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18 January 2026

Promotion and Tenure Committee
Crane School of Music
SUNY Potsdam
44 Pierrepont Avenue
Potsdam, NY 13676

Re: Letter of Support for Promotion to Full Professor — Dr. Erin Brooks

Dear Members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee,

I am writing to offer my strongest possible support for Dr. Erin Brooks for promotion to Professor (Full Professor) at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam. I have known Dr. Brooks professionally for approximately twelve years, and in that time, I have worked with her closely across multiple significant scholarly initiatives. Most notably, we are currently co-editing the two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Music, Sound, and Trauma Studies*, meeting nearly weekly (online) as part of this work. I therefore have an unusually detailed view of her scholarly rigour, leadership, collegiality, and national/international professional standing.

Across Scholarship, Teaching, Service, Leadership, and Reputation, Dr. Brooks demonstrates sustained excellence and field-shaping impact. She is already operating at the level of a senior scholar who not only produces significant work, but also builds infrastructure for the discipline and advances its intellectual agenda.

Scholarship (Quality, Productivity, Intellectual Contribution)

Dr. Brooks's scholarship is distinguished by its originality, interdisciplinarity, and intellectual urgency, and it is increasingly recognized as agenda-setting within contemporary musicology. Her research productively connects musicology with sound studies, trauma theory, disability studies, feminist theory, opera studies, and

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cultural history—areas that are not only shaping the field’s future direction, but also expanding its ethical and methodological horizons. A hallmark of her work is its ability to address complex historical materials while simultaneously offering conceptual frameworks that are broadly transferable across disciplines and time periods.

For example, in her recent publications, including “When the Echoes of the Last Shots Have Ceased” (in *The Journal of the American Musicological Society*—the top journal in the field of musicology) and “Sonic Scars in Urban Space,” (*Nineteenth-Century Music Review*), Dr. Brooks offers powerful accounts of traumatic listening in the nineteenth century through her reconstruction of the Parisian soundscape during France’s *l’année terrible* (1870–71). She demonstrates how sonic violence produces long afterlives of trauma—what she theorizes as enduring “sonic scars”—that persist in bodies, archives, and contested urban memory. The significance of this scholarship extends well beyond its historical case study: it provides methodological and theoretical tools for analysing traumatic sound across historical contexts, making it work of clear national and international relevance.

Dr. Brooks’s research trajectory remains strong and forward-looking. In addition to her work-in-progress on music and sound during the American polio epidemic, she is currently preparing a monograph on Metropolitan Opera Radio Broadcasts. She also continues to participate actively in leading international scholarly conversations, including a paper at the most recent annual conference of the Royal Musical Association (University of Southampton, England, September 2025), and she has submitted proposal to the Feminist Theory in Music conference (University of Dayton, OH, June 2026). This combination of substantial accomplishments and a clearly articulated programme of work ahead reflects the sustained productivity and scholarly ambition expected at the senior professoriate level.

A particularly clear demonstration of Dr. Brooks’s scholarly maturity and standing is her work co-editing the above-mentioned two-volume *Oxford Handbook of Music, Sound, and Trauma Studies*. This large-scale international project demands sophisticated editorial judgment, wide disciplinary command, and sustained intellectual leadership. Dr. Brooks has played a decisive role in shaping the handbook’s conceptual architecture, guiding contributors, and maintaining coherence across an unusually broad interdisciplinary community. This is precisely the kind of field-defining, externally visible scholarly leadership typically associated with promotion to Full Professor.

Teaching (Pedagogy, Curriculum Development, Student Impact)

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Dr. Brooks is a highly innovative and award-winning educator whose teaching reflects both curricular leadership and strong disciplinary relevance. At Crane, she has developed undergraduate and graduate courses engaging urgent and emerging areas in music studies—such as disability, environmental humanities, and race and opera—topics that are at the forefront of current scholarly and pedagogical conversations and essential to contemporary music curricula. Her teaching therefore represents not simply effective course delivery, but meaningful contribution to the strategic modernization of the curriculum. She consistently integrates current research questions into classroom practice, strengthening students’ critical thinking and ensuring that learning outcomes remain aligned with evolving disciplinary standards. Importantly, her pedagogical approach is also informed by her scholarship on trauma and disability, including a sustained commitment to trauma-informed teaching and inclusive learning environments.

