

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Harold Battiste

PERSON

Battiste, Harold R.

Alternative Names: Harold Battiste;

Life Dates: October 28, 1931-June 19, 2015

Place of Birth: New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Residence: New Orleans, LA

Occupations: Jazz Musician; Nonprofit Chief
Executive; Music Producer

Biographical Note

Musician, composer, arranger, performer and teacher, Harold Raymond Battiste, Jr. was born October 28, 1931, in New Orleans. Young Battiste loved the rich music of his New Orleans neighborhood. Graduating from Gilbert Academy in 1948, Battiste attended New Orleans' Dillard University, earning a B.S. in music in 1953.

Battiste's professional achievements as a producer and

arranger for studio, film, stage and television included Sam Cooke's *You Send Me*, Sonny and Cher's *I Got You Babe*, Joe Jones's *You Talk Too Much*, Barbara George's *I Know* and Lee Dorsey's *Ya Ya*. Battiste introduced audiences to New Orleans artist Mac Rebennack as "Dr. John" and produced his earliest albums. Earning six gold records, Battiste spent thirty years in Los Angeles, including fifteen years with Sonny and Cher. In 1961, Battiste initiated the first African American musician-owned record label, All For One, better known as AFO Records. AFO featured contemporary New Orleans jazz musicians Melvin Lastie, Ellis Marsalis, James Black, Alvin Batiste, Ed Blackwell, Nat Perilliat and Alvin "Red" Tyler. In addition to mentoring and tutoring other music professionals and his musical scoring and conducting for film and television, Battiste lectured at several colleges including the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Southern California; Southern University; Mozartium Music School in Innsbruck, Austria; and Le Torri Montanare in Lancano, Italy.

In 1989, he joined Ellis Marsalis on the Jazz Studies faculty of the University of New Orleans. While back in New Orleans Battiste founded the AFO Foundation to document and make available the musical history of the city. Battiste remained active in the community and served as a board member of the Congo Square Cultural Collective, the Louisiana State Music Commission, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, Louisiana Jazz Federation, the African Cultural Endowment and numerous other cultural organizations. He received the Beaux Arts Award, the Mayor's Arts Award, the Governor's Arts Lifetime Achievement Award and many others. In 1998, the City of New Orleans proclaimed his birthday, October 28 as Harold Battiste Day with a proclamation from Mayor Marc Morial.

Battiste passed away on June 19, 2015 at age 83.

Related Entries

Gilbert Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Dillard University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Carver High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1952 to 1954]

Music Teacher

Carter G. Woodson High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1954 to 1955]

Itinerant Teacher

McDonogh 35 High School [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1955 to 1956]

Itinerant Teacher

Specialty Records [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1957 to 1961]

Artists and Repertoire

AFO Records [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1961 to ?]

Founder