UCLA Oral History Collection

Interview with Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

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Interview with Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

Donna Armstrong, Interviewer

April 12, 2013, 10:46am

The Green Room, 1230 Schoenberg Music Building, UCLA

PART ONE

Transcribed by Donna Armstrong, JoAnna Schindler, and Helen Yuan

(Transcription revised: January 1, 2014, August 31, 2016, and September 11, 2016)

ARMSTRONG: We're here on April 12, 2013, in Schoenberg Music Building with Professor Jacqueline DjeDje.

Thank you for agreeing to do the interview. You have had a very illustrious career so far. And you will retire from the University of California, Los Angeles very soon, and you will start on your next adventure. We are here to talk about your career so far. I want to start off with acknowledging your thirty-four years here as a professor at UCLA in the now Department of Ethnomusicology – it was the Music Department when you started – and your years as a graduate student. Your journey took place during a period of history when our country was segregated. You will tell us about your childhood years, and the process during the 60s when we've been developing our understanding of African music and culture, and you've been a part of this development. Do you have anything to say about your role in letting students know about African American culture?

DJEDJE: Before I begin, in the African and African American tradition, I want to thank you for organizing all of this. I always used to say that you are the glue that held everything together. You are also the engine that gets things started and makes things get done. I want to thank you. I know that you are going over and beyond your normal duties to do this.

ARMSTRONG: You are welcome.

DJEDJE: I want to thank all of the forces out there that have allowed us to be here.

ARMSTRONG: I am honored to play the role. I feel the presence of the ancestors and I feel their presence with our association, when you were chair and before you were chair. So, I feel honored to be able to play this role. So, let's just move on. Let's go ahead and start.

Please tell us something about your early years – where you were born and what your childhood was like; what values were most important in your family, and also where did your interest in music begin.

5:30

DJEDJE: I was born in Jesup, Georgia. This is a small town in southeast Georgia. At the time I grew up, it had a population of about 10,000 or 15,000 people. Perhaps 30% were African American, 70% white, so we were really in the Deep South. Segregation and Jim Crow was everywhere. But my parents raised me and my sister, who is about six or seven years younger than I am, they raised us in such a way that we didn't really experience this. We didn't really know that it existed. I knew that you went to the doctor and you had to go to the back door. When you went to the movies, you had to go upstairs. But that was just a part of your life. No one really explained why you were doing this. This is what I thought everyone would need to do. The only real evidence that… I didn't know we were in segregation, I just asked the question and seemed so simple. This demonstrates to you how naïve I was. During the early 60s, my town opened its first washer mat. Back during my time, everyone washed their own clothes, normally by scrubbing and hanging them on the [clothes]line. Then [later] people had washing machines. But then, there was a washer mat that was opened in our town. I remember seeing on the sign of the washer mat, it said, "Whites Only." I remember passing [the washer mat] and saying, "*Mama, why would they open a washer mat and only allow people to come in and wash white clothes?"* It didn't occur to me that when it says "Whites Only," they are talking about that only people who were actually white could go into this washer mat and use this particular service. So I grew up in the Deep South.

There were separate schools – the white school and the black school. But in a way, it was good, especially when I think about some of the problems that we're having with our children receiving education now. But in my school [Wayne County Training School], we received second-hand books. Whatever was second-hand, it would be passed on to us. But we had really committed teachers. All of our teachers were African American – the principals and also the teachers. All of them were very well educated. They had gone to places like Spelman [College] and Savannah State [College], so those were sort of the premier schools in our community. And they [the teachers] really challenged us. They did not accept anything less than us doing our best. When someone was especially smart, or they considered them to be smart, what they would do is to skip that person [to a higher grade]. So the person would end up graduating at sixteen or fifteen years old because they were so smart. They were able to absorb the material in a way that it was not conducive for them to stay in that particular class.

And I remember some of the school administrators and teachers telling my parents, "*Jackie should be skipped*." And my mother and father said, "*No, she's not that smart – she's just not really being challenged. She's not being challenged."* So, for that reason, they decided to send me away to school. And my father investigated various schools in the area. He found a [private] school about one hundred and fifty miles from where we lived. This was Boggs Academy. It was a Presbyterian school [founded in 1906 in Keysville, Burke County, Georgia, under the aegis of the Board of Missions for Freedmen, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. It was a college-preparatory academy for African Americans that grew from meager beginnings to an institution of acknowledged educational excellence. The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools accredited Boggs in 1943. Partly because of the desegregation of schools, Boggs had difficulty recruiting students and was closed in 1984. http://boggs-academy.com/aboutus.html - Accessed 11 August 2016].

He [my dad] discovered this school [Boggs] because he learned that the director, or the administrator [Harold N. Stinson who left Boggs to become the first black president (from 1967 to 1980) of Alabama's Stillman College, another black college established by the Presbyterian church], as well as the principal,

were some of his former classmates at Johnson C. Smith [University in Charlotte, North Carolina]. Originally, he [my dad] went to Talladega [College in Alabama], and after being there for two years on a football scholarship…I'm not sure what happened, but I'm told that he decided to not go there [to Talladega College] anymore. And then, for his last two years, he went to Johnson C. Smith and he received his Bachelor's [bachelor of science degree] at Johnson C. Smith. [Founded in 1867, Talladega College is a historically black college and Alabama's oldest private black liberal arts college. Although affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, Johnson C. Smith University is a private historically black university established in 1867. http://www.talladega.edu/history.asp; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talladega_College; http://www.jcsu.edu/about/our_university/history/; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnson_C._Smith_University - Accessed 18 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: That was in North Carolina?

DJEDJE: Yes, this [Johnson C. Smith University] is in North Carolina. So, he came in contact with these people [Harold N. Stinson and Charles W. Francis] and therefore he discovered that they were the top people at Boggs Academy. So, he, my mom, and myself, and my sister, we all took a trip to Boggs Academy to see their facilities. [Charles W. Francis Jr. (1920-1986) was a faculty member and director of Boggs' A Capella Choir. When Francis Jr.'s father, Charles W. Francis Sr. (a Presbyterian minister), accepted the position of Superintendent of Boggs, Francis Jr. attended Boggs Academy as a student and graduated in 1936. After graduating from Johnson C. Smith University as a history major in 1948, Francis Jr. returned to Boggs as a social studies teacher and started the choir. I believe Francis Jr. is the person who is responsible for my attending Boggs. Not only were he and my father former classmates from Johnson C. Smith University, but also Francis Jr. is probably the person my father spoke with during our visit to Boggs in spring 1963. After learning about Boggs' strong music program and Francis Jr.'s role in the program, my parents probably thought this was the perfect place for me and decided to send me there. For additional information about Boggs and Charles W. Francis Jr., see "The Life and Legacy of Boggs" by Michael N. Searles, *The True Citizen* February 26, 2014. http://www.thetruecitizen.com/news/2014-02-26/Front_Page/The_life_and_legacy_of_Boggs_Academy.html - Accessed 19 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: And how old were you at that time?

