Conversations: The Columbia/Princeton Jazz Summit

Featuring the Jazz Programs from Columbia University
Dr. Chris Washburne, director
and Princeton University
Dr. Anthony D.J. Branker, director
with the Princeton University Concert Jazz Ensemble

Saturday, December 3, 2011
at 8:00 pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall
Princeton University
Welcome...

On behalf of the Department of Music, I am delighted to welcome you to our concert tonight. This performance represents only a small portion of the richness and diversity of activities that take place in the Department of Music every year. Composition, Performance, and Scholarship—these are the central activities of the undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty in the Department of Music.

Our music majors spend their senior years as composers, conductors, music historians, producers, directors, and even novelists. The Department of Music’s certificate programs in Musical Performance and Jazz Studies provide undergraduate students from across the University with the opportunity to study and play music at the highest level, nurturing what for many will be a lifelong passion for music and commitment to the performing arts.

The intellectual and artistic life in the Department of Music is enhanced by our internationally-acclaimed PhD programs in musicology and composition. Alumni from our department hold posts at the most prestigious universities throughout the world. We invite you to sample our Composers’ Ensemble Concerts, where you can hear premieres of new works by our graduate and faculty composers, or take advantage of the many pre-concert lectures and conferences sponsored by members of our musicology faculty.

We are particularly proud of the Princeton University Jazz Program under the direction of Anthony D. J. Branker ’80. Developed and directed by Dr. Branker, the program exposes the university community to the artistic and historical significance of jazz, presents artists and repertoire from a wide spectrum of styles and approaches, and features students in performance both here and abroad. Students involved in jazz performance have numerous opportunities to concertize, participate in master classes, study privately, and can pursue coursework that emphasizes the study of the historical, social, theoretical, stylistic, and creative issues associated with the jazz tradition and beyond. Highlights of the 2011-2012 academic year include a trip to Sydney, Australia by members of the University Jazz Composers Collective, to perform at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and collaborate with the students in their jazz studies program.

We look forward to seeing you at our next Music Department event!

Wendy Heller
Professor and Acting Chair, Department of Music

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Saturday, December 3 at 8:00PM
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

PROGRAM

Princeton University Concert Jazz Ensemble
Directed by Dr. Anthony D. J. Branker

57th St. Mambo........................................Michael Philip Mossman
All I Need................................................Radiohead
                           arr. Sherisse Rogers
Dedicated to Dolphy.....................................Oliver Lake

Columbia University Jazz Combo
Directed by Don Sickler

Rounder’s Mood.........................................Booker Little
Samba LaRue...........................................Michael Philip Mossman
Rise To The Occasion................................James Williams
                           Corey Dansereau, trumpet
                           Spencer Horstman, tenor sax
                           Nat Flack, guitar
                           Jacob Snider, piano
                           Raviv Markovitz, bass
                           Vincente Hansen, drums
Columbia University Jazz Combo
Directed by Ben Waltzer

Rattlesnakes and Moonshine
(Southern Kentucky Drinking Song) Sam Yulsman
Bulldog Smile Zach Ostroff
Stone Kettle Point Ben Kreitman

Ben Kreitman, trumpet
Daro Behroozi, tenor sax
Armand Hirsch, guitar
Sam Yulsman, piano
Zach Ostroff, bass
Ethan Kogan, drums

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CONCERT JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Saxophones
alto 1: Divya Farias
alto 2: Grace Li
tenor 1: Colby Pines
tenor 2: John Petruccelli
baritone: Alejandro Van Zandt-Escobar

Trombones
lead: Peter Gustafson
2nd: Christopher Kennedy
3rd: Benjamin Tien
4th: Luke Paulsen

Trumpets
lead: John Anderson
2nd: Suzanne Shoffner
3rd: Reuben Shorser
4th: David Zheng
5th: Gregory Ketchum-Colwill

Rhythm Section
piano: Spencer Caton
Oliver Marsh
guitar: Simon Segert
bass: Eric Weiser
drums: Kevin Laskey

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY JAZZ SMALL GROUP

David Zheng, trumpet
Divya Farias, alto saxophone
Jackson Greenberg, vibraphone
Jason Weinreb, piano
Eric Weiser, bass
Kevin Laskey, drums

COMING IN FEBRUARY: COMPOSING IN THE MOMENT
Saturday, February 25, 2012 8pm

Composing in the Moment — an annual recital featuring original works composed and performed by members of the Princeton University jazz faculty.

FREE ADMISSION • TAPLIN AUDITORIUM IN FINE HALL
Columbia University Jazz Program

The Louis Armstrong Jazz Performance Program (LAJPP) in the Music Department at Columbia University, supported in part by a grant from the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation, was founded in 2001 by Professor Chris Washburne. The mission of the LAJPP is to provide diverse performance opportunities in jazz for both our undergraduate and graduate students. From our perspective jazz performance is not an extracurricular activity, but rather an enriching cultural experience that should be fully integrated into our academic programs across the University. Columbia’s strength is its interdisciplinary approach to jazz studies, and the LAJPP is an integral part of a larger mission which sees jazz as a music without borders and ultimately without limits, and a mode for the integration of forward-thinking models of scholarly inquiry with innovative teaching and community dialogue. The LAJPP comprises fifteen diverse student performance ensembles, fourteen music associates who provide private lessons, ensemble coaching, and a visiting Master Artist program.

Trumpeter and arranger Don Sickler made his initial splash in 1983, debuting with the LP *The Music of Kenny Dorham*. However, he then spent the next dozen years out of the spotlight, focusing instead on backing and producing artists such as Freddie Redd, Larry Coryell, and Cindy Blackman. He also enjoyed a brief stint with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Perhaps Sickler’s most productive extended collaboration was with drummer T.S. Monk, whom he met at the Thelonious Monk Institute. A founding member of the T.S. Monk Sextet, Sickler played on albums including 1991’s *Take One* and 1993’s *Changing of the Guard*, before finally taking the reins and leading his own date, 1995’s *Nightwatch*. He is celebrating his 25th year of teaching jazz at Columbia University.

The *New York Times* has called Ben Waltzer “an imaginative pianist and composer, and he’s part of a valid new underground in the jazz of this city, building on a foundation of straight-ahead jazz and adding foreign concepts and fresh sensibilities to it. He has a fistful of smart compositional ideas, and his regular quartet is spangled with some of the best young jazz players in New York.” Originally from Lansing, Michigan, Ben attended high school at the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he won awards from *Down Beat* magazine and the National Association of Jazz Educators. Enrolled in a double-degree program at the New England Conservatory and Tufts University, where he studied with pianists Geri Allen and Bevan Manson and saxophonist Jimmy Giuffre, in 1991 Ben transferred to Harvard University to pursue a degree in American History and Literature, graduating magna cum laude in 1993 with a thesis on the jazz historian, essayist and novelist Albert Murray, and receiving Harvard’s Braverman Award for artistic excellence. Ben has performed with Bill McHenry, Reid Anderson, Jorge Rossy, Leon Parker and Mark Turner. In 1996 he recorded his first CD, *For Good*, for the Fresh Sound/New Talent record label, featuring Rossy and bassist Reid Anderson. In addition to teaching improvisation and jazz piano at Columbia University and the Maine Jazz Camp, Ben writes about jazz for *The New York Times*, *Jazziz* and other publications.

Dr. Chris Washburne is Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at Columbia University and the Founding Director of Columbia’s Louis Armstrong Jazz Performance Program. He has published numerous books and articles on jazz, Latin jazz, and salsa, including *Sounding Salsa: Performing Latin Music in New York* (Temple University Press, 2008) and *Bad Music: the Music We Love to Hate* (Routledge, 2004) and he is currently working on a book on Latin jazz which will be published by Oxford University Press in 2012. As a performer he has been called “one of the best trombonists in New York” by *The New York Times* and was voted as a “Rising Star of the Trombone” in the 2008, 2009, and 2010 Downbeat Critics Poll. He has recorded over 150 albums and performed with numerous jazz and Latin groups including, Tito Puente, Anthony Braxton, Duke Ellington Orchestra, Ruben Blades, Justin Timberlake, Celia Cruz, Marc Anthony, Ray Barretto, and Eddie Palmieri. His Latin jazz group, SYOTOS, pushes the genre into uncharted waters with a postmodern mix that embraces dissonance, weaving contemporary up-tempo beats with a driving sound, or as the *New York Times* states “SYOTOS plays with fire with erudition!” Syotos was founded 20 years ago and has become what *Time Out* New York calls a “Latin Jazz institution.” They held the longest running Latin jazz gig in the City’s history, playing every week for 19 years. Their release *Paradise In Trouble* on Jazzheads Records was nominated as the Best Latin Jazz Record of 2004. Their most recent release *Fields of Moons* (2010) was voted the best jazz release of the week by *All About Jazz*. Washburne also co-leads the jazz groups
NYNDK and the quartet FFEAR. FFEAR’s debut recording will be released in 2012 and they were recently featured on NPR’s JazzSet with DeeDee Bridgewater.

