

AAAMC LINER notes

In this Issue:

LETTER

- From the Desk of the Director

IN THE VAULT

- Featured Collection: DMC DJ Competition Videos
- Collection Highlights: Michael Woods, Vy Higginsen
- Recent Donations

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

- "Something in the Water"—Funk Music Exhibition
- The Johnny Otis Show and the Rhythm & Blues Exhibition
- Extensions of Tradition 1999—Concert and Exhibition

LECTURES

- Harry Allen—Media Assassin and Hip-Hop Activist
- Jack Gibson—Black Radio Pioneer

VISITING SCHOLARS

- Gilbert Williams
- Kevin Seal
- Peter Davenport
- Christopher Johnson

PEOPLE

- Research Associate Highlight: Johnny Griffith

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS FORM

From the Desk of the Director

This issue of *Liner Notes* appears as the Archives of African American Music and Culture (AAAMC) gears up for entry into a new millennium. Over the past 12 months, we have sponsored lectures and concerts, and developed exhibitions (some of these programs are described within). Through these forums, AAAMC exposes the public to unique and contemporary interpretations of African American music and culture through the lens of those involved in its creation, dissemination, preservation, and documentation. We will continue to offer these programs in the twenty-first century and develop new ones that will bring together performing artists and music industry personnel. Through these programs, we will explore various issues (technological, business, political, social, and cultural) of importance to the legacy and future of African-American music and culture. AAAMC will also continue its development of educational materials and has begun collecting materials for the creation of educational programs inclusive of video documentaries.

To facilitate these and other goals, AAAMC is in the process of establishing a digital-based processing lab to collect and store materials in the highest quality format possible. Such a lab will enable us to provide our patrons with high-quality research materials as well as more efficient services resulting from in-house processing and duplication in most formats. As we become more self-sufficient, we will also be able to produce small production projects in-house. Moving into the twenty-first century, AAAMC anticipates bringing more exposure to the rich legacy of African-American music and culture and related personalities.

Portia K. Maulsby

Portia K. Maulsby
 Director

In the Vault

The DMC DJ Competition Video Collection

"Hip-hop humanizes technology and makes it tactile. In hip-hop, you make the technology do stuff that it isn't supposed to do, get music out of something that's not supposed to give you music quite that way. You squeeze it, rip at it, and do other things with the equipment that mess viciously with your warranty."
 —Harry Allen, "Invisible Band," Village Voice, October 1988

Hear that? That's the deejay scratch, scra-, scra-, scratchin' right now. Cutting the record back and forth, back and forth, back and forth against the needle. Making it scratch.

Scratching is just one of the possible techniques used by a deejay in the construction of a mix. It is perhaps the most familiar sound effect known by name to the general hip-hop audience. But as a technique in the bigger world of turntablism, I have learned that it is a relatively small component of a deejay's performance. So, how did I become so knowledgeable? Read on.

While the function of the deejay is to keep the flow of the dance floor moving, these gladiators of groove show that the process is just as important as the final product. Movements are coordinated with the very beats that are being created: turning, twisting, arm-crossing, and spinning backwards, using the elbows, the feet, the nose, the forehead, and even the tongue to scratch and cut-back. Watch as one deejay handcuffs his wrists to do his mix in the tradition of Grand Master Flash back in the day. These techniques, among others, turn the art of deejaying into a stylish, choreographed dance that makes its own music in the process. Turntables, cartridges, and LPs can be bought, but style must be taught.

Included in the DMC DJ Competition Video collection are a few instructional videos. The video titled *So You Want to Be a DJ?* is a compilation of mixing tips and tricks from world-renowned club deejays. The collection also contains interviews that explain the perspectives and the everyday lives of these artisans, information that is important to students of hip-hop music and culture. The instructional video, *The DMC B-Boy Foundations*, not only teaches the viewer how to perform bridges, freezes, and head spins, but also contains information about the history of dance, b-boy legends, team competitions, and the innovators of various styles. The host, Popmaster Fabel, often breaks into personal narratives that express the importance of breaking to the lives of kids in the 'hood and the barrio.

