

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Eldee Young

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Young, Eldee
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Eldee Young,
Dates:	August 6, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:09:13).
Abstract:	Bassist Eldee Young (1936 - 2007) was a member of the original Ramsey Lewis Trio and Young & Holt Unlimited. His album, "The Soulful Strut," was a certified gold record. Young also performed with other artists, including Dinah Washington, Dizzy Gillespie and Oscar Brown, Jr. Young was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 6, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_127
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Eldee Devon Young was born on January 7, 1936, in Chicago, Illinois. His father, Walter, worked as a machinist and his mother, Beatrice, looked after the couple's eight children. After learning the guitar from his brother at age ten, Young began playing the upright bass professionally at thirteen. He played at the After Hours Club on Sunday nights from 2:30 a.m. until dawn and then ate breakfast at home before heading to school. Young achieved great heights as a musician and could be heard on bass, cello and vocals with his own group, the Eldee Young Jazz

Quartet before his passing.

Young met pianist Ramsey Lewis at McKinley High School. They played together until after graduation in 1953, when Young toured with a blues band through the South. However, he was unsatisfied and his preference for jazz and bebop led him to return to Chicago. Lewis, drummer Isaac "Redd" Holt and Young formed the Ramsey Lewis Trio. The three worked hard to improve their skills. Young went on to study at the American Conservatory of Music. The Ramsey Lewis Trio released their first album in 1956, becoming hugely successful. Their albums *The In Crowd* and *Hang on Sloopy* went gold and the group sold out Carnegie Hall. However, the pressures of fame caused friction and in 1965 Young and Holt split to form Young-Holt Unlimited. *The Soulful Strut*, released soon after, sold enough copies to be certified gold. Young also performed with other artists, including Dinah Washington; Dizzy Gillespie; and Oscar Brown, Jr.

Young and his wife, Barbara, have three children, Eldevon, Tyree and Marcus. Young performed for numerous television and radio programs, as well as for movies. In his later years, he spent six months a year performing in Singapore.

Young passed away on Monday, February 12, 2007 in Thailand where he was performing. Young was 71 years old.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Eldee Young was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 6, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Bassist Eldee Young (1936 - 2007) was a member of the original Ramsey Lewis Trio and Young & Holt Unlimited. His album, "The Soulful Strut," was a certified gold record. Young also performed with other artists, including Dinah Washington, Dizzy Gillespie and Oscar Brown, Jr.

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:

Young, Eldee

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Young, Eldee--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Bassist

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 Eldee Young, August 6, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Eldee Young, Section
A2002_127_001_001, TRT: 0:30:17 2002/08/06

Born in Chicago, Illinois in 1936, jazz bassist Eldee Young describes his family's roots in Tennessee. Young's paternal grandparents were an interracial couple--his grandmother was black, his grandfather white. In accordance with the laws of the time, upon his grandfather's death, the grandmother had to repurchase the family's farm. Young describes how hard his father and his father's siblings worked in order to achieve this goal. His father, a trained machinist with a love of blues music, moved north in search of employment opportunities. He and his wife, a homemaker, settled in Chicago. Young describes being entranced by the excitement of the local music scene. From a young age he was determined to become a part of the community of performers he had witnessed. His eldest brother taught him what he had learned in his guitar lessons, and Eldee Young eventually pursued the bass. In high school, he moonlighted in local clubs, coming home late and attending school the following morning. He eventually became involved with a band that traveled the United States. He left the band and returned to Chicago upon realizing his interest in bebop music. He returned to school in order to get training in genres other than the blues.

Video Oral History Interview with Eldee Young, Section
A2002_127_001_002, TRT: 0:18:12 2002/08/06

Jazz bassist Eldee Young describes his early years on the Chicago music scene as an exciting time during which he became familiar with the shake dancers and comedians who performed in all-night dance clubs. Early on, Young's elder brother instilled in him that he should focus on the music, and not become involved with the drugs that were rampant in many musical circles and their local community in general. Eldee Young played shows late into the morning and would attend school the following day. After high school, he went on the road with R&B

singer Chuck Willis and other musicians. They experienced considerable discrimination on their travels; restaurants, gas stations, and hotels often refused them service and accommodations. After some time on the road, Eldee Young returned to Chicago to pursue training in musical forms other than the blues and to take care of his new family. Shortly after his return, he became involved in a group with two other local musicians, Ramsey Lewis and Isaac 'Redd' Holt; the three formed The Ramsey Lewis Trio. Their manager, radio personality Holmes 'Daddy-O' Daylie, garnered the trio media exposure and celebrity mentors.

Video Oral History Interview with Eldee Young, Section
A2002_127_001_003, TRT: 0:30:46 2002/08/06

Jazz bassist Eldee Young describes that after much consideration, his successful jazz band was named The Ramsey Lewis Trio by Holmes 'Daddy-O' Daylie, the group's manager. The trio's first hit record, 'The In Crowd,' was inspired by a barmaid who insisted that they do a jazz rendition of an R & B record she had heard. Eldee Young describes that Chicago's music atmosphere was the best; the most successful jazz musicians in the world had spent considerable time in the city's nightclubs. Young describes the power of live musical performance. He describes that inspiring the audience to tap their feet, smile and applaud is a unique and powerful experience. Upon the break-up of The Ramsey Lewis Trio, Isaac 'Redd' Holt and Eldee Young formed a second band, Young-Holt Unlimited, which enjoyed considerable media exposure and musical success. In addition to his career success, Young had a family at home in Chicago--a wife and three sons. Young describes that his dearest memories include spending time with his role models, jazz legends like Nat King Cole, Ray Brown, Duke Ellington, and Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley.

Video Oral History Interview with Eldee Young, Section
A2002_127_001_004, TRT: 0:26:21 2002/08/06

Jazz bassist Eldee Young describes that his success came with some obstacles. After he finished touring with Young-Holt Unlimited, he spent time in Chicago performing with local musicians and putting ensembles together for different venues. He then recognized that he

was an alcoholic. A friend advised him to check into a program for rehabilitation from alcoholism, and Young followed the advice. He describes that he has not consumed alcohol in twenty-five years. Young discusses his family members' responses to his musical fame. Many of his relatives have passed. Young describes that he contributed his music to the Civil Rights Movement; he performed at benefit concerts and political events. He recognizes that the black community today has to become more cohesive and assert itself politically and economically. Eldee Young wants to be remembered as a musician who performed happy, uplifting music and enjoyed doing it. Through touring, he has brought his brand of upbeat jazz music to southeast Asia.

Video Oral History Interview with Eldee Young, Section
A2002_127_001_005, TRT: 0:23:37 2002/08/06

Jazz bassist Eldee Young describes photographs from his many years as a musician.