

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Camara Kambon

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Kambon, Camara
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 17, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:26:40).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Music composer and music producer Camara Kambon (1973 - ) was nominated for both Grammy and Emmy Awards for his musical compositions. He worked with Dr. Dre, Mary J. Blige, and Nelly Furtado and won Emmy Awards for his musical work on the HBO film, "Sonny Liston: The Mysterious Life and Death of a Champion," and the HBO documentary, "Where Have You Gone Joe DiMaggio?" Kambon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 17, 2008, in Hollywood, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_111
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music composer and music producer Camara Yero Kambon was born on February 4, 1973, in Baltimore, Maryland to Anana Maisha Kambon, a preschool teacher, and Kwame Sietu Kambon, an artist. At the age of two, Kambon started studying drums. He moved to the piano at age four and composed his first musical riffs by the age of six. While living in Baltimore, Maryland, Kambon attended Cross Country Elementary and attended Fallstaff Middle School where he began to play other instruments besides the piano. After graduating from middle school, Kambon attended St. Paul's School for Boys in Lutherville, Maryland. In 1983, Kambon enrolled in the Peabody Preparatory School in Baltimore, studying jazz, classical piano and composition. Kambon graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts in 1994 where he studied music production, music engineering and film scoring. While there, he composed music for the Emmy nominated films, *Dancing: New Worlds, New Forms* and *Malcolm X: Make it Plain*.

In 1996, Kambon won an Emmy Award for the music he composed for the HBO film, *Sonny Liston: The Mysterious Life and Death of a Champion*. At the age of twenty-three, he was the youngest composer ever to receive a national Emmy Award. Kambon then became head of Influx Entertainment, a musical production company in Hollywood, California, specializing in film, television and records. Kambon has worked as the composer for two television series, *A Different World* and *Living Single*. He has also worked as a keyboard player for producer and rapper, Dr. Dre. In addition, Kambon composed *Korikabaya*, which was performed by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

In 1998, Kambon received his second Emmy nomination for the HBO documentary, *Where Have You Gone Joe DiMaggio?* Kambon received three Grammy nominations in 2001 for co-writing the Mary J. Blige hit, *Family Affair*; for his keyboard work on Nelly Furtado's *Whoa, Nelly!*; and for his contribution to Eve's album, *Scorpion*.

Two years later, Kambon received another Emmy nomination for *A City on Fire: Tigers of '68*.

Camara Yero Kambon was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 18, 2008.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Camara Kambon was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 17, 2008, in Hollywood, California, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Music composer and music producer Camara Kambon (1973 - ) was nominated for both Grammy and Emmy Awards for his musical compositions. He worked with Dr. Dre, Mary J. Blige, and Nelly Furtado and won Emmy Awards for his musical work on the HBO film, "Sonny Liston: The Mysterious Life and Death of a Champion," and the HBO documentary, "Where Have You Gone Joe DiMaggio?"

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Kambon, Camara

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kambon, Camara--Interviews

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African American sound recording executives and producers--Interviews.

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African American composers--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Music Composer

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Music Producer

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## 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

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon, September 17, 2008. 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).

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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

Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon, Section A2008\_111\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:10 ?

Camara Kambon was born on February 4, 1973 in Baltimore, Maryland to Anana Kambon and Kwame Kambon. His great-great-grandfather had Native American and white ancestry, and originated in Prince George's County in Maryland. Kambon's maternal grandparents, Yolanda Proctor and Leon J. Proctor, met at Morgan State College in Baltimore, where his mother was born in 1953. She was raised in the Catholic faith, and attended the St. Ann Catholic Church and Mercy High School. His maternal aunt, Gwynette Proctor, later became a Catholic nun. Kambon's mother was politically active in the 1970s; and, during that time, met Kambon's father. They became involved with civil rights activists Maulana Karenga and Amiri Baraka, musician James Mtume and the Congress of Afrikan People. From the age of seven years old, Kambon had no contact with his father, and little contact with his paternal family. He and his brother, Khari Kambon, grew up in a tight knit community in Baltimore, in close proximity to their mother's family.

African American families--Maryland--Baltimore.

African American musicians--Maryland--Baltimore.

African Americans--Maryland--Baltimore--Social life and customs.

African American parents--Maryland--Baltimore.

Passing (Identity).

Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon, Section A2008\_111\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Camara Kambon was raised near the home of his maternal grandmother, Yolanda Proctor, the east side of Baltimore, Maryland. His father, Kwame Kambon, was a painter and Swahili teacher; while his mother, Anana Kambon, studied preschool education at Coppin State College. Kambon's mother began to notice his musical abilities when he was two years old. Three years later, his family moved to the northwest area of Baltimore, where he learned to read music, and took private music lessons from Odell Wilson, who was affiliated with the Agnihotra movement in Baltimore. From the age of six years old, Kambon performed with the band Satyadharma. He listened to the music of Bob Marley, the Bee Gees, John Coltrane, Abdullah Ibrahim, Sonny Rollins and Ahmad Jamal; as well as Kweisi Mfume's radio show, 'Two Way Talk.' Kambon was soon recognized as a musical prodigy, and was featured in the Baltimore Afro-American and The Baltimore Sun newspapers. He also recalls meeting Alice Coltrane in the mid-1990s.

African American musicians--Maryland--Baltimore.

Gillespie, Dizzy, 1917-1993.

Coltrane, John, 1926-1967.

African American musicians--California--Los Angeles.

Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon, Section A2008\_111\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Camara Kambon attended Cross Country Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland, where he excelled in math. At eight years old, Kambon began studying classical and South American music at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. He joined the school band at Fallstaff Middle School, and played the timpani, xylophone and glockenspiel. With the encouragement of his mother, Anana Kambon, he performed at clubs like Left Bank Jazz Society, where he

played the song 'St. Thomas' with Dizzy Gillespie. Kambon experienced racial discrimination for the first time at St. Paul's School, where there were few African American students. Nevertheless, he was elected president of the student council, and state treasurer of the Maryland Association of Student Councils. As a teenager, Kambon performed at the King of France, a venue in Annapolis, Maryland where he met his mentor, jazz musician Jack Pastorius. Kambon was also influenced by composer Stu Gardner, guitarist Pat Metheny, and pianists John Lewis and McCoy Tyner.

African American mothers.

African American musicians--Baltimore--Maryland.

Pastorius, Jaco.

St. Paul's School (Baltimore, Md.).

Gardner, Stu.

Gillespie, Dizzy, 1917-1993.

Jazz--1981-1990.