

BEN KONO

woodwinds/teaching artist

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benkono.com

EDUCATION

University of North Texas, Denton, TX, Master of Music in Woodwinds Performance and Jazz Studies—1993

Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Music Performance (saxophone)—1989

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Assistant Professor, City College of New York 2017-present

- Director Small Jazz Ensembles. Upper level course for jazz majors focusing on bebop, post-bop and contemporary styles. Coursework adapted to distance learning during Spring 2020 semester due to COVID-19.
- Private instructor of jazz saxophone and woodwinds. Advanced improvisation concepts, repertoire and transcription analysis as well as basic saxophone and doubling skills taught to undergraduate music majors. Preparation for juries, performances and general 'street' knowledge for the working musician discussed. Coursework adapted to distance learning during Spring 2020 semester due to COVID-19.

New York Pops Teaching Artist, New York City 2010-Present

Working closely with New York City Public School band directors, conducted weekly woodwind masterclasses, jazz improvisation workshops, and concert preparation for middle and high school students. Responsibilities include designing curriculum for a weekly class that focuses on woodwind-specific techniques within the concert band, conducting the jazz ensemble, music theory and jazz improvisation, coaching chamber music, and developing strong foundational skills among gifted young musicians, often from underserved communities. Residencies in NYC metro area for 2019-2020 include:

- I.S. 318 (Brooklyn—weekly ongoing residency)

- Ebbets Field Middle School (Brooklyn—in partnership with Paul Simon Music Fellows, twice weekly ongoing residency)
- New York Pops ‘Kids on Stage’ Carnegie Hall Program
- All-City High School Marching Band
- French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts
- M.S.167 (Manhattan)
- InterSchool Orchestras of New York (Manhattan)

Oboe Instructor, Packer Collegiate Institute, Brooklyn, NY 2004-2005

Music Faculty, Center for Preparatory Studies in Music, Queens College, CUNY 1999-2003

- Collaborated with jazz faculty to design curriculum and recruit for six week long annual high school summer jazz camp. Courses taught included ensemble coaching, jazz theory, composition and arranging, jazz history through critical listening, and private lessons. Produced professional quality studio and live recording for coached ensembles.
- Designed and taught curriculum for beginning music theory and ear training course, ensemble coaching, and private lessons for year-round weekend classes.

Instructor of Woodwinds, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD 1998-2000

- Taught private saxophone, clarinet and bassoon lessons to music majors. In addition to passing juries, graduating seniors were required to program, publicize and perform a recital on their major instrument.
- Designed and taught curriculum for woodwind methods class for music education majors. Students were required to pass juries as well as written exam.

Jazz Saxophone Clinician, U.S.Army Jazz Ambassadors, Washington, DC 1994-1998 (Rank of Staff Sergeant)

- Presented masterclasses at college programs throughout the U.S. as part of touring operations for the U.S. Army Jazz Ambassadors.
- Collaborated with development team for Jazz Ambassadors video clinic “Inside the Big Band”.

Teaching Fellow, University of North Texas, Denton, TX 1991-1993

- Director Seven O’Clock Jazz Lab Band. Rehearsed and performed two concerts per semester. Repertoire included classics by Thad Jones, Count Basie and Duke Ellington as well as student arrangements and compositions.

- Director Saxophone Reading Band. For saxophonists who were not accepted into a jazz lab band, emphasis was on development of a swinging style, blending in a section, and improving sight reading skills. Repertoire included saxophone section writing from Thad Jones, Frank Foster, Duke Ellington and Bob Mintzer.
- Private Instructor of Saxophone. Studio of 10-12 saxophone majors ranging from freshman to graduate students. Course work was tailored to fit individual students' needs, but all were expected to complete a battery of scalar exercises, standard classical repertoire, and perform before a jury of faculty members.

Student Teacher, Rush-Henrietta Public School District, Rochester, NY 1988-1989

Worked with band directors in elementary, middle and high schools. Assisted conducting wind ensemble, rehearsing jazz ensembles, and teaching beginning instrumentalists and general music classes.

MAJOR TEACHERS

Ramon Ricker (saxophone), Eastman School of Music—1985-1989

Bill Dobbins (jazz improvisation), Eastman School of Music—1985-1989

Rayburn Wright (jazz arranging), Eastman School of Music—1986-1987

Gary Campbell (saxophone), University of Miami—1989-1990

Jerry Bergonzi (saxophone), Boston, MA —1989-1990

James Riggs (saxophone), University of North Texas—1990-1993

James Gillespie (clarinet), University of North Texas—1990-1993

Jacqueline Hofto (flute), University of North Texas—1991-1992

Kathleen Chastain (flute), University of North Texas—1992-1993

Charles Veazey (oboe), University of North Texas—1992-1993

Sue Schrier Bancroft (bassoon), University of North Texas—1992-1993

Vladimir Lande (oboe), Baltimore, MD—1998

PERFORMING EXPERIENCE (SELECTED)

Broadway

King Kong Alive on Broadway, 2018-present

Hello Dolly, 2018

War Paint, 2017

Jersey Boys, 2005-2017

Hugh Jackman Back on Broadway, 2012

La Cage Aux Folles, 2004-2005

The Boy From Oz, 2003-2004

Amour, 2002-2003

Big Band

BMI Jazz Composers Orchestra, 2002-present
Ted Nash Big Band, 2012-present
Ed Palermo Big Band, 2000-present
John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, 2002-present
The Jazz Ambassadors of the U.S. Army Field Band, lead alto, 1994-1998
University of North Texas One O'Clock Jazz Lab Band, 1991-1993
The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, under the direction of Buddy Morrow, 1989-1990

The Ben Kono Group, 2010-present

Performances and clinics at Amherst College, MA; Joplin Pro Musica, MO; Music Mountain, CT; Bryant Park New Music Festival, NYC; Hopper House Museum, Nyack, NY; 2016 Chamber Music America National Conference, NYC

Has Performed and Recorded with:

Wynton Marsalis, Michael Brecker, Freddie Hubbard, Michel Legrand, Toots Thielemans, Bob Berg, Billy Hart, Kenny Wheeler, John Hollenbeck, Darcy James Argue, Joel Harrison, Andrew Rathbun, Patti Austin, Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis, Frankie Valli, Hugh Jackman, Gotham Jazz Orchestra, Westchester Jazz Orchestra, Miho Hazama's M-Unit, Baltimore Symphony, Orchestra of St. Lukes, American Symphony Orchestra, New York Pops

HONORS, AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

2018 Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Commissioning and Ensemble Development Grant

2013 Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Commissioning and Ensemble Development Grant

Featured in Chamber Music America Magazine Fall 2016 issue article: *Reflecting a Planet in Peril*

Author Reed School Woodshed article for Downbeat Magazine May 2011: *Sax Section Evolution: Leading the New Pack*

Placed in 'Rising Star' category for jazz flutists in 62nd-66th Downbeat annual critics polls.

Ben Kono Group CD 'Crossing' placed among top ten list for debut album of the year by Jazz Journalist Association.

Grammy® winner 2007; *Jersey Boys* Original Cast Recording

DISCOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

Ben Kono Group, *Don't Blink*, 2019

Ben Kono Group, *Crossing*, 2011

Ted Nash Big Band, *Chakra*, 2013*

Joel Harrison 19, *Infinite Possibility*, 2013

John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, *All Can Work*, 2018*

John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, *Eternal Interlude*, 2009*

John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble, *A Blessing*, 2005*

Jersey Boys Original Cast Recording, 2005**

The Boy From Oz Original Cast Recording, 2003*

*Grammy Nomination

**Grammy Winner