DJEDJE: I must have been about twelve or thirteen years old, because I went to Boggs in my tenth grade. So, when we went there, it was a very small school – there were only about one hundred and twenty, one hundred and thirty students. It went from eighth grade to twelfth grade. I entered sort of a little late compared to the other students, my colleagues. It was a school that was self-sufficient. In other words, we were in the middle of nowhere. The city for the school was called Keysville, Georgia, which was like that [snapped fingers to indicate that the town was very small in population and size]. I'm not sure if they even had twenty people there. It was sort of a farm area. The place where we were, it was almost like a plantation area. The nearest town was Waynesboro. The largest city, which was maybe about forty or fifty miles away, was Augusta, Georgia. We were all there and my parents saw that the music program was exceptional. There was someone there [Celeste Gadsden] who was teaching piano; they had an excellent choral program. And all of these are things that I was doing in my high school, at least in my school, Wayne County Training School, where I went, in Jesup. It's just that it was at another level. In Jesup I was getting excellent training, but at Boggs it was at another level – almost comparable to a place like a

Tuskegee [University] or a place like Hampton [University] or a place like Fisk [University]. [All three institutions are private, historically black universities. Located in Hampton, Virginia, Hampton University was founded in 1868 by black and white leaders of the American Missionary Association to provide education to freed blacks. Originally known as Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, the name was changed to Hampton Institute in 1930, and Hampton University in 1984 when the school expanded its graduate and research programs in the arts and sciences. Tuskegee University, located in Tuskegee, Alabama, was officially founded in 1881 with Booker T. Washington, a graduate and former teacher of Hampton, as its first principal. The school began as the Normal School for Colored Teachers at Tuskegee, but the name was changed to the Tuskegee Normal Industrial Institute and later Tuskegee Institute. Tuskegee acquired university status in 1985. Fisk University was founded in 1866 by leaders of the American Missionary Society who named it in honor of a Union Army officer, General Clinton B. Fisk of the Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau, who made unused barracks available to the school and endowed it with $30,000. Originally called the Fisk Free Colored School, it was incorporated as Fisk Normal School in 1867 and Fisk University in later years. http://www.blackpast.org/aah/hampton-university; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hampton_University; http://www.blackpast.org/aah/tuskegee-university-1881; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuskegee_University; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisk_University. - Accessed 18 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: Was it a boarding school?

DJEDJE: It [Boggs Academy] was a boarding school. We all lived on campus. There was a separate dorm for girls, and a separate dorm for boys. And what was unique about the school – because it was self-sufficient – we all had to work. We all had to work. So we understood what work was. You had kids at that school who were not necessarily from that area. Maybe one or two were from that area. Most of them came from other parts of the country. A lot of them came from Chicago, some from New York. Some of our teachers were from other parts of the United States. Because it was a Presbyterian school, you had teachers who were both black and white. These were teachers who were very well educated; [most were also] church people. We had students who were international: some students from Africa, some students from the Caribbean. This was my first time coming in contact with people from other parts of the world. Also, it was my first time interacting with people, so many different people, from other parts of the country. And I was like a country bumpkin when I went to Boggs. But I think going to Boggs – it opened up a totally new world for me. I think that experience probably led me to do what I wanted to do.

ARMSTRONG: Okay, speaking of opening a whole new world, let's go back a little bit. Let's think, just for a moment, about the world that you came from. Your parents and the values that – what were some of the most important values that your parents and your other relatives who surrounded you in Jesup gave to you. The ones that you still have – two or three values that impressed you the most, from your parents and your other family members in Jesup – that are still with you.

DJEDJE: There was always the emphasis on hard work, hard work, primarily because we lived in a segregated environment. We had to prove to ourselves that we were better than those people who were different from ourselves, from whites – [my parents] always [placed emphasis on] excelling, excelling. The other thing that I remember most is: be your own person. In other words, don't allow – and this is from my intimate family – don't allow what other people are doing to influence what you are doing. I

remember going to school as a youngster – and, maybe because I was little smart or whatever, and there were other smart kids in the class – students used to pick on me and say, *"You're the teacher's pet. You're the teacher's pet. Therefore, that's why you're this, you're this. You think you are better than others."* So, when I came home – we used to walk home from school in Jesup – kids used to follow me and try and beat me up. And they did beat me up! And I remember coming home with my clothes torn and this and that – they really did physically beat me up. My mom said, "*You just don't listen to those people. You do what you think is best, and don't let them influence you in any kind of way*." So I guess I've always been a person who would march to the beat of a different drum. And then I guess the third thing is: community – being inclusive. Maybe because people were trying to exclude me for one reason or another – either because of the color of my skin or because I tried to do my very best – people tried to make exceptions. So I always thought to include everybody. Everybody should be included regardless of what they have to offer. Everyone can make a significant contribution to whatever is happening.

ARMSTRONG: So you said that your father went to college. Did your mother go to college?

DJEDJE: Yes. My family was sort of an educated family. They believed in education. From the South, that was all you had. So we believed in education. But my mother wasn't able to finish college. During their time in Jesup, Georgia, there was no high school. The highest grade that you could go to was ninth grade. Once you reached ninth grade, then family members would send their children to neighboring towns to finish high school. So my grandparents on my father's side were able to send him to Savannah, Georgia, and he finished Beach High School, and then [from there], that's when he went to Talladega. My mom was sent to Brunswick, which is another town, which is very close to the Georgia Sea Islands – about thirty or forty miles, we used to call them Geechees [black people who lived on the islands near Brunswick] and all of that. And so, after she finished high school, she went on to college, to Savannah State College. But she was not able to finish because her family didn't have the income. But because my father had a scholarship first, and his family was a little well off – they had property, and my grandfather had his own business – so they were able to send him on to Johnson C. Smith. So my mom stopped after two years in college.

Now, my grandmother was a fascinating woman. I really admire her. She may be the reason that I am in music today, but I won't go there. But for her time, she was a well-educated woman. She received her [formal] training; she received some kind of educational training. Back during that time, they [blacks] would finish [a] normal school, [which is a school created to train high school graduates to be teachers. Its purpose is to establish teaching standards or *norms*, hence its name. Most such schools are now called teachers' colleges. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normal_school - Accessed 18 August 2016.]

Even Fisk University, it was a "normal" school. Normal school is what would allow [black] children [in the South] to go to the university [or to teach]. Once they received their degree, in a normal school, then they were qualified to go back to their communities and serve as teachers. And that's how these very small communities were able to educate their children. So she finished her normal school degree, then after that, she would go to college on a regular basis during the summer [for further study. And I don't know if that was something that was required of them to maintain their teaching credentials, but this was something that she always wanted to do. And she went to Tuskegee Institute [and Savannah State College]. She took my father there -- [he was with her at Tuskegee when he was a child] -- to do that. She