Each videotape in this collection is a historical component of the study of hip-hop. The deejay competition videos are time capsules—warehousing culturally diverse *flava* as well as the techniques and styles current in their times. As an audio-visual resource, the videos allow the viewer to watch the art of turntablism evolve through time and space.

The instructional videotapes not only teach us the *how to's*, but also teach the significance of what it means to be a deejay or a b-boy. *The DMC: DJ Competition Video Collection* helps viewers better understand hip-hop artistry and its context, because deejaying and dancing are very much physical and bodily phenomena and demand the attention of our eyes, ears, hands, feet, mind, and spirit.

—Fernando Orejuela

Fernando Orejuela is a doctoral candidate in folklore, minoring in sociology and ethnomusicology. Orejuela is the associate instructor for a rap music class.



AAAMC MISSION

The AAAMC is devoted to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of materials for the purpose of research and study of African-American music and culture.

AAAMC Collection Highlights

In each issue of *Liner Notes* we provide brief descriptions of selected existing and new collections.

MICHAEL WOODS COLLECTION. A collection of jazz and rhythm and blues scores by Woods. Includes a taped interview with the composer, and the interview transcript.

VY HIGGINSEN COLLECTION. Recordings, complete script, book, photographs, poster, and promotional materials for the gospel musicals *Mama, I Want to Sing!*; *Mama, I Want to Sing II*; and *Born to Sing! Mama 3*, written and produced by Vy Higginson and Ken Wydro.

Recent Donations (1998–99)

The AAAMC would like to thank the following individuals and corporations for donations made over the year. While some are new collections, others are additions to existing collections. These additions are indicated by an asterisk (*):

Harry Allen*: Articles, audio, and videotapes on hip-hop culture; photographs, videotapes, and transcripts of interviews with and lectures by Harry Allen.
William Barlow: Interviews related to the book *Looking Up at Down: The Emergence of Blues Culture* (1989); documents and recorded interviews related to his book, *Voice Over: The Making of Black Radio* (1999).
Peter Davenport: *Encarta Africana: Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Black History and Culture*, CD-ROM.
Ted Fox: Book, *Shouttime at the Apollo*.
Charles Frederick*: Posters of jazz and blues musicians; hip-hop magazines.
Luvonia George: *Beyond Category*, a Duke Ellington educational kit prepared by the National Museum of American History/Smithsonian Institution.
Jack Gibson*: Photographs, videotapes, and transcripts of interviews and lectures related to black radio.
Johnny Griffith: LPs of various genres, 1950s–80s.
Michael Lydon: Book, *Boogie Lightning*.
Johnny Otis*: Photographs and videotapes of the Johnny Otis Show; interviews with and lectures by Johnny Otis.
Tom Reed*: Videotape, *Great Civilizations of African Origins*, produced by Tom Reed.
Robert Sims: Compact disc.
Miles White*: Photographs of Miles Davis and research materials on hip-hop deejaying.
Michael Woods*: Original jazz and rhythm and blues scores.
DMC USA: Videotapes, *DMC—Disc Jockey Mixing Competitions*.
Mad Rhythms: Back issues of *Mad Rhythms* magazine.
Vibe Magazine: Back and current issues of *Vibe* magazine.
Alligator Records: Compact discs, LPs.
Arista Records: Compact discs, LPs.
BMG: Compact discs, LPs.
Malaco: Compact discs, LPs.
Warner Bros: Compact discs, LPs.

(Selected collections will be showcased in the "Featured Collection" and "Collection Highlights" columns of upcoming issues of *Liner Notes*.)

Collaborative Projects

"SOMETHING IN THE WATER: THE SWEET TASTE OF DAYTON STREET FUNK"

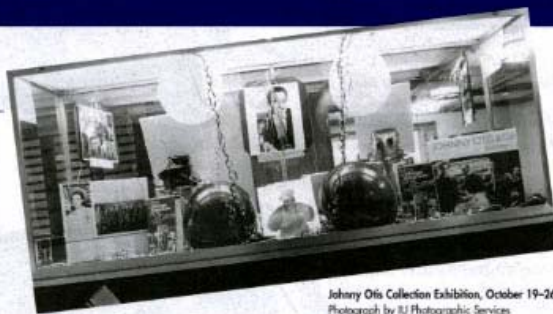
The AAAMC collaborated with the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center (NAAMCC) in Wilberforce, Ohio, on the development of the exhibition, "Something in the Water: The Sweet Taste of Dayton Street Funk."

