

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Geraldine de Haas

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	De Haas, Geraldine, 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas,
Dates:	July 30, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:42:57).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive and jazz singer Geraldine de Haas (1935 -) is the founder, president and CEO of Jazz Unites, Inc., dedicated to the growth and appreciation of jazz, and educating people through the use of jazz. de Haas is also the founder of the popular Jazzfest at the South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago. de Haas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 30, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_115
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Geraldine de Haas, “The Jazz Lady,” was born in Newark, New Jersey on January 16, 1935. As a young woman, de Haas sang and toured with her brother and sister as Andy and the Bey Sisters, initially starting out in the Miami club scene in 1958. When they returned to New York after several months, they went to several auditions that promised them a few weeks of club dates in Spain and London. However, their music proved wildly popular, and they went on a whirlwind tour all across Europe that lasted a year and a half.

While the trio was in Europe, they became the featured act at the world famous Blue Note in Paris, and were featured in a jazz film directed by Roger Vadim. De Haas and her siblings returned to the United States in 1960, and began performing at jazz clubs and festivals across the country, and made several recordings, as well. The trio finally disbanded in 1966. The early 1970s found de Haas joining the Free Street Theater in Chicago, and her theater career continued over the next two decades, with performances in *Hair*, *Showboat* and *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, and numerous jazz performances, as well. She also began producing events during the 1970s, and in 1983, she presented the first Jazzfest at the South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago, which continues on to this day. De Haas also earned her B.A. in music education in 1980 from Chicago State University, and has taken other courses to continue her education since.

In 1981, de Haas founded Jazz Unites, Inc., to further the growth and appreciation of jazz, and to educate people through the use of jazz. Since 1993, she has served as the president, CEO and artistic director. Over the course of her career, she has shared the stage with such jazz legends as Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, and her favorite, the late bass player Ray Brown.

De Haas is married to Edgar de Haas, a prominent jazz musician in his own right. They have two children, both of whom are artists.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Geraldine de Haas was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 30, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive and jazz singer Geraldine de Haas (1935 -) is the founder, president and CEO of Jazz Unites, Inc., dedicated to the growth and appreciation of jazz, and educating people through the use of jazz. de Haas is also the founder of the popular Jazzfest at the South Shore Cultural Center in Chicago.

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:

De Haas, Geraldine, 1935-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

De Haas, Geraldine, 1935---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Jazz Singer

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 Geraldine de Haas, July 30, 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 Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00
?

Geraldine de Haas was born January 16, 1935 in Newark, New Jersey, the seventh of nine children. Her mother, Victoria Johnson Bey, born in 1906, was a homemaker. She had little formal education but was strong-willed and independent. Her father, Andrew Weidman Bey, born in 1905, was a window washer and a member of the Moorish Science Temple of America. Her father

was always in search of knowledge about African American history and became involved with the The Moorish Science Temple of America. De Haas attributes her drive for success to her father. Both parents originated from Georgia, but her mother's family left their farm and fled to New Jersey to escape racist violence. While growing up in Newark, de Haas was immersed in music at a young age; her family's house was never without a piano and her brother Andrew W. Bey made music from the age of three. She remembers her sisters dancing to the music of Duke Ellington and Count Basie, the neighborhood playmates and the pervasiveness of heroin in the community.

Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_002, TRT: 0:29:30
?

Geraldine de Haas and several of her siblings were influenced by their father's love of black history, which led de Haas to question her teachers' Eurocentric versions of history. De Haas attended Newton Street School in Newark, New Jersey. She was not interested in singing until she became a teenager. She attended West Side High School, a college preparatory institution, where she enjoyed studying music. Although she loved opera and classical music, she was ashamed to admit it until she began listening to Marian Anderson and Mario Lanza. Her siblings Andrew W. "Andy" Bey and Salome were considered the musical stars of the family and performed in New Jersey; at the age of nine, her brother Andy had appeared with Louis Jordan at the Apollo Theater in New York City. De Haas joined them to form the musical trio Andy and the Bey Sisters in 1957. De Haas attended Chicago State University in Chicago, Illinois to study music education. While there, she realized her love for the freedom and creativity of jazz music.

Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20
?

Geraldine de Haas graduated from high school in 1954 and spent the next few years developing her music career by appearing in the Newark music scene as part of the sibling trio, Andy and the Bey Sisters. They performed at the Cotton Club in Miami in 1957, then embarked on a European tour in 1958, where they met many artists, including Billy Eckstine and Eartha Kitt. When the group performed in Paris, de Haas rebuffed an advance from Marlon Brando, despite her admiration for him. In 1960, they played at the Club Versailles in New York City and met HistoryMaker Carmen de Lavallade and other celebrities. They also attended a dinner party hosted by Gail Buckley, where de Haas received important musical advice from Miles Davis. While appearing at the Boston nightclub Storyville, de Haas worked with Thelonious Monk and Max Roach, then the group's drummer. She married bassist Eddie de Haas in 1961. After the birth of her first child, de Haas had to leave the group. She moved to Germany, then to Chicago in 1968.

Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_004, TRT: 0:29:10
?

Geraldine de Haas joined Free Street Theater during the early 1970s and saw the racism that divided Chicago, Illinois while also learning of the different neighborhoods' common concerns. She spearheaded the Tribute to Duke Ellington concert in 1974. Aided by HistoryMaker The Honorable John H. Stroger, Jr., de Haas succeeded in securing Grant Park as the concert site rather than Washington Park to grant the musician the prominence he was due. She rallied artists, including HistoryMakers Billy Taylor and Merri Dee, to appear at the celebration. This tribute concert became the catalyst for several of Chicago's current annual musical festivals. De Haas graduated cum laude from Chicago

State University in 1977. She founded Jazz Unites in 1981. After having spent several years battling alongside HistoryMakers Carol L. Adams and Abena Joan P. Brown to save the South Shore Cultural Center, de Haas was able to host the South Shore Jazz Festival there. She also describes her husband Edgar “Eddie” de Haas’s background.

Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_005, TRT: 0:28:40
?

Geraldine de Haas joined Chicago’s Free Street Theater in the early 1970s and performed in ‘Hair’ and HistoryMaker Micki Grant’s ‘Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope.’ De Haas was hired by the Illinois Arts Council in 1983. During her ten years there, she helped other, smaller nonprofit arts organizations acquire funds. She also served on the National Endowment for the Arts alongside HistoryMaker A.B. Spellman. De Haas participated in the Congressional Black Caucus Forum on Jazz developed by HistoryMaker John Conyers, Jr. where she helped write a resolution to better recognize and fund jazz that was eventually passed unanimously with the help of HistoryMaker Carol Moseley Braun. De Haas believes that jazz has the ability to unite people in a way like no other music form, hence the name of her organization Jazz Unites. Jazz Unites has hosted notable artists such as Art Blakey and HistoryMaker Gloria Lynne. De Haas talks about her children’s artistic careers and describes her hopes for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Geraldine de Haas, Section A2004_115_001_006, TRT: 0:17:17
?

Geraldine de Haas reflects upon her life, her legacy, and how she would like to be remembered. She also describes her parents’ feelings about her success and how opportunities for African Americans in the entertainment industry changed over the years. De Haas concludes her interview by narrating her photographs.