was an educated woman, and she was always very curious because I remember when we were young, and I was about five or six years old, during the summer she would always want to travel someplace. She would persuade my father [to take her] because her husband was not an educated person. I don't think he finished high school. He was a person who had very keen insight about business. His story is very interesting too because his family came from North Carolina, after slavery, and they moved all the way until they arrived in Georgia. He was not a well-educated person. But he was an important [community] leader. He had something about himself that people really respected him, even though he was not well educated. In church, he was always the chairman of the deacon board, or the chairman of the trustees [or the trustee board], and people just respected him. So, the two of them [my paternal grandmother and grandfather] were really like oxymoron [opposites]. But he allowed her to do what she wanted to do, and he supported her, even though he was not going anywhere in any car to take her wherever she wanted to go. So, that's when she used to have my father [take her]. So they would travel to New York City, to Washington D.C. They even traveled all the way north to Canada, to see the Niagara Falls. This is what she wanted to do! And I remember there was a time – and I remember this distinctly – they were traveling, it was late at night, and my grandmother saw a sign; you can travel and you would see these billboard signs. And there was this black woman on the billboard sign, [which was rare for my hometown area], welcoming you, welcoming you. So, my grandmother said, "'*C' [my grandmother often called my father by his nickname, "C," the initial of his middle name."], let's go there – it has a black face on there, and perhaps they will allow us to [buy some food]*." /Laughs/ She said, *"This is a place where we can go and sleep*." It was late and night, and you [blacks] didn't have any place to sleep [or eat]. You had to go from the next place to the next place and there were no toilets or anything; you just had to stop on the road and do your business there. She saw this black sign near this restaurant or hotel. And Daddy said, "*I don't think we should do that.*" And she said, "*Yes we should; they have a black picture [on the billboard]*." /Laughs/ And so my dad, following his mom, because he's an only child. They stopped there and the man said, "*We don't serve blacks*" and she said, "*Oh really?*" You know, she had this proper way of saying "Oh really," as if she's surprised. That stands out in my mind. She was a really fascinating woman. A lot of people say that I look like her, and that I somewhat act like her.

ARMSTRONG: I like the way you said her voice. I could hear her voice in your voice.

DJEDJE: She died when I was about thirteen years old, about thirteen or fourteen. I suppose, and we'll get to that – about my music – she was the person [who encouraged me to study music].

ARMSTRONG: Let's go ahead and talk a little bit about music. What are your earliest memories of music?

DJEDJE: I don't know what happened in my early life, but my grandmother is the one who insisted that my father provide music lessons for me. She said, "*I'm going to buy her a piano.*" So she went downtown [in Jesup] and she went to this music store that sold pianos, and she decided to buy me a piano on installment payments. She made the down payment. They brought it to the house, and she told him, "*You are going to pay for this and you are going to give her lessons.*" This is when I was five years old. Again, he is this person who does what his mother tells him to do. They brought it to the house. Not very many people in Jesup had pianos. So that sort of stood out.

They were able to find a piano teacher – not in Jesup; Jesup is this small, little country town – but in a town somewhat close to Jesup. I remember the teacher. Her name was Suzanne McDaniel – excellent, excellent, pianist. She was really a church pianist. I don't know about her training, but she also was very, very talented in performing Western art music or classical music. So when my father asked her about teaching me lessons, she said, *"Well, I'm not sure. I'm not so sure if it's worth my time just to teach one person, to come all the way from Waycross, which is about thirty miles* [Actually, the distance between Jesup and Waycross is roughly forty miles] *to come all that way to teach me lessons*." She did have a church [she was the pianist for a church in Jesup]. Back during that time, in my hometown, we had some people who were musicians, but some of the musicians weren't of the par that people really wanted. It sort of gives you an idea about my community. Even though we didn't always have things there, we knew what we wanted, and we wanted a standard of life that we knew about and so we would go out and seek it, either by bringing people [into Jesup] or we would go there [to that person's location or residence]. So, Miss Suzanne was already performing for an AME [African Methodist Episcopal] church – Mount Moriah AME Church – and so she would come on Fridays, before every second Sunday, once a month, and prepare the choir for the church service. So this is what she did on a regular basis. But she told my dad, *"If you can recruit several students who want to have lessons, perhaps I can do this*. *I would come on Tuesdays and Fridays."* And she would have [teach] the lessons at the church. And so my dad was able to recruit – I don't know exactly how many – but I think maybe about ten students. So this is how we began our lessons – myself, and I had a very close friend, Pat [Patricia Mobley], who was also an excellent pianist, and extremely bright person, and other people. And then, once or twice a year, we would have recitals. Everyone would learn their music so they could give their performance on the recital. She may have been also the person who told my dad that she had already taught me as much as she could: "*She needs to go elsewhere if she wants to excel in music."* So that thinking was another factor in my father deciding to perhaps pursue Boggs. And Boggs had this really excellent music program.

ARMSTRONG: Were you playing a mixture of European classical and gospel?

DJEDJE: I was a member of Bennett Union Baptist Church. In fact, my mother's grandparents were some of the founders of Bennett Union Baptist Church. I think it was established in the 1860s, before slavery [ended]. It was one of those churches that started as a "brush arbor church." [Alternate spellings include "brush harbor" or "hush arbor."]

ARMSTRONG: Brush arbor?

DJEDJE: Brush arbor. Right. Back during slavery, we had something called the "invisible church." This is when slaves would escape, not escape, but they would go to what they called the "brush arbor," away from the plantation, or the master's house, late at night, and they would, by themselves, collectively begin to have church service, on their own [combining African religious traditions with Christianity]. Sometimes there would be a pot of water there, and they would be around the pot of water, singing and praising and dancing, and all of that. Well, Bennett Union began as a brush arbor church, in 1863 I think. It was in the 1860s, I'm not sure. My [great] grandparents on my mom's side were some of the founders of this particular church. Actually, it is the first church to be established in Wayne County. In fact, when I was there a few years ago, when my father died [in 2010] and I was there for the funeral, we were doing some research and I discovered that it was the oldest church in Wayne County; this is where Jesup is

located. Jesup is the county seat for Wayne County. So it's even older than the white churches [in the county] – Bennett Union Baptist Church. Because it was the oldest, it became the most so-called respected church. It was a very elitist church [with a worship style was very European]. So, during the 1960s, Bennett Union would not have had gospel music.

ARMSTRONG: I see.

DJEDJE: Gospel was [regarded as] this sort of "low-down" music that was not really respectable [because its performance style was more African-derived]. I am beginning to learn more about that as I conduct research here in Los Angeles [on gospel music]. But by 1963, and this is significant – 1963 [was beginning to be more acceptable to blacks in so-called respectable or elitist churches]. I think it had to do with what was happening in the larger society.

ARMSTRONG: Did they have hymns?

DJEDJE: They [Bennett Union] would have had hymns, and they would have had "old time spirituals" [that were performed during slavery] – not the concert spirituals [arranged in a European performance style after slavery], but the old time spirituals – that we would have performed during the devotional service. We would have had the hymns. We didn't have anything like anthems. But hymns were the things that were most important for us.

Occasionally, if there was someone who could do this, they would have performed the so-called "concert spirituals" [spirituals that had been formally arranged and written down by a composer and sung using a performance style that is European-derived]. But that would have been on a special occasion. I would have been performing concert spirituals in my school – Wayne County Training School. There was a choir there. There was only one school in Jesup for blacks. It included the elementary school, the middle school, and the high school, from first to twelfth grade. When I began to be able to play the piano, I was the accompanist for the choir. There was a woman there by the name of Ruth Mallard – another person away from Jesup – who used to come in [from Ludowici, Georgia, about twelve miles north of Jesup] and she would teach there. She was the person who was in charge of the music program [at our school]. She would teach them songs like "Inflammatus," which was this sort of oratorio. I think it was either by [George Frideric] Handel [1685-1759] or maybe [Johann Sebastian] Bach [1685-1750]. I forget exactly. [The information about the composer is incorrect. Actually, "Inflammatus" is the eighth movement of a larger work, *Stabat Mater*, created by the Italian composer Gioachino Antonio Rossini (1792-1868) between 1831 and 1841.] "Inflammatus" was this…a very, very important piece that we [Western-educated blacks often performed to] demonstrate that we could perform – very, very European [music]. One could say that it was like an anthem – "Inflammatus" and all these other concert-spirituals performed by, I mean, arranged by people like William Dawson [1899-1990] or Nathaniel Dett [1882-1943] or John W. Work. [Although I state John W. Work, actually I am referring to members of the Work family who were involved in arranging concert spirituals. These include John Wesley Work Jr. (1871-1925); John Jr.'s brother, Frederick Jerome Work; and John Jr.'s son, John Wesley Work III (1901-1967).] That's the kind of music that we performed [at Wayne County Training School] and I would have been the accompanist.

