

FOUR:
EXTERNAL LETTERS OF EVALUATION

Kirsten Docter

Associate Professor of Viola

Oberlin College Conservatory of Music

Kirsten Docter is Associate Professor of Viola at Oberlin Conservatory and is on the viola faculty of the Perlman Music Program and the Madeline Island Music Camp. Docter formerly served on the chamber music and viola faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music and has given numerous master classes at universities and music schools. She has been a jury member of the Primrose International Viola, Fischhoff National Chamber Music, and Sphinx competitions.

Kimberly Sparr has no relationship with this reviewer.

Leslie Straka

Professor of Viola

University of Oregon School of Music and Dance

Leslie Straka joined the University of Oregon faculty in 1987, teaching viola and chamber music and performing regularly with the Oregon String Quartet. She served as chair of the string department from 1993–2006. She has been a featured artist at the Luzerne Chamber Music Center in New York, Festival Miami, the Miami Bach Society, the University of Oregon Chamber Music Series, the Oregon Bach Festival, the Red Lodge Festival in Montana, the Mainly Mozart and Flagstaff Festivals in Arizona, and the York Festival in England.

Kimberly Sparr has no relationship with this reviewer.

Scott Rawls

Associate Professor of Viola

University of North Carolina Greensboro

Dr. Rawls currently serves as Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He holds a BM degree from Indiana University and a MM and DMA from State University of New York at Stony Brook. He plays principal viola in the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra and in the festival orchestra at Brevard Music Center where he also coordinates the viola program.

Kimberly Sparr has no relationship with this reviewer.

Maggie Snyder

Associate Professor of Viola

University of Georgia

Hugh Hodgson School of Music

Ms. Snyder is on the faculty of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia, and has served on the faculties of West Virginia University, Ohio University, and the University of Alabama, where she was Head of Strings. Ms. Snyder has given masterclasses, clinics, and performances at universities and music schools throughout the country, including Interlochen Arts Academy, Eastman, Hartt, The University of Rochester, The University of Tennessee, The University of Kentucky, and the University of South Carolina, among others.

Kimberly Sparr attended Aspen Music Festival with this reviewer in the late 1990s.

Sally Chisholm

Professor of Viola

University of Wisconsin - Madison

Mead Witter School of Music

Sally Chisholm is violist of the Pro Arte Quartet, Professor of Viola, and artist in residence at UW-Madison. She is a permanent member of Midsummer's Music Festival (Door County), the Northern Lights Chamber Music Institute (Minnesota), and the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota. During the 2013-14 season, Chisholm served as Principal Violist of the Chicago Philharmonic. Ms. Chisholm is a board member of the American Viola Society.

Kimberly Sparr has no relationship with this reviewer.

Ettore Causa

Associate Professor of Viola

Yale School of Music

Having studied at the International Menuhin Music Academy with Alberto Lysy and Johannes Eskar, and later at the Manhattan School of Music with Michael Tree, then having taught both viola and chamber music for many years at the International Menuhin Music Academy, Mr. Causa joined the faculty of the Yale School of Music in 2009. He was awarded both the P. Schidlof Prize and the J. Barbirolli Prize for "the most beautiful sound" at the prestigious Lionel Tertis International Viola competition in England in 2000.

Kimberly Sparr has no relationship with this reviewer.

David Rose

Associate Professor of Viola

SUNY Fredonia School of Music

David Rose has served as the acting assistant principal viola of the San Francisco Symphony. David was formerly associate principal viola of the Vancouver Symphony and served for eight seasons as principal viola of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. Before his position at SUNY Fredonia, David was a viola teacher at the University of Waterloo.

Kimberly Sparr has taught some of Mr. Rose's students at the National Music Festival. She has not met him personally.

OBERLIN

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

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June 15, 2018

Dear Prof. Dye and members of the tenure committee,

It is a pleasure to assist in the evaluation of Professor Kimberly Sparr for tenure at Texas Tech University. While I do not know Prof. Sparr personally I am very familiar with all of her teachers as well as many of the programs with which she is or has been affiliated. I believe that her work as a performer, teacher and mentor well qualifies her in the field of higher learning.

Prof. Sparr performs regularly as a recitalist, a chamber music collaborator as well as in orchestras. Not only does this provide a wonderful opportunity for her students and others to hear her play, it also sets an example for them in regards to the practice and preparation of a recital, concert or concerto performance. It seems that TTU has an active performing faculty and that Prof. Sparr has embraced her role on the collaboration series committee, appearing in a wide range of ensembles and repertoire. Her many performances outside of TTU take her to venues all over the U.S. and allow her to reconnect with musician friends and colleagues, as well as establish new contacts. In particular, performing with the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra and the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble in Virginia provide great opportunities to form lasting musical relationships in large and small ensembles. It seems Prof. Sparr has a well-balanced career as a music professor who is an active performer. It is my belief that one enhances the other and makes one a better teacher. Her travel and performances also help with recruiting.

I am impressed by the number of works that Prof. Sparr has commissioned, as well as the many world premieres that Prof. Sparr has performed. Along with the standard repertoire she plays works by living composers, keeping the tradition alive. This sets an example for her students and all TTU students. It also means she has experience with the whole commissioning process, from collaborating with a composer, grant writing and programming of the work. The ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming that the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble received is a prestigious achievement. Performing on electric viola allows for an alternative expression of viola playing and is a valuable skill to have both as a performer and teacher. She is an expressive and dynamic player; from the musical selections included in her external review materials it is clear that she is comfortable with a wide range of musical styles and genres.

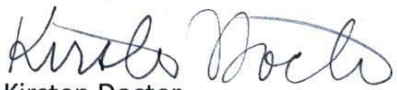
Outreach and community engagement is an important part of being a musician, not only to recruit future musicians but to educate and inspire current and future audience members. I would include giving masterclasses and serving as a clinician here as well, and Prof. Sparr has done quite a lot of both, especially in Texas where I would imagine her recruiting is centered. Having spent time at Avaloch Farms in NH, I can attest to the inspiring atmosphere of immersing oneself in work, then sharing it with the community. It is an invigorating and

nourishing place. One area that Prof. Sparr might look to get more involved in is musical service organizations such as American String Teachers Association (local and national levels) and the American and International Viola Societies. Both organizations, and many others, hold conferences at which opportunities for performance and presentations are possible.

I have not observed Prof. Sparr teach, but it is clear from reading student evaluations that she is a much admired, respected and beloved teacher and mentor at TTU. Her teaching statement covers the importance of technical studies, body awareness, musical expression and the valuable lesson of guiding students toward developing their own interpretations. I also like that Prof. Sparr teaches pedagogy as part of the curriculum, as many, if not most graduates with music degrees will find themselves teaching at some level in their professional career. Prof. Sparr has students ranging from just out of high school through their twenties which presents a wide span of abilities as well as levels of maturity. I liked her idea of having studio projects so that each student can contribute and that the younger ones can learn from the older students. A willingness to teach the same technique or musical idea in different ways for different learners is a valuable asset. It can be difficult to measure achievement and progress in the performing arts; it seems to me that Prof. Sparr and TTU's extensive syllabi help guide students through expectations. I would have liked to see in the syllabi a bit more on what makes playing the viola relevant within the study of music and types of careers TTU students might pursue with their music degree. Clearly, Prof. Sparr has a great rapport with her students and is an active mentor to them both in and out of the classroom.

Prof. Sparr's connections to and knowledge of other teachers, school and music festivals help her students find a path to further studies. I see that some of her students have attended respected festivals such as Aspen, Brevard and National Orchestra Institute and are members of the viola section of local orchestras during their studies at TTU. Prof. Sparr herself studied with many of the viola greats who are pedagogues, chamber music and orchestral performers. The schools from which she has degrees and the summer festivals she attended speak to a very high level of training and a wide range of experiences. With her active performing and teaching career she seems to be a valuable asset to TTU and the community of Lubbock.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kirsten Docter".

Kirsten Docter

Associate Professor of Viola
Oberlin Conservatory of Music



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
School of Music and Dance

May 25, 2018

Keith Dye, Interim Director
Professor of Music Education
Texas Tech University School of Music
J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts

Dear Dr. Dye:

This is an evaluation of the file of Professor Kimberly Sparr. I have reviewed the materials sent and offer the following comments.

Dr. Sparr's work as a soloist and chamber musician is thoroughly documented in the file she prepared. Professor Sparr maintains an active solo and ensemble performance schedule, including many performances on campus as well as guest appearances outside of the region. She has performed as a member of Texas Tech University faculty ensembles and has appeared with nationally recognized artists at music festivals and conferences. The level of performance activity would indicate that Dr. Sparr is a highly visible member of the performance faculty on a local, regional, and national level.