Princeton University Jazz Program

Throughout the years, the Princeton University Jazz Program under the direction of Dr. Anthony D.J. Branker has sought to educate and expose the university community to the artistic and historical significance of jazz by presenting artists and repertoire that are representative of the wide spectrum of styles and conceptual approaches found throughout the music’s evolution. Students involved in jazz performance have numerous opportunities to concertize, participate in master classes, study privately, and to pursue independent projects. They also have the opportunity to participate in academic courses from the music department curriculum that encourage the study of the historical, social, theoretical, stylistic, and creative issues that pertain to the jazz idiom. In 2008, Princeton University received a $4 million gift that will enhance the study and performance of jazz, significantly expanding the university’s ability to support performances and develop innovative research and teaching in this uniquely American and broadly influential art form. As a result of this generous contribution to the development of jazz studies at Princeton, we are proud to announce the establishment of the newly created Certificate Program in Jazz Studies at Princeton University.

Presently, the ensemble program features one 17-piece big band (Concert Jazz Ensemble) and an ever changing variety of small groups, which have included Jazz Composers Collective, Crossing Borders Improvisational Music Ensemble, Free to Be Ensemble, Jazz Vocal Collective, Birth of the Cool Ensemble, Kenny Dorham Ensemble, Ron Carter Ensemble, Bebop Ensemble, American Songbook Ensemble, Tadd Dameron Ensemble, Horace Silver Ensemble, Ralph Bowen Ensemble, Modal Ensemble, Pat Metheny Ensemble, New Voices Collective, Miles Davis Ensemble, Wayne Shorter Ensemble, Afro-Latin Ensemble, Jazz Messengers Ensemble, Ornette Coleman Ensemble, Swingtet, Fusion Ensemble, Ellington/Strayhorn Ensemble, Afro-Groove Ensemble, John Coltrane Ensemble, Horace Silver Ensemble, Ensemble X, New Orleans Ensemble, Jazz Saxophone Quartet, Art Blakey Ensemble, Avant Garde Ensemble, Monk/Mingus Ensemble, Hard Bop Ensemble, Jazztet, and the Jazz Vespers Ensemble. Qualified students have the opportunity to pursue further studies in jazz performance through the Music Department’s Certificate Program in Musical Performance.

In an effort to provide ensemble members with the opportunity to learn from recognized jazz masters, Princeton’s national award-winning jazz program has been fortunate to sponsor master class residencies and feature its ensembles in concert performances with such internationally renowned jazz artists as Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Terence Blanchard, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Heath, Gilberto Gil, Jon Faddis, Conrad Herwig, Oliver Lake, Frank Foster, Benny Carter, Ted Carson, Stanley Jordan, Bobby Watson, Bob Mintzer, Ralph Peterson, Steve Nelson, Antonio Hart, Don Braden, Kendrick Scott, Brice Winston, Fabian almazan, Joshua Crumbly, Jacky Terrasson, Jonny King, Walt Weiskopf, Valery Ponomarev, Bryan Carroll, Michael Philip Mossman, Rick Margitza, Ralph Bowen, Mark Gross, Clifford Adams, Jeffery Smith, Guilherme Franco, Renato Thomes, and Winston Byrd. The program has also been fortunate to feature Maria Schneider, Geri Allen, Omar Sosa, Victor Lewis, Edward Simon, Matt Penman, Eric Harland, Robin Eubanks, Bill Frisell, Fred Hersch, Joanne Brackeen, Dr. Billy Taylor, Roy Hargrove, Hugh Masekela, Kenny Davis, James Williams, Craig Handy, Jeremy Pelt, Gene Bertonci, Jim Black, Bruce Williams, Scott Lee, Eddie Allen, The Respect Sextet, and Wilson “Willie Tee” Turbinton as guest lecturers in master class situations.

