

## Wendell Logan

Chair of the Jazz Studies Department

Professor of African American Music

An exponent of both jazz and art music, Wendell Logan is an important compositional presence within his musical generation. Throughout his distinguished career as composer, performer, and educator, he has received numerous commissions and won many awards, including four from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lakond Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a dozen or so ASCAP awards, three Ohio Arts Council grants and, in 1991, the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship and the Cleveland Arts Prize in Music. In 1994, he was a fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center in Italy. A soprano saxophonist, he has performed in Africa and the Caribbean, in Europe, and throughout the U.S.

Logan grew up in small-town Thomson, Georgia, where he first studied music with his father, a professional musician. At an early age, he was exposed to the Southern cultural milieu of spirituals, the blues, jazz, and gospel music. He also heard performances by touring musicians and groups such as James Brown, "Fats" Domino, and "Little Richard" Penniman. As a boy, he enjoyed playing with Tinker Toys and Erector Sets, which fueled his interest in "putting pieces together," as he says. Later encouraged by his music theory teacher, Mrs. Johnnie Lee, Logan finally chose composition as his musical path.

In his second year of studies at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, where he eventually earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1962, Logan heard Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and was exposed to 12-tone music for the first time. Realizing the exquisite craftsmanship behind *Firebird*, he then earnestly committed to becoming a composer. In pursuit of this goal, he studied with Olly Wilson and Johnnie V. Lee at Florida A&M, and then began graduate work in composition at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he studied with Will Gay Bottje.

Logan earned his master's degree in music from the university in 1964, all the while playing the trumpet with jazz groups and concert bands and arranging music for both.

He has composed more than 200 works that have been performed on three continents. In 2001, Logan's large, operatic composition, *Doxology Opera: The Doxy Canticles*, premiered in Chicago; Paul Carter Harrison was librettist. The work was a synthesis of Logan's early influences, including the long-meter hymns and chants of the African American church, jazz, blues, and the Euro-American classical tradition. His work has been recorded on Orion, Golden Crest, University of Michigan Press, Morehouse College Press and RPM labels, among others.

Logan is the founder of the Jazz Studies Department at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, for which he serves as chair. He is Professor of African American Music, and has been a member of the faculty since 1973.

In addition to teaching composition, African American music, and jazz ensemble at Oberlin, Logan has served on the faculties of Florida A&M University, Ball State University (Muncie, Indiana), and Western Illinois University (Macomb). In 2007, Logan collaborated with jazz studies faculty members to produce *Beauty Surrounds Us* on the Oberlin Conservatory's new music label, Oberlin Music. Two of Logan's compositions, "Shoo Fly" and "Remembrances," can be heard on the album.