

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dianne McIntyre

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McIntyre, Dianne
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre,
Dates:	June 18, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:23:08).
Abstract:	Choreographer and dancer Dianne McIntyre (1946 -) founded her own dance company, Sounds in Motion, which was active during the 1970s and 1980s. McIntyre's special interest in history and culture as it relates to dance had led to many projects for her in the areas of concert dance, theatre, film and television. McIntyre was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 18, 2004, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_085
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Choreographer, dancer, and director Dianne McIntyre was born in 1946 in Cleveland, Ohio to Dorothy Layne McIntyre and Francis Benjamin McIntyre. She attended Cleveland Public Schools and graduated from John Adams High School in 1964. As a child, she studied ballet with Elaine Gibbs and modern dance with Virginia Dryansky and earned a BFA degree in dance from The Ohio State University.

Following her move to New York City in 1970, McIntyre founded her own company, Sounds in Motion, in 1972. McIntyre and her company toured and performed in concert with Olu Dara, Lester Bowie, Cecil Taylor, Max Roach, Butch Morris, David Murray, Hamiet Bluiett, Ahmed Abdullah, Don Pullen, Anthony Davis, Abbey Lincoln, Sweet Honey in the rock, Hannibal, Oliver Lake, and countless others musicians until 1988, when she closed it to have more time to explore new areas of creative expression. From her studio, McIntyre mentored many dance artists and continues to do so.

McIntyre's special interest in history and culture as it relates to dance has led to many projects for her in the areas of concert dance, theatre, film and television, including (in dance) *Union* (after her research in Haiti) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (from Zora Neale Hurston's novel). Other signature concert dance and dance theatre works are *Take Off from a Forced Landing* (her mother's aviator stories), *Mississippi Talks*, *Ohio Walks*, *I Could Stop on a Dime and Get Ten Cents Change* (her father's stories of Cleveland), and *Open the Door, Virginia!* (school civil rights events). In addition to completing works for her own companies, she has choreographed for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Dallas Black Dance, as well as college dance groups.

McIntyre's work in theatre has been for Broadway, Off-Broadway, regional productions and London, England. Her theatre choreography credits of more than thirty plays include *Mule Bone*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Spell #7*,

Crowns and Scott Joplin's opera, *Treemonisha*. For film, McIntyre's work appears in *Beloved* and for television, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, *Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper* and *Miss Evers' Boys*, for which she received an Emmy nomination.

Other awards include a 2007 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2009 Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from State University of New York Purchase College, three Bessies (NY Dance), two AUDELCOs (NY Black Theatre), a Helen Hayes Award (DC Theatre) and the Cleveland Arts Prize.

Grant support for McIntyre's work includes awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trust and the New York State Council on the Arts. She has served on the board of directors of the Stage Directors and Choreographers' Society. McIntyre is also a member of the Dramatists Guild and ASCAP.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dianne McIntyre was conducted by Regennia Williams on June 18, 2004, in Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Choreographer and dancer Dianne McIntyre (1946 -) founded her own dance company, Sounds in Motion, which was active during the 1970s and 1980s. McIntyre's special interest in history and culture as it relates to dance had led to many projects for her in the areas of concert dance, theatre, film and television.

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:

McIntyre, Dianne

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
McIntyre, Dianne--Interviews

Choreographers--Interviews

African American dance teachers--Interviews

African American dancers--Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Dancer

Choreographer

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Dianne McIntyre, June 18, 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 Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_001, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Dianne McIntyre was born on July 18, 1946 in Cleveland, Ohio. Her father, Francis McIntyre, was born to a Jamaican father and an African American and Native American mother. They moved to Cleveland where McIntyre's paternal grandfather was a chauffeur for a prominent doctor. McIntyre's father was a postal worker. McIntyre's mother, HistoryMaker Dorothy McIntyre, grew up on a farm in Le Roy, New York and attended West Virginia State College in Institute, West Virginia and worked as a bookkeeper, a social worker and a teacher in Cleveland. Her maternal ancestors were slaves in Culpeper, Virginia who freed themselves and are buried in the town cemetery. Dorothy McIntyre was also the first African American female pilot trained and licensed in the U.S. Dianne McIntyre created a dance piece called, 'Take Off from a Forced Landing,' inspired by her mother, and a play entitled, 'I Could Stop on a Dime and get Ten Cents Change,' inspired by her father.

Choreographers--Interviews.

African American dance teachers--Interviews.

