

Guide to the Billy Root oral history interview

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Summary Information

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| Repository: | University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives. |
| Creator: | Root, Billy |
| Contributor: | All That Jazz Oral History Project |
| Title: | Billy Root oral history interview |
| ID: | OH-02569 |
| Date: | 2008 May 14 |
| Physical Description: | 165 Digital Files (1.45 GB) MP3, JPG |
| Language of the Material: | English |
| Abstract: | Oral history interview with Billy Root conducted by Lisa Gioia-Acres on May 14, 2008 for the All That Jazz Oral History Project. Root begins by discussing his upbringing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he developed an early interest in being a musician due to encouragement from his father, who was also a musician. He describes playing baritone saxophone in the Philadelphia Orchestra, performing at the Apollo Theater in Ella Fitzgerald's orchestra, and going on tour with a predominantly African American jazz band in the Southern United States during segregation. Root details his interactions and impressions of various celebrities, such as Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, attending Playboy parties, and eventually deciding to settle in Las Vegas, Nevada. He discusses working as a professional musician in Las Vegas, where he performed in such casinos as the Dunes and the Desert Inn. He concludes by discussing his retirement and his family. |

Preferred Citation

Billy Root oral history interview, 2008 May 14. OH-02569. [Cite format consulted: Audio recording or Transcript.] Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Scope and Contents Note

Oral history interview with Billy Root conducted by Lisa Gioia-Acres on May 14, 2008 for the All That Jazz Oral History Project. Root begins by discussing his upbringing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he developed an early interest in being a musician due to encouragement from his father, who was also a musician. He describes playing baritone saxophone in the Philadelphia Orchestra, performing at the Apollo Theater in Ella Fitzgerald's orchestra, and going on tour with a predominantly African American jazz band in the Southern United States during segregation. Root details his interactions and impressions of various celebrities, such as Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, attending Playboy parties, and eventually deciding to settle in Las Vegas, Nevada. He discusses working as a professional musician in Las Vegas, where he performed in such casinos as the Dunes and the Desert Inn. He concludes by discussing his retirement and his family. Digital audio available; no transcript available. Digital photographs available.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

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Acquisition Note

This interview was conducted by the Oral History Research Center (OHRC) which is part of the UNLV University Libraries Special Collections and Archives Division.

Processing Note

Interview materials were processed by UNLV Libraries Special Collections and Archives in 2016. Kyle Gagnon wrote the collection description. Access copies were created for born-digital audio and/or transcript files. The audio has been minimally reviewed and all readily available information has been included in the description.

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Names and Subjects

- Oral histories (document genres)
- Las Vegas (Nev.)
- Jazz musicians
- African American jazz musicians
- Race relations
- Entertainment
- Dunes Hotel and Casino (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Desert Inn Hotel and Casino
- Apollo Theatre (Organization : New York, N.Y.)

Potentially Harmful Content Warning

This interview contains derogatory and insensitive language that does not mirror the views of UNLV Libraries Special Collections and Archives.

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