

New York Folklore Society
2002-03 Documentary Heritage Program Project
Documenting Hip Hop

Collection creator:

Thembisa Mshaka-Morris

Title:

A Tribe Called Quest Interview

Dates:

1996

Extent:

1 audio cassette tape

Biographical/historical note:

A native of Los Angeles, Thembisa Mshaka-Morris is a music promoter and writer. She began her career at Absolute Artists, a small but powerful booking agency, working with many music legends, including George Clinton, Etta James, Junior Walker and Gil-Scott Heron. From December 1993 to May 1998, Mshaka-Morris was Rap Editor for *Gavin Magazine*, a music industry trade publication, which is now defunct. She was the first woman to hold this position, and was instrumental in breaking many Hip Hop artists who became best-sellers, including, Busta Rhymes, The Fugees, and Timbaland. Since leaving Gavin, she has worked as a Senior Advertising Copywriter for Sony Music, and is responsible for developing advertising campaigns for the company's Hip Hop, reggae, rhythm and blues and crossover artists, including Lauryn Hill, Kenny Lattimore, George Michael and Babyface. She made a foray into music supervision with the award-winning independent film "Anne B. Real" (Urban Dream Productions, 2002).

As a writer, Thembisa Mshaka-Morris became widely known as for her controversial column, "The Monthly Flow," in the now defunct *BLAZE* magazine. The column addressed the convergence of gender and Hip Hop culture in a progressive, groundbreaking, journalistic style. Her writings have been published in, *Launch.com*, *Essence.com*, and *Honey*, and she is also editor-at-large for *The Hotness.com*, an online magazine for young women of color. Mshaka-Morris is at work on her first book, *Handle Your [music] Business: Her Guide To Entering, Navigating, and Exiting the Record Industry*, and contributes a monthly music business column with the same title to *Emixshow* magazine.

Scope and content:

Thembisa Mshaka-Morris of *Gavin Magazine* taped this interview with A Tribe Called Quest (ATCQ) in 1996. At the time of the interview, ATCQ had a number one single, "Ince Again" on the *Gavin* Rap chart. The members of ATCQ, who

debuted with the single "Description of a Fool" in 1989, are three Queens, New York, rappers: Q-Tip (Jonathan Davis), Phife (Malik Taylor), and DJ Ali Sheed (Ali Sheed Muhammed). The members of ATCQ met when they all attended the same Manhattan high school, and were originally part of a New York based group called Native Tongues Posse, which also included Queen Latifah and the Jungle Brothers. ACTQ was given its name by Afrika Baby Bambaataa of the Jungle Brothers. The members of the Native Tongues Posse embraced African heritage and used it as a consistent undertone in their music. The groups' ethnic pride became its signature.

Finding aid note:

There is no finding aid for this material. Information on this collection was gathered during an interview with Thembisa Mshaka-Morris by Chic Smith of Urban Think Tank in the Spring of 2003.

Additional physical forms:

This interview was published in *Gavin* magazine, issue 2114, July 19, 1996.

Location:

This collection is held by Thembisa Mshaka-Morris, Brooklyn, New York.

Restrictions on Access:

Researchers interested in using this material should contact Urban Think Tank; P.O. Box 1476, New York, NY 10185; telephone 718-679-3739; fax 718-596-1228; Email, urbanthinktank@usa.net.

Other authors:

A Tribe Called Quest (Musical group)
DJ Ali Sheed (Ali Shaheed Muhammed)
Q-Tip (Jonathan Davis)
Phife (Malik Taylor)

Indexing terms:

Corporate/organizational names:

Gavin Magazine

Subject terms:

Hip-hop
Rap (music)
Interviews -- Musicians

Occupation

Rap musicians

Form and genre/Form of material:

Audiotape
Interviews

Date of interview and survey: Spring 2003

Interview and survey by: Chic Smith

This summary written by: Nancy Johnson with information provided by Chic Smith