Dr. Brooks’s teaching and mentoring is also notable for its breadth across music history and cultural inquiry, spanning multiple time periods, genres, and methodological approaches. Drawing on her own active work as a performing violist, she brings a practitioner’s insight to the classroom that enables her to connect scholarship directly to performers’ training and professional realities, reinforcing the value of academic work within conservatoire education. Taken together, this record demonstrates pedagogical leadership and curricular innovation fully consistent with expectations for promotion to Professor in the US context.

Service (Institutional and Disciplinary)

Dr. Brooks’s service record is exceptional in its scope and disciplinary significance. She contributes not only through active professional citizenship within the American Musicological Society, but also by building new scholarly structures that will continue to serve the field long-term.

A major example is her foundational role in co-founding the Music, Sound, and Trauma AMS Study Group. Dr. Brooks took primary responsibility for drafting the proposal and communicating with AMS leadership, including the AMS President, at key stages of development. This is high-level service to the profession—work that strengthens the discipline’s intellectual infrastructure and supports scholarly community formation. This level of disciplinary service reflects sustained national engagement and academic citizenship at the level expected of a full professor.

Importantly, this initiative was not abrupt or opportunistic; it grew from years of thoughtful network-building. At earlier conference roundtables and sessions, Dr. Brooks gathered participant names and contact details and cultivated ongoing community ties—effort that culminated in a formal AMS structure.

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Dr. Brooks also contributes significant disciplinary service through regular peer-reviewing for leading journals and presses, such as the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, helping to uphold the highest standards of scholarly rigor and shaping the direction of current research in the field

Leadership (Scholarly Initiative, Project Management, Mentorship)

Dr. Brooks is a natural and highly effective academic leader. She combines decisiveness and organization with a consultative, collegial style that brings out the best in collaborators.

This leadership was especially visible in the planning and delivery of the virtual international conference “Music, Sound, and Trauma Studies: Interdisciplinary Perspectives” (February 2021, online, hosted by the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University). Dr. Brooks spearheaded planning and delegation of duties, taking a central leadership role among co-organisers and the graduate students commissioned to assist.

The success of the event was extraordinary: it drew over 1,500 attendees globally, creating a truly international interdisciplinary community. Dr. Brooks’s capacity to design an event of this scale and execute it effectively reflects exceptional project leadership and professional credibility. This is clear evidence of scholarly leadership at national/international level—an appropriate hallmark of promotion to Professor.

Following the conference, Dr. Brooks also helped translate that momentum into major scholarly infrastructure through the *Oxford Handbook* proposal, demonstrating the ability to move from event-based scholarly energy to enduring publication outcomes.

Reputation (Visibility, Peer Esteem, Recognition)

Dr. Brooks has established an increasingly clear national and international professional profile. She frequently is asked to chair sessions at conferences, including at annual conferences of the American Musicological Society and the Royal Musical Association, and she has been invited to give talks and keynote lectures at a number of institutions internationally, including at Durham University, the University of Edinburgh, and the University of Chicago—an indicator of peer trust, interest in her work, and professional standing. She also has on several occasions organised themed panels for conferences, shaping scholarly conversation rather than simply participating in it.

Her excellence has been recognized through the Chancellor’s Award for Scholarship activities at SUNY Potsdam in 2025. This award supports what her disciplinary

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work already demonstrates: she is recognized as an impactful scholar and leader by both her institution and her peers. Taken together, her visibility, peer trust, and scholarly leadership demonstrate the external reputation expected for promotion to Full Professor.

Conclusion

In sum, Dr. Erin Brooks has demonstrated sustained excellence across scholarship, teaching, service, leadership, and disciplinary reputation. She is a generous and highly effective collaborator, a deeply respected scholar, and a builder of disciplinary community and infrastructure. Her impact reaches well beyond her institution, and her ongoing scholarly trajectory is strong.

I therefore offer my strongest recommendation that Dr. Erin Brooks be promoted to Full Professor at the Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam. Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Sincerely,



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