I was mentored by John Coltrane. The Visitors, jazz quintet (Founded by Carl & Earl Grubbs) demonstrated a musical aesthetic that incorporated the advanced language of our musical mentors but also showcased our own lyrical approach. This music allowed me to hone my own style and voice within the advanced language of experimental jazz while at the same time finding vehicles that could appeal to wider audiences.

Another important influence in my development was Julius Hemphill. The exploratory natures of Hemphill’s composing and the equally innovative choreography of Bill T. Jones allowed me to work within multi-genre platforms that combined a high degree of artistry with fresh and exciting techniques and approaches.

The proposed project is entitled: “The Inner Harbor Suite: Revisited. The greatest degree of inspiration for the proposed new work has come as a result of my personal desire to take my music to another level. As I reflected on what I wished to accomplish I studied the recordings of Charlie Parker. Parker’s recordings were a perfect blending of saxophone tone and the sensitivity of the string sound. The similarity of the instruments in terms of range became apparent - Tenor sax and cello; Alto sax and viola; soprano and violin. The new music will use string improvisers/readers, group improvisation and ensemble performance. The new music will also utilize modern acoustic sound. The structure of the piece will include melodies, counter-melodies, blues elements of call and response, bebop rhythms, Afro-Cuban rhythms and avant garde elements.

Instrumentation for project

Saxophones (Alto, Tenor, Soprano)

Acoustic Piano, Bass, Drums, Percussion

Violin (2) Viola, Cello (The string section will be led by a conductor)

Stages of project’s production

1. Writing and Arranging the new compositions
2. Working out the string arrangements. Collaborating with John Blake, Jr., jazz violinist and Peter Minkler, viola to assist with the articulations and bowings, etc.
3. Rehearsals – String sectionals, jazz ensemble, full ensemble rehearsal
4. Performance – Public
5. Final Product - CD Recording

 To facilitate the public performance I would reach out to the following venue partners:

1. Baltimore Museum of Art
2. Eubie Blake Jazz Institute & Cultural Center
3. The Ward Center at St. Paul’s School

This is the right time in my career for this project to come to fruition. My earlier works were designed for the traditional jazz ensemble. Now, I am hearing new ideas that I want to incorporate into my music.