ARMSTRONG: William Dawson – was he at Tuskegee? My mother has told me about him.

DJEDJE: Yes. That is the repertoire that we would have performed. And so, at church, that's the kind of music – if someone wanted it – I would have performed, or even the different kinds of hymns. We didn't call it gospel, but now that I look back on it, it was sort of the early, early gospel. Maybe the Thomas Dorsey [1899-1993] music [Thomas Andrew Dorsey (1899-1993) was an African American composer who is often called the "father of black gospel music" because of his prominent role in composing and promoting the genre]. And there was this man [Charles] Tindley [1851-1933], you know – "We'll Understand It By and By"; that was a Tindley [composition]. [Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933) was an African American Methodist minister and gospel music composer who became the pastor of a church in Philadelphia, which over time had a population of 10,000 members. After his death, the church was renamed "Tindley Temple." Tindley is also one of the earliest composers of gospel hymns to have his music published in hymnbooks of various denominations. His composition, "I'll Overcome Someday," is credited by some to be the basis for the Civil Rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome"].

But we didn't call it "gospel." Gospel was this other kind of music that people didn't think was appropriate for church service. But it became okay. And I think it became okay after John Kennedy – if you remember, John Kennedy was elected president in 1960 – and he had his inaugural ball. At one of his major inaugural balls, he invited Mahalia Jackson to perform. [Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972) was an African American gospel singer. During the 1950s and 1960s, she was one of the most prominent gospel singers in the world, and was especially noted for her activism in the Civil Rights Movement.] So people began to think, *"If the President of the United States can have gospel music at his party … [why not us]?"* I think people [began to think the music was okay].

People at my church were very elitist and very snotty, and I was very elitist and snotty. It's okay to have this gospel, but there would [have to] be a certain kind of gospel. And the gospel that the person, Ruth Mallard [performed was different from your "down home" gospel]. She was the director of the group at Wayne County Training School, but eventually she became director of Choir Number Two at my church, and this started about the early 60s: '61, '62, '63. What's memorable about the music that she sang is that it sounded very similar to the music that I hear right here in Los Angeles – at Saint Paul Baptist Church – the Echoes of Eden Choir – some of the songs that people like J. Earle Hines [1916-1990] made famous. And he used to travel to the Baptist conventions singing these songs. James Earle Hines is significant because he was Western-trained. Many of the people at Saint Paul were Western-trained. In other words, they already had academic degrees in Western music. He attended some school of music on the East Coast. He was originally from Atlanta, and attended some school in Cleveland or either New York, or whatever. But he was Western-trained, so he was a very, very Western-trained baritone. [Hines attended the Cosmopolitan School of Music in Cincinnati and Columbia University in New York City. http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/articles/music/Prof_James_Earle_Hines__The_St_Paul_Church_Choir_Of_Los_Angeles_Gospel_Roots_/35703/p1/ - Accessed 26 July 2016].

But then he also began to perform gospel music. So when he performed gospel music, he performed it in a, what they call, "classical style." It was a little lighter, you know, it had all the improvisations and all of the intricacies, but it was not, what I call "down home." And so now, when I began to study here in Los Angeles the kind of gospel [performed at Saint Paul], now I'm beginning to understand why we [musicians at Bennett Union] were performing that type of gospel music in Jesup. This was a kind of gospel music that was a little more acceptable to the people who were attending that church. The so-called

leaders of the community, the people who were the most well educated in the community, the people who sort of revered. 'Cause right down the street from my church was a sanctified church – a Holiness church, right across the street from where I lived. And so [on] Saturday and Sunday night, we used to hear them all the time rocking with their drums and their movements.

ARMSTRONG: How did you feel about that?

DJEDJE: We were curious; we would go – some of my friends [and I late at night], once we would leave our church on Sunday evenings – we would go and peek in the window at the Holiness church. Peeking in and then sometimes we slip in [the church] and sit on the back seat [in the back of the church] just to see what they were doing. 'Cause it was just so unusual to see people getting happy and seeing people use drums and guitar. It was all very strange to us. And it was not something that [we did in our church].

ARMSTRONG: But you still did not mind going in.

DJEDJE: We didn't mind going in – we were curious. It's almost like some people today. You are interested in things because it is very different from what you are experiencing yourself, you know from what is around you. So when I performed at my church, it was much more the kind of gospel, very kind of controlled gospel, [rather] than so-called "down-home" gospel.

ARMSTRONG: Where they get the spirit.

DJDEDJE: Where they get the spirit. We didn't have too many people "getting the spirit" at my church. Sometimes during the church service, you know when the preacher is preaching, or even during the devotional service, when we are singing these other kinds of jubilee type of spirituals – these are the spirituals that had been maintained from slavery – but the music of, say, Doris Akers [a black gospel composer], the music of Tindley, and some of the early music of Thomas Dorsey…. Because you know, Thomas Dorsey, his music was always written. It's really based on how you perform it. You can perform it in a very sort of "classical" fashion, or you can perform it in a sort of "down home" fashion. So that's the kind of music [the "classical" gospel] that I performed in my church. And I was extremely elitist. I would perform this type of music but I didn't really respect it. I didn't respect it at all. I thought it was less than.

ARMSTRONG: Less than what?

DJEDJE: Less than my performing Bach, my performing [Ludwig van] Beethoven [1770-1827].

ARMSTRONG: I see. Well, what did you like about Bach?

DJDEDJE: It was very systematized. It was very controlled. It [gospel music] sort of frightened me – maybe frightened is not the right word – I was not comfortable with things that were not controlled at that time. And then some of the music that was happening in this Holiness church was music that was not controlled whatsoever. It was being performed by the spirit of the people, and no one really knew what was going to happen. But with the classical music, you knew what was going to happen -- this section and that section.

ARMSTRONG: With the spirituals that you were playing, was there improvisation?

DJEDJE: No. No. It was all written. The concert spirituals like [those arranged by] John W. Work [III], [William] Dawson – all of those things – were all written. The devotional service, those jubilee songs, you would go and you would participate. But you didn't have anyone accompanying that. All of that was music that was performed a capella – very much the way it was done during the slave era. And that was the devotional service. That's when people would come in, and they would get happy, and you would hear moans [another type of religious music created by blacks during slavery]. The devotional service could last anywhere from fifteen to twenty, thirty minutes. But people accepted it for that. Even though this was a so-called elitist church, we knew that was the time [it should be performed and it was important]. That would happen during the early [part of the church service], but [there was] only a certain kind of people who were there. It was mostly the older people who would arrive very early. It would start out [with] maybe two or three, four people. Someone would read the scripture and someone would line out the hymn and then they would sing sort of a jubilee, and they would start [lining] out another one. And so, all [of] this would take place as people would be coming to church. And once everyone got there, then they began to have another part of the church [service] that was a little more controlled. That's when the choir came in, and this is when you began to have music from the piano. It was just basically the piano – we didn't have any organ or drums – just the piano and the choir. And that's when the young people would come. The young people wouldn't come too much at the very beginning [of the church service].