Portia K. Maultsby, director of the AAAMC, participated in the opening ceremony on Saturday, October 3, 1998, as co-curator for the project. Collaborating with Michael Sampson, public information coordinator of the NAAMCC, Maultsby conducted the research and wrote the narrative for the development of the exhibition. Sampson coordinated the interviews, researched and collected the artifacts and memorabilia (costumes, photos, musical manuscripts, original recordings, instruments, posters, promotional materials, etc.), and supervised the mounting of the exhibition.

Collaboration on the project began in the summer of 1997. Following the planning meeting between AAAMC and NAAMCC staff, Maultsby and her research assistant, Stephanie Shonekan, began interviewing a cross-section of individuals from Dayton. The objective was to examine the evolution of Dayton funk, its distinguishing musical features, and the sociocultural environment from which this unique funk style emerged. Maultsby and Shonekan interviewed musicians from



"Something in the Water: The Sweet Taste of Dayton Street Funk" Exhibition
Photograph by Wendy Felder, March 1999



Johnny Otis Collection Exhibition, October 19–26, 1998
Photograph by IJ Photographic Services

various Dayton funk groups such as the Ohio Players, Slave, Hearwave, Sun, Faze-O, Dayton, and Zapp, as well as parents of the musicians, teachers, record store owners, radio disc jockeys, politicians, historians, and sociologists. Maultsby also analyzed several songs of the funk groups to decipher the musical elements that distinguish Dayton funk from other funk styles.

"Something in the Water: The Sweet Taste of Dayton Street Funk," which featured a broad historical and panoramic view of this tradition, was exhibited at the NAAMCC Museum in Wilberforce, Ohio, from November 1998 to March 1999. The audiotaped interviews, transcripts, print materials, and recordings are housed in the AAAMC.

THE JOHNNY OTIS SHOW AND EXHIBITION

"The venerable impresario treated the audience to a revue of soul, rhythm and blues, and swing classics . . . the young and old all vying for a spot close to the Rock and Roll Hall of Famer."
Indiana Daily Student
October 26, 1998

The AAAMC and the African American Arts Institute collaborated with the Society for Ethnomusicology on a program that featured a lecture, performance, and exhibition on rhythm and blues music during the Society's forty-third annual conference, which took place at Indiana University from October 23 to 25, 1998. The program committee chose Johnny Otis, veteran swing, jazz, and rhythm and blues bandleader and songwriter as a featured speaker, and invited his band, the Johnny Otis Show, to be the headline performer.

Otis captivated a packed room of ethnomusicologists and other scholars and students with the stories and reflections about his life and career as a performing musician, talent scout, and songwriter. He also candidly addressed sensitive racial issues that have affected African-American communities for decades.

Held at the Bloomington Convention Center, the performance by the 11-piece

Johnny Otis Show also drew a full house. The audience jammed the dance floor, swinging to big band sounds and rhythm and blues hits from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. After this electrifying performance and an evening of good times, conference attendees concluded that the Johnny Otis Show was the highlight of the conference.

In recognition of Johnny Otis's musical achievements, the mayor of Bloomington proclaimed October 25, 1998, as Johnny Otis Day. Indiana University also inaugurated the Johnny Otis Collection of radio shows on rhythm and blues. (For a description of this collection and more details about Otis, see AAAMC *Liner Notes*, No. 1, Inaugural Issue.)

Two rhythm and blues exhibitions developed by the AAAMC and co-sponsored by the African American Culture Center library, complemented Otis's lecture and performance. One focused on Johnny Otis, the other on the rhythm and blues era. They were displayed in the Indiana Memorial Union and in Indiana University's main library, respectively. Both exhibitions featured photographs, album and book covers, and other relevant memorabilia. According to Dina Bennett, a doctoral student in ethnomusicology who researched the project and wrote the narrative and captions, her work on this exhibition "was truly a worthwhile and enjoyable experience that has greatly enhanced [her] academic endeavors."

