

A. Abstract: *(100 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your abstract)* Describe briefly how the funds for which you are applying will be used. If funded, the abstract will be posted to the CoTA website.

Through a highly competitive international application process, I have been selected to present a lecture/clinic on my recent CD release, *“Whispers On the Wind”*, at the Jazz Education Network’s International Conference in Dallas, TX. This conference, which annually attracts over 4,000 musicians, educators, scholars, and music industry professionals from across the world, is considered the largest and most prestigious conference for jazz educators. Entitled *“Local Color”* the clinic will illustrate, how imbuing a composition with a sense of “place” (using concepts driving works found in *“Whispers”*) can often enhance creativity, focus decision-making, and lead to greater engagement with the audience.
(100)

B. Proposal: *(500 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your proposal)* Describe the goals of your project / activity / conference and the area in which your project supports the strategic goals and objectives of the unit, college and university.

On Sept. 8th, 2017 just as Irma was hitting the Florida Keys, *“Whispers On the Wind”*, the latest recording project featuring my Jazz Surge big band, was released internationally on Summit/MAMA Records. I composed and arranged all the music on the CD as well as conducting the 19-piece ensemble, producing the recording, even performing on accordion and hammered dulcimer (neither of which I played prior to this project)!! Scintillating contributions from jazz trumpet legend, Randy Brecker, and Swiss harmonica virtuoso, Gregoire Maret make this project even more special!

“Whispers” was conceived as a suite of 7 pieces linked by a somewhat ethereal examination of Americana - its perceived values, landmarks, folklore, heroes, and myths. Quotes from authors Stephen King, Larry McMurtry, and Cormac McCarthy are associated with each piece – defining and delineating them as well as unifying the project. I tried to capture musically the clear affinity for local color, as well as the wry sense of humor, unique characters, strong sense of place, and disarmingly un sentimental honesty for which these authors are noted.

Early reviews have been extremely gratifying:

“Chuck Owen's incorporation of roots elements and heartland aura . . . is creative, poetic and liable to do all manner of unexpected things in service to American vision. where Gil Evans could add the poetry of Claude Thornhill's dance band to Duke Ellington's highly personal sonic laboratory and come up with wildly personal and unusual syntheses of jazz and pop sound no one had thought of.” – Jeff Simon, Buffalo News.

“The new release is killin’! Played ‘Into the Blue’ this morning . . . blown away by the depth of the tune!” - Gary Walker, Host of WBGO’s (New York/New Jersey) morning, dirve-time jazz program.

Last March I applied to present a lecture/clinic at the Jazz Education Network's annual International Conference this coming January in Dallas. Acceptance to present at JEN is highly competitive, so I was absolutely delighted to have been selected.

In this one-hour session, I intend to discuss the creative process used in composing the works for "*Whispers*" - with particular attention paid to those elements that serve to unify the album's conception and governed/inspired musical decision-making throughout. As opposed to focusing on the somewhat more pedantic "mechanics" of writing (all too frequent at conferences), I believe this approach will highlight the unique aspects of this particular project (particularly in comparison to some of my earlier writing) while, ultimately, leading to a lively exchange of ideas with the composers/jazz musicians in attendance.

The University's strategic vision values "high-impact scholarship, research and creative activities" while the CoTA's mission states it "aspires to achieve national and international recognition as a distinguished center for study, creation, and research". With the CD already attracting international attention as well as strong radio play, such a visible appearance will clearly advance the impact of the project; adding to the national and international recognition sought by the College. (496 Words)

C. Anticipated Benefits: (250 word limit using Microsoft Word – please post word count at the end of your anticipated benefits) Describe the ways in which the proposed goals will be used to enhance your research and the impact/significance of the research to your discipline.

One of the greatest challenges in writing & producing any jazz recording is marketing it amidst the massive volume of other projects clamoring for consumers' and critics' attention. For smaller jazz ensembles, touring is typically the most effective way of "trumpeting" (excuse the pun) a new release as well as garnering interest amongst those that might review or broadcastmuch less purchase CDs! However, touring a big band is virtually a financial impossibility these days unless a sponsor, record label, or large jazz festival underwrites it.

The JEN International Conference is a prestigious opportunity to present "*Whispers*" to a large audience of my colleagues via a lecture/clinic. JEN attendees constitute the most important "market" for my music – not just in terms of purchasing CDs; but in driving future commissions, performances, and invitations to appear as a featured guest composer, conductor, or lecturer. I was fortunate to do a similar presentation in New Orleans, following the release of "*River Runs*", and believe it was not only influential in the general visibility that project received (ultimately garnering 2 Grammy nominations); but that it led directly to featured performances of the massive work at Manhattan School of Music (reviewed in the Huffington Post) and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music as well as invitations to do almost three dozen subsequent lecture/workshops at campuses across the country including such prominent music programs as: University of Michigan, University of North Texas, University of Wisconsin, and University of Minnesota. (247 Words)