ARMSTRONG: So there was some connection then, in the spirit – not just reading books – to the previous era, even going back to slavery, in your church. You know just in your, in church [they] had this – maybe they kept it to a certain time period – but there was a little connection to your history that came before you.

DJEDJE: Oh definitely, definitely. And it was only when I went away [from home] did I really begin to appreciate all of this. I didn't understand it. I was too blinded by what other people were saying is so-called respectable. It's almost like today you see what's on the media and people think that's what you are supposed to believe in. And kids, young people, see all of this stuff in the media and that's what they pretty much believe. For me, we didn't have a whole lot of media – I didn't get a TV in my house until I was twelve years old. So, what you believed was people around you, and what they were stating was respectable. Fortunately, for me, it was things that were positive – which I guess today you don't have that much control – but things were positive. But it was all things that were very Western, very Europeanized, that was [considered] respectable. The other things that were part of our culture were important, but they were not really respected in the very same way as this so-called European [music].

ARMSTRONG: I'm sorry to interrupt but we're going to be coming back to this as we go along. Maybe we should move along. You have taken the time, the opportunity, in the course of your life, to go back and re-analyze all of these things as you become more aware of yourself, your own thoughts, as you develop your individuality. We all are influenced by things [as a child], but how many of us get a chance – or take the chance – to re-analyze that and come to new conclusions, which is what you have done in light of your knowledge, even about Africa as well. So, that is amazing.

DJEDJE: I think we all do that. It all depends upon the time and how it happens. /Laughs/

ARMSTRONG: Let's move on. We didn't really talk about Boggs much. Maybe you want to touch on something about Boggs and how it influenced you musically and then, moving on to Fisk, and how you made that decision to move on.

DJEDJE: Boggs was really a life-changing experience for me, both academically as well as musically. I was challenged. My father was right. I was challenged. I was a country bumpkin, but I worked hard. I worked hard. Some of the kids, because they were a little more urbane, they came from other places, they looked at me and said, *"What kind of person is this?"* So I didn't always fit in. I didn't really fit in. But it was interesting [that] I graduated from Boggs as the valedictorian! So, even though I was not the most popular young lady, and I came from the little country church, I worked hard and I tried to do my very best. Also, musically Boggs was very good for me because the people who were in charge of the music program also came from the same background that I had come from – sort of [a] Western music background. But they were also interested in concert spirituals. I was able to take piano lessons from a teacher there, and I forget her name [Celeste Gadsden is her name], but she was really, really excellent. She really motivated me. She had me participating in various kinds of competitions, piano competitions, and I actually won some of the competitions – regional competitions, piano competitions, and also state competitions.

ARMSTRONG: What kind of music were you playing for these competitions?

DJEDJE: Concert classical music.

ARMSTRONG: What composers?

DJEDJE: Beethoven, Bach, [Wolfgang Amadeus] Mozart [1756-1791]. All of those sort of people – the same thing that I had been performing earlier on [in Jesup]. Again, I was interacting with people on a different level. I didn't really think about it – I was just doing what I was told to do. But evidently, I was competitive. I had achieved enough that I was somewhat competitive with other people and was able on to go on to the state level. I didn't win the state piano competition, but the fact that I made it there. So I wasn't just competing with people, the thirty-six or one hundred people, at Boggs. I was competing with people in Augusta and the state level [competition] was actually in Atlanta.

ARMSTRONG: So, you practiced daily?

DJEDJE: Oh, all the time, all the time. People thought, my friends thought, I was crazy. I was the accompanist for the choral group that was there. We used to travel quite a bit, somewhat similar to the Fisk Jubilee Singers [at Fisk University], and at various Presbyterian places; [we] travelled to South Carolina, various places in Georgia, these Presbyterian churches. And so, I was always the accompanist. And the group was good. They were comparable, I think, to the Fisk Jubilee Singers. But these were basically high school [students]. They were really, really excellent.

As a result of being at Boggs, I had the opportunity to learn about these other places, like a Tuskegee, or like Hampton. In fact, it was my teacher [Celeste Gadsden] – I can't think of her name – she is the one who encouraged me to go to Hampton [Institute]. It was a summer program at Hampton for students who were interested in music. I went there and it was a good experience for me. I learned not only the stuff

that – R. Nathaniel Dett – he is the person who was the director of the Hampton Singers, at Hampton. John W. Work was at Fisk University. So, I learned about Dett. The other thing that was interesting is that we performed the opera by [the English composer] Henry Purcell [1659-1695]. That was one of our major projects. These were high school students from all around the country, and our major project was to perform this music by Henry Purcell. He is this composer I'd never heard of before, but a British composer. This is significant. This is really significant. So then, the next year, I went to Fisk.

ARMSTRONG: So you performed this opera during your senior year?

DJEDJE: This was the summer before I went to Fisk.

ARMSTRONG: After you graduated…?

DJEDJE: After I graduated [from Boggs in spring 1966]. My teacher [Celeste Gadsden] had arranged for me to go to Hampton to participate in this [summer music] program. I only vaguely remember what I used to do during the other summers. I think I may have gone back home. I think I may have been a teacher, some type of summer program at home for teachers. I would have been an assistant to some summer program at home for teachers. I vaguely remember that, but I didn't do anything musical except this Hampton thing. That really stands out.

Then, I went to Fisk [in fall 1966]. I went to Fisk primarily because people in Jesup thought it was good. The people in Boggs thought it was good. It was the premier – the Julliard School of Music for black people. For me to even get in, it was interesting. My parents did not have the funds or the resources to take me there, so they put me on a train, with all of my stuff packed, and I went there by myself, on this train, and I got out and went to Fisk. When I saw the Music Department, it was this shack! It was about a three-room shack! /Laughs/ I said, *"Is this <u>the</u> Fisk University? The great music department where you had people like, you know, [John W.] Work and all these other people?"* But that was it. It was not so much the facilities, but it was what they did to you [what you learned] while you were there.

When I went to Fisk during my first year, there were about nineteen of us who were music majors. By the end of my fourth year, when we graduated [in 1970], there were only three of us. It was extremely challenging. And they [the Fisk music faculty] did that intentionally. They wanted to weed people out to get people who were really seriously interested in music. It was Western classical music; it was like going to Julliard [School of Music]; Indiana School of Music. There was nothing African American about it, except for, perhaps, the Fisk Jubilee Singers [because they performed concert spirituals]. There were some people who performed with the Fisk Jubilee Singers. I was not a singer. I sang with the Fisk Choir. But I didn't make it into the Fisk Jubilee Singers – it was only for people with really good voices. That's what was African American about it. All of our teachers were white; most of our teachers [were white]. But I did have a piano teacher. My piano teacher was African American – she and her husband [Matthew Kennedy (1921-1914)]. Anne Gamble Kennedy [died 2001] was my piano teacher. She had attended Fisk. The whole thing about Fisk was [skin] color, color. It was noteworthy that I even got into Fisk, based on my [skin] color. Because at one time [I am told], when people applied to Fisk, you had to send a picture in, and they would determine if you would be accepted, based on the hue [of your skin].