Over the years, the award-winning Concert Jazz Ensemble has dedicated itself to the performance of the historically significant music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. They have presented such works as: The Far East Suite and New Orleans Suite with the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra; Ellington’s extended orchestral composition, A Tone Parallel to Harlem with the Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra and the Princeton University Orchestra; New World A Comin’ with the Princeton University Orchestra; The Sacred Concert Music of Duke Ellington with the Princeton University Chapel Choir as well as with the University Glee Club and Gospel Ensemble; the all-Strayhorn program of big band music entitled, A Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn; as well as the Ellington/Strayhorn collaborative adaptation of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite and Edward Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 & 2. Princeton’s jazz
groups have also undertaken a number of stylistically diverse and challenging projects in concert programming.

Between 2003 and 2006, Princeton's jazz program worked in collaboration with The Commission Project (TCP) from Rochester, New York to present new works for big band. Jazz composers who have received TCP commissions to write for the University Concert Jazz Ensemble have included Jimmy Heath, Bob Mintzer, Michael Philip Mossman, and Ralph Bowen. Of these commissioned works, Bob Mintzer's March Majestic has been made available through Alfred Publishing and appears on recordings by the Bob Mintzer Big Band (Old School, New Lessons) and the Yellowjackets' Altered State, and Michael Mossman's three-movement John Coltrane Suite has been performed by university and conservatory jazz programs throughout the United States and is published by RGM. Randy Bauer, a recent Ph.D. recipient and graduate of Princeton's composition program was named the winner of an Honorable Mention Award in the 2004-2005 ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composers Award Competition for his composition, Wide-Eyed Wonder. This work was also made possible thanks to a commission from The Commission Project and was premiered by the University Concert Jazz Ensemble in 2003. In 2007, through funding from Sons of Sound Productions, the jazz program commissioned trombonist Conrad Herwig to compose the Afro-Latin influenced Reflections of a Man Facing South, a suite that was premiered by the Concert Jazz Ensemble. Recently, the Concert Jazz Ensemble collaborated with the University Sinfonia and the vocal ensemble Fuma Sacra to present the world premiere of In Another Time, a five-movement work by composer Laurie Altman.

Princeton offers a number of outstanding jazz performance groups. The University Jazz Composers Collective has traveled to Estonia for two tours sponsored by the Department of State of the United States of America, the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, and the Estonian Academy of Music. The ensemble presented performances at the Estonian Academy of Music, Geneva Night Club in the city of Narva, which was recorded for broadcast on Estonian National Radio, and two performances at Theatre No. 99 in Tallinn where they featured original music created by students in the ensemble and collaborated with students from the jazz studies program at the Estonian Academy of Music & Theatre, Estonian jazz vocalist Kadri Voorand, and guitarist Jaak Sooläär, chair of the jazz department at the academy of music. The Jazz Composers Collective was also featured in performance on Estonian National Television (ETV) and took part in a master class presentation at Heino Elleri Nimeline Tartu Muusikakool in Tartu, Estonia. In addition, the University Jazz Composers Collective traveled to Hong Kong, China in March of 2008 for a series of performances, including a night at the Vibe Jazz Club, and the University Crossing Borders Improvisational Music Ensemble collaborated with the experimental jazz quartet Amparo from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden in concert at Princeton University.

In 1999, the University Monk/Mingus Ensemble was named winner of Down Beat magazine's Student Music Award for "Best College Jazz Instrumental Group" and Ensemble X was selected by Down Beat as the winner of "Outstanding Performance" honors in the jazz instrumental group category in 2003. The jazz program received its third national prize from Down Beat in 2007 when pianist Julia Bras was awarded "Outstanding Performance" honors in

