

**Jan. 29, 2021**

**Re: Peer Teaching Observation Review** for Formal Review (Spring 2021) of **Dr. Luke Dahn**

To Whom It May Concern:

As a member of the committee to offer a peer teaching observation of Dr. Luke Dahn, I had the opportunity to review two online lecture classes of his MUSC 2570 Composition Seminar course that was offered in the fall of 2020. These two classes were conducted in the same week, namely on Nov. 17, 2020 and on Nov. 19, 2020.

As is evident from the teaching observation and in his student evaluations, Dr. Dahn succeeds in creating a welcoming and open-minded atmosphere, right from the very start of the class. He is very responsive to the students' comments and needs. Students freely share their experiences and questions in this open-minded atmosphere.

Throughout both classes that I observed, Dr. Dahn navigates exceptionally well and coherently between concrete examples and the abstract principles behind the content that he is teaching.

To give an example from the Seminar held on Nov 17, Dr. Dahn started the class with asking students about their own approach of *how* to create a cadence with compositional limitations of just two interval classes, e.g. a fifth and a second interval. Through well-led group discussions surrounding his detailed explanations of very clear examples that he provided in various instructional formats (scores, videos, recordings etc.), Dr. Dahn with ease brought the students' discussion to the underlying abstract principles (tension/resolution, etc.). He also provided plenty of references to and examples from selected pieces of a varied body of literature. From there – and interwoven in a continuing discussion – students reported on their own experiences from working on their related, ongoing composition assignment, demonstrating their understanding of Dr. Dahn's previously delivered course content. Using a very clear and effective way of communicating, Dr. Dahn encourages his students also to investigate more indirect connections with further musical parameters and compositional principles, smoothly helping the students to move beyond their current level of understanding of the subject matter.

During the in-class discussions, during which all students were involved and following at all times, Dr. Dahn uses time effectively and shows an excellent sense time management. This includes practical decisions on how much time he gives to students to respond to his questions, thus keeping them constantly engaged with the course content. At times, Dr. Dahn would give the students the time to take notes, so that potentially less outgoing students would feel even more comfortable to speak about their observations in front of their classmates.

During the entire class, Dr. Dahn's instructions, his explanations of concepts and examples were very clear (as is all his teaching material that he provides, including handouts, syllabus, assignment instructions). Questions and considerations as follow-up, or referring to assignments were answered in detail. Dr. Dahn's summarizing and contextualization of student comments were helpful for all students, as was his excellent and constructive critique of the student works in progress.

The following seminar of Dr. Dahn's MUSC 2570 course, was conducted on Nov. 19, 2021 – two days after the above described class. This class meeting included the handling of organizational issues in regards to the upcoming streamed concert and updates by the students in order to implement the required concert performances. In doing so, Dr. Dahn reminded the students of general practices of professionalism, including general copyright considerations. This practical activity was followed by the sharing of works in progress by the students attending the course, and thorough discussion of the compositional works in progress, as well as very helpful compositional feedback by Dr. Dahn for the students. A musical gestures game (a speed composition exercise) was rounding off this second seminar, which served as a interactive idea generator for the development of musical ideas for the students' implementation in their own pieces.

His enthusiasm for the subject matter and all things music clearly make Dr. Dahn a very engaging and inspiring teacher, who creates an open-minded atmosphere and learning environment for his students, helping his students achieve an impressive creative course output, as the student concert at the end of the fall semester 2020 clearly demonstrated. For this, and all the above mentioned reasons, I can highly recommend Dr. Luke Dahn for reappointment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Meier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot above the 'i' in "Meier".

Dr. Manuela Meier

Assistant Professor