

Balancing an active performing life with professorial responsibilities has broadened the scope of my goals as an artist and educator. The stimulus for my research and creative activities as a jazz performer, composer of music and educator holds a direct relationship to my engagement in Western music (i.e., the musical system of Western Europe and the Americas) over three Decades.

TEACHING

It is both exciting and inspiring to witness the progressive effect of “new information” upon the development of students’ abilities, and the impact of teaching upon my own development as an educator and as a person. Teaching helps me to “be myself” and it is encouraging to work in York University’s diverse and innovative music department. My role as a jazz educator enables me to incorporate many aspects of the jazz canon (including orchestrations, compositions, solo transcriptions and performance practices) into the necessary pedagogy. Teaching at the university level inspires my research, bolstering the development of an effective didactic process. While jazz curricula has existed and evolved for over fifty years in the university setting, the consolidation of a unified didactic process in jazz pedagogy has not. As such, many misnomers and faulty practices have seeped into the teaching of the jazz art form. My teaching involves tools and references that provide the student with historical and contemporary knowledge. I never encourage students to memorize “patterns” without discussing the underlying harmonic implications and musical aesthetic with them; nor do I dispense technical information without demonstrating the corresponding manual ability.

I focus on ‘relaying’ the most pertinent information as it relates to my goals for the students’ analytical, compositional and improvisational development. My goal is to assist the students in expressing their musical ideas clearly. In addition to brass pedagogy, jazz improvisation and composition, I teach a course entitled *Contemporary Black Urban Music* (i.e. Hip-Hop).

Hip-Hop represents my generation and I was excited to be asked to conduct this course upon starting my appointment at York University. Although the course already existed, I designed a new course outline and a new approach to delivering the lectures. This course has been very successful and due to student demand a new section was added this year.

I am dedicated to further developing this course. *This year, along with all my duties as the Oscar Peterson Chair (committee, outreach efforts and administration), I am teaching four major courses in the same term: African- America Popular Music- MUSC 3510, 4059, Jazz Theory IV and MUSC 5007, Graduate Jazz Composition (and previously mentioned 2520).*

SERVICE

The fostering of relationships both personal and professional is a huge part of service to any organization, and I am aware of the degrees of interaction needed for success and innovation. In this regard, most of my service to York University is based on promoting the Oscar Peterson Scholarship and our music programs while touring, performing and recording as a national and international jazz artist and educator. Through my experience serving on department and faculty committees I have gained a better understanding of how York administrative systems function, and I have fostered meaningful, professional relationships with colleagues. My graduate committee work has also revealed to me the depth of my responsibilities as well as that of students’ expectations. It is a distinguished honor to represent York University as the Oscar Peterson Chair In Jazz Performance and I will continue to use my designation to help build the York University music program by connecting with Canadian and international supporters, strengthening the York University jazz program, and broadening the way we teach *all* music students.

Ron Westray- 10/29/13