

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Garth Fagan

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Fagan, Garth
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan,
Dates:	April 18, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:55:23).
Abstract:	Choreographer Garth Fagan (1940 -) founded the Garth Fagan Dance company, and choreographed the Tony award winning musical The Lion King. Fagan was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 18, 2018, in Rochester, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_068
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Choreographer Garth Fagan was born on May 3, 1940 in Kingston, Jamaica to Louise Walker and S.W. Fagan, a chief education officer of Jamaica. As a teenager, Fagan studied dance with Ivy Baxter and the Jamaica National Dance Company. He attended Excelsior High School in St. Andrews, Jamaica, and performed at the inauguration ceremony for Cuban President Fidel Castro in 1959. After moving to Detroit, Michigan in 1960, Fagan danced with the Detroit Contemporary Dance Company and the Dance Theater of Detroit, where he studied with Jose Limon, Mary Hinkson, Alvin Ailey, Lavinia Williams, and Katherine Dunham. In 1968, Fagan received his B.A. degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He later earned his D.F.A. degree from the University of Rochester in 1986.

Upon graduating from Wayne State University, Fagan moved to Rochester, New York, where he was hired as a dance teacher and choreographer at the educational opportunities center. In 1969, Fagan began teaching at SUNY Brockport; and in 1970, he founded his own dance company, originally called The Bottom of the Bucket, But... Dance Theater. The name was later changed to Garth Fagan Dance. Fagan produced a number of successful pieces through his dance company, including *From Before* in 1978, *Prelude* in 1981, and *Never Top 40 (Jukebox)* in 1985. Fagan choreographed the first fully staged production of the Duke Ellington street opera, *Queenie Pie*, in 1986. He then opened the Garth Fagan Dance School in 1990. The following year, Fagan collaborated with musician Wynton Marsalis and sculptor Martin Puryear for the production of *Griot New York*. In 1997, Fagan became the choreographer of the Broadway musical production of *The Lion King*, for which he won a Tony Award for best choreography. Over the next two decades, Fagan continued to choreograph notable pieces like *Trips and Trysts* in 2000, *ING* in 2004, and *Mudan 175/39*, which was named by *The New York Times* as the third of the top six dance watching moments of 2009. He also developed the Fagan Technique, a unique and evolving vocabulary, which fuses the weight of modern dance, the vitality of Afro-Caribbean movement, and the speed and precision of ballet with the risk-taking experimentation of post modernism.

Fagan received numerous awards and honors for his choreography. In addition to his Tony Award for his work in

The Lion King, Fagan also received a Laurence Olivier award for Best theater Choreographer in 2000, Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Choreography, and an Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Choreography for the production. In 1998, Fagan was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Choreography Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Fagan was honored with the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001; and in 2012, Dance Heritage Collection named Fagan among “America’s 100 Irreplaceable Dance Treasures.” Fagan received honorary degrees from Juilliard School, Hobart College, William Smith College, and Nazareth College. In 2017, Fagan received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Dance Guild.

Garth Fagan was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 18, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Garth Fagan was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 18, 2018, in Rochester, New York, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Choreographer Garth Fagan (1940 -) founded the Garth Fagan Dance company, and choreographed the Tony award winning musical *The Lion King*.

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:

Fagan, Garth

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Fagan, Garth--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 Garth Fagan, April 18, 2018. 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 Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_001, TRT: 1:28:14 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_002, TRT: 2:28:58 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_003, TRT: 3:30:10 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_004, TRT: 4:31:50 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_005, TRT: 5:29:55 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Garth Fagan, Section A2018_068_001_006, TRT: 6:26:16 ?