Included in the recordings of performances are many selections that clearly demonstrate Professor Sparr's rich, warm tone and vibrant musical personality. Her playing is excellent, and she displays a depth of understanding of the technical and the musical in excellent balance. All of the performances I listened to clearly demonstrate her versatility as a performer. She is equally at home performing music from different historical periods.

From reading Dr. Sparr's statement regarding her teaching, as well as the many comments from her students, I am confident in saying that she is a very fine teacher. She provides her students with clear expectations that are challenging but realistic. Her "violacentric" studio projects indicate that her approach to pedagogy is both creative and comprehensive.

It is difficult to judge in the area of "Service", but from my experience at two universities, her committee work seems well above what would be expected for an assistant professor.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading Dr. Sparr's file and listening to her many performances. The quality of her work is excellent. I believe her work compares very well to other associate professors around the country, and if she were being reviewed at the University of Oregon, I am quite confident she would receive tenure and a promotion. The students at TTU are very fortunate to have the opportunity to study with such a first-rate violist.

Thank you for the opportunity to review Kimberly Sparr's file. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Straka". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Leslie Straka
Professor of Viola
Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Studies



June 12, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

It gives me great pleasure to write as an external reviewer for Dr. Kimberly Sparr and her application for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. While we have never met, her wonderful reputation as a fine player and teacher is well known to me. In addition, I have heard and worked with a number of her TTU viola students at the Brevard Music Center, summer festival and institute. They consistently represent her studio and their school admirably, attesting to the quality of her pedagogy and the high level of artistry in her class. And I would like to add they clearly hold Dr. Sparr in extremely high regard.

As I perused Dr. Sparr's vita, I was impressed by the level and extent of her artistic activities and associations. She has a sustained presence on the national stage and is endeavoring to do the same internationally. One significant example of this are her invited performances in the Netherlands. The scope of her research and creative activities is quite impressive. Not only does she appear to canvas many regions in Texas annually playing concerts and giving masterclasses, she is a regular guest artist performer and teacher at festivals, on concert series and at universities across this country. In fact, she holds title positions in the Colorado Music Festival, Assistant Principal Viola in the festival orchestra and in the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble (ACE), co-founder and violist. Her work with ACE has been recognized by ASCAP and has also recently received a \$30K grant from the Blank Foundation to commission a new chamber work by composer, Mason Bates.

Beyond the sheer volume of her artistic output, Dr. Sparr's commitment to the music of our time is noteworthy. Her performances, commissions and premieres featuring her playing an electric or amplified instrument and perhaps involving some multimedia component are cutting edge and sets her apart from the vast majority of her colleagues around the world. She has found a way to blend her devotion for our viola tradition with a commitment to and innovative spirit for helping blaze the way forward. Brava! When one sees such an array of projects over time it is a reasonable assumption that they will continue and grow in number.

From the supplied vita, I also note the service component of her work at TTU as a committee member and the impressive list of her students' awards and achievements over time. In my estimation, both seem to easily surpass the expectations of one at her current rank. It is therefore a very easy document for me to evaluate because it indicates no weaknesses in an assistant professor that clearly takes great care to balance all that she does. I cannot find flaw with the depth and range of her creative, teaching and academic duties. I strongly support Dr. Sparr and her application for promotion and tenure.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me directly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Rawls". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Rawls, DMA
Professor of Viola
School of Music
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The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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The University of Georgia

Hugh Hodgson School of Music
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Keith Dye, Interim Director
Professor of Music Education
Texas Tech University School of Music
J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts
P.O. Box 42033
Lubbock, TX 79409

Dear Dr. Dye,

15 June, 2018

I have studied the materials you sent to me regarding Dr. Kimberly Sparr's application for Tenure and Promotion at the Texas Tech University's School of Music and this letter serves as my evaluation and recommendation for Tenure and Promotion. I have met Dr. Sparr some years ago when we were both students at the Aspen Music Festival. I remember how much of a wonderful player she was even that long ago, and I'm glad to reconnect with her even through this paperwork. I look forward to reconnecting even more after this review process is completed.

Dr. Sparr is clearly a phenomenal player of viola. Her representative videos are fantastic and even forward-thinking. Her use of alternative styles is to be commended. Clearly from the materials provided one can conclude that her reputation and experience is world class. She has provided clear documentation of her previous professional record of excellence with both her active orchestral musicianship and her collegial pedigree from Universities of Maryland, Rice and New England. She clearly has a top notch reputation at Texas Tech, as is clear with the numerous awards she has won since 2014. Of particular note are the awards for continuing career research and the one for adventurous programming. I find her activity in the promotion of new music particularly noteworthy and important. Her performance calendar is extremely impressive: she has performances scheduled nearly every two weeks for years on end. This is a highly accomplished record of creative activity. I am also particularly struck by her commissioning and premiere work- this is a lasting contribution to music and the cannon of viola literature and will bring resilience and permanence to her career as a violist.

