



The University of Vermont

September 24, 2018

Re: David Feurzeig Promotion to Full Professor

I have been asked to observe Professor Feurzeig's teaching and provide a letter.

On Wednesday, September 19, I visited Prof. Feurzeig's introductory music theory class. He began the class by distributing prizes of animal crackers and gummy bears to the winners of a competition to come up with the cleverest mnemonic devices for remembering the lines and spaces on the musical staff. Many of the students seemed to enjoy this activity which lasted about 10 minutes.

Dr. Feurzeig then asked all the students to stand as he led them in singing the root pitches of the chord changes as he played a blues on the piano. This activity, like many others in the class, emphasized aural comprehension of theoretical concepts. Students were frequently asked to stand and conduct "in two" as they sang. As is common in class exercises, not all the students seemed to participate. While standing is a good idea, one problem is that it made it difficult for the teacher to see what was going on in the back row (and the class was only three rows deep).

Students were then asked to sing both the rhythms and pitches and eventually notate a simple melody. Prof. Feurzeig discussed the construction of major scales and the concept of tetrachords.

Much of this activity was directed toward the upcoming first quiz. He distributed a study guide to the class that outlined in detail what the students should expect to find on the quiz.

Overall, the class clearly emphasizes aural skills as well as written. This approach is line with music theory pedagogy that aims to encourage students to internalize more abstract theoretical concepts. Throughout the session, Dr. Feurzeig demonstrated a high level of energy which is not always easy when teaching very rudimentary content.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Stewart, Ph.D.
Professor of Music



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Southwick / Music Complex • 392 South Prospect Street • Burlington, VT 05405-1708
(802) 656-3040 • fax: (802) 656-0759
music@uvm.edu • dnce@uvm.edu
www.uvm.edu/music