecca writes primarily for dance. He has completed five commercial recordings - usually on compact disc - that offer music suitable for use on stage and in the dance studio. Since his conferral of tenure, three recordings have been completed and he has received four commissions to write music for top professional dance companies. As a pianist, Professor Matijas-Mecca has performed with the piano Duo RusC and has also served as the music director and pianist in performances of Mark Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* with the Nevada Repertory Theatre, and has led dozens of other professional dance performances and rehearsals. Professor Matijas-Mecca has become involved in research and publishing in the sphere of popular music studies. He has presented his work to the top musicological professional meetings, including at the conferences of the American Musicological Society and College Music Society.

Service: Part of the reason for Professor Matijas-Mecca's long progression has been his dedication to departmental service, including the revision of the undergraduate dance curriculum and his work as advisor to the undergraduate dance major (since 2012) and the growing dance minor (since 2017). His knowledge of the dance curriculum and his skill in helping students navigate the challenges of integrating dance study with other UM programs led to his appointment as the associate chair of the department in 2019. In addition, he has managed the Dance Department's music staff since 2000, and coordinated six iterations of the Paul Taylor Summer Intensive. For the university as a whole, he has been a stalwart member of SMTD's undergraduate curriculum council and provided regular service to Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Professor Matijas-Mecca has also provided significant service to the field as a scholarly referee and editorial board member to several academic publications, as a competition judge, and as an advisory board member to the Detroit Sound Conservancy.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "As a pianist and instructor in the Department of Dance, his profile of engagement as a performer is very impressive. It is wide-ranging and includes working with top artists in the field, including in the role of composer... He is clearly a leader who is making a significant contribution to the SMTD."

Reviewer B: "I have great respect for the work the professor has accomplished in bridging the two languages of music and dance. I would add that Professor Matijas-Mecca is virtually unique in his multiple academic roles including as a composer, performer, teacher, and scholar. If only there were more people like him who could help to make transparent the very important links between the two fields-music and dance-that are so intertwined and vitally necessary to each other's history."

Reviewer C: "Associate Professor Matijas-Mecca has clearly established a voice in the field of music for dance.... His music lends itself well to dance and his work as a Musical Repetiteur is unique to the field and stands to make significant contributions to the preservation of dance

history... He has established a national, and some degree of international, reputation and a record of excellence.”

Reviewer D: “It is my overall assessment that Christian Matijas-Mecca demonstrates high levels of both scholarly and creative abilities... The depth and array of his service activities speaks to his enthusiasm to serve the educational experience of dance students at the undergraduate and graduate level, and his commitment to active citizenship and leadership within the university overall... Christian Mathias-Mecca has demonstrated his ability to contribute outstanding work in his academic and creative scholarship.”

Reviewer E: “It has been a pleasure therefore to review his creative and scholarly work that I am not familiar with and discover an artist/scholar of great ingenuity, craft, and nuanced support of dance arts through his music and teaching... I find Christian's commitment to music as an embodied, kinesthetic experience to be powerful.”

Reviewer F: “In *The Words and Music of Brian Wilson* Matijas-Mecca showcases a deft command of music scholarship. Though he has only recently begun to publish in this area, he has clearly been honing his scholarly skills throughout his career. His intellect, refined musical perception, and dogged thoroughness, :ill [sic] grounded in long experience, are on vivid display. His grasp of a topic’s core issues and relevance, and his instinct for historical context and significance lead the reader on an illuminating journey.”

Summary of Recommendation:

With the support of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance Executive Committee, it is a great pleasure to recommend Christian Matijas-Mecca for promotion to professor of dance, with tenure, Department of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



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

May 2020