UPCOMING MUSIC AT PRINCETON EVENTS

12/4 Princeton University Wind Ensemble, Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 3:00PM
12/6 Composers Ensemble at Princeton, Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00PM
12/7 Senior Jazz Recital, Rebecca Potter, Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00PM
12/8 Making Tunes! Series, "This Is How We Fly," Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00PM
12/8 Jazz At Cafe Vivian, Frist Campus Center, 11:00PM
12/9 Princeton University Orchestra, Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 8:00PM
12/10 Princeton University Orchestra, Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 8:00PM
12/11 MUS 215, Projects in Jazz Performance, Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall, 8:00PM
12/15 Princeton University Sinfonia, Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 8:00PM
1/19 Ensemble ACJW, Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall, 8:00PM

For more information, visit princeton.edu/music
the "Best College Jazz Soloist" category. In addition, Ms. Brav was selected to the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE) Sisters in Jazz Collegiate All-Star Quintet and performed with the group at the IAJE 35th Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

Princeton's jazz program, in partnership with the Princeton Public Library, was the proud recipient of a 2006-2007 Looking At: Jazz, America's Art Form grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center, the American Library Association and Re: New Media. The Looking At: Jazz project series was dedicated to exploring the cultural and social history of jazz through the presentation of six compelling documentary films, accompanied by viewing and discussion programs, essays by eminent scholars, and live performances for the community that featured the Princeton University Concert Jazz Ensemble, Swingtet, and Afro-Latin Ensemble.

Princeton's jazz program has also produced twelve recording projects over the past twenty years, which include OnWARDS (Jazz Composers Collective), Blue/Yellow Dances (Jazz Composers Collective), Expanding Horizons (Jazz Composers Collective), Yesternow: The Princeton University Jazz Program 1989-2004 compilation CD, It's All About the Groove (Afro-Groove Ensemble & Fusion Ensemble), Sounds From The Free-Thinking (Monk/Mingus Ensemble) with guest trumpet soloist and former Mingus band member Ted Curson, Music From the Sacred Concerts of Edward Kennedy Ellington (Concert Jazz Ensemble and Chapel Choir), What's Going On? (Ensemble X), Mosaic (Concert Jazz Ensemble & Hard Bop Ensemble), The Sacred Concert Music of Duke Ellington (Concert Jazz Ensemble, Glee Club and Gospel Ensemble), Mean What You Say (Concert Jazz Ensemble), and 7 Steps 2 Heaven (Concert Jazz Ensemble).

Dr. Anthony D.J. Branker, Program Director

Dr. Anthony D.J. Branker holds the endowed chair of the Anthony H.P. Lee '79 Senior Lecturer in Jazz Studies, is Founder and Director of the Program in Jazz Studies, and serves as Associate Director of the Program in Musical Performance at Princeton University, where he directs an extensive list of ensembles and teaches courses in jazz theory through improvisation & composition, jazz performance practice in historical and cultural context, jazz composition, and the evolution of jazz styles. He has served as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and visiting professor at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in Tallinn, Estonia and has also been a member of the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts, Hunter College of the City University of New York, Ursinus College, and the New Jersey Summer Arts Institute. He has been honored by the United States Department of Education with a Presidential Scholars Teacher Recognition Award, the Institute for Arts and Humanities Education Distinguished Teaching Award, the International Association of Jazz Educators Award for Outstanding Service to Jazz Education, and was the recipient of the 2004 Alumni Award presented by the Association of Black Princeton Alumni. Recently, the New Jersey Association for Jazz Education honored Dr. Branker at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark by presenting him with the 2009 Jazz Education Achievement Award for "Outstanding Accomplishment in the Field of Jazz Studies and Continued Dedication to the New Jersey Jazz Education Community."

