

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul Douglas Freeman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Freeman, Paul, 1936-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman,
Dates:	April 24, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:14:38).
Abstract:	Orchestra conductor Paul Douglas Freeman (1936 - 2015) founded and conducted the Chicago Sinfonietta. He was also the music director and conductor of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. Freeman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 24, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_089
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born in Richmond, Virginia, maestro Paul Freeman made a global impact with his symphonic direction. Freeman attended the Eastman School of Music, where he earned his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, with his principal instruments being the clarinet and the cello. Following the completion of his Ph.D., Freeman received a Fulbright Scholarship for two years of study at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, and then studied under conductor Pierre Monteaux at the American Symphony.

Freeman began his conducting career with the Opera Theater of Rochester, New York, where he worked for six years. Following his term at the Opera Theater, Freeman served as the associate conductor of the Dallas and Detroit symphonies, and went on to become the principal guest conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1979, Freeman joined the Victoria Symphony in Canada, where he served as music director until 1989. In 1987, Freeman founded the Chicago Sinfonietta, where he served as conductor; in 1996 he was appointed the music director and conductor of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. Freeman served in both posts concurrently.

After the 1970s, one of Freeman's passions became exposing audiences to black composers. To achieve this aim, the Sinfonietta produced numerous shows highlighting the works of black composers; during the 1970s Freeman released nine albums on Columbia Records to highlight some of the most notable names. In 1975, *Time* listed Freeman's recordings of the first four volumes in its top ten classical records of all time.

Freeman conducted seven productions for national television; conducted five productions for international audiences through Czech national television; and was involved in more than 200 recordings. Freeman was the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Mitropoulos International Conductors Competition; the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds Award; and the Jubilate Award, Canada's highest award for music education. In total, Freeman conducted over 100 orchestras in twenty-eight countries.

Paul Freeman passed away on July 22, 2015, at the age of 79.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul Douglas Freeman was conducted by Adele Hodge on April 24, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Orchestra conductor Paul Douglas Freeman (1936 - 2015) founded and conducted the Chicago Sinfonietta. He was also the music director and conductor of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra.

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:

Freeman, Paul, 1936-

Hodge, Adele (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Freeman, Paul, 1936- --Interviews

African American conductors (Music)--Interviews

African American musicians--Interviews

African American families

African Americans--Genealogy

School music--Instruction and study

Conducting

Conductors (Music)

Eastman School of Music

Berlin (Germany)

Discrimination in education

Victoria (B.C.)

Dallas (Tex.)

Orchestral music

Chicago Sinfonietta

Music--Philosophy and aesthetics

Česky národní symfonický orchestr

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Chicago Sinfonietta

Occupations:

Orchestra Conductor

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 Paul Douglas Freeman, April 24, 2003. 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 Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_001_001, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Paul Freeman shares his family background and describes what it was like growing up in a house with twelve siblings. Freeman discusses his early interest in music, recalling his first experiences playing clarinet. Freeman then explains how he cultivated his talent by taking private lessons and playing with a college symphony while he was still a teenager. He also explains why he was drawn to conducting.

African American conductors (Music)--Interviews.

African American musicians--Interviews.

African American families.

African Americans--Genealogy.

School music--Instruction and study.

Conducting.

Conductors (Music).

Eastman School of Music.

Berlin (Germany).

Discrimination in education.

Victoria (B.C.).

Dallas (Tex.).

Orchestral music.

Chicago Sinfonietta.

Music--Philosophy and aesthetics.

Česky národní symfonický orchestr.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_001_002, TRT: 0:29:35 ?

Paul Freeman describes the start of his musical career, from his first time conducting an orchestra, to his doctoral work at the Eastman School of Music. Freeman explains why he chose Eastman for his undergraduate study, and discusses his experience studying abroad in Berlin, where he had great success. Freeman gives an example of racism in the admissions process that denied him enrollment at Indiana University. Freeman then describes his time as a doctoral student at Eastman.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_001_003, TRT: 0:30:52 ?

Paul Freeman discusses his professional life as a conductor, starting with the effects his profession has had on his family life, including his moves to Dallas, Texas, and Victoria, British Columbia. Freeman describes his various appointments to conducting posts around the world; he was the first African American to conduct many orchestras. Freeman describes the many instances of segregation and racism in the orchestral music world, and explains how he was able to overcome prejudice.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_001_004, TRT: 0:30:19 ?

Paul Freeman discusses various topics about orchestral music, particularly about his interpretation of other composers. He lists his many successes, and shares some of the work he has done in conducting the works of many black composers. Freeman also describes how he has integrated other art forms into his interpretations of music.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_001_005, TRT: 0:14:45 ?

Paul Freeman considers his legacy and reflects on his current successes with the Chicago Sinfonietta and Czech National Symphony Orchestra. Freeman says he is proud of having inspired the diversification of many orchestras around the world. Freeman also describes a series of photographs, depicting his life and family.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_Freeman_Paul_06_MED_001, TRT: 0:51:24

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_Freeman_Paul_06_MED_002, TRT: 0:51:02

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_Freeman_Paul_06_MED_003, TRT: 0:58:46

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Douglas Freeman, Section A2003_089_Freeman_Paul_06_MED_004, TRT: 1:11:39