

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Mark Baszak** (*Such Sweet Thunder* Editor and Contributing Author, and Assistant Director of the Black Musicians Conference and Festival from 1994 - 1999)

Received his BA in Music and his M.Ed. with a concentration in creativity and human development from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 1983 and 1993. He began his administrative career at the Fine Arts Center as director of the Performing Arts Division in 1987, a community school for the arts offering instruction in music, theater and dance. Baszak was then appointed five college educational programs director and became the administrative director of Jazz in July Summer Music Programs. After receiving his Masters Degree, he was promoted to Associate Director of Multicultural Programs for the Fine Arts Center, where he also edited the Department's newsletter *Diversity* and coordinated Black Musicians Conference and Festival activities among other responsibilities.

Baszak also became an arts journalist and established his freelance writing career in 1993. His reviews and feature stories have appeared in the *Union News/Sunday Republican*, the *Town Recorder*, *Jewish Weekly News*; *Women UnLimited Magazine*; and *BusinessWest Magazine*. He currently is a resident of Holyoke, Massachusetts.

**Edward Cohen** (*Such Sweet Thunder* Photographer, and recipient of the 2003 Distinguished Achievement Award)

Received his Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication Studies with a concentration in Afro-American studies and multicultural education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1976. He studied photography through courses at the Five Colleges, and although he enjoys all types of photography, he is particularly drawn to photography of performers in dance, theater and music.

Cohen has an affinity for jazz, blues and gospel music, and has been photographing musicians for over twenty years. He has also promoted jazz on his current radio program for WTCC 90.7 in Springfield, Massachusetts and formerly for WMUA 91.1 in Amherst.

Cohen combines his love for music and photography by photographing musicians who play jazz, blues and gospel, and tries to pay tribute to them by displaying their images in a positive setting. He has been photographing participants of the Black Musicians Conference since 1980, and through his work, he attempts to capture the energy and feelings that the artist experiences while performing or even when talking about their music. Cohen feels that his photographs will provide a lasting visual legacy to Black musicians and the music that has made an impact on his life. He currently is a resident of Springfield, Massachusetts.

**Horace Clarence Boyer** (Black Musicians Conference and Festival Artistic Director from 1991 – 1999, Panel Moderator from 1996 – 1998, *Such Sweet Thunder* Contributing Author, and recipient of the 2003 Distinguished Achievement Award)

Professor Emeritus of Music Theory and African American Music at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he taught for 26 years, Dr. Boyer has a long and distinguished musical career. He served as guest curator of musical history at the Smithsonian Institution in 1985-86, and was the Distinguished Scholar-at-Large at Fisk University in 1986-87, where he conducted the famed Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Boyer served as advisor on gospel music to the *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, edited the 1993 edition of the African American hymnal, *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, and authored the very popular *How Sweet The Sound: The Golden Age of Gospel*.

As a scholar, Boyer has appeared in numerous television documentaries on gospel music and has lectured across the United States. As a singer, he has performed throughout his life as a soloist and with his brother James as a member of The Boyer Brothers. He has recorded on Savoy and Nashboro labels, and has appeared in over 500 concerts, festivals and television performances, and with such gospel luminaries as Mahalia Jackson, Clara Ward, Alex Bradford, James Cleveland, and Dorothy Love Coates. He currently is a resident of Amherst, Massachusetts.

**Frederick C. Tillis** (Fine Arts Center Director from 1976 – 1999, Black Musicians Conference [1998: *A Great Day In Harlem: A Tribute To Dr. Frederick C. Tillis*] Distinguished Achievement Award Recipient, Black Musicians Conference Panel Discussion Moderator from 1989 – 1995, and *Such Sweet Thunder* Contributing Author)

Dr. Tillis is a renowned artist, educator, administrator and poet, and is a lifetime member of the International Association of Jazz Educators, an organization that honored him with an award for outstanding service. He is a Danforth Associate, and is currently Director Emeritus of the University of Massachusetts Fine Arts Center after 23 years as Director. For the University, Dr. Tillis has served as Associate Chancellor, Professor of Music Composition, and Director of the African American Music and Jazz program. He earned his Ph.D. in Music Composition from the University of Iowa, and has written more than 120 pieces in various media, including orchestral, jazz instrumental, choral, chamber music, and vocal works. His compositions explore a variety of musical contexts from throughout the world including African, African American, and classical European traditions.

The works of Frederick Tillis have been performed internationally and in the United States. Such pieces include *A Festival Journey* (1992), and *Ring Shout Concerto* (1974) for percussion, written for and performed by Max Roach and symphony orchestra; and *Concerto for Piano (Jazz Trio) and Symphony Orchestra* (1983) written for and performed by Billy Taylor. He has produced seven books of poetry and a text, *Jazz Theory and Improvisation*. In addition, Dr. Tillis is an accomplished instrumentalist offering a distinct and personal interpretation of the soprano and tenor saxophones. He currently is a resident of Amherst, Massachusetts.

For Press Interviews/

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