

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with BeBe Winans

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Winans, BeBe
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with BeBe Winans,
Dates:	November 2, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:24:47).
Abstract:	Music producer, songwriter, and singer BeBe Winans (1962 -) was one of the premier contemporary Gospel singers in America. Winans was the winner of four Grammy Awards, ten Dove Awards, six Stellar Awards, two NAACP Image Awards and a Soul Train Music Award, and appeared in an assortment of movies, television shows, and Broadway productions throughout his career. Winans was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 2, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_317
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music producer, R&B singer, songwriter and gospel singer BeBe Winans was born Benjamin Winans on September 17, 1962 in Detroit, Michigan. He, along with his nine siblings, started singing in the choir at Mount Zion Church of God and Christ in Detroit. All of the Winans brothers and sisters were talented singers and contributed greatly to the church choir, in which both Winans parents also performed.

Winans began his career as a background singer for his famous brothers, The Winans. He and his sister, CeCe, joined the television show *Praise the Lord* as the “PTL Singers” in 1982 and released their first record, “Lord Lift Us Up”, in 1984. BeBe and CeCe Winans eventually recorded five albums together including the self titled *BeBe & CeCe Winans* (1987), *Heaven* (1988), *Different Lifestyles* (1991), *First Christmas* (1993), and *Relationships* (1994). BeBe recorded numerous solo albums including *BeBe Winans* (1997), *Love & Freedom* (2000), *Live and Up Close* (2002), *My Christmas Prayer* (2004), and *Dream* (2006), which features the single “I Have A Dream.” The song uses samples from the historic speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 1963 March on Washington along with Winans’ singing of some of its passages. Winans has also recorded songs with such entertainers as Stevie Wonder, Brian McKnight, Whitney Houston. In 2004, Winans made his film debut with a role in the remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*, featuring actors Denzel Washington and Meryl Streep. He also starred in the off-Broadway touring musical production of *King Solomon Lives, A Nubian Love Story*. Winans previously starred on Broadway in the shows *Civil War* and *Don’t Get God Started* and the national tour of *What’s On the Hearts of Men*.

In 2007, Winans began hosting his own nationally syndicated radio program, *The BeBe Winans Radio Show*. As an R&B and Gospel vocalist, writer, and producer, Winans has won four Grammy Awards, ten Dove Awards, six Stellar Awards, two NAACP Image Awards and a Soul Train Music Award.

BeBe Winans was interviewed by The *HistoryMakers* on November 2, 2007

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with BeBe Winans was conducted by Sasha Dalton on November 2, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Music producer, songwriter, and singer BeBe Winans (1962 -) was one of the premier contemporary Gospel singers in America. Winans was the winner of four Grammy Awards, ten Dove Awards, six Stellar Awards, two NAACP Image Awards and a Soul Train Music Award, and appeared in an assortment of movies, television shows, and Broadway productions throughout his career.

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:

Winans, BeBe

Dalton, Sasha (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Winans, BeBe--Interviews

African American gospel singers--Interviews

Gospel musicians--Interviews

Rhythm and blues musicians--Interviews

African American singers--Interviews

African American musicians--Interviews

Winans, BeBe--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Producer

Songwriter

Singer

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 BeBe Winans, November 2, 2007. 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 BeBe Winans, Section A2007_317_001_001, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

BeBe Winans was born on September 17, 1962 in Detroit, Michigan to Delores Ransom Winans and David Winans, Sr. His paternal great-great-grandfather was enslaved in South Carolina, and purchased his former owner's land after emancipation. His son was Winans' paternal great-grandfather, preacher Isaiah W. Winans. Winans' paternal grandparents, Laura Glenn Howze and Carvin Winans, never married, and his father did not assume the name Winans until 1962. Winans' maternal grandmother, nurse Frances Ransom, had Native American ancestry. After divorcing Winans' maternal grandfather, William Ransom, Frances Ransom raised two daughters, including his mother, in Dearborn, Michigan. Winans' parents were musically talented, and met while singing with Lucylle Lemon and the Lemon Gospel Chorus. They married, and raised ten children in Detroit's Brewster-Douglass Housing Projects. Winans' family later moved to Detroit's west side, where they were one of the few black households in their neighborhood prior to white flight.

African American families--Michigan--Detroit.

African Americans--Religion.

Gospel music.

Integration in housing.

African American parents--Michigan--Detroit.

Video Oral History Interview with BeBe Winans, Section A2007_317_001_002, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

BeBe Winans grew up in a strict Pentecostal household in Detroit, Michigan. His family attended Detroit's Mack Avenue Church of God in Christ, which was co-founded by Winans' paternal great-grandfather, Pastor Isaiah W. Winans. The Winans were active in the music program at the church; and his father, singer David Winans, Sr., required Winans and his siblings to sing gospel harmonies each night before bed. Winans began his education at Pasteur Elementary School, and later attended MacDowell Elementary School on the west side of Detroit. There, he was influenced by his fourth grade teacher, Miss Byars, who read Elizabeth Rendall's poem, 'The Wind,' to his class, inspiring him to write his own lyrics. Winans went on to attend Samuel C. Mumford High School, where he was encouraged to work hard and earn high grades by his guidance counselor, as well as his history teacher, Mrs. C. Robinson. Winans also describes his ten siblings, of which he was the seventh born.

African American families--Michigan--Detroit.

African American fathers.

Cooke, Sam.

Rawls, Lou.

African Americans--Michigan--Detroit--Social life and customs.

African American Pentecostal churches--Michigan--Detroit.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Michigan--Detroit.

Gospel music.

African American gospel singers.

Video Oral History Interview with BeBe Winans, Section A2007_317_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

BeBe Winans aspired to become a professional musician from an early age. He performed as The Winans, Part Two with his siblings, Michael Winans, Daniel Winans and Priscilla Winans Love (CeCe). Their older brother, Ronald Winans, choreographed their routines; and, while in elementary school, they won a talent show with their interpretation of Andrae Crouch and The Disciples' song, 'Tell Them.' Winans went on to attend Detroit's Beaubien Junior High School and Samuel C. Smith High School. His father, David Winans, Sr., encouraged his children's musical interests by purchasing a piano, although he only permitted them to play to gospel music. Winans' family also held biannual holiday concerts at the Henry and Edsel Ford Memorial Auditorium with groups like The Clark Sisters. At seventeen years old, Winans and his sister, CeCe, were recruited by music director Harry McCrary to audition for the Praise the Lord Club in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they moved after his sister was cast in the show.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Michigan--Detroit.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Michigan--Detroit.

African American fathers--Influence--Vocational guidance.

Winans (musical group).

Winans Phase 2 (musical group).

Winans, CeCe.

Video Oral History Interview with BeBe Winans, Section A2007_317_001_004, TRT: 0:29:42 ?

BeBe Winans moved with his sister, Priscilla Winans Love (CeCe), to Charlotte, North Carolina after she was selected to join the Praise the Lord Club singers. Winans was also recruited to join the choir after its leader, Jim Bakker, heard him sing. He and his sister were the only two African American vocalists in the group, which had three hundred members. The choir's musical director, Harry McCrary, selected Winans and his sister to sing his gospel adaptation of the song 'Up Where We Belong,' which became one of the Praise the Lord Club's signature songs. Soon, Winans and his sister were booked as a duet at venues around the country. Around this time, they formally left The Winans, Part Two, and created the act BeBe and CeCe. They went on to release their first album of duets, 'Lord Lift Us Up,' on PTL Records in 1984. Winans talks about the encouragement of Jim Bakker and his wife, Tammy Faye Bakker; and the role of the Pentecostal church in his life.

Winans, CeCe.

Winans Phase 2 (musical group).

PTL Singers.

PTL Club (Television program).

African American families.

African American gospel singers--Religious life.

Video Oral History Interview with BeBe Winans, Section A2007_317_001_005, TRT: 0:26:18 ?

BeBe Winans joined the Praise the Lord Club singers in 1982. On the set of their television program, he experienced discrimination from a white cameraman, who eventually overcame his prejudice after working with Winans for several years. Winans remained with the Praise the Lord Club until 1987, when both he and his sister, Priscilla Winans Love (CeCe), left the group. His sister returned to Detroit, Michigan, while Winans remained in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1988, they released their third album as BeBe and CeCe, 'Heaven,' which featured the hit song of the same name. In 1991, they recorded 'Different Lifestyles,' which included a song written by Winans, 'Searching for Love.' Winans describes the difficulty of transitioning between the gospel and secular music markets, as well as the response to his music in the African American and Pentecostal communities. He remembers Jim Bakker and Tammy Faye Bakker, and reflects upon the disbandment of the Praise the Lord Club.

PTL Singers.

PTL (Organization)

Bakker, Tammy Faye, 1942-2007.

Bakker, Jim, 1940-.

Contemporary gospel music.

African Americans--Religion.

Gospel music.

Race relations.

African American gospel singers--Religious life.