



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Black African Heritage Audiotapes

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
National Museum of African Art
P.O. Box 37012
MRC 708
Washington, DC 20013-7012
elisofonarchives@si.edu
<https://africa.si.edu/collection/eliot-elisofon-photographic-archives/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Black African Heritage Audiotapes
Date:	1972
Identifier:	EEPA.2020-007
Creator:	Elisofon, Eliot (Producer) Group W Productions (Producer) Westinghouse Broadcasting Company (Producer) Angelou, Maya (Narrator) Davis, Ossie, 1917-2005 (Narrator) Parks, Gordon, 1912-2006 (Narrator) Bond, Julian, 1940-2015 (Narrator)
Extent:	64 Sound tape reels (1/4 in., 5 in and 7 in reels)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Provenance

Donated by Rena Kosersky in 2020, who received the tapes from Eliot Elisofon in 1972 for safekeeping while he was working on Black African Heritage. Elisofon passed away the following year.

Related Materials

Related materials include the Eliot Elisofon Papers and Photography Collection (PH-00066) at the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, the Time/Life Photographs Archives, and Broadcast programs collection (ACMA.09-037) at the Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Restrictions

Materials have not yet been digitized and processed for public access.

Biographical / Historical

These materials were produced by Eliot Elisofon and Group W (Westinghouse Broadcasting Company) in 1972, for a four-hour television series called Black African Heritage. The episodes, in order of broadcast date: 1. The Congo, narrated by Julian Bond, focuses on the "heartland of Africa" the equatorial area which encompasses rainforests, grassy plains, volcanoes, the great Congo River, lakes, and the snow-covered Ruwenzori, called the Mountains of the Moon. This episode encounters groups such as the Watusi, Bambenga, the Wagenia, the Bakuba, and the Bapende—and traces African art and history back 1,500 years. 2. The Bend in the Niger, narrated by Ossie Davis, follows one of the continent's great rivers as it flows northward in West Africa from the home of the Bambara group, known for their music, dancing, and sculpture, to Timbuktu, where it turns eastward to the Atlantic Ocean through the home of the Dogon groups, famous for sculpture. Other groups met along the way are the Borora, the horseman of Muslim Hausa, the

nomadic Tuaregs, and the Bozo and Dendi people of the Niger River. 3. The Slave Coast, narrated by Maya Angelou, focused on the tradition, cultures, beauty, and history of the people of the rainforest and the coast of West Africa. Watch dancers of Nigeria, examine sculptures made 2000 years ago, listen to the talking drums of Yoruba, see bronze portraits, visit the women warriors once known as Amazon, see golden treasures of Ashanti in Ghana, and marvel at the acrobatic dancers of the Ivory Coast. 4. Africa's Gift, narrated by Gordon Parks, focuses primarily on the Senufo people of the Ivory Coast, their music, and their art. Mongo Santamaria, leading exponent of Afro-Cuban music plays the "Afro-blues." Lionel Hampton and his group play "Glad Hamp," to show the relationship of the vibraphone and the balaphone of the Senufo. Modern jazz star Randy Weston and a trio play a number rooted in the Ashanti music in Ghana.

Content Description

These original (64) magnetic audio tapes and reels were created for the Black African Heritage television series, produced by Eliot Elisofon and Group W (Westinghouse Broadcasting Company) in 1972. These correspond with the film outtakes and original work prints held in the EEPA 1973-001 Collection.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Bambara (African people)
- Bozo (African people)
- Dendi (African people)
- Dogon (African people)
- Drums
- Hausa (African people)
- Kuba (Bakuba)
- Pende (Bapende)
- Senufo (African people)
- Tuareg (African people)
- Vibraphone
- Yoruba (African people)

Cultures:

- Bambara (African people)
- Bozo (African people)
- Dendi (African people)
- Kuba (Bakuba)
- Pende (Bapende)

Places:

- Africa, West
- Congo River (Congo)
- Ghana
- Ivory Coast
- Niger River
- Ruwenzori Mountains (Uganda and Congo)