

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Clarence Avant

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Avant, Clarence
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant,
Dates:	April 14, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	17 uncompressed MOV digital video files (9:44:41).
Abstract:	Music executive Clarence Avant (1931 -) known as the “Godfather,” is one of the most influential African American music executives in the world. Avant was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 14, 2012, in Beverly Hills, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_101
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music executive Clarence Avant was born on February 25, 1931 in the small town of Climax, North Carolina. He went to school through his junior high years in a one-room school house before attending James B. Dudley High School in Greensboro, North Carolina. At the age of sixteen, Avant decided to move to New Jersey to live with his aunt and cousin. He began working as a manager at Teddy P’s Lounge, owned by Teddy Powell, where he met the blues artist Little Willie John. Little Willie John was so impressed by Avant that he asked him to be his road manager, and more clients soon followed. In 1967, Avant helped sign William Stevenson with MGM, engineering the first joint venture between an African American artist and a major record company with the incorporation of Venture Records, Inc into MGM Records in California.

Avant was known in the business world as a great deal-maker, and in 1968, Al Bell enlisted his help to sell Stax Records to Gulf & Western. The deal was finalized for \$4.3 million. The next year, Avant founded Sussex Records and bought the KAGB-FM radio station in 1973, both ventures closed in 1975. However, Avant had realized his passion for the music business and founded Tabu Productions in 1976. In 1987, Avant helped to promote Michael Jackson’s first solo tour which grossed \$125 million. He was named Chairman of the Board of Motown Records in 1993. One year later, Avant worked with a group of other notable African American investors to create a \$20 million investment partnership in South Africa called New Age Beverages. New Age partnered with PepsiCo to build a bottling plant in South Africa, which would be completely run by South Africans.

Avant, along with Quincy Jones, received the Thurgood Marshall Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Morehouse College in 2003 and received the Living Legends Foundation Award in 2007. In 2010, he was inducted into the NAACP Hall of Fame. He has become known as the “Godfather” in the music business because of his willingness to aid newcomers in the industry. Through his mentoring, many of these people have become very successful and prestigious leaders in the business. Avant currently lives with his wife, Jacqueline, in Beverly Hills, California.

Avant was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 14-15, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Clarence Avant was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 14, 2012, in Beverly Hills, California, and was recorded on 17 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Music executive Clarence Avant (1931 -) known as the “Godfather,” is one of the most influential African American music executives in the world.

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:

Avant, Clarence

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Avant, Clarence--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Executive

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 Clarence Avant, April 14, 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 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 Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_001, TRT: 1:34:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_002, TRT: 2:35:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_003, TRT: 3:33:54 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_004, TRT: 4:33:47 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_005, TRT: 5:32:23 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_006, TRT: 6:40:31 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_007, TRT: 7:37:57 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_008, TRT: 8:36:41 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_009, TRT: 9:43:37 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_010, TRT: 10:35:35 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_011, TRT: 11:33:28 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_012, TRT: 12:36:09 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_013, TRT: 13:30:40 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_014, TRT: 14:35:11 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_015, TRT: 15:28:03 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_016, TRT: 16:27:47 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section A2012_101_001_017, TRT: 17:28:57 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Avant, Section
A2012_101_Avant_Clarence_06_MED_003, TRT: 0:48:55