EXTENSIONS OF THE TRADITION, 1999

The AAAMC annually collaborates with the African American Arts Institute and the School of Music to sponsor the Extensions of the Tradition Concert and Exhibition, a program that showcases the works of a selection of African-American classical composers. The 1999 Extensions of the Tradition concert and exhibition took place March 28, 1999. The concert featured compositions of David Baker, William Banfield, and Patrice Rushen.

Pianist Dan Michalak performed William Banfield's "Wagussy Duke." Michalak then joined soprano Virginia LaBlanc and the Dubinsky String Quartet on a performance of David Baker's "Through This Vale of Tears." The Dubinsky Quartet also performed Patrice Rushen's "Psalm" and William Banfield's "Con Tone."

The Extensions of Tradition exhibition was mounted at the School of Music Library by Macia Richardson, AAAMC archivist. It featured photographs and scores by Lena J. McLin, a Chicago-based composer, arranger, vocal teacher, pianist, and singer. McLin also conducts the McLin Ensemble, a concert chorale.

Lectures

HARRY ALLEN—MEDIA ASSASSIN AND HIP-HOP ACTIVIST

"Allen's presentation provided an improvisation of musical history. Instead of its study, students observed its documentation."

Indiana Daily Student
November 11, 1998

In November 1998, media assassin and hip-hop activist Harry Allen gave a series of lectures at Indiana University Bloomington. The program was sponsored by the AAAMC in conjunction with the School of Journalism, the Department of Communication and Culture, the Department of African American Studies, the American Studies Program, the Folklore Institute, the Ethnomusicology Program, the Honors Division, and the Horizons of Knowledge Lecture Series.

Allen's public lecture, titled "Hip-Hop: Roots and Reality," drew a responsive crowd of university students,



Harry Allen
Photograph by Row Duffy,
November 9, 1998

faculty, staff, and community members, as did his classroom presentations in the Department of Afro-American Studies and the School of Journalism.

The former publicist for the rap group Public Enemy, Allen is the first serious writer on hip-hop culture who

grew up with the culture. In 1983, as a college student at Adelphi University on Long Island, New York, Allen wrote his first critical article on the tradition. In 1986, at a Black Music Association conference, he presented a paper that outlined six points for enhancing our understanding of hip-hop. Since that time he has written for *Vibe*, *Billboard*, *Spin*, *Essence*, *Source*, *New York Newsday*, *Musician*, *XXL*, and the *Village Voice*.

In his public lecture, Allen recounted his initial exposure to hip-hop culture and the early history of the tradition. He noted the contributions of deejays Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, and Keith Wiggins. He also explained that rap is a fully urban expressive form, in contrast to the rural roots of blues, jazz, and gospel music, because the African American community is rooted in the north, and is "no longer sending down south for the relatives." Rap, he said, reflects the energy and aggression of an urban landscape. It attempts to replicate the syncopated rhythms that pulse to the beat of shrieking trains and other forms

of "acoustic shrapnel," rather than the agricultural soundscape reflected in the poetic rhythms of poets such as Pope and Pound.

Allen emphasized the importance of cheap technology in the development of hip-hop and the African roots of the tradition. Related to the latter, he contends that the emphasis in hip-hop on asymmetry, adornment, and improvisational skills are fundamental to African musical expressions. African Americans combine these components to produce artistic transformations, because of the need to "freak the note." Allen explained that African-influenced expressive forms, from West African sculpture to rap, reveal a creative imperative that makes it necessary to improvise, to improve, and to transform the original.

—Denise Lynn

Denise Lynn is a graduate student in the Folklore Institute.

JACK GIBSON—BLACK RADIO PIONEER

"Some history can't be found in books. . . . Students, faculty and community members crowded Jordan Hall Wednesday night to hear a presentation by black radio pioneer Jack 'The Rapper' Gibson, a media icon and cultural legend. . . . For many in attendance, Wednesday's event offered a chance to meet a man they said they considered a hero."