African American dancers--Interviews.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_002, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

Dianne McIntyre's mother, HistoryMaker Dorothy McIntyre, was denied jobs as a pilot during World War II due to racial discrimination, but did teach an aircraft mechanics class in Baltimore, Maryland during the war. After the war, McIntyre's family moved to Cleveland, Ohio where her paternal grandparents lived; her father worked various jobs before working for the post office. McIntyre's parents' first home was a duplex in the Glenville neighborhood; in the 1950s, they moved to Mount Pleasant, a white neighborhood that transitioned to be predominantly African American over the course of the decade. McIntyre remembers her first day of kindergarten in Glenville and her interracial friendships in Mount Pleasant. She always loved to dance, and started lessons with ballet teacher Elaine Gibbs when she was four years old, then took lessons at the Community Services Center of Mount Pleasant started by Murtis H. Taylor. There, she discovered modern dance from her teacher, Karamu dancer Virginia Dryansky.

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_003, TRT: 0:30:03 ?

Dianne McIntyre studied ballet and modern dance as a child and was influenced

by the racially integrated productions put on by Karamu House in Cleveland, Ohio. She was raised in the supportive community of Cleveland's Mount Pleasant neighborhood. Although her teachers encouraged her artistic talents, she did not consider becoming a professional dancer. McIntyre attended Andrew J. Rickoff Elementary, Alexander Hamilton Junior High and John Adams High School. She did not make the varsity cheerleading team the first time she tried out, and feared it was because of her race. She reflects upon race relations in high school and the Civil Rights Movement in Cleveland. She remembers a student strike to protest overcrowding in African American schools, the death of a protester and the districts plan to build annexes onto African American schools in an effort to maintain school segregation. McIntyre attended St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Ohio, where her father had been a member since the 1920s.

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_004, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Dianne McIntyre graduated from John Adams High School in Cleveland, Ohio in 1964. She entered The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio as a French major, later changing to dance. After graduating in 1969, she taught dance at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She was caught in controversy when, in an effort to keep student protesters from stopping her class, she moved it off campus and was accused by the head of the dance department of sympathizing with the protests, causing a rift in the department. McIntyre left in 1970, spent the summer teaching dance in Cleveland then moved to New York City in the fall. She worked in the dance collection of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at the Lincoln Center while also studying under masters of modern dance and teaching at The Harlem School of the Arts. In 1972, McIntyre founded Sounds in Motion Dance Company. She describes her company's growth and the African and African American dancers who inspired her, like HistoryMaker Katherine Dunham.

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_005, TRT: 0:30:22 ?

Dianne McIntyre describes a piece she choreographed about slavery entitled, 'The Voyage,' and explains the inspiration behind her adaptation of Zora Neale Hurston's, 'Their Eyes Were Watching God.' McIntyre remembers choreographer Alvin Ailey and the work she did for his junior company, Ailey II, called 'Deep South Suite,' for which designer Willi Smith created costumes. She reflects on Ailey's work 'Revelations,' the strength of other African American male choreographers of his generation and the inclusion of dancers of different body types. McIntyre tries to avoid choreographing pieces that are stereotypically beautiful. McIntyre talks about the energy and funding that was behind the Black Arts Movement and its legacy, which lives on through contemporary African American artists.

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_006, TRT: 0:30:18 ?

Dianne McIntyre first met Ntozake Shange in 1974, when she came to McIntyre's Sounds in Motions studio to take dance classes. Shange asked McIntyre to choreograph the play adaptation of her work, 'For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf,' which McIntyre turned down, but later choreographed the film adaptation. In 1979, McIntyre choreographed Shange's play, 'Spell #7' and worked with her again in 2003. In 1988, McIntyre ended Sounds in Motion Dance Company to focus on her choreography, as she felt she was doing too much administrative work. She recreated Helen Tamiris' 'How Long Brethren?' in 1991 and created her own piece, entitled 'In Living Color,' about the Gullah people of South Carolina. She also worked on the Opera Theater of St. Louis' production of 'Treemonisha.' In

1997, McIntyre worked on her first film choreographing for 'Miss Evers' Boys,' and the next year working on the film adaptation of Toni Morrison's 'Beloved.'

Video Oral History Interview with Dianne McIntyre, Section A2004_085_001_007, TRT: 0:22:53 ?

Dianne McIntyre was moved by Beah Richards' performance as Baby Suggs in the film adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel 'Beloved.' McIntyre describes the genuine emotion Richards' elicited from the other actors and dancers in one scene. McIntyre considers her signature pieces to be 'Their Eyes Were Watching God,' 'Love Poems to God,' 'Mississippi Talks, Ohio Walks' and 'Deep South Suite.' She describes the projects she was working on at the time of the interview, in 2004, and gives advice to aspiring choreographers. McIntyre concludes by narrating her photographs.