

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Gene Barge

PERSON

Barge, Gene

Alternative Names: Gene Barge;

Life Dates: August 9, 1926-

Place of Birth: Norfolk, Virginia, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Saxophonist; Songwriter; Music
Producer

Biographical Note

Saxophonist, music producer and song writer Gene “Daddy G” Barge was born in Norfolk, Virginia on August, 9 1926. He graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and played clarinet in the school band. Barge then attended West Virginia State College where he first majored in architecture, but quickly switched to music because of his interest in the saxophone. After receiving his B.A. degree from West Virginia State College in 1950, Barge returned to

Norfolk, Virginia and played with a number of bands and singing groups including the Griffin Brothers and the Five Keys.

In 1955, Barge recorded his first saxophone instrumentals entitled “Country” and “Way Down Home” on Chess Records’ Checker Label. He taught music at Suffolk High School while playing and singing in bands and touring with both Ray Charles and the Philadelphia vocal group The Turbans. In 1957, Barge played the saxophone on Chuck Willis’ “C.C. Rider,” which became a number one R& B hit. In 1960, he recorded “A Night with Daddy G” with his band the Church Street Five on Norfolk’s Legrand Label. From 1961 to 1962, Barge collaborated with Gary U.S. Bonds on a number of hit records including "School Is In," "School Is Out," "Dear Lady Twist," "Twist Twist Senora," "Copy Cat" and the number one pop hit, “Quarter to Three.” In 1964, Barge was hired as a producer, arranger, and saxophone player for Chess Records in Chicago, Illinois and played on Fontella Bass’ “Rescue Me” in 1965. Chess Records closed in 1971 and Barge was hired by Stax Records in their gospel division, Gospel Truth. Barge produced Inez Andrews’ “Lord Don’t Move the Mountain” and The Beautiful Zion Baptist Church's "I'll Make It Alright.” In 1974, Barge began working with pianist, Marvin Yancy and Charles Jackson. He was hired to do demos with Natalie Cole. He went on to win a Grammy Award for co-producing Cole’s “Sophisticated Lady” in 1977.

Barge has toured with Fat Dominoes, Bo Diddley, Chuck Willis, The Rolling Stones and Natalie Cole. He has had roles in many major motion pictures including Code of Silence, Above the Law, Under Siege, The Package and The Fugitive. Barge consulted for Martin Scorsese’s 2003 PBS documentary, The Blues. He also appeared in a 2010 episode of the TV documentary series Legends, entitled "Roll over Beethoven - The Chess Records Saga." Barge lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Gene Barge was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 20, 2012.

Related Entries

Booker T. Washington High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

H.S. Diploma

West Virginia State University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

B.A. Degree

J.C. Price Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Suffolk High School [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Teacher

United States Air Force [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1944 to 1946]

Flight Cadet

United States Navy [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1951 to 1953]

Electronic Technician

Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1964 to 1971]

Producer, arranger, sax player, and musical contractor

Stax Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1971 to 1974]

Producer for Gospel Truth

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

[MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]