

DWIGHT ANDREWS RESEARCH STATEMENT

I have maintained a rich and varied career and regard my work as theater artist, musician, composer, and public scholar as my research/scholarship profile. The broad base of my work reflects my interdisciplinary interests as well as my self-concept as an artist/scholar and public intellectual. This view of artist/scholar makes larger connections between art and culture and places these connections within even larger contexts. My work reflects my understanding of the goals and aims of a liberal arts understanding of the world.

As a musician, I have performed as an instrumentalist in a variety of settings in the field of 'new' or creative music, sometimes referred to as the avant-garde. Such work includes tours in the United States, Western and Eastern Europe and Iceland, performances in venues as varied as the New York City Opera and the Berlin Opera house, and over twenty five recordings with noted jazz artists, two of which received Grammy Awards and a third which was nominated for a Grammy. I have been invited to perform on recording projects specifically because of my gifts as an improviser of new music and my versatility on woodwind instruments. My discography includes performances on clarinet, bass clarinet, flute, alto flute, bass flute, piccolo, soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones. Each recording featured a stellar group of artists who are detailed in the discography of my CV.

Theatre is, by its very nature, a collaborative art. My theatre work is rather unusual in that it focuses on creating musical settings for dramatic stage plays. As a theatre artist, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to serve as collaborator with many of the pre-eminent writers and directors of our time. My principal collaborations have been with award-winning playwright, August Wilson. Wilson is regarded as one of the most significant African American playwrights in the second half of the 20th century. Before his death, he created of a ten-play cycle that chronicled the African American experience. Each play reflected the centrality of music to the African American experience. The works he created were stage dramas, not musicals. He ingeniously created dramatic works in which music plays a pivotal role in moving the story forward. I was chosen by Mr. Wilson and his directors to create the musical segments and contexts for his plays. Of the ten play cycle, I collaborated on five of his award winning plays, *Ma Rainey Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and *Seven Guitars*. All of these plays were presented on Broadway after extensive pre-Broadway histories in regional theatres around the country. In addition, I served again as the musical director for the revival of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, which featured Ms. Whoopi Goldberg and Mr. Charles S. Dutton. I also participated in the pre-Broadway development of Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Because of my long history with Wilson, I was invited to serve as music director for the Kennedy Center's production of the entire ten play cycle entitled, "August Wilson's 20th Century." All of my theatre work involves extensive background research so that the character of the music in each play is true to its time, place, and performance practice. I am at once musicologist, composer, and music dramaturg. I believe my work with Wilson represents a powerful and transformative contribution to the stage that has changed the landscape of American Theatre.

As a composer, I have written a number of chamber pieces and art songs based on the writings African American writers such as Mari Evans, Maya Angelou, and James Baldwin. I have been recognized by my peers in composition by my invitation to teach composition at the prestigious Yale School of Music and my service on the Pulitzer Prize Committee for Music Composition on two separate occasions.

My immediate future artistic plans include three recording projects. The first entails a 2017 Videmus recording of my chamber music settings of African American writers. The second project involves a duo recording with my longtime collaborator, pianist Geri Allen, and the third is a trio recording with noted avant-gardist, Wadada Leo Smith, slated for April 2017. Additionally, I am working on a manuscript on spirituality and jazz for publication.