

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

John S. Ellis, associate professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, is recommended for promotion to professor of music, with tenure, School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

Academic Degrees:

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| D.M.A. | 1991 | Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY, Piano Performance             |
| M.M.   | 1983 | Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, IN, Piano Performance |
| B.M.   | 1981 | SUNY Potsdam Crane School of Music, Potsdam, NY, Piano Performance     |

Professional Record:

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| 2006 - present | Associate Professor, with tenure, Department of Piano, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan |
| 2000 - 2006    | Assistant Professor, Department of Piano, School of Music, Theatre & Dance, University of Michigan              |
| 2000 - 2012    | Private Piano Studio, Ann Arbor, MI   |
| 1998 - 2000    | Director of Core Studies, Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY   |
| 1997 - 2000    | Private Piano Studio, Nyack, NY   |
| 1988 - 2000    | Faculty, Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY  |
| 1988 - 1992    | Director of Curriculum, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, Brooklyn, NY  |

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Ellis's primary teaching assignment is the coursework and related program supervision for the graduate Piano Pedagogy and Performance degrees. This includes the core seminar sequence (four courses), and two practicums. Additionally, he has taught individual piano lessons. Professor Ellis also oversees all class piano instruction within the School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD) (a required course and competency for all undergraduate music degrees, and a popular non-major offering, as well), and a vibrant pre-college program, the Piano Pedagogy Laboratory Program (PPLP). There is a strong and necessary relationship between these three facets of Professor Ellis's position, as graduate students in the Piano Pedagogy and Performance degrees teach class piano to UM students, and in PPLP, as well, and apply the skills that they learn within their academic program.

Professor Ellis consistently receives extremely positive student evaluations of his teaching and has an outstanding track record of mentoring students into the profession. His former students hold leading academic positions in the field of piano pedagogy, have garnered significant professional honors, and been competition winners. Notably, four of his students have received prestigious and competitive Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships. One of SMTD's most admired teachers, Professor Ellis was just named recipient of the 2024 Harold Haugh Award, given annually in SMTD in recognition of excellence in private studio teaching.

Professional Activities: Professor Ellis is one of the leading figures in the field of piano pedagogy, whose creative and scholarly portfolio includes important contributions to the academic literature, presentations at the most significant disciplinary conferences, and regular performances as a collaborative pianist. Most recently, Professor Ellis has completed a major monograph on a seminal figure in his field. The Pedagogical Writings of Marguerite Long: A Reassessment of Her Impact on

the French School of Piano is forthcoming from Indiana University Press, and scheduled for publication in March, 2024.

Professor Ellis has presented his research at the most important conferences in his field including the National Conference of Keyboard Pedagogy, and national and regional meetings of the Music Teachers National Association. He has been invited to present master classes and present lectures and recitals both nationally and internationally.

Service: Professor Ellis' contributions in service to SMTD are in the upper echelon of all faculty. He has served on all of the most important SMTD committees, including both the graduate and undergraduate curriculum committees, the Executive Committee (two terms), the Scholarship Committee, and numerous task forces and search committees. As an associate dean for six years (2012-2018), he oversaw primary and operational functions of the school, including University Productions, Information Technology, Piano Technology, and Human Resources, while driving forward a range of other special projects related to engagement, outreach, and cross-campus collaborations in his overlapping time as the SMTD director of community and preparatory programs (2011-2015). He also served a term as the chair of the Department of Piano, and during his tenure helped expand the department's technology resources. In all of these administrative roles, Professor Ellis has been highly regarded as an effective, collaborative, and accessible partner to faculty and staff colleagues.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "I strongly feel the breadth and depth of his accomplishments is stunning, and sets him at the pinnacle of the profession, a model not only for his students, but to the rest of us in this profession...he is the model for us all, the epitome of scholar/ pedagogue/ musician/performer, and humanitarian. He embodies excellence in this profession; he defines commitment and dedication."

Reviewer B: "His current book publications are quite outstanding and will be part of the oeuvre. It seems the work he does is very high level, meaning his pedagogical productions are at an advanced level. His performances are also at a high level...His service to the profession remains outstanding...His contributions include recently graduated students who are making it very big in the profession."

Reviewer C: "Most telling of the effectiveness of Dr. Ellis's [sic] teaching perhaps is the success of his former students...the international significance of his projects both recent and sustained over a long period, coupled with the considerable success of his former students, and an overall distinguished career in higher education over more than three decades, points to professional accomplishment that is to my mind worthy of promotion to full professor."

Reviewer D: "Dr. Ellis is to be congratulated for his forthcoming 2024 publication with Indiana University Press, *The Pedagogical Writings of Marguerite Long: A Reassessment of Her Impact on the French School of Piano*. This publication will be a welcome addition to[t]he piano and piano pedagogy field and to research regarding gender and the arts...Dr. Ellis has maintained a high-level performance schedule on top of his illustrious publication record...I don't know of many other School of Music university faculty that have had such an enormous teaching and administrative load, spread across many different domains. It should be noted that his numerous doctoral graduates are very well-known in the piano and piano pedagogy field and have made remarkable contributions themselves."

Reviewer E: "Beyond his work as a pianist and scholar, Dr. Ellis is perhaps best known for his work as Director of Graduate Studies in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Michigan, having mentored

several outstanding graduates who are now making positive contributions to the discipline and who hold faculty positions at such institutions as the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the University of Calgary, the University of Iowa, Vanderbilt University, and the University of the District of Columbia...Dr. Ellis has demonstrated many very fine contributions to the profession and I'm certain he will continue to make a meaningful mark in the field of piano and piano pedagogy."

Reviewer F: "The norm seems to be that experts in pedagogy are less active as performers, focusing more on research and pedagogical presentations. But Dr. Ellis also includes evidence of his performing and recording activities as a pianist...he presents intelligent, committed music-making throughout, with a full sound and good partnering skills. This is surely a bonus! Professor Ellis has a fine record as a teacher. He has attracted students of sufficient caliber that their job placement rate is extremely high, no small achievement in any corner of the music profession."

Reviewer G: "The breadth of Dr. Eilis's [sic] work in the pedagogy arena is to be applauded - loudly! I...regret that I will not be around for the next 40 or so years to watch his students grow even more, share, teach, lead, perform, work to maintain the status of music programs throughout our country and beyond. Thank you, Dr. Ellis for your leadership and role in the education of so many musicians."

Reviewer H: "Clearly, since his promotion to Associate Professor in 2006, Prof. Ellis has been extremely active as a pedagogue, performer, administrator, and scholar. Reviewing the record in total, my reaction is to state that it renders the Energizer Bunny as somewhat narcoleptic. This is an incredibly active and dedicated musician. Pedagogy is at the core of his collegial mission, and as Director of the PPLP since 2000, he has developed detailed and highly delineated coursework at both the MM and DMA levels."

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Ellis is an outstanding teacher, whose impact on the field of piano pedagogy can be seen in both the far-reaching success of his students, his many artistic and scholarly contributions to the discipline as a presenter and author, and the influence of the curricula, academic degrees and pre-college programs that he has so successfully designed and implemented. He is an exemplary citizen of the school, UM, and his profession, and has made lasting contributions in service to every community or organization that he has been a part of. With the unanimous support of the school's Executive Committee, I enthusiastically recommend John S. Ellis for promotion to the rank of professor of music, with tenure, 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 2024