Indiana Daily Student
February 26, 1999

Black radio pioneer, Jack Gibson, also known as "Jack the Rapper" or "Jockey Jack," gave a series of lectures in February 1999 at Indiana University Bloomington. The program was sponsored by the AAAMC in conjunction with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Support and Diversity, the Office of African American Affairs/Black History Month Committee, the Minority Achievers Program, and the Department of Telecommunications.

University students, faculty, staff, and community members filled Jordan Hall to hear Gibson's intriguing lecture, "Black Radio: Early History and Current Issues." Gibson also gave classroom presentations in the Department of Telecommunications.

With his smooth, melodic storytelling style, Gibson not only enthralled, but also educated the audience about the issues surrounding the growth of black radio and the rise and fall of the personality disc jockey. Over many

decades, Gibson worked in various radio stations across the country, including WERD Atlanta, the first black-owned and operated radio station.

Gibson also discussed what life was like during segregation, and the critical role black radio played in keeping the community informed. He described what life on the road was like for black entertainers, and he reminisced about the Lord Calvert Hotel in Miami Beach, from which he broadcast some of his programs.

Having also worked in the record industry, Gibson described his experiences at Motown and his involvement with entertainers, including the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, and Marvin Gaye. Now "retired," Gibson is back on the air at KCEP radio in Las Vegas. There, he recreates the personality deejay style that was so popular during his radio heyday.

An exhibition on black radio developed by the AAAMC and displayed in the Indiana University Main Library complemented Gibson's lecture. According to Stephanie Shonekan, a doctoral student in ethnomusicology, who wrote the narratives and captions, "Gibson's lecture vividly brought to life the information and photographs which I encountered while doing research for this project."

—Denise Lynn

For a description of this collection and more details about Gibson, see AAAMC Liner Notes, No. 1, Inaugural Issue.

Visiting Scholars

During the 1998–99 academic year, several scholars visited the archives. Some of them are profiled below:

GILBERT A. WILLIAMS

Gilbert Williams, a professor of telecommunications at Michigan State University, visited the AAAMC to conduct research for his book *Legendary Pioneers of Black Radio* (1998). As well as listening to and examining the raw research documentation from the "Telling It Like It Was" series, Williams located photographs that "put a face to the disc jockeys covered in his book." Williams had not seen some of these photographs—such as an early photograph of Al Bell and a photograph of Eddie Castleberry and Eddie O'Jay together—anywhere else. On the acknowledgement page of his book, Williams expressed his gratitude to Macia Richardson, AAAMC archivist and head of Public and Technical Services: "Macia has been a joy to work with and assisted in identifying and securing many of the photographs in this book."

KEVIN SEAL

Kevin Seal, a graduate of IU's School of Journalism, who is presently in the master's program at the University of California, Berkeley, spent a week at the AAAMC in December 1998 examining the Johnny Otis Collection (a description of the Johnny Otis Collection appears in the inaugural

issue of *Liner Notes*). Seal became interested in the material because of its importance to his master's thesis, which involves the production of "an interactive radio documentary on the life and manifold careers of Johnny Otis."

PETER DAVENPORT

In 1998, Peter Davenport, a Microsoft consultant, began work on a CD-ROM project for Harvard University's W. E. B. DuBois Institute. The project is titled *Encarta Africana: Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Black History*. Davenport visited the AAAMC to discuss his work on the project and to explore AAAMC resources for future volumes of the project. Specifically, he was interested in "historically and stylistically significant gospel singers, blues, and rhythm and blues artists." The first volume of *Encarta Africana: Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Black History* was released in January 1999.

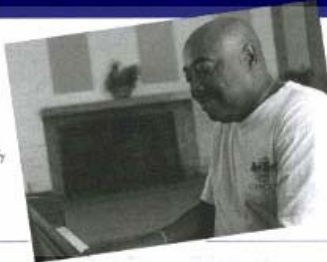
CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON

A student in the master's program in Black Studies at Ohio State University, Christopher Johnson visited the archives for a week in March 1999 to conduct research for his thesis on black radio. The thesis focuses on the black disc jockey as a verbal performer. Johnson came to the AAAMC on the advice of his academic advisor and the staff of the Smithsonian Institution. In particular, he found useful the "Black Radio: Telling It Like It Was" series, and the interviews from that project. Johnson expressed his impressions of the AAAMC: "From the staff, to the resources, to just the experience of being able to track down information, this has been a phenomenal experience."