As a conductor, Dr. Branker has had the opportunity to work with such internationally renowned artists as Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Heath, Jon Faddis, Conrad Herwig, Oliver Lake, Frank Foster, Benny Carter, Ted Curson, Stanley Jordan, Bobby Watson, Terence Blanchard, Bob Mintzer, Ralph Peterson, Steve Nelson, Antonio Hart, Don Braden, Jacky Terrasson, Jonny King, Walt Weiskopf, Valery Ponomarev, Bryan Carroll, Michael Philip Mossman, Rick Margitza, Ralph Bowen, Mark Gross, Clifford Adams, Jeffery Smith, Guilherme Franco, Benny Powell, Michael Cochrane, and Patience Higgins. Dr. Branker has also conducted Terence Blanchard's Grammy Award-Winning score for A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina) from Spike Lee's documentary When the Levees Broke featuring trumpeter Terence Blanchard and his Quintet along with members of the Princeton University and Rutgers University Orchestras. In addition, he conducted the Princeton University Orchestra in world premieres of two dance works choreographed to the orchestral music of Claude Debussy's La Boîte à Joujoux (The Toy Box) - including the U.S. Premiere of Debussy's newly discovered "jazz overture" for this work - and John Alden Carpenter's Krazy Kat. Dr. Branker has collaborated with the
Juilliard Jazz Orchestra and conductors Wynton Marsalis, Loren Schoenberg, and Cecil Bridgewater on joint big band performances of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's *The Far East Suite* and Ellington's *The New Orleans Suite* at McCarter Theatre in Princeton. He has also appeared as guest conductor with the Jugend Sinfonie Orchester (Bremen, Germany), Israel's Kriyet Ono Symphonic Youth Band, Japan's Fukui Junior Orchestra, Estonian Academy of Music Big Band (Tallinn, Estonia), Hunter Jazz Repertory Orchestra (New York), Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts Jazz Ensemble, New Jersey IAJE Intercollegiate All State Jazz Ensemble, and the 2008 New Jersey All State High School Jazz Ensemble. While at Princeton, Professor Branker has led performances that have featured the Princeton University Orchestra, Sinfonia, Chapel Choir, Glee Club/Concert Choir, and Gospel Ensemble, and has directed two national award-winning jazz groups, including the Monk/Mingus Ensemble, winner of the Down Beat magazine Student Music Award for "Best Jazz Instrumental Group," and Ensemble X, recipient of a 2003 Down Beat music award for "Outstanding Performance." In addition, the University Jazz Composers Collective has traveled to Estonia for a series of concerts sponsored by the Department of State of the United States of America, the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, and the Estonian Academy of Music, and to Hong Kong, China to perform at the Vibe Jazz Club.

As a composer, Branker has received composition prizes, commissions, served as composer-in-residence, and has had his music featured in performance at the Pori International Jazz Festival (Finland), Leningrad/St. Petersburg International Jazz Festival (Russia), Kaunas International Jazz Festival (Lithuania), Estonia International Jazz Festival (Estonia), Mt. Fuji International Jazz Festival (Japan), JVC Jazz Festival (New York); concert and club appearances in China, Russia, France, and Germany; as well as in performance at such venues as the Iridium Jazz Club, Sweet Basil Jazz Club, The Five Spot, New York's Symphony Space, the Fez under the Time Café, Trumpets Jazz Club, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. In addition, his music has appeared on National Public Radio, was spotlighted at the International Jazz Composers Symposium at the University of South Florida, and has been performed by the Shanghai Jazz Orchestra in Shanghai, China. His works have been performed and/or recorded by Steve Nelson, Stanley Jordan, Talib Kweli, Conrad Herwig, Mark Gross, Curtis Lundy, James Weidman, Steve Koon, Rick Margitza, Jann Parker, and the Spirit of Life Ensemble and have featured such guest soloists as Kenny Barron, Eddie Henderson, Winard Harper, John Hicks, Valery Pomarre, Joe Ford, Cecil Brooks III, Onaje Allen Gumbs, Alex Blake, Sarah Jane Cion, and Benny Carter.