With regards to her viola playing and the submitted recordings: Dr. Sparr's playing is unique in that her virtuosity gives a sense of ease. Her intonation is impeccable, and her musicality is subtle and fluid. Her performances of difficult repertoire are of the highest caliber. She has a clear voice for the repertoire and is versatile.

With regards to teaching, Dr. Sparr has a clear record of student achievement. There is evidence of a high level of recruitment, retention, and improvement of students in her care. Student feedback is stellar and her students seem to be motivated, cared for, and inspired by her leadership and nurturing. As a faculty member at Brevard Music Festival I have

come across students of hers and they are both impressively set up, but also collegial. Her students quite happily brag on her and the program she runs at TTU.

Dr. Sparr's service to the TTU community seems quite active. She is clearly supportive of colleagues through student committee work, and also active in the state and region in recruitment activities. She has a clear commitment to the program through her collegial committee work and assumes a great deal of civic activity on a national scale that promotes music.

Dr. Sparr clearly has a national reputation and is already forging an international career and is representing TTU through all of her dedicated work. I am particularly impressed with her video and performance of the Jennifer Higdon viola concerto- a piece that just recently won a Grammy, and the representation of works of music by women composers (a topic I too champion). Recently in my research of a new project I came across Dr. Sparr's name with regards to commissions and premieres of new works by women composers and her work with commissioning and premiering McGowen's *Volt*, Molly Joyce's *ABC*, and Mallonee's *Rotations*.

Dr. Sparr is highly active, highly motivated, and seems to inspire likewise to her students. An understood requirement for tenure at the University of Georgia is the solo recording. While Dr. Sparr doesn't seem to have one of these, I do think that she sees into the future with her release of her music videos. These are forward-thinking creative activities. This, along with her stellar performance schedule, and commissioning work far supersede what we would see as commensurate requirements for Tenure and Promotion at UGA. I recommend her fully and without any reservation whatsoever and greatly look forward to what she will bring to the viola world next.

Should you have further questions or need additional services from me, please do not hesitate to be in touch: masnyder@uga.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Snyder', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Maggie Snyder
Associate Professor of Viola
Hugh Hodgson School of Music
University of Georgia
Artist-Faculty, Brevard Music Festival



Mead Witter School of Music
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

May 22, 2018

Dr. Keith Dye, Interim Director
Texas Tech University School of Music
J. T and Margaret Talkington College of Visual and Performing Arts
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX

Dear Dr. Dye:

Please let this letter serve as an external evaluation for Assistant Professor Kimberly Sparr for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Though I know several faculty at Texas Tech University, I have no personal acquaintance or connection to Professor Sparr.

Professor Sparr has top credentials as a violist and teacher, with an excellent record of national performances and student evaluations, and live performance recordings of top rank.

Her pedagogical background is first rate with degrees from the most prominent viola professors in our country - Daniel Foster, Heidi Castleman, James Dunham and Martha Katz - who represent great chamber musicians, the most requested professor of viola at the Juilliard School, and the grandson of John Kendall who was one of the most influential pedagogues of the Twentieth Century. The information she would disseminate to violists would be of the highest caliber. Student evaluations reflect her ability to foster and develop a wide range of student levels with excellent success and personal support. Students accepted to Aspen is a high mark of excellence in teaching.

National appearances include Associate Principal of the Colorado Philharmonic and the Lake George Festival with concertmaster David Kim of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Her international collaboration in the Netherlands is especially relevant with the focus of

musicians of today on social justice, which includes a strong influence from Carnegie Hall outreach programming.

Hosting guest master classes by nationally known musicians Tom Rosenburg, Rudolf Haken and internationally known Dwight Pounds are excellent contributions to the musical horizons of any campus. Service on the musicology search committee plus numerous recital and doctoral committees is laudable.

Professor Sparr is a wonderful violist with great energy on stage. The Bach Brandenburg Concerto and the Brahms Clarinet Quintet performances were particularly impressive and her repertoire represents a wide range of musical genres which is another plus in the current trend of music education.

Overall, Professor Sparr demonstrates a top level as a performer, educator and colleague and her contributions to the viola and music world in general are excellent.