Especially females had to be very light-skinned, they had the long flowing hair. It didn't matter so much about the black guys. They were dark. You think about John Hope Franklin [1915-2009]. [A graduate of Fisk, John Hope Franklin (1915-2009) was an African American historian who is probably most well-known for writing *Up from Slavery to Freedom*, which was first published in 1947 but is continually updated.] You see him [his skin color is very dark], but if you look at his wife, [she is very light-skinned].

ARMSTRONG: It wasn't like that at Tuskegee.

DJEDJE: At Tuskegee it was like that too.

ARMSTRONG: Was it?

DJEDJE: Yep. I remember when I taught at Tuskegee, they told me there was a time which was really, really atrocious. They used to have people divided. One group of people on one side; [on the other side] another group, which was really ridiculous. What is interesting about Tuskegee, the presidents of the university were always extremely light skinned, extremely light skinned. That was not the case so much at Fisk. But the women, and most of the time the women who went to Fisk, they went there, not so much to get an education, but to get a man. Meharry is located right across the street. So, a Meharry man [is what a lot of women desired]. So, this was a place where I didn't really fit in. Because, well my appearance – I'm very African in my appearance. Back during that time, however, I made efforts to fit the Western mold. I had a head full of hair when I was growing up that went all the way back to my shoulder blade. It was always straightened, always straightened. As I grew older, it began to get a little shorter, but it was always straight. And I remember looking at a picture of myself from Fisk. Because when you went to Fisk your very first year, what was most important is to change your demeanor so that you are a Fisk woman. So they had special classes that you took on certain days, to teach you how to walk, how to talk, how to dress. [In] Fisk Jubilee Hall, there were these stairs, these stairs, that you walk in and you go up, and therefore, during that first year or two, you [would] take a picture in that area. And you had on a gown, a dress. I still have that picture today.

But Fisk was also important because this is when I began to accept who I was as an African. Because in my freshman year, this was when Stokely Carmichael [1941-1998] came to Fisk. [Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998), who later became known as Kwame Ture, was a Trinidad American. Active in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, he was as a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).] He came and he riled everything up. I was so excited. I remember leaving [the protest] that was going [on] outside. There was all of this rioting – people in Nashville, police in Nashville, surrounding the school.

ARMSTRONG: When?

DJEDJE: I went to Fisk in 1966, so this had to be 1966-67, that he came there. I remember – I was so excited. This was in the evening, and I went to my dorm, got on the phone, and I called my dad and I said, *"Daddy, Daddy, we are protesting, we are protesting!"* and he said, *"Fool, you'd better get into your room underneath your bed!"* In other words, he was concerned about my safety, and rightly so, because the next day, [we learned that] there was someone who was shot [during the protesting]!

But just the fact that Stokely Carmichael was there and told us – *"We need black power, black power."* We need to be proud of who we were. And so it was at that point that my class [first-year students who entered Fisk during the 1966-67 academic year] really was transformative at Fisk. We began to agitate more and more for courses and programs that were much more African-derived. As a result of that – I think it was during my junior year – Fisk began to offer a course on African music. I think it was "Music of the [African] Diaspora." What was noteworthy was the person they hired for this [course] was a white man – Darius Thieme [1928-2015]. I don't know how they found him, but he was an ethnomusicologist. He had conducted research in Nigeria among the Yoruba people. He was in the process, or he had almost finished his [doctorate] degree in music; [he had received his] training at American University. He was an ethnomusicologist. So he came to Fisk.

ARMSTRONG: Did you hear that word?

DJEDJE: Nope, nope, nope, nope. He was just a person who taught courses on African music; one course on Africa and one course on [music of] the African Diaspora. What is seminal about him is that he organized a spring festival. Fisk normally has a spring festival every year to celebrate the anniversary of the school's founding. [Actually, Fisk University was founded in 1866, but the annual spring arts festival did not begin until 1929. Regarding the history of the festival, one of Fisk's special collections librarians, Beth Madison Howse (1943-2012), writes: "Annual Spring Arts Festival is an established tradition at Fisk University. In 1929, the first Festival was held under the auspices of the Fisk Music School with Ray Francis Brown as director. Invitations were sent to Nashville patrons of music and to friends of Fisk all over the country requesting their presence at the three-day celebration known then as 'The Festival of Negro Music and Fine Arts.'" For more information about the festival's history, go to: https://www.fisk.edu/campus-life/spring-arts-festival.]

In fact, I had my students [at UCLA] read…. I'm getting off the subject. I had my students read in my class on yesterday – we were discussing an article about John W. Work. [The UCLA course title was "Study of Ethnomusicology" (Ethnomu 183), Spring 2013, and the reading for that week was: John W. Work, Lewis Wade Jones, and Samuel C. Adams, Jr., "Introduction" in *Lost Delta Found: Rediscovering the Fisk University-Library of Congress Coahoma County Study, 1941-1942*, edited by Robert Gordon and Bruce Nemerov. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005, pp. 1-26.]

John W. Work, in 1941, organized a special festival celebrating the 75th anniversary of Fisk's founding. And Alan Lomax was a presenter at that particular festival. [Alan Lomax (1915-2002) was a European American folklorist, ethnomusicologist, archivist, writer, scholar, political activist, oral historian, and film-maker, who became well known for collecting folk music in the United States. He collected material first with his father, folklorist and collector, John A. Lomax, and later alone and with others, including John W. Work III. Lomax recorded thousands of songs and interviews for the Archive of American Song, of which he was the director, at the Library of Congress. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Lomax - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

So, here's Darius Thieme in 1966, almost one hundred years [after Fisk was founded]. Not one hundred years, he [Thieme] came in 1968-69. For this festival, what he did was to invite someone who performed gospel music. Her name was Pearl Williams-Jones [1931-1991], who performed gospel music, and the

"down home" gospel music. And she was also a scholar. I think she was also – maybe she was teaching at Howard University – or she had taught at Howard University. Later on, she began to publish things [scholarly articles on gospel music]. [Pearl Williams-Jones (1931-1991) was a scholar and performer of gospel music. Her daughter, Yvonne Lembo, writes: "A Classical piano virtuoso and magna cum laude graduate of Howard University's School of Fine Arts, Dr. Pearl Williams-Jones was deeply rooted in the Black Gospel tradition of her parents, Bishop and Mother Smallwood E. Williams, founders of Bible Way Church Worldwide. She was instrumental in launching the famed Overbrook Singers, the first Black Gospel Choir in the Philadelphia School System. She was influential in shaping the music careers of luminaries such as Richard Smallwood and DaVonne Gardner." For additional information, go to: https://www.gofundme.com/Pearl-Williams-Jones-CD - Accessed 1 August 2016. Pearl Williams-Jones' most well-known article is: "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic," which is published in ethnomusicology's premier journal: *Ethnomusicology: Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology*, Volume 19, Number 3, September 1975, pp. 373-385.]

And so I said, *"Wait a minute now, here is this person performing gospel music, that back home in my place, that we used to look down on."* I said [to myself], *"Is this something respectable?* I remember talking with her [and asking], *Is this something that is legitimate?"* And she said, "*Yes.*" And then I began to ask Darius Thieme, *"Is this something that you can study academically?"* He said. "*Yes.* That's when I was introduced to ethnomusicology and UCLA. I asked, *"Where can you do this?"* and he said *"UCLA."* As a result of being with him, and him introducing me and giving legitimacy to all of the things that I had resisted, and thought was not worthy, it began to validate black culture and black people.

