

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul Riser, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Riser, Paul
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr.,
Dates:	October 18, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:52:03).
Abstract:	Musician and music arranger Paul Riser, Sr. (1943 -) worked as a session musician and music arranger for Motown Records from 1961 until 1973. He arranged music for many artists since his departure from Motown and has won two Grammy Awards. Riser was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 18, 2017, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_187
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Musician and music arranger Paul Riser, Sr. was born on September 11, 1943 in Detroit, Michigan. Riser attended Keating Elementary School in Detroit, where he began to develop an interest in music. Riser later enrolled at Cass Technical High School in Detroit, where he studied classical and jazz trombone, as well as musical theory. At Cass Technical High School, he was mentored and encouraged by people such as Dr. Harold Arnoldi and Dr. Harry Began. He graduated from Cass Technical High School in 1961.

After graduation, Riser began working as a session musician playing trombonist with The Funk Brothers at Motown Records. By 1963, Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown Records, chose Riser to work as a music arranger at Motown Records. He worked on a number of Motown hits during his tenure, including “I Heard It Through the Grapevine” by Marvin Gaye, “My Girl” by The Temptations, “My Cherie Amour” by Stevie Wonder, “Ain’t No Mountain High Enough” by Diana Ross, “If I Were Your Woman” by Gladys Knight & The Pips, “Reach Out and Touch (Somebody’s Hand)” written by Ashford and Simpson as performed by Diana Ross, and “The Tears of a Clown” by Smokey Robinson & The Miracles. Following his departure from Motown Records in 1973, Paul Riser continued to arrange songs for popular artists. He has worked with artists such as Quincy Jones, The Carpenters, Carly Simon, Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, and Phil Collins. In 2003, Riser arranged music for R. Kelly’s fifth studio album, *Chocolate Factory*. The album debuted at number one on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart and sold over three million copies worldwide.

In 1972, Riser won a Grammy Award for “Best R&B Instrumental Performance” for the song “Papa Was A Rollin’ Stone” by The Temptations. He was nominated for another Grammy Award in 1982, for “Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocals” for the song “Do I Do”, which was performed by Stevie Wonder. In 2009, Riser was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum.

Riser and his wife have a son, Paul Riser, Jr.

Paul Riser, Sr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 16, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul Riser, Sr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 18, 2017, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Musician and music arranger Paul Riser, Sr. (1943 -) worked as a session musician and music arranger for Motown Records from 1961 until 1973. He arranged music for many artists since his departure from Motown and has won two Grammy Awards.

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:

Riser, Paul

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Riser, Paul--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Musician

Music Arranger

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 Paul Riser, Sr., October 18, 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 Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_001, TRT: 1:27:17 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_002, TRT: 2:29:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_003, TRT: 3:27:56 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_004, TRT: 4:28:05 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_005, TRT: 5:27:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Paul Riser, Sr., Section A2017_187_001_006, TRT: 6:32:04 ?