

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Famoudou Don Moye

PERSON

Moye, Famoudou Don

Alternative Names: Famoudou Don Moye; Dougauwana Famoudou Moye;

Life Dates: May 23, 1946-

Place of Birth: Rochester, New York, USA

Occupations: Percussionist

Biographical Note

Drummer extraordinaire Famoudou Don Moye was born on May 23, 1946 in Rochester, New York. In high school, he began playing drums, congas and bongos and went on to formally study percussion at Wayne State University in Detroit.

In 1968, Moye toured Europe with the Detroit Free Jazz Band and worked briefly in Italy for RAI (Italian Radio and Television). While abroad, Moye had the opportunity to work with Steve Lacy, Pharoah Sanders, Sonny Sharrock, Randy Weston and Art Taylor and to collaborate extensively with Moroccan musicians.

Moye joined the innovative, avant-garde quintet, the Art Ensemble of Chicago (AEC), in 1969 and he has been a permanent member ever since. Moye and the other members of AEC draw their influence from both Africa and the Caribbean, rural as well as urban spaces, from the whole spectrum of black music. Their radically experimental performances include painted faces, costumes and exotic instruments, which all contribute to their energetic improvisations. In addition to his work with AEC, Moye has been a member of The Leaders since 1984 and has recorded with the Black Artists Group, Joseph Jarman, Don Pullen, Cecil McBee, Hamiet Bluiett, Julius Hemphill, Chico Freeman and Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy. He also leads the Sun Percussion Summit, a group dedicated to exploring the traditions of African American percussion music.

Moye's recordings have won him the praise of critics at such esteemed publications as Rolling Stone, Down Beat, Melody Maker, The New York Times, Audio Magazine and Stereo Review. He was the winner of the Downbeat International Critics Poll in 1977, 1978 and 1982; and the New York Jazz Poll in 1979 and 1980. He received performance grants from the National Endowment for the Arts in both 1974 and 1981. He lives in Chicago, with his wife Gloria and their son, Bongo.

Moye was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 4, 2002.

Related Entries

Holy Redeemer Catholic School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Central State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Wayne State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

McQuaid Jesuit High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Detroit Artists' Workshop [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Art Ensemble of Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACRM) [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]