So, as a result of that, during my next year, I decided to apply to various schools. My [piano] teacher was somewhat sad – Anne Gamble Kennedy was sad because she had been a [concert] pianist. She wanted me to be in the vein of Natalie Hinderas (1927-1987), who's this great African American [concert] pianist who had an international career. [Natalie Leota Henderson Hinderas (1927-1987) was an African American pianist, composer, and professor at Pennsylvania's Temple University. She was born in Oberlin, Ohio, to a musical family. Her father was a jazz pianist and her mother, Leota Palmer, was a classical pianist who taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Natalie began playing piano at the age of three, and received her bachelor's degree in from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in 1947. For additional information, go to: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalie_Hinderas - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

In fact, Ms. Kennedy had me to give a piano recital. Normally, at Fisk, you [music majors] only have to give a senior recital [to complete their B.A. degree]. But she thought I was so good and she had great things [planned] for me. She insisted that I do a junior recital, which I did, and also a senior recital, which I did. We [she and I] were playing concertos – [Edvard Hagerup] Grieg (1843-1907), [Wolfgang Amadeus] Mozart (1756-1791), and all this stuff [on the recitals]. [I performed Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major K488* for my junior recital and Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op 16* for my senior recital. For each recital, I also performed a prelude and fugue by Bach, nocturnes – "Nocturne in B-flat minor, Op. 9, No. 1" and "Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2" -- by Frédéric François Chopin (1810-1849). For the senior recital, I also performed "Two Roumanian Dances" by Béla Bartók (1881-1945) as well as other pieces I learned during the academic year.]

So, when I'm in my senior year, thinking about doing something in ethnomusicology, she was just [so annoyed that she said], *"The devil!"* But I think she already had an inclination [that I was not going to become a concert pianist]. It was my sophomore year [Actually, it was after my junior year] at Fisk. For the summer, I decided to go with my roommate – Lolita Brown – to Peg Leg Bates Nightclub [Country Club], which was in the Catskill Mountains of New York state. [The country club was owned by Clayton "Peg Leg" Bates (1907-1998), an African American entertainer from Fountain Inn, South Carolina. Bates who lost a leg at the age of twelve in a cotton gin accident. He subsequently taught himself to tap dance with a wooden peg leg, which is the reason he was called "Peg Leg." Bates was a well-known dancer in his day. He performed on *The Ed Sullivan Show* twenty-two times, and had two command performances before the King and Queen of England in 1936 and then again in 1938. He retired from the dancing business in 1996. He owned and operated the Peg Leg Bates Country Club in Kerhonkson, New York, from 1951 to 1987, along with his wife Alice E. Bates. This made Bates the first black resort owner in Ulster County in the Catskill Mountains. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_Inn,_South_Carolina - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

In fact, the first year [summer 1969] we went there, Woodstock was happening in the same area. I knew nothing about Woodstock. [The Woodstock Music and Art Fair – informally called the Woodstock Festival or simply Woodstock -- was a music festival attracting an audience of over 400,000 people, scheduled over three days on a dairy farm in New York state from August 15 to 17, 1969, but which ran over four days to August 18, 1969. Held at a 600-acre dairy farm in the Catskills, it is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in popular music history, as well as the definitive nexus for the larger counterculture generation. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Yasgur - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

This was a black-owned nightclub, Peg Leg Bates. It was there that, again, I am being introduced to black culture and black people. I was a chambermaid; I went there as a chambermaid. And then I also worked a little bit as a waitress. The experience of being there and hearing black music [changed my view of black culture and what I wanted to do with my life].

ARMSTRONG: They were playing what kind of music?

DJEDJE: They were playing jazz, early jazz, blues, pretty much jazz, at Peg Leg Bates. You had [black] people from the New York City area who would go there. This was during a time, I guess things were open to black people in the North, but perhaps they didn't go to [private clubs]. But it was still racism. You couldn't go everywhere you wanted to go. This is what [black] people would do during the summer. They would go and they would spend the weekend. People who had money – people would come there with all of their fancy cars and fancy money. He had horseback riding, he had a pool, and he had golf. All of this was black-owned. All of this is opening a whole new world to me. Then they would have these shows at night, Friday nights and Saturday nights. This is my first time really seeing secular music being performed in this kind of context. I'm a church person. I had never gone to a place like this. So, I'm seeing all of this, and as a result of being there, I decided I was going to cut off all of my [straightened] hair. This was also during the time of Angela Davis [born 1944]. [Angela Yvonne Davis (born 1944) is an African-American political activist, academic scholar, and author. She emerged as a prominent activist in the 1960s as a leader of the Communist Party USA, and had close relations with the Black Panther Party through her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. Her membership in the Communist Party, while a

professor at UCLA, led to Ronald Reagan's request in 1969 to have her barred from teaching at any university in the State of California. She was twice a candidate for Vice President on the Communist Party USA ticket during the 1980s. And she later became a professor at University of California, Santa Cruz. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_Davis - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: When was this?

DJEDJE: This was during the 60s – '67, '68, '68, '69 – it was around that time. But I cut off all of my hair, and I had this really big Afro, in the shape of Angela Davis. I remember going back to Fisk, after summer vacation, and I'm going to my [piano] lesson, and my teacher sees me. I knock on the door, and she comes to the door and she opens the door for me to go into her studio and she sees me, she says, *"What have you done to yourself?"* She was so disappointed. She saw the transformation; it was really beginning. It all began with me going and getting excited about what was happening with Stokely [Carmichael]. But it just changed; it [my introduction to black culture in a different way] caused me to be transformed. And then when I applied to come to UCLA – I wasn't quite sure it was going to happen. I didn't have the money. But fortunately, in case I didn't have the money, I decided to take an exam with the government, and I passed the exam, and I was offered a job to be a member of the NSA – the National Security Agency. They actually invited me to Washington D.C., they gave me this polygraph test and all of this. I was going to be involved in what they called cryptography [the art of writing or solving codes]. What is cryptography? But evidently, I had the skills in order to do some kind of analysis that they thought was valuable for detective kind of work. Fortunately, I received an award from the Ford Foundation and I went there – to New York City – for an interview, and I was able to get a four-year award to attend any school of my choice. And I was accepted at UCLA, I was accepted at the University of Wisconsin, where Lois Anderson was, and I was accepted at some place called Ball University and Baldwin College. But because Darius Thieme said that you could study ethnomusicology at UCLA, I decided to come here. But I was also considering [Wisconsin] because Lois Anderson was a graduate of UCLA. And she actually contacted me and said, *"Well you know I really wish you would come here and study here, but since you have been accepted to UCLA,*" … she thought that would be the better place for me to come. So I came to UCLA in 1970. [Lois Anderson received her Ph.D. from UCLA's Music Department with a specialization in ethnomusicology in 1968. She is the first UCLA graduate to receive a degree with a specialization in African music. She later taught at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.]

ARMSTRONG: So 1970, you came to the Music Department knowing that they had ethnomusicology within the Music Department. So you knew?

