

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jun Mhoon

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mhoon, Jun, 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon,
Dates:	July 19, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:48:20).
Abstract:	Music and television producer Jun Mhoon (1954 -) was a touring drummer with many artists, including the Staple Singers, Gene Chandler, and others. He was an executive at several record labels, including Warner Bros., RCA, and A&M before founding I AM Records (later I AM Music and I AM Music Online) in 1987 and I AM Digital Media in 1999. Mhoon also has served as an adjunct professor at Harold Washington College and Columbia College Chicago. Mhoon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 19, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_099
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music and television producer Jun Mhoon was born on June 10, 1954, in Chicago, Illinois, to Justina Williamson Poole and Wilbur Leon Mhoon, Sr. He received his B.A. degree in arts, entertainment, and media management in 1984 from Columbia College Chicago.

In 1968, Mhoon began touring as a drummer with the Staple Singers. Over the next ten years, Mhoon toured and performed with many artists, including Thad Jones, Jessy Dixon, the Bee Gees, the Doors, Paul Simon, and the Count Basie Orchestra. Mhoon was a staff drummer at Brunswick Records and Chess Records in the early 1970s, playing on tracks by The Chi-Lites, Gene Chandler, Jackie Wilson, Jackie Ross and many others.

In the 1970s, Mhoon took a job as a warehouse clerk at Warner Bros. Records, where he soon became director of Midwest Local Marketing. In 1978, Mhoon joined RCA Records as their Midwest regional director, a position he held until 1986, and enrolled at Columbia College in Chicago. While a student at Columbia College, Mhoon founded AEMMP Records, Columbia College's student-run record label. After receiving his bachelor's degree, Mhoon became vice president of A&M Records, in Los Angeles, California.

In 1987, Mhoon founded I AM Records (later I AM Music and I AM Music Online), which specialized in hip hop, jazz, gospel, and inspirational music, as well as spoken word albums. In 1999, he founded I AM Digital Media, where he has been a direct digital content supplier for iTunes, Amazon.com, Spotify, Pandora, Facebook, and others. Mhoon also has served as Chief Digital Aggregator/Consultant for Johnson Publishing Company and JPC Digital and vice president of TV production at Burrell Communications.

As a TV producer, Mhoon co-created the *The Stellar Awards* with Milton Brunson and Don Jackson. He also co-

produced *Steppin' at Club 7* with Anna Morris and has produced several other TV shows. In 2014, Mhoon began contributing a weekly segment, “Your Digital Media Evangelist,” on WVON radio’s *The Urban Business Network*. Mhoon has been a resident lecturer at Chicago State University, Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management, Tribeca Flashpoint Academy, North Park University, and the Chicago Urban League. He also served as an adjunct professor at Chicago’s Harold Washington College and for over ten years at Columbia College Chicago.

Jun Mhoon was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 19, 2004.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jun Mhoon was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 19, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Music and television producer Jun Mhoon (1954 -) was a touring drummer with many artists, including the Staple Singers, Gene Chandler, and others. He was an executive at several record labels, including Warner Bros., RCA, and A&M before founding I AM Records (later I AM Music and I AM Music Online) in 1987 and I AM Digital Media in 1999. Mhoon also has served as an adjunct professor at Harold Washington College and Columbia College Chicago.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Mhoon, Jun, 1954-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Mhoon, Jun, 1954---Interviews

African American musicians--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

African American businesspeople--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Music trade--Illinois--Chicago

African American sound recording executives and producers--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

African American families--Indiana--Gary

Poor--Indiana--Gary

Chicago (Ill.)--Social life and customs

Concert tours--United States

Bee Gees

Doors (Musical group)

Staples Singers

Staples, Pops

Jackson, Jesse, 1941-

Warner Bros. Records

Columbia College (Chicago, Ill.)

Basie, Count,--1904-1984

Sound recording industry--Economic aspects

African American business enterprises--Illinois--Chicago

Music and technology

Digital divide--Economic aspects--United States

Kennedy-King College (Chicago, Ill.)

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Producer

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, July 19, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Music producer Jun Mhoon begins by describing his family background and talking about the lives of his mother and father. He shares stories of his parents on and off relationship, their difficult childhoods and efforts to raise a family. Mhoon richly details his hardscrabble childhood in Gary, Indiana and Chicago, where his family struggled to make ends meet. Mhoon also recalls several stories from his youth involving his uncles' involvement in the mob.

African American musicians--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

African American businesspeople--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Music trade--Illinois--Chicago.

African American sound recording executives and producers--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

African American families--Indiana--Gary.

Poor--Indiana--Gary.

Chicago (Ill.)--Social life and customs.

Concert tours--United States.

Bee Gees.

Doors (Musical group).

Staples Singers.

Staples, Pops.

Jackson, Jesse, 1941-.

Warner Bros. Records.

Columbia College (Chicago, Ill.).

Basie, Count, 1904-1984.

Sound recording industry--Economic aspects.

African American business enterprises--Illinois--Chicago.

Music and technology.

Digital divide--Economic aspects--United States.

Kennedy-King College (Chicago, Ill.).

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Jun Mhoon shares richly detailed stories of childhood misadventures on the South Side of Chicago, and also shares amusing anecdotes about his uncles and other extended family members. Mhoon describes his neighborhood and his mischievous personality, saying that he always seemed to be getting into trouble. He also talks about his education and explains how he became interested in the drums at an early age.

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_003, TRT: 0:31:17 ?

Jun Mhoon recalls in vivid detail his early years as a professional drummer. Mhoon tells of how he got his first break with the Staples Singers, and explains how Purvis Staples and Pops Staples mentored him and influenced him throughout his career. Mhoon also discusses touring with notable groups such as the Bee Gees and the Doors as a youth. He also discusses getting married at an early age and shares lessons he learned from touring.

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_004, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Jun Mhoon discusses his transition from working as a musician to working for a music label, explaining how Pops Staples taught him about the music industry. After running Staples' recording studio in the early 1970s, Mhoon talks about his work for Warner Brothers Records. Mhoon then details the inside story on the rise and fall of his music label, I AM, originally started as a joint project with

Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_005, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Jun Mhoon discusses education at Columbia College and Kennedy King College and shares a story about playing drums with Count Basie. Mhoon details his entry into the digital music industry, transforming his old record label into I AM Music, which provides digital music to major online music stores. Mhoon discusses and the effect of the technology on black musicians and addresses the impact the internet and digital media have had upon the consumption of music and the music industry. He also discusses the consolidation of major record labels and talks about the lack of black-owned digital music companies.

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_001_006, TRT: 0:17:10 ?

Jun Mhoon discusses the rapid changes in communications and technology, and expresses his concerns that African Americans will be left behind as paradigms shift. Finally, Mhoon reflects on his life and career, discusses the successes of his family, and considers his legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Jun Mhoon, Section A2004_099_Mhoon_Jun_06_MED_001, TRT: