

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jeffrey Mumford

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Mumford, Jeffrey, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jeffrey Mumford,
Dates:	January 12, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:45:10).
Abstract:	Music instructor and music composer Jeffrey Mumford (1955 -) enjoyed a prolific career as a composer and arranger. He worked as an instructor in music at the Washington Conservatory of Music, artist in residence at Bowling Green State University, and assistant professor of composition at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Mumford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 12, 2005, in Oberlin, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_011
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Jeffrey Mumford served as instructor in music at the Washington Conservatory of Music, artist in residence at Bowling Green State University, and assistant professor of composition at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. A native of Washington, D.C., he earned his B.A. degree at the University of California, Irvine, and his M.A. degree from the University of California, San Diego. Mumford has composed solo works for voice, piano, and other instruments, as well as works for chamber ensemble, chorus and orchestra. His recordings include *The Focus of Blue Light*, and *Dark Fires*.

Mumford has received commissions from the Nancy Ruyle Dodge Charitable Trust; Sonia and Louis Rothschild; Theater Chamber Players; Meet the Composer/Art Endowment Commissioning; Music/USA; the National Symphony Orchestra; Walter W. Naumburg Foundation; Amphion Foundation; New York Music Ensemble; McFim Fund of the Library of Congress; and violinist Wendy Richman. Mumford's works have been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the American Composers' Orchestra, among others.

Mumford's honors, awards, and grants include the Guggenheim Foundation; the American Music Center; an ASCAP Foundation grant; ASCAP Standard Panel Awards; the ASCAP Aaron Copland Scholarship Award; and seven Meet the Composer grants.

Mumford and his wife have one daughter.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jeffrey Mumford was conducted by Regennia Williams on January 12, 2005, in Oberlin, Ohio, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Music instructor and music composer Jeffrey Mumford (1955 -) enjoyed a prolific career as a composer and arranger. He worked as an instructor in music at the Washington Conservatory of Music, artist in residence at Bowling Green State University, and assistant professor of composition at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

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:

Mumford, Jeffrey, 1955-

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mumford, Jeffrey, 1955---Interviews

African American composers--Interviews

African American educators--Interviews

African American music teachers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Composer

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 Jeffrey Mumford, January 12, 2005. 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 Jeffrey Mumford, Section A2005_011_001_001, TRT: 0:29:40 ?
Jeffrey Mumford was born on June 22, 1955 in Washington, D.C. His maternal grandfather was a postal worker and often told Mumford amusing stories. His

maternal grandmother was more serious and babysat Mumford. His mother, Sylvia Jefferson Mumford, was born in 1926 in D.C. where she matriculated at Miner Teachers College and became an elementary school teacher. Smart and politically active, she attended the 1972 Democratic National Convention. Mumford's father, Thaddeus Mumford, was born in 1923 in Rockingham, North Carolina. He transferred from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee to D.C.'s Howard University where he became a dentist and, in the 1940s, was stationed as a dental officer at Maryland's Fort Meade. As a student, Mumford was inspired by orchestral performances, listened to classical music and improvised on the clarinet while his older brother acted in children's theater productions. He attended public elementary schools and graduated high school from Sidwell Friends School in D.C.

African American composers--Interviews.

African American educators--Interviews.

African American music teachers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Jeffrey Mumford, Section A2005_011_001_002, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Jeffrey Mumford was influenced by his father's musical interests; while growing up, he was exposed to Count Basie, Ray Charles, HistoryMaker Ramsey Lewis and Brazilian music played on WMAL. He enjoyed holiday festivities, including listening to HistoryMaker Billy Taylor's Christmas album. He attended Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. where he was influenced by African American tenor Ralph Williams's course in music theory and his English teacher's encouragement of critical thinking. A family friend encouraged Mumford to attend University of California in Irvine where he initially studied painting. After his artwork was denigrated, Mumford transferred to the department of music and took additional classes in theory and composition. He composed his first professional piece for the Contemporary Music Forum in D.C. shortly before he entered graduate school in music at the University of California at San Diego. Mumford describes the problems involved in categorizing and labeling music.

Video Oral History Interview with Jeffrey Mumford, Section A2005_011_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Jeffrey Mumford teaches a course at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, which explores the contributions of African American classical composers. He reflects upon the reception of African American composers throughout the centuries, including the impact of William Grant Still. He describes the wide range of music written by African American composers, including trailblazers such as HistoryMakers Olly Wilson and T.J. Anderson, and misconceptions about their work. Mumford names Eileen Southern and William Banfield as music historians who have grounded his own coursework and composition. He recalls the impact of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in Washington, D.C., reflects upon the Civil Rights Movement and details his views about U.S. educational policies.

Video Oral History Interview with Jeffrey Mumford, Section A2005_011_001_004, TRT: 0:17:40 ?

Jeffrey Mumford's compositions have been recorded and published by Albany Records, Composers Recordings Inc., Capstone Records and Theodore Presser Company. At the time of the interview, Mumford had been commissioned to compose new works for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a performance commemorating the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday in 2006. In this part of the interview, Mumford shares his perspective on the National Endowment for the Arts and its need for better funding as well as government censorship of the arts. He describes his daughter, Josephine Blythe Coleman-Mumford, and wife, Donna Leslie Coleman, who is a painter. Mumford reflects

upon his hopes for society at-large, his future goals and his legacy.