

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Savion Glover

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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>	Glover, Savion
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Savion Glover,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 30, 2016
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2016
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:05:15).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Tap dancer, choreographer, and actor Savion Glover (1973 - ) first appeared on Broadway at ten years old, and went on to choreograph and star in Jelly's Last Jam (1991), Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk (1996), and Shuffle Along (2016). Glover was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 30, 2016, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2016_090
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Tap dancer, choreographer and actor Savion Glover was born on November 19, 1973 in Newark, New Jersey. Glover began taking in music classes at Newark Community School of the Arts at four years old. He soon progressed to advanced classes, becoming the youngest student in the school's history to receive a full scholarship. At the age of seven, Glover enrolled in tap dance classes, and was soon opening at festivals with such greats as Jimmy Slyde, Chuck Green, Honi Coles, and Buster Brown. In 1991, Glover graduated from Newark's Arts High School.

Glover appeared on Broadway for the first time at ten years old in *The Tap Dance Kid*. He was featured in the title role when the production moved to the Minskoff Theater in 1984. From 1988 to 1989, Glover danced in *Black and Blue*, a Broadway musical revue of black Parisian culture in the interwar period. His performance earned him a Tony Award nomination for Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical, and he was dubbed a “teen-age prodigy” by *The New York Times*’ dance critic Anna Kisselgoff. In 1989, Glover made his film debut dancing in *Tap*, alongside Gregory Hines. The following year, at the age of seventeen, Glover made his choreographic debut at the Apollo Theater’s Rat-A-Tat-Tap Festival in New York City, and began dancing on *Sesame Street*. Upon his graduation from Newark’s Arts High School, Glover portrayed the young Jelly Roll Morton, appearing again with Gregory Hines, in George C. Wolfe’s *Jelly’s Last Jam*. In 1996, Glover rejoined Wolfe to conceive, choreograph and star in *Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk*, a Broadway musical revue of black history. Glover returned to film in 2000 to portray the tap-dancing minstrel Manray/Mantan in Spike Lee’s satire, *Bamboozled*. He also appeared in the television biopic *Bojangles* (2001), *Classical Savion* at New York City’s Joyce Theater, and provided the choreography for the tap-dancing penguin Mumble in the animated movie *Happy Feet* (2006). Glover opened his tap school, The HooFeRzCLuB School for TaP, in Newark in 2009. He continued performing pieces such as *SoLe Sanctuary* (2011) and *Om* (2014) at the Joyce Theater, until reuniting with director George C. Wolfe as choreographer of the 2016 musical *Shuffle Along, or, the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*.

In 1992, Glover became the youngest recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Glover was nominated for several Tony Awards for *Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk*, winning the Best Choreography Award, in addition to a Drama Desk Award.

Savion Glover was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 30, 2016.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Savion Glover was conducted by Harriette Cole on November 30, 2016, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Tap dancer, choreographer, and actor Savion Glover (1973 - ) first appeared on Broadway at ten years old, and went on to choreograph and star in *Jelly’s Last Jam* (1991), *Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk* (1996), and *Shuffle Along* (2016).

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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:

Glover, Savion

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Glover, Savion--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:**

Tap Dancer

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Choreographer

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Actor

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

ArtMakers

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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 Savion Glover, November 30, 2016. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Savion Glover, Section  
A2016\_090\_001\_001, TRT: 1:31:36 2016/11/30

Savion Glover was born on November 19, 1973 in Newark, New Jersey to Yvette Glover and Willie Mitchell. His maternal great-grandfather, Dick Lundy, was one of the highest ranking players in the Negro League, and was known for his role as a player and manager of the Bacharach Giants. Glover's maternal grandparents, Anna Lundy Lewis and Wilbert Lewis, were both accomplished musicians, and his grandfather performed with comedian Jerry Lewis in the Catskill Mountains. Glover's grandmother was a pianist with the USO during World War II. She played on Newark's church circuit alongside Glover's mother, who sang gospel under the direction of Rudy Stevenson. Glover and his two brothers were raised in Newark by their mother and maternal grandmother. Although Glover met his father only a few times in his life, he often spent time with his paternal grandparents, Mittie Wilson and John Wilson, and their friends, Annie Barr and George Barr, who also lived in Newark.

Video Oral History Interview with Savion Glover, Section

A2016\_090\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:39 2016/11/30

Savion Glover and his two brothers, Carlton Glover and Abron Glover, grew up in Newark, New Jersey. They were raised by their mother and maternal grandmother, Yvette Glover and Anna Lundy Lewis, with the help of their family friends, Annie Barr and George Barr. In Newark, Glover attended the Avon Avenue School and Queen of Angels School. At the age of four years old, he began taking drum lessons at the Newark School of the Arts, and formed the Three Plus band with the children of Rudy Stevenson. At seven years old, Glover performed with Three Plus at a benefit concert for tap dancer Benny Clorey, which was held at the Hines-Hatchett dance studio in New York City. While there, Glover met tapper Lon Chaney, and enrolled in Frank Hatchett's tap classes. Hatchett quickly noticed Glover's talent, and recommended that he audition for the Broadway show 'The Tap Dance Kid.' Although initially cast as an understudy, Glover debuted on Broadway in the show's leading role in 1984.

Video Oral History Interview with Savion Glover, Section  
A2016\_090\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:46 2016/11/30

Savion Glover debuted on Broadway in 'The Tap Dance Kid' at the age of eleven years old. Due to his busy performance schedule, Glover left the Queen of Angels School in Newark, New Jersey. He briefly enrolled at New York City's Professional Children's School, and then transferred to the East Harlem Performing Arts School. After 'The Tap Dance Kid' closed, Glover was cast in the musical revue 'Black and Blue,' alongside renowned tap dancers Lon Chaney, Jimmy Slyde and George Hillman. The show opened in 1985 in Paris, France. While there, Glover was mentored by his costars, who served as father figures and taught him to communicate through dance. Glover and the cast returned to the United States to open 'Black and Blue' on Broadway in 1989. That year, Glover enrolled in the drama program at Newark's Arts High School, where he graduated in 1991. At this point, Glover talks about his style of tap, including the influence of his tap predecessors as well as hip hop artists like Public Enemy.

Savion Glover starred in the 'Black and Blue' musical revue alongside his mentors, Lon Chaney, Jimmy Slyde and George Hillman. At one of the shows in 1985, Glover was approached by tap dancer Gregory Hines, who wanted to cast Glover in his upcoming film, 'Tap.' Not realizing who Hines was, Glover forgot about the meeting and continued with his performances. In 1986, Glover returned to the United States and began preparing for the show's premiere on Broadway. During this time, he was contacted again by Hines, who cast Glover as his son in the film 'Tap.' While on set, Glover spent his free time watching and listening to his costars, including Hines and Sammy Davis, Jr. After the film's release in 1989, Glover began choreographing and teaching at the Hines-Hatchett dance studio in New York City, and appeared as a guest on 'Sesame Street.' In 1992, Glover returned to Broadway as the young Jelly Roll Morton in George C. Wolfe's 'Jelly's Last Jam.'