DJEDJE: Yes. I knew that I could study a different kind of music than I had been studying my entire life. This was a way for me to give respectability, legitimacy, validate my heritage. To begin to understand the importance of what people were doing in the brush arbor, what people were doing in the brush arbor.

ARMSTRONG: In the brush arbor. I never heard that word.

DJEDJE: The brush arbor. The "invisible church." The music that they were performing during the devotional service [in Bennett Union, my home church]. So much so that for my master's degree, for my master's research, and back during that time we had to actually write a master's thesis. I decided to do it on spirituals and gospel in southeast Georgia. I went back to my hometown, recorded all these people –

all these people in church, and people who used to sing spirituals. By that time, they had begun to sing a little gospel music in the "down home" [style]. Not so much at my church, but people at [churches in] the other parts of the city and the community – in Waycross and Gardi, [Georgia], and all of that. That's what I did for my master's. [I conducted field work in summer 1971, and completed my M.A. degree in June 1972. The title of my master's thesis is "An Analytical Study of the Similarities and Differences in the American Black Spiritual and Gospel Song from the Southeast Region of Georgia." David Morton (1920-2004), a UCLA ethnomusicology faculty member who also received his Ph.D. degree in music from UCLA with a specialization in Thai music, was my committee chair.]

ARMSTRONG: Since you mentioned it, I am thinking of two issues: one is the issue of you having the desire to do this, to go back home and do this, and the other is, you need the techniques of how to do this. So UCLA provided techniques to go back to your own community, the community that you were raised in. Did they encourage that? Sometimes people discourage people going to their own community. They say, "*Well, you're going to be – it's too subjective. It's too subjective. You're from there. How are you going to be objective, or objectively study?"* Or did they encourage you to do that and give you the tools?

DJEDJE: I never received any discouragement from faculty at UCLA during that period. It was all really encouragement. UCLA at that time was extremely, at least, especially ethnomusicology, they were extremely open, and they encouraged people from all backgrounds, all backgrounds, regardless of what you knew and didn't know. They knew that they had a program and they could help you to acquire the necessary kind of skills and methodology to do what you wanted to do. And I suppose during this time most of them [the faculty members] were white; most of them were white, but they were very open. In my class, my cohort [the class that entered the ethnomusicology graduate program in fall 1970] – there were twelve of us.

ARMSTRONG: You are talking about graduate now?

DJEDJE: Graduate.

ARMSTRONG: You can talk about graduate. I also want to talk about undergrad.

DJEDJE: At Fisk, however, in spite of the changes that were taking place around us, the school, the Music Department, continued to be very much sort of classically oriented – European music oriented – except for this guy, Darius Thieme. And as I said, he was white and I suppose – what is interesting about the three of us who graduated, it sorts of demonstrates to you where Fisk was. One person, her name is Edythe Jason. She was originally from Savannah, Georgia. I think her parents, or either her father, was a professor at Savannah State College. So she came from sort of a very well respected background in terms of music. And she had been, was always, interested in being an opera singer. She ended up going to Indiana University to study opera. So that demonstrated what Fisk did. My other friend – there were three of us – Portia [Schuler], what was her name? I forget. Her name now is Portia Hawkins. She ended up going to Yale University to study piano. It's interesting because I remember we had all of these choices. This was during a time when many of these schools were interested in recruiting people of color, especially black people. So they [recruiters] would come to all of these [black] colleges trying to encourage us. I remember the guy [Ronald A. Crutcher] who was at [Yale University], he was African American. He came [to Fisk] and he was trying to encourage all of us to go there – they [Yale] would

give us [fellowship and scholarship] money and do this [and] do that. [Ronald Andrew Crutcher, a cellist, was a graduate student at Yale at the time he visited Fisk in the late 1960s. In 1979, he became the first cellist to obtain a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Yale. Although he continues to perform cello professionally, he has worked as a college administrator, holding a variety of positions at different universities in the United States, since the late 1980s. In 2015, Crutcher became the tenth president of the University of Richmond in Virginia. http://news.richmond.edu/releases/kp4/article/-/12443/ronald-a.-crutcher-named-10th-president-of-university-of-richmond.html - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

But my mind was set [to study ethnomusicology]. So Portia decided to go and study music [at Yale]. She said that she wanted to be a [piano] music teacher. She wanted to have her music studio. Basically, that's what she did. After she received her master's degree, she came back to Atlanta. This is sort of off the topic. /chuckle/ She said she wanted to have a Porsche [automobile]. She wanted to marry a man who was a banker who could take care of her so she could spend her time on her music, teaching the music and she wanted to be a performer. And basically, that is what she did. She and her husband are living in Atlanta. [She established the Hawkins Music Studio in her home. When I searched Portia Hawkins on the Internet, I found her "LinkedIn" page, which indicates that she received her M.M. (master of music) degree in music, piano performance, from Yale University in 1972. In previous years, she has taught piano at Spelman College and Agnes Scott College, which are both located in Atlanta, Georgia.]

Now, Edythe [Jason], I think she completed her degree, but I'm not quite sure what happened to her later. What is interesting, I saw her on TV, on *The Bill Cosby Show* [that aired from 1984 to 1992]. One season I saw her there. She was not performing [opera], but she was there. So I don't know what happened to her life for her to switch gears and not sing opera. I guess she went to New York, but not sing opera, and ended up doing whatever she is doing. [Edythe Jason also attended high school at Boggs Academy. We both graduated in 1966. I am unsure about the date she began, but it was before 1963 (my first year at Boggs). When I searched Edythe Jason on the Internet, I found her "LinkedIn" page, which indicates that she received her M.M. (master of music) degree in music pedagogy from Indiana University, Bloomington. Also, she is an actor/substitute teacher, Los Angeles United School District, 2000-present. https://www.linkedin.com/in/edythe-jason-755b3695 - Accessed 1 August 2016.]

So and then me – I was the rogue, I was the rogue. Darius Thieme was the only one who understood what I was doing. But the people at Fisk did not really quite understand what I was doing. Unfortunately, I think still at historically black schools today, they don't really understand ethnomusicology; the value of ethnomusicology. They believed that in order to excel in a music profession here in the United States, you needed to study Western music.

ARMSTRONG: Maybe they study black classical composers? William Grant Still or…?

DJEDJE: They may or may not be introduced to, but it's really, really a Western music classical background, very similar to what students here in our Music Department receive or do. It's no different, it's no different. What happens after that, sometimes they go on and they receive a music education degree so they can teach in a community. Some of them become performers. But as I discovered at Fisk, that my aspiration to go to Fisk was to become a concert pianist, very similar to what my teacher Anne Gamble Kennedy wanted me to become. But in addition to all of the [social] changes that were happening

– I consider myself to be a child of the 60s – but I discovered that pianists were a dime a dozen. There are too many of us.

ARMSTRONG: At the same time, you did learn a lot about Western [music] theory. You learned about counterpoint, you learned various aspects of the music.

DJEDJE: Yes, I wouldn't change it at all. I wouldn't change anything at all. I think it was all extremely valuable. I don't think people should not study it [European music theory]. What is unfortunate is that they are excluding all of this other stuff [in world music]. It [the music program at universities] needs to be much more [open].

ARMSTRONG: Right, prioritize it as being ahead of everything else.... Going back to when you first arrived as a freshman, what did you study? Did you immediately start studying African music? Your first four years, