

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Toni-Marie Montgomery

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Montgomery, Toni-Marie, 1956-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery,
Dates:	August 26, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:26:18).
Abstract:	Music professor and pianist Toni-Marie Montgomery (1956 -) was the first African American and first female dean of Northwestern University Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music. Montgomery was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 26, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_103
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Pianist and music professor Toni-Marie Montgomery (1956-) was born to Hattie Drayton in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She started piano lessons at the age of six, and began performing on the piano at age nine. In 1971, Montgomery's mother used her hard-earned savings to buy her a Steinway grand piano. Montgomery attended the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts, graduating with her B.Mus. degree in 1980. Only a year later, in 1981, she received her M.Mus. degree from the University of Michigan. Montgomery went on to earn her D.M.A. degree in piano chamber music within three years, becoming only the second person to receive that degree from the University of Michigan.

Montgomery became artistic director and assistant director of the School of Music at Western Michigan University. She then moved to Connecticut to serve as assistant dean for academic programs at the University of Connecticut's School of Fine Arts. While teaching there, Montgomery participated in the founding of the Black Music Repertory Ensemble at Columbia College in Chicago. The Ensemble was founded in 1987 as an outgrowth of the Columbia College Center for Black Music Research. Montgomery left Connecticut in 1990 to become a professor at Arizona State University. During her ten year tenure, she served as associate dean in the College of Fine Arts and Director of the School of Music. In 2000, the University of Kansas School of the Fine Arts hired Montgomery as its first African American academic dean. When she left in 2003, the university inducted her into its Women's Hall of Fame. Montgomery was then hired at Northwestern University, becoming the first African American and first female dean of the Bienen School of Music.

Montgomery is an active musical performer. She has travelled around the world to perform in countries such as Austria, Brazil, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. In 1994, Montgomery and the Black Music Repertory Ensemble recorded an NPR series entitled "African American Music Tree." She has also appeared with the group on the "Today Show" and CNN. In 2003, Montgomery collaborated with cellist Anthony Elliott to release a CD entitled *Music for Cello and Piano by African American Composers*.

Toni-Marie Montgomery was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 26, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 26, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Music professor and pianist Toni-Marie Montgomery (1956 -) was the first African American and first female dean of Northwestern University Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music.

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:

Montgomery, Toni-Marie, 1956-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Montgomery, Toni-Marie, 1956- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Pianist

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 Toni-Marie Montgomery, August 26, 2010. 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 Toni-Marie Montgomery, Section A2010_103_001_001, TRT: 0:30:43 ?

Toni-Marie Montgomery was born on June 25, 1956 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Mattie Drayton and Milton Montgomery. Her mother's parents, Marie Cross Drayton and Sylvester Drayton, raised their nine children in

Savannah, Georgia. After high school, Montgomery's mother lived with her brother in North Carolina before moving to Philadelphia, where she met Montgomery's father. Montgomery did not know her father, and was raised primarily by her mother, who worked as a nurse in North Philadelphia. At six years old, Montgomery attended Most Precious Blood of Our Lord School, and began taking piano lessons from nun Maria Rafaela. Later, she took music classes at the Settlement Music School; and, from age twelve to fifteen, attended the Amherst Summer Music Center in Raymond, Maine. When she was thirteen years old, Montgomery and her mother moved to a house on Philadelphia's west side. She enjoyed concerts given by the Philadelphia Orchestra, and watched Leonard Bernstein's 'Young People's Concerts' on television.

Video Oral History Interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery, Section A2010_103_001_002, TRT: 0:30:33 ?

Toni-Marie Montgomery attended Merion Mercy Academy, an all girl's private Catholic school in Merion Station, Pennsylvania. There, she was one of five African American students in her graduating class, and often felt isolated from her classmates. In high school, she continued her musical studies, and hoped to become a concert pianist. While she enjoyed performing, she disliked competitions. Upon graduating in 1974, Montgomery took lessons from Paul Emerich in New York City while practicing at home. In 1976, she matriculated at the Philadelphia College of Performing Arts. There, she was mentored by piano instructor Jeanne Behrend who paid for her to attend a summer music program in Fontainebleau, France, where she was taught by piano teacher and program director Nadia Boulanger. Upon graduating in 1980, Montgomery pursued a master's degree and doctorate degree in music at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she met Associate Dean Willis Patterson and Professor Eugene Bossart.

Video Oral History Interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery, Section A2010_103_001_003, TRT: 0:30:25 ?

Toni-Marie Montgomery graduated in 1984 from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and moved back to her hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She returned to the university in 1985 to attend a symposium on black composers, where she met musician Billy Taylor. In 1986, Montgomery was named the director of the Bullock Performance Institute at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan; and in 1987, was hired as the assistant dean for the School of Fine Arts at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut. Montgomery then moved to Tempe, Arizona, where she became the associate dean for the Katherine K. Herberger College of the Arts at Arizona State University. In the 1990s, Montgomery frequently performed with the Black Music Repertory Ensemble, which was created by educator Samuel Floyd. The ensemble performed music by African American composers. In 2000, Montgomery was recruited as the dean of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas.

Video Oral History Interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery, Section A2010_103_001_004, TRT: 0:30:13 ?

Toni-Marie Montgomery's mother, Mattie Drayton, bought her a Steinway and Sons piano when she was in tenth grade, which Montgomery kept throughout her career. At the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, Montgomery worked with visual artists and musicians as dean of the School of Fine Arts. In 2003, she became the dean of Northwestern University's School of Music in Evanston, Illinois, later named the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music. With the support of university president, Henry Bienen, Montgomery decided to

end the school's organ program, which prompted protests and death threats from former students. After the unexpected resignation of jazz program director Don Owens, Montgomery faced backlash from those who believed she planned to end the program. After a years-long search, Montgomery hired Victor Goines as the new director. She also raised \$24 million in six years to construct a new music school building, and developed initiatives to bring more minority students to the university.

Video Oral History Interview with Toni-Marie Montgomery, Section A2010_103_001_005, TRT: 0:24:24 ?

Toni-Marie Montgomery was the dean of the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. In this role, she oversaw the building of its new facility, and established a weekend children's fair and Spring Festival Concert to promote classical music in the community. At the time of the interview, she was involved in improving the curriculum at Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music. She talks about the interest in hip hop studies at the university, as well as her own musical interests. She also describes her family and her hopes and concerns for the African American community. Montgomery reflects upon her life and legacy, and describes how she would like to be remembered. She concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.