

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Donald Byrd

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Byrd, Donald, 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd,
Dates:	October 8, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:53:43).
Abstract:	Choreographer Donald Byrd (1949 -) founded the Donald Byrd/The Group dance company and served as the artistic director of the Spectrum Dance Theater. Byrd was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 8, 2017, in Seattle, Washington. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_182
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Choreographer Donald Byrd was born on July 21, 1949 in New London, North Carolina to Emmarine Clark and Jeter Byrd, Jr. Byrd graduated from Pinellas High School in Clearwater, Florida in 1967, and enrolled at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. In the following year, he transferred to Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. In 1969, he left Tufts University and moved to New York City, where he studied at The Ailey School for two years. In 1974, he returned to Tufts University to earn his B.A. degree in drama.

In 1972, Byrd was a member of the Twyla Tharp dance group. He later joined Gus Solomons, Jr.'s dance company in 1976, and moved to California to work as a dance instructor at The California Institute of the Arts in Santa Clarita, California, where Solomons was named dean of the dance program. In 1978, Byrd founded the Donald Byrd/The Group dance company. Byrd served as the company's choreographer, and incorporated classical ballet, modern dance, and urban street dancing into the pieces. Byrd returned to New York City in 1983, and established the Donald Byrd Dance Foundation in 1985. In 1987, he choreographed the dance piece *Crumble* for the Alvin Repertory Company, followed by *Shards*, a work he choreographed for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. In 1990, the Donald Byrd/The Group premiered *Prodigal*, which was inspired by George Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*. Byrd went on to debut *Minstrel Show* in 1991, *Drastic Cuts* in 1992, *Bristle* in 1993, and *Domestic Violence Project* and *The Harlem Nutcracker* in 1994. Over his career, Byrd has choreographed over eighty dance pieces and toured throughout the United States and Europe. In 2002, he became the artistic director of the Spectrum Dance Theater.

Byrd has received numerous honors including the 1992 Bessie Award for *Minstrel Show* and the Emerging Dance Award from the Metropolitan Life Foundation. He has also taught at the University of California-Santa Cruz, Ohio University, and Wesleyan University, and served on the board of directors of the Dance Theater Workshop and Dance USA.

Donald Byrd was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 4, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Donald Byrd was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 8, 2017, in Seattle, Washington, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Choreographer Donald Byrd (1949 -) founded the Donald Byrd/The Group dance company and served as the artistic director of the Spectrum Dance Theater.

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:

Byrd, Donald, 1949-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Byrd, Donald, 1949- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Choreographer

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Donald Byrd, October 8, 2017. 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 Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_001, TRT: 1:30:42 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_002, TRT: 2:40:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_003, TRT: 3:29:32 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_004, TRT: 4:36:20 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_005, TRT: 5:28:17 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_006, TRT: 6:29:29 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_007, TRT: 7:32:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Donald Byrd, Section A2017_182_001_008, TRT: 8:06:59 ?