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

Overview of the Collection

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

Creator: Kambon, Camara

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Camara Kambon,

Dates: September 17, 2008

Bulk Dates: 2008

Physical Description: 3 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:26:40).

Abstract: Music composer and music producer Camara Kambon (1973 - ) has been nominated for both Grammy and Emmy Awards for his musical compositions. He has 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.

Identification: A2008_111

Language: The interview and records are in English.

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 Inflx 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.

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 Betacam SP videocassettes. Music composer and music producer Camara Kambon (1973 - ) has been nominated for both Grammy and Emmy Awards for his musical compositions. He has 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?"

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:

Kambon, Camara

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

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

African Americans--Interviews
Kambon, Camara--Interviews

African American sound recording executives and producers--Interviews.

African American composers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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 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 11/15/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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
Camara Yero Kambon was born on February 4, 1973 in Baltimore, Maryland. Kambon grew up near Pikesville, northwest of the Pimlico neighborhood in Baltimore Maryland. Kambon mentions that his mother, Anana Maisha Kambon became actively involved in the Black Power Movement as a teen during the late 1960s. Kambon's father, Kwame Sietu Kambon was an artist. He states that his parent met through the Congress of Afrikan People Movement as college students. His great-great grandfather's surname was Proctor and his family has a strong significant presence in Baltimore, Maryland. Kambon's maternal great-great grandfather was extremely light in complexion and could pass for being white. His earliest memory is of his mother's family connection with other members of the family on the eastside of Baltimore. Kambon ends this segment of the interview by explaining the origins of his name and why his parents changed their names to African-inspired names.

Camara Yero Kambon discusses how his parents met and describes growing up in Baltimore, Maryland. Kambon's father met his mother in a Swahili language class. Growing up, music was an essential part of Kambon's family. At the age of two, Kambon started playing African drums as his first musical instrument, but he eventually gravitated towards playing the piano. Kambon's earliest memory is of his mother's family connection with other members of the family on the eastside of Baltimore, Maryland. He grew up near Pikesville, northwest of the Pimlico neighborhood in Baltimore Maryland. He mentions the musicians that influenced him including musicians Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, Bob Marley and The Supremes. He performed with a group named Satya Dharma. Kambon ends this segment of the interview describing his experience meeting Alice Coltrane, the wife of musician, John Coltrane, in Los Angeles at age twenty-three.

Camara Yero Kambon discusses how the media discovered him at an early age and how his mother's guidance helped him to remain humble. He played the piano at age four and composed his first musical riffs by the age of six. Kambon attended Cross Country Elementary and Fallstaff Middle School in Baltimore, Maryland. After graduating middle school, Kambon attended St. Paul's School for Boys in Lutherville, Maryland. Kambon describes his difficulty adjusting to St. Paul's School because of his first interaction with wealthy kids and his first exposure to racism. His mentors were his piano teachers.
teacher, Odell Wilson; music composer for the Cosby Show, Stu Gardner; and Jazz musician, Jack Pastorius. He grew up going to Jazz clubs with his mom and playing with Dizzy Gillespie at age ten. Kambon ends the interview describing how fortunate he was to be exposed to early jazz greats and musicians.

African American mothers.
African American musicians--Baltimore--Maryland.
Pastorius, Jaco.
St. Paul's School (Baltimore, Md.).
Gardner, Stu.