Jack Gibson with AAAMC Staff
Left to right: Stephanie Shonekan, Macia Richardson,
Jack Gibson, Susan Oehler, Denise Lynn, Andrew Funke,
and Portia Maulsby
Photograph by Row Duffy, February 24, 1999

Johnny Griffith
 Photograph by Roe Duffy



People

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE HIGHLIGHT—JOHNNY GRIFFITH

As part of its organizational structure, the Archives of African American Music and Culture maintains a group of resident research associates who act as resource consultants to the staff and the patrons of the archives.

During the 1998–99 academic year, the AAAMC enjoyed the presence of former Motown pianist Johnny Griffith as a resident research associate. Griffith also served as acting director of the Indiana University Soul Revue, visiting lecturer in the Department of Afro-American Studies, and artist-in-residence at the Collins Living-Learning Center.

As a research associate for the AAAMC, Griffith contributed his skills and knowledge to the growing Motown collection that is supervised by Charles Sykes, AAAMC research associate and

director of the African American Arts Institute. Over the years, Sykes has been working on an exciting CD-ROM project that focuses on Motown's Detroit era. Griffith has been a valuable resource for this project, which should be complete and available for use at the archives by 2001.

At Motown, Griffith played on hits for many top-ranking musicians including the Temptations, the Supremes, Jackie Wilson, and Marvin Gaye. He also freelanced with other musicians including Edwin Starr, the Capitols, the Chi-Lites, and the Artistics.

Griffith has been not only a pianist and session man for Motown and others, but also a jazz recording artist in his own right, a jazz record store owner, a manager and producer of gospel and rhythm and blues groups, and a radio music director.

With parents who hailed from Georgia and Mississippi, Griffith was raised in Detroit, Michigan. He has vivid memories of growing up during the height of the racial tensions in Detroit. It was also in Detroit that his interest in music was sparked early in life. While Detroit was best known as an auto industrial town in the 1950s and 60s, it was also well-known as a cultural testing ground.

Griffith's father had a reasonably good job at Ford; his mother was a housewife who spent many hours teaching her children how to play the piano, focusing mostly on a classical music repertoire. This laid the foundation for Griffith's musical performing, writing, and arranging career. He played trumpet in the school band as well as other classical and jazz bands outside school, but later returned to the piano.

By the late 1950s, though Griffith's primary love was jazz, the special Motown brand of rhythm and blues was beginning to gain popularity. Griffith was invited to play on what would become Jackie Wilson's big hit, "Lonely Teardrops," written by Berry Gordy. That was the start of a thriving career at Motown for Griffith. He continued to work as a keyboardist for many musicians, returning in 1962 to his love—jazz—and becoming Motown's first jazz recording artist with the release of the album, *Jazz*.

Most recently, in his capacity as acting director of IU's Soul Revue, Griffith has set out to develop "a listening band with a groove and a

funky beat. Black, white, Asian—that's our Soul Revue."

Griffith's experience and direct involvement in the music industry has helped the Motown collection and inspired the creation of the Johnny Griffith Collection held at AAAMC. For more than four decades, Griffith has collected numerous albums and memorabilia that cover jazz, rhythm and blues, pop, gospel and, of course, Motown recordings. He has donated his collection to the AAAMC. At present, he has deposited more than 600 albums dating from the 1950s through the 1980s.

With his varied and colorful background, the AAAMC looks forward to working with Griffith as the Johnny Griffith Collection grows and becomes available for use by our patrons.

—Stephanie Shonekan

Stephanie Shonekan is a doctoral student in folklore and ethnomusicology specializing in the biographical study of African and African American musicians.

AAAMC STAFF

P. Macia Richardson, archivist and head of public/technical services
 Portia K. Maultsby, director
 Stephanie Shonekan, *Liner Notes* editor

Produced by the Indiana University Office of Publications

Spring 1999, No. 2

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