Dr. Branker is also an Origin Records recording artist/composer who leads two jazz collectives for the label. The group Anthony Branker & Ascent, has released three recordings internationally, including Spirit Songs (Sons of Sound, 2006), Blessings (Origin Records, 2009), and their most recent project Dance Music (Origin Records, 2010) with performances by alto saxophonist Tia Fuller, tenor & soprano saxophonist Ralph Bowen, trombonist Clifford Adams Jr., pianist Jonny King, bassist Kenny Davis, drummer Adam Cruz, guitarist Freddie Bryant, and Estonian vocalist Kadiir Voorand. The Dance Music CD made it to the #1 spot on the Roots Music Report (RMR) National Jazz Radio Charts and hit #25 on the JazzWeek National Radio Charts, while also earning 8 weeks in the Top 50 and 15 weeks in the Top 100. Dance Music was also named to the First Round in the 54th Annual Grammy Awards Balloting in the "Best Jazz Instrumental Album" category. The group's first CD project Spirit Songs - with alto & soprano saxophonist Antonio Hart, Bowen, Adams, King, bassist John Benitez, and drummer Ralph Peterson - was released internationally in 2006 on the Sons of Sound record label and was cited by the Jazz Journalists Association as one of the "Top 10 new jazz releases for 2006" with the composition Imani (Faith) being named one of the "Top 10 best new compositions of the year." Blessings, the collective's second CD, which featured alto saxophonist Steve Wilson, Bowen, Adams, vibraphonist Bryan Carroll, King, bassist Belden Bullock, conguero Renato Thoms, and drummer Wilby Fletcher, was released on Origin Records, and was named to the First Round in the 52nd Annual Grammy Awards Balloting in the "Best Jazz Instrumental Album" category, along with Branker's composition "Crystal Angel" for "Best Instrumental Composition," and Ralph Bowen's soprano saxophone feature on Branker's composition "The Holy Innocent" for "Best Jazz Instrumental Solo." Dr. Branker also leads Anthony Branker & Word Play featuring Ralph Bowen (tenor & soprano saxophones), Jim Ridl (piano), Kenny Davis (acoustic bass), and Adam Cruz (drums), which recently released the CD Dialogic (Origin, 2011).
spotlighting a collection of new compositions rooted in conversational interplay, free exploration, and the dialogue between diverse musical influences. The Dialogic recording made it to the First Round in the 54th Annual Grammy Awards Balloting with Branker's composition "Iggery-Poncheek" cited for "Best Instrumental Composition" and Ralph Bowen's tenor saxophone feature on Branker's composition "Land of Milk and Honey" cited for "Best Improvised Jazz Solo."

As a trumpeter, Branker has performed and recorded with the Spirit of Life Ensemble - including a five-year residency at New York's internationally renowned Sweet Basil jazz club. He has also appeared at the Pori International Jazz Festival (Finland); Leningrad/St. Petersburg International Jazz Festival (Russia); Kaunas International Jazz Festival (Lithuania); Estonia International Jazz Festival (Tartu, Estonia); JVC Jazz Festival at Sweet Basil (New York); Panasonic Village Jazz Festival (New York); as well as jazz club performances in France, Finland, Germany, Russia, and New York. In addition, he has worked in a variety of musical settings with such artists as Ted Curson, Talib Kibwe, Guilherme Franco & Nova Bossa Nova, Steve Nelson, Michael Cochrane, Calvin Hill, James Weidman, Eddie Henderson, Stanley Jordan, Benny Carter, Ralph Peterson, Terence Blanchard, Big John Patton, Roscoe Mitchell, Rick Margitza, Gary Burton, the R&B group Tavares, and has performed in the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway production of Dinah Was: The Dinah Washington Musical.

Dr. Branker has received fellowships or grants from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board/Council for International Exchange of Scholars, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, Princeton University, and Ursinus College. He has presented research at the Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA) / New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) School Leadership Conference, Research in Music Education International Conference, International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education, International Society for Music Education, College Music Society, International Jazz Composers Symposium, International Association for Jazz Education, New Jersey Music Educators Association, and the Princeton University Regional Conference - "Big Ideas: Science, Innovation, and Discovery." He has also appeared as a guest lecturer for the Department of Pop & Jazz Music at Helsinki Polytechnic Stadia in Helsinki, Finland; Heino Elleri Nimeline Tartu Muusikakool, Tartu, Estonia; Kuressaare Music Academy on the Estonian island of Saaremaa; the Pop/Jazz Program at Viljandi Kultuurikadeemia Muusikamajas in Viljandi, Estonia; National Endowment for the Humanities Paul Robeson Institute at Rutgers University; "Teachers as Scholars" program for New Jersey Educators at Princeton University; Princeton University Alumni College Seminar "New Orleans: City of Jazz" in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Plexus Institute; Drew University; and has served as program scholar for the Looking At Jazz, America's Art Form, a six-part documentary film viewing and discussion series at the Princeton Public Library.

Anthony D.J. Branker holds the degrees of Doctor of Education and Master of Education from Columbia University, Teachers College; Master of Music in Jazz Pedagogy from the University of Miami; and a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Certificate in African-American Studies from Princeton University.