Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Edward Robinson

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Edward Robinson

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Edward Robinson,

Dates: April 29, 2003

Bulk Dates: 2003

Physical Description: 3 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:05:38).

Abstract: Gospel pianist Edward Robinson (1933 - ) is recognized as one of Chicago's pioneers of gospel music and has accompanied Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, and many others. Robinson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 29, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2003_094

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Gospel pianist Edward Robinson was born in 1933. At a young age Robinson sat down at his older brother's piano and began playing the song "Does Jesus Care" by ear. This experience began a lifetime dedicated to gospel music.

After his family moved to Chicago from Birmingham, Alabama, Robinson started playing piano for Louis Bodie. He became an accompanist for Mahalia Jackson and traveled the world with her for seventeen years. While traveling with Mahalia Jackson, he played gospel songs at the White House for five presidents, performed before European royalty and took the stage at New York's legendary Carnegie Hall. He has also performed with Aretha Franklin, Albertina Walker, Sam Cooke, The Caravans, Gladys Knight and Robert Anderson.

Despite his professional success, Robinson remained faithful to his gospel roots. In 1997, Mayor Richard Daley and the City of Chicago honored Robinson as one of Chicago's pioneers of gospel music. Former Illinois Governor George Ryan also honored him as a historian.

Edward Robinson lives in Chicago, where he works as the pianist for the St. Andrew Temple Choir and as chapel musician for Leak and Sons Funeral Directors. Robinson also travels the world as the pianist for Willie Wilson.

Edward Robinson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on April 23, 2003.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Edward Robinson was conducted by Adele Hodge on April 29, 2003, in
Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 3 Betacam SP videocassettes. Gospel pianist Edward Robinson (1933 - ) is recognized as one of Chicago's pioneers of gospel music and has accompanied Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin, and many others.

**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:**

Robinson, Edward

Hodge, Adele (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

**Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews
Edward Robinson--Interviews

African American church musicians--Interviews.

Pianists--Interviews.

African American church musicians.

Pianists.
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**Organizations:**

- HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)
- The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

**HistoryMakers® Category:**

- MusicMakers

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**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**


**Processing Information**

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/13/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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**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.

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**Detailed Description of the Collection**

**Series I: Original Interview Footage, April 29, 2003**

Video Oral History Interview with Edward Robinson, Section A2003_094_001_001, TRT: 0:29:27

2003/04/29

Edward Robinson begins the interview by narrating some photographs he brought. He then slates the interview and gives a very brief history of his family and his parents' occupations. Robinson states that his mother was a nurse and was very well respected in their community in Birmingham, Alabama. He
remembers how close he was to his mother and that he helped her deliver food to the sick people in their community. Robinson also states that his father worked for Tennessee Coal & Iron Company's Steel Mill in Birmingham. His mother was very religious and he was always fond of gospel music. Robinson remembers the first time he met Mahalia Jackson, who became a good friend to him over the years. During the interview, Robinson briefly lists the different schools he attended, and talks about the first time he ever played the piano.

African American families--Alabama.
Jackson, Mahalia, 1911-1972.
Gospel musicians--United States.
African American mothers.
African American nurses.
Pianists.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward Robinson, Section A2003_094_001_002, TRT: 0:30:06 2003/04/29

Edward Robinson continues to discuss working with Mahalia Jackson, and he talks about the first time he toured with her. Robinson recalls a time that she walked through an entire concert hall and greeted everyone who came to see her sing. The audience was so excited to see her that they started chanting her name. Robinson also remembers the different artists that influenced the evolution of his musical style, and notes the other people he worked with, like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during the freedom rallies, and Aretha Franklin and her father Rev. C.L Franklin.

Jackson, Mahalia, 1911-1972.
Gospel musicians--United States.
Franklin, Aretha.
Civil rights movement--Songs and music.
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward Robinson, Section A2003_094_001_003, TRT: 0:06:05 2003/04/29

Edward Robinson discusses how he met Nat King Cole and other celebrities during his career as a gospel musician.

Cole, Nat King, 1919-1965