

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sasha Daltonn

PERSON

Daltonn, Sasha, 1947-

Alternative Names: Sasha Daltonn; Sharon Simmons; ; Sharon Wilson

Life Dates: June 25, 1947-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, United States

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Music Writer

Biographical Note

Writer, producer, and singer Sasha Daltonn was born on June 25, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois, to Edgar Sanders and Christine Goolsby. She received her B.A. degree in organizational leadership in 1995 from Trinity International University, in Deerfield, Illinois, where she also worked towards an M.A. degree in ministry.

Daltonn first performed in theater in the Los Angeles production of Anna Lucasta. After her performance in the Chicago production of GodSpell, she joined Actor's Equity. Daltonn also developed the musical production Running With the 8 Ball. Daltonn appeared with Desmond "Sanford and Sons" Wilson in Come Blow Your Horn, followed by her first one-woman show, Madame Hortense, for which she received a nomination for the Joseph Jefferson Citation. In 2018, she appeared in the film The Animator, written and produced by Robert Jones. As a vocalist, Daltonn has performed throughout the United States and Canada, including for the Kool Jazz festival at Carnegie Hall and with Lionel Hampton.

Daltonn wrote Dinah and her Music, a musical revue of Dinah Washington's life, which she performed as Sasha Sings Dinah with a five-member cast in Chicago in 1980 and Dinah! Queen of the Blues as a one-woman off-Broadway show at the West Side Arts Theater in New York City in 1983. In 1985, Daltonn joined Chicago Mayor Harold Washington's Office of Special Events, where she planned the annual Dr. King Interfaith Breakfast and founded the Chicago Gospel Music Festival (formerly known as the Thomas A. Dorsey Gospel Festival). The festival, which Daltonn planned for five years, was first presented at the South Shore County Club (later South Shore Cultural Center), and in its third year moved to Grant Park.

In 1989, Daltonn became the talent coordinator for the TV special Going Home to

Gospel with Patti LaBelle, produced by WTTV and aired in 1991. In the 1990s, Daltonn founded her own production company, Royal Productions. She later produced the show The Empress, The Lady, and The Queen, portraying Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, and Dinah Washington. Daltonn is currently the president of Sasha Daltonn Entertainment. Daltonn's book Chicago's Gospel Music Festival: The Untold Story, Unplugged - How A Jazz Singer Founded the World's Largest Gospel Festival! was published in 2021.

Daltonn became a founding member of the Chicago Gospel Announcers Guild in 1996 and joined the board of directors of Gospel Music According to Chicago in 2008 and the board of directors of the South Side Jazz Coalition in 2016.

Daltonn lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Sasha Daltonn was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on January 30, 2022.

Related Entries

Hyde Park Academy High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Central YMCA High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Central YMCA College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Southwest Junior College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Trinity International University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.A.

City of Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1983 to 1989]

Office of Special Events

Various [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Performer

WTTW [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1989 to 1991]

Talent Manager

Royal Productions [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Founder

Sasha Daltonn Entertainment [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Founder

Chicago Gospel Announcers Guild [MEMBEROF]

[from 1996 to ?]

Founder/ Board Member

South Side Jazz Coalition [MEMBEROF]

[from 2016 to ?]

Board Member

Gospel Music According to Chicago [MEMBEROF]

[from 2008 to ?]

Board Member