

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lynn Sterling

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sterling, Lynn, 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling,
Dates:	December 12, 2021
Bulk Dates:	2021
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:24:54).
Abstract:	Stage and film actor, dancer, singer, and voice actor Lynn Sterling (1954 -) starred in numerous Broadway productions, including <i>Cats</i> , <i>West Side Story</i> , and <i>Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill</i> . She studied with the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Alvin Ailey, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Katherine Dunham at the American Dance Machine and was one of the first three black Radio City Music Hall Rockettes. Sterling was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 12, 2021, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2021_030
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Stage and film actor, dancer, singer, and voice actor Lynn Sterling was born on July 18, 1954 in Dayton, Ohio, to Mattie Gullatte Brown and Sterling Brown. She graduated from Julianne High School and attended Wright State University, both in Dayton.

At age sixteen, Sterling joined Theatre West, starring in Clarence Young III's *The System*. In 1974, she worked as a secretary for Theodore Roosevelt Hagans II in Washington, D.C. In 1975, Sterling became a principal dancer with the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. In 1976, she worked as a secretary for the City of Dayton Division of Youth and Manpower and studied with Alvin Ailey and Dance Theatre of Harlem. In 1979, Sterling joined the American Dance Machine, where she worked with Katherine Dunham, Agnes de Mille, and Gwen Verdon. On and off Broadway, Sterling performed in *Louis* in 1981, *Evita* in 1982, the *Sophisticated Ladies* touring company from 1983 to 1984, the *Sweet Charity* touring company in 1987, *Anything Goes* and *Can-Can* in 1988, *Cats* from 1992 to 1996, *Ain't Misbehavin'* in 1992, *Pal Joey* in 1995, *The Life* in 1997, the *Fosse* touring company from 1992 to 2002, *West Side Story* in 2002, and the one-woman show *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* as Billie Holiday in 2006. On the screen, Sterling performed in the 1992 Spike Lee film *Malcolm X*, the 1995 animated film *The Land of the Four Winds*, and the 1997 animated film *The Ten Commandments*. In 1988, she became one of the first three black Radio City Music Hall Rockettes. Sterling also directed five companies of *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and helped train Deborah Cox as a dancer.

Sterling has appeared on the television broadcasts of the 41st and 51st Tony Awards, the tenth annual Kennedy Center Honors, the sixth annual Essence Awards, and on the *Rosie O'Donnell Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, *The Late Show with David Letterman*, and *The View*. Sterling was honored by her fellow performers in *The Life* with the Gypsy Robe Ceremony in 1997.

Sterling lives in New York City.

Lynn Sterling was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 12, 2021.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lynn Sterling was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 12, 2021, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Stage and film actor, dancer, singer, and voice actor Lynn Sterling (1954 -) starred in numerous Broadway productions, including *Cats*, *West Side Story*, and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. She studied with the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Alvin Ailey, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Katherine Dunham at the American Dance Machine and was one of the first three black Radio City Music Hall Rockettes.

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:

Sterling, Lynn, 1954-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sterling, Lynn, 1954---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Actor

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 Lynn Sterling, December 12, 2021. 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 Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_001, TRT: 1:29:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_002, TRT: 2:29:23 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_003, TRT: 3:30:02 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_004, TRT: 4:28:34 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_005, TRT: 5:28:55 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_006, TRT: 6:27:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lynn Sterling, Section A2021_030_001_007, TRT: 7:31:12 ?