

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jessye Norman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Norman, Jessye
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman,
Dates:	April 27, 2017 and November 21, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016 and 2017
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:37:42).
Abstract:	Opera singer Jessye Norman (1945-) began performing with international and American opera companies in 1969. She received multiple Grammy awards, founded the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, and wrote a memoir, <i>Stand Up Straight and Sing!</i> , published in 2014. Norman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 27, 2017 and November 21, 2016, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_128
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Opera singer Jessye Norman was born on September 15, 1945 in Augusta, Georgia to Janie King Norman and Silas Norman. She graduated from Augusta's Lucy C. Laney Senior High School. Following her participation in Philadelphia's Marian Anderson Vocal Competition in 1960, Norman received a full-tuition scholarship to attend Howard University, where she completed her B.M. degree in 1967. She then earned her M.M. degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1968.

After Norman won the ARD International Music Competition in Munich, Germany in 1969, Egon Seefehlner invited her to perform as Elisabeth in *Tannhauser* with Deutsche Oper Berlin. She signed a three-year contract with the opera company and, in 1970, she performed in *Deborah*, followed by *L'Africaine* and *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Berlin Festival. In 1972, Norman sang Verdi's *Aida* at La Scala in Milan. Norman continued to perform internationally as a soloist and recitalist. She returned to the stage, performing in *Oedipus rex* and *Dido and Aeneas* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia in 1982. The following year, Norman performed at the Metropolitan Opera for its 100th anniversary season. Following a 1987 performance with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Norman was featured in *Erwartung*, the Metropolitan Opera's first single-character production, and *Bluebeard's Castle* in 1989. In 1990, she performed in *Tchaikovsky: 150th Birthday Gala from Leningrad* along with Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman. Her first appearance with the Lyric Opera of Chicago was in the title role of *Alceste* in 1990. She was cast as Jocasta in a televised production of *Oedipus rex* at the inaugural Saito Kinen Festival Matsumoto in 1993, the same year she was featured in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Metropolitan Opera, followed by *The Makropulos Case* in 1996. In 1998, she performed at Carnegie Hall in *Sacred Ellington*, featuring music by Duke Ellington, and released a jazz crossover project, *I Was Born in Love with You*, with Michel Legrand. In 2002, she established the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, a tuition-free, after school arts program in her hometown of Augusta, Georgia. In collaboration with New York City cultural institutions, Norman curated *Honor!: A Celebration of the African American Cultural Legacy* in 2009. With seventy-five recordings to her credit, in 2010,

Norman released *Roots: My Life, My Song*.

A five-time Grammy Award winner, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, Norman has received forty-five honorary doctorate degrees, is a Kennedy Center Honoree and holds the National Medal of the Arts. Graduate fellowships at the University of Michigan's School of Music have also been named in her honor. Norman serves as a spokesperson for The Partnership for the Homeless and was named an honorary ambassador to the United Nations. Additionally, she serves on the board of trustees of the New York Public Library, The New York Botanical Garden, The Dance Theatre of Harlem, Paine College and Carnegie Hall.

Norman passed away on September 30, 2019.

Jessye Norman was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 21, 2016 and April 27, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jessye Norman was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on April 27, 2017 and November 21, 2016, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Opera singer Jessye Norman (1945-) began performing with international and American opera companies in 1969. She received multiple Grammy awards, founded the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, and wrote a memoir, *Stand Up Straight and Sing!*, published in 2014.

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:

Norman, Jessye

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Norman, Jessye--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Opera Singer

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 Jessye Norman, April 27, 2017 and November 21, 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 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 Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_001_001, TRT: 1:31:31 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_001_002, TRT: 2:29:23 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_001_003, TRT: 3:35:29 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_001_004, TRT: 4:33:25 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_005, TRT: 5:29:24 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_006, TRT: 6:30:34 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_007, TRT: 7:30:11 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_008, TRT: 8:28:43 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_009, TRT: 9:30:46 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_010, TRT: 10:30:52 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Jessye Norman, Section A2016_128_002_011, TRT: 11:27:24 ?