

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cornelius Grant

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Grant, Cornelius
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant,
Dates:	November 16, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:10:43).
Abstract:	Music director Cornelius Grant (1943 -) played guitar for Mary Wells and Marvin Gaye before becoming the musical director for The Temptations from 1964 to 1982. He wrote and co-wrote songs for The Temptations, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Edwin Starr, and Stevie Wonder, among others. Grant was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 16, 2016, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_134
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music director Cornelius Grant was born on April 27, 1943 in Blooming Grove, Texas. He was raised by his grandmother, and taught himself to play the guitar at nine years old. At thirteen years old, his family moved to Detroit, Michigan, where Grant met his future writing partner and childhood friend Rodger Renzabene. He graduated from Samuel C. Mumford High School in 1961.

At the age of fifteen, Grant started playing with local groups at many of Detroit's clubs and music venues. While playing with a local band called the Staccatos, he met Motown producer and songwriter Henry Cosby. Through Cosby, Grant became a back-up guitar player for singer Mary Wells, and later as lead guitarist and music conductor for singer Marvin Gaye. It was while working with Wells that Grant met The Temptations. From 1964 to 1982, Grant served as guitar player, musical director, and live show arranger for The Temptations. He also played in Motown studio sessions with the Funk Brothers from 1964 to 1970, and played lead guitar on the 1967 hit "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" by Gladys Knight and the Pips. In 1965, Grant wrote "You've Got to Earn It" with Smokey Robinson, his first song written for The Temptations. In 1966, he wrote The Temptations' hit song "(I Know) I'm Losing You," with Norman Whitfield and Eddie Holland. Grant was responsible for the famous opening guitar riff to the song. The song became a number one hit on the U.S. Billboard R&B singles chart. Grant also wrote "You're My Everything" and "I Gotta Find A Way (To Get You Back)" for The Temptations, in addition to co-writing "Take Me in Your Arms and Love Me" by Gladys Knight & the Pips, "I Want My Baby Back" and "My Weakness Is You" by Edwin Starr, "I'm More Than Happy (I'm Satisfied)" for Stevie Wonder, and "Loving and Affection" for Marvin Gaye. He worked alongside Temptations members Otis Williams and Melvin Franklin as part of D.O.C. Productions, producing the 1973 album *It's Time For The Swiss Movement* by The Swiss Movement.

After ending his working relationship with The Temptations in 1982, Grant became a contributing writer for the

Hollywood Reporter and *BRE Magazine*. He also formed a production and talent booking agency named Siege Company with Ruth Adkins Robinson; and in 2011, founded the Flashback International production company to start his online radio show “Flashbacks and Newtraks.” Grant created a series of non-profit organizations, like Starz of Tomorrow, dedicated to fostering new talent and preserving the legacy of those who have worked in the industry. He also started the Skoole Awards, a pre-Grammy Award show dedicated to honoring unrecognized pioneers in the entertainment industry, as well as the live weekly comedy show “Do You Think You’re Funny?” in West Hollywood, California.

Cornelius Grant was interviewed by *The Historymaker* on November 17, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cornelius Grant was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 16, 2016, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Music director Cornelius Grant (1943 -) played guitar for Mary Wells and Marvin Gaye before becoming the musical director for The Temptations from 1964 to 1982. He wrote and co-wrote songs for The Temptations, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Edwin Starr, and Stevie Wonder, among others.

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:

Grant, Cornelius

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Grant, Cornelius--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Director

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 Cornelius Grant, November 16, 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 Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_001, TRT: 1:29:13 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_002, TRT: 2:27:50 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_003, TRT: 3:27:01 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_004, TRT: 4:31:41 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_005, TRT: 5:38:24 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_006, TRT: 6:30:35 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_007, TRT: 7:26:52 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_008, TRT: 8:30:54 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_009, TRT: 9:25:57 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_010, TRT: 10:30:18 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Cornelius Grant, Section A2016_134_001_011, TRT: 11:11:58 ?