Sincerely,

Sally Chisholm
Violist, Pro Arte Quartet
Germain Prévost Professor of Music
UW-Madison Mead Witter School of Music



Mead Witter School of Music
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

May 22, 2018

Dr. Keith Dye, Interim Director
Texas Tech University School of Music
J. T and Margaret Talkington College of Visual and Performing Arts
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, TX

Dear Dr. Dye:

Please let this letter serve as an external evaluation for Assistant Professor Kimberly Sparr for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Though I am not currently a member of several faculty at Texas Tech University, I have no personal acquaintance or connection to Professor Sparr.

Professor Sparr has top credentials as a violist and teacher, with an excellent record of national performances and student evaluations, and live performance recordings of top rank.

Her pedagogical background is first rate with degrees from the most prominent viola professors in our country - Daniel Foster, Heidi Castleman, James Ehnes, and Martha Katz - who represent great chamber musicians, the most prominent professor of viola at the Juilliard School, and the grandson of John Keeney, who was one of the most influential pedagogues of the Twentieth Century. The information she would disseminate to violists would be of the highest quality. Student evaluations reflect her ability to foster and develop a wide range of students at student levels with excellent success and personal support. Students who have studied with her at Aspen is a high mark of excellence in teaching.

National appearances include Associate Principal of the Colorado Phil and the Lake George Festival with concertmaster David Kim of the P Orchestra. Her international collaboration in the Netherlands is especially relevant with the focus of musicians of today on social justice, which has a strong influence from Carnegie Hall outreach programming.

Hosting guest master classes by nationally known musicians Tom Rose and Rudolf Haken and internationally known Dwight Pounds are excellent contributions to the musical horizons of any campus. Service on the research committee plus numerous recital and doctoral committees is

Professor Sparr is a wonderful violist with great energy on stage. The Brandenburg Concerto and the Brahms Clarinet Quintet performances are particularly impressive and her repertoire represents a wide range of genres which is another plus in the current trend of music education.

Overall, Professor Sparr demonstrates a top level as a performer, educator, colleague and her contributions to the viola and music world in general are excellent.

Sincerely,



Sally Chisholm

Violist, Pro Arte Quartet

Germain Prévost Professor of Music

UW-Madison Mead Witter School of Music

Dear Professor Dye

I have reviewed with great interest and attention the materials Professor Sparr has submitted for her tenure promotion.

Although I don't know her personally and I wasn't familiar with her playing, I have been delighted to hear her recordings and read about her work.

Professor Sparr is clearly an excellent violist and a first class musician.

In every performance I had the pleasure to listen, I was very impressed by the fine and cultivated music making approach, her playing possesses passion, energy, skill and integrity.


The writing on her teaching philosophy show that Professor Sparr is not only a competent and mature pedagogue but also some one with an extremely innovative and engaging spirit.

Besides being already a very experienced teacher she seems to be also a very active performer with long list of major appearances as a Soloist, Chamber and Orchestra player which enrich even further her profile.

All this allows me to say with full confidence that Professor Sparr has that unique combination of artistic, technical and intellectual gifts, along with leadership capabilities, that makes her an invaluable inspiration for all students and colleagues

In my humble opinion there is no doubt that Kimberly Sparr deserves your full consideration for tenure and promotion to Professor

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ettore Causa', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ettore Causa

Yale School of Music

(203)-809-6835

www.ettorecausa.com



To whom it may concern,

This letter is in review of Professor Kimberly Sparr, in her application for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

I have never met Prof. Sparr personally, but am aware of her professional work and reputation as a violist and teacher. In particular, I am aware of the work she has done at the Avaloch center, and have sent my own students to the National Music Festival so they may benefit from her teaching.

I have reviewed the materials submitted to me and have found Dr. Sparr's views on teaching to be most current and refreshing. I can attest to this first hand as her reputation as a teacher blooms within my own students who have met and worked with her.

The effusive student evaluations highlight her impact upon the humans with whom she comes into contact. They fall very much in line with her reputation beyond Texas Tech.

The recorded materials show a most diverse offering of musical styles, all played with devotion and finesse. Dr. Sparr is well aware of the latest and greatest works to enter the viola repertoire, and performs them most admirably.

Her work in commissioning and championing new works is essential within the larger viola community, as our 'canon' repertoire is small, and can stagnate without curiosity and ambition on her level.

I find that her creative and professional activities are a definite asset to the larger viola world, and am glad to have her among our numbers.

If you wish for more information on Dr. Sparr, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Rose'.

David Rose
Associate Professor of Viola
Fredonia State University
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716-673-4855