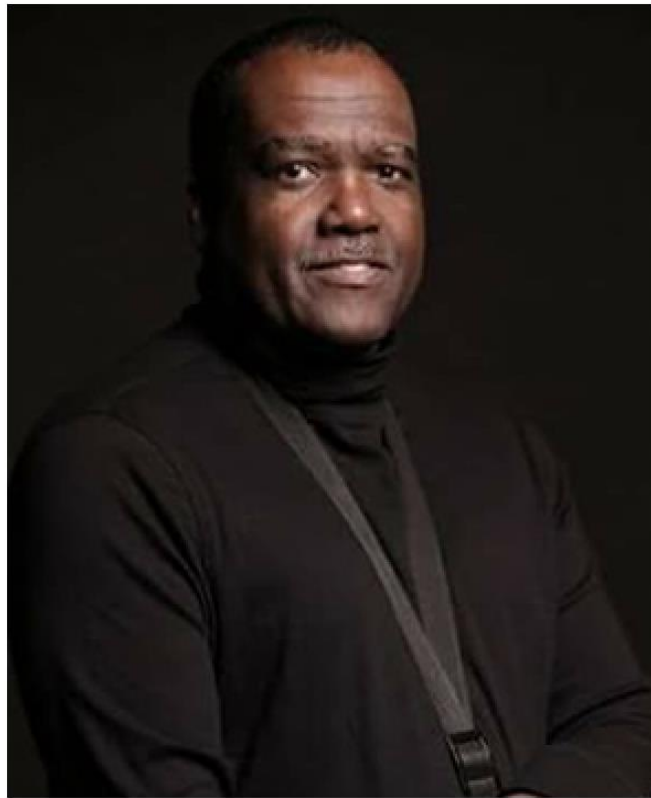


Biography - Benny Russell - Saxophonist



Saxophonist Benny Russell, a graduate of Morgan State University, moved to New York shortly after graduation and quickly formed a jazz orchestra called the NEW YORK ASSOCIATION – a seventeen piece ensemble that featured such noted jazz artists as trumpeters Cecil Bridgewater and Tom Harrell, saxophonist John Purcell, trombonists Steve Turre and Robin Eubanks, pianist Onaje Allan Gumbs, and drummer Mike Clark.

Russell chaired the jazz division at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, where he also taught jazz history. While working at the Conservatory, he was able to launch a string of other cultural activities that served Brooklyn, including a program of workshops for high school students in the Brooklyn public school system, the Charlie Parker Birthday Festival, and regular performances with the Next Legacy Orchestra. In February, 2002, Russell presented his work Langston Hughes: The Soul of His Words at the Museum of Natural History in New York.

In 2004, Russell chaired the Jazz department at the Maryland Conservatory of Music where he produced the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the birth of Count Basie which included Grammy-nominated artists Frank Foster, Antonio Hart and Mark Gross. In February 2005, Russell was commissioned to write a Jazz score for Zora Neale Hurston's play Cold Keener. In 2008, Mr. Russell was commissioned by the Multicultural Music Incorporation to write a three movement suite entitled The Darfur Chronicles which was performed by the Bronx Arts Ensemble and featured the actress Nora Cole as the narrator. In 2011, Mr. Russell conceived a program that featured an overture entitled Just Before the Autumn performed by the Susquehanna Symphony Orchestra. On February 24, 2013, Mr. Russell presented at Harford Community College Spirituals and Other Musings: A Tribute to 50

Years of a Dream. It featured a nine piece chamber orchestra in which he arranged all of the music and conceived the entire multi-media production.