

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

Matthew T. Albert, assistant professor of music, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

M.M.	2003	Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, Violin Performance
A.D.	2000	University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, OH, Artist Diploma in Chamber Music
B.M.	1996	Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, OH, Violin Performance
B.A.	1996	Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, English

Professional Record:

2016 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Chamber Music, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan
2011 – 2016	Artist in Residence, Director of Chamber Music and SYZYGY (Meadows New Music Ensemble), Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX
1996 – 2011	Eighth Blackbird founding violinist/violist, Oberlin & Cincinnati, OH, Chicago, IL
2004 – 2011	Ensemble in Residence (Eighth Blackbird) and Lecturer, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA
2000 – 2011	Ensemble in Residence (Eighth Blackbird) and Lecturer, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Albert is the inaugural chair of the Chamber Music Department at SMTD, and in that role, he coaches a range of student ensembles, and supervises a total cohort averaging 57 ensembles with more than 150 students each semester. He has fully embraced the charge to expand the breadth and depth of chamber music activity and the expectations of what the study of chamber music can and should signify at SMTD and nationally. He has revised the chamber music curriculum as a whole and designed new courses to encourage cross-departmental collaboration. Rather than focus solely on performance, Professor Albert sees chamber music as demanding that musicians “take responsibility for all aspects of the artistic process, including the technical steps needed to achieve a great performance and the logistical steps needed to present the final result.” As a result, his pedagogy also addresses “group dynamics, confrontation, negotiation, personal identity, and so much more.” Students in his program also learn entrepreneurial skills necessary to navigate the professional world of small ensemble music, in which group members serve as both artists and administrators responsible for marketing, grant writing, and concert production, among other tasks. Professor Albert is also a leader at SMTD in integrating DEI goals into his pedagogy and program design. This has resulted in an expansion of literature performed and even commissioned by student ensembles. Professor Albert’s teaching evaluations scores are routinely

in the range of 4 to 5, indicating strong approval of his teaching by students taking his courses. Student evaluation letters solicited for this review speak passionately to the success of his approach and express praise and support for Professor Albert as an instructor, pedagogue, and artist.

Professional Activities: Professor Albert “is a violinist and violist who specializes in new chamber music for mixed instruments written within the past five years.” As a founding member of the multi-Grammy winning new music sextet Eighth Blackbird, Professor Albert is deeply connected to a national and international network of ensembles, musicians, and composers with whom he has continued to collaborate. While at Michigan, Professor Albert has performed regularly with the New York City-based new music orchestra Alarm Will Sound, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble75, and SYZYGY, among others. In the summers, Professor Albert performs and administers at several chamber music festivals, including Music in the Mountains (Durango, Colorado) and the prestigious Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, California. Professor Albert is also involved professionally with historically-informed performance, and performs with the Florida-based choral-orchestral ensemble Seraphic Fire and also with the Early Music program at SMTD. Since coming to Michigan, Professor Albert has performed with collaborators on fourteen recordings of works by prominent, internationally known composers, such as John Luther Adams, Tyshawn Sorey, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jake Heggie, Sean Shepherd, Lisa Bielawa, Stacy Garrop, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Michael Kropf, and Michael Daugherty. Five of these were released by internationally-distributed commercial record labels, while four others appeared on Cabrillo Festival online broadcasts. Because of his deep investment in the university musical community, a significant portion of Professor Albert’s creative effort is forged through local collaborations. He serves as the director of the Michigan Chamber Players, the SMTD faculty chamber music collective for which he produces three or four concerts each year. He has brought a new focus on contemporary music by living composers to these concerts, as well as a collaborative approach that has invited colleagues from both performance and academic departments to serve as curators to increase the diversity of music presented.

Service: While Professor Albert’s appointment includes administrative time to oversee Chamber Music activity—for example, organizing student ensembles, assigning coachings to faculty, and administering the annual Briggs Competition—his service to SMTD as a whole plays a vital role across the school. Professor Albert is one of two SMTD faculty members who contribute to both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees. His skills as a facilitator, known to balance inclusivity and productivity, led to his election of chair of the undergraduate curriculum committee, as well as his role as the co-chair of SMTD’s DEI Faculty and Staff Action Team. Professor Albert is also an effective steward of SMTD’s donors who are focused on chamber music. These efforts have led to the creation of a fund to support professional development grants for student chamber groups.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “I am impressed with his credentials, and he embraces a true chamber music spirit as an active listener and present in all his service activities and committee work.”

Reviewer B: “Matt is a fine violinist technically, and...is among the finest modern music violinists...the chamber music program is well organized. The program is robust, and a full range of music is studied by students from all instrumental areas.”

Reviewer C: “In the area of teaching, it is also clear that Professor Albert is doing extremely important work. He has created two new courses, and as his teaching statement makes clear, he engages deeply with his teaching, taking his responsibilities extremely seriously...In short, the separate strands of his career at Michigan intertwine in an extremely productive fashion.”

Reviewer D: “His deep dedication to and vast knowledge of contemporary music is extraordinary and extraordinarily important, for this is where the future and the diversity of classical music lies. I am envious of the work he has done in this area at Michigan and I believe his program stands as a model for schools everywhere...he seems to have thrown himself wholeheartedly into the musical, intellectual, social and administrative life of your school.”

Reviewer E: “Having read Prof. Albert's materials, in my opinion the quality, quantity, focus, and scholarly impact of his work meet the requirements for tenure...His multidisciplinary collaborations...are impressive...He has also commissioned new compositions, which is a significant contribution to the discipline. And his list of world premiere performances is impressive.”

Reviewer F: “His creative output, while constantly maintaining a forward-looking posture, has firm footing in the past. The seamless integration of standard repertoire by Bach, Bruch, Shostakovich, Enescu, Ligeti, and Copland effortlessly coexisting with numerous world-premiers, improvisatory experiments, and theatrical and vocal endeavors is simply not the norm for the vast majority of musicians in our field...Make no mistake about it, Matt Albert is a star in the field and his body of work is one of the most impressive I've seen.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Albert is a dedicated teacher who nurtures artistic excellence, professional acumen, and interpersonal grace. He sustains a vibrant career as a new music specialist, and has shown extraordinary commitment to his service work as a leader who balances consultation and action. With the strong support of the school's Executive Committee, I strongly recommend Matthew T. Albert for promotion to the rank of associate professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.



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

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