

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with T.J. Anderson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Anderson, T. J. (Thomas Jefferson), 1928-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson,
Dates:	February 19, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:00:14).
Abstract:	Music composer T.J. Anderson (1928 -) was a leading composers of the twentieth century. He composed over eighty works, including operas, symphonies, choral pieces, chamber music and band music, and was the recipient of numerous honors, including seven honorary doctorates. Anderson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 19, 2012, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_045
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Composer and music professor Thomas Jefferson Anderson was born on August 17, 1928 in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. Anderson attended West Virginia State College and Pennsylvania State University, where he received his B.A. degree in music and his M.Ed. degree in music education in 1950 and 1951, respectively. Anderson studied composition at the Cincinnati College - Conservatory of Music in 1954, before obtaining his Ph.D. degree in music at the University of Iowa in 1958. Anderson also studied composition at the Aspen School of Music in 1964 with Darius Milhaud

Anderson was hired as a professor of music at Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma, where he became chair of the music department. He then served as a music professor at Tennessee State University before being named composer-in-residence with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in 1969. During his three year tenure at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Anderson orchestrated the Scott Joplin opera *Treemonisha* and in 1972, the first full staging of Joplin's work took place. His first opera, *Soldier Boy*, based on a libretto by writer Leon Forrest, was commissioned by Indiana University. After a visiting professorship at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Anderson was hired as a professor of music and department chair at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts in 1972.

As a lecturer, consultant, and visiting composer, Anderson has taught at institutions in the United States, Brazil, Germany, France and Switzerland. He has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Arts, the Djerassi Foundation, the National Humanities Center and a scholar-in-residence at the Rockefeller Center for the Creative Arts in Bellagio, Italy. Anderson has accumulated numerous honors throughout his illustrious career, including an honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and grants from the Rockefeller Foundation. He has received honorary doctorates from the College of Holy Cross, West Virginia State College, Bridgewater State College, St. Augustine's College, Northwestern University, Bates College and Tufts University. In March, 1997, he was honored as a founder and first president of

the National Black Music Caucus, now NASPAAM with a concert of his music. In 2005, Anderson was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Anderson and his wife, Lois, have three adult children, a son, Thomas J. Anderson and two daughters, Janet Anderson and Anita Anderson Downing.

T.J. Anderson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 19, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with T.J. Anderson was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 19, 2012, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Music composer T.J. Anderson (1928 -) was a leading composers of the twentieth century. He composed over eighty works, including operas, symphonies, choral pieces, chamber music and band music, and was the recipient of numerous honors, including seven honorary doctorates.

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:

Anderson, T. J. (Thomas Jefferson), 1928-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Anderson, T. J. (Thomas Jefferson), 1928- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Tufts University. Dept. of Music.

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 T.J. Anderson, February 19, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 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 T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_001, TRT: 1:28:49
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson was born on August 17, 1928 in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, to Anita Turpeau Anderson and T.J. Anderson, Sr. His maternal great-grandfather came to Louisiana from South America. His maternal grandfather, David D. Turpeau, was born in Texas, and worked as an African Methodist Episcopal minister in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Washington, D.C., where Anderson's mother was born. Her family later moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where Anderson's maternal grandfather served in the Ohio state legislature. Anderson's paternal grandfather owned a small business and served on the town council in Lynchburg, Virginia, where Anderson's father was born. Anderson's parents met at Howard University, and raised him from an early age in Washington, D.C., where he was exposed to jazz and classical music. After the seventh grade, Anderson lived for a few years with his grandmother in Cincinnati, before returning with his family to Coatesville, where he completed high school.

Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_002, TRT: 2:29:51
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson was immersed in classical music from an early age. His mother, Anita Turpeau Anderson, exposed him to the music of Paul Robeson, James Weldon Johnson, Philippa Schuyler and William Grant Still; and Anderson learned to play the violin, piano, trumpet, saxophone and bassoon. During the seventh grade, he became interested in big band jazz and began attending the shows of Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, Duke Ellington and Earl Hines in Washington, D.C. His grades decreased, and he was sent to complete junior high school in Cincinnati, Ohio before reuniting with his family in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, where his parents worked as educators and community organizers. From 1946 to 1950, Anderson studied music at West Virginia State University, where his uncle, sister and cousins were alumni. While there, he began arranging and composing, and met musicians Prince Ahmed Williams, and Edward C. Lewis. He also remembers the influence of African American concert singers Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson.

Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_003, TRT: 3:29:27
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson witnessed performances by numerous notable musicians at West Virginia State College, including African American composer Clarence Cameron White. Even so, the academic music program focused on European contributions, and excluded rhythms from the African American culture, which Anderson observed through his subsequent engagements with ragtime and stride piano music. After completing his undergraduate degree, Anderson studied composition at Pennsylvania State University and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. During this time, he made a living by working in steel mills and garment factories. Encouraged by his professors, including George Ceiga, Scott S. Huston and Philip Greeley Clapp, Anderson went on to complete a Ph.D. degree in music composition at the University of Iowa. While a student, he married Lois Fields Anderson. The couple then moved to Langston, Oklahoma, where Anderson taught music at Langston University and befriended his colleague, poet Melvin B. Tolson.

Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_004, TRT: 4:29:14
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson began his career as a professor and composer with the support of

Edward C. Lewis, who was his teacher at West Virginia State University, and then became his colleague at the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University. After joining the faculty there, Anderson began reconstructing Scott Joplin's opera, 'Treemonisha,' with composer William Bolcom. In 1969, Anderson transitioned to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and continued work on the opera. In 1972, 'Treemonisha' was staged with the help of choreographer Katherine Dunham, conductor Robert Shaw and musical director Wendell Whalum, and was accompanied by a weeklong conference featuring scholars and composers like Richard Long and Eubie Blake. Anderson then began teaching at Tufts University, where he remained until retirement. As the chair of the music department, he expanded its focus to include musical traditions from around the world with the help of faculty like David Locke, Jeff Todd Titon, Jane Bernstein and Mark DeVoto.

Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_005, TRT: 5:29:05
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson was the chairman of the music department at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. Under his leadership, the department became one of the best liberal arts music programs in the country. During his time there, Anderson received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Rockefeller Foundation residency at the Bellagio Center in Italy, in addition to honorary degrees from the College of the Holy Cross, West Virginia State University, St. Augustine's University, Northwestern University and Harvard University. He also led the Boston Pops as a guest conductor, and served as the chairman of the advisory committee to the Black Music Center at Indiana University. At this point in the interview, Anderson reflects upon his career, and remembers his relationships with black composers like William Levi Dawson, William Grant Still, Ulysses Kay, Florence Price, Eubie Blake and David Baker, as well black music scholars Dominique-René de Lerma and Samuel Floyd.

Video Oral History Interview with T.J. Anderson, Section A2012_045_001_006, TRT: 6:33:48
2012/02/19

T.J. Anderson reflects upon his life and career, and talks about the supporters who contributed to his success, including his wife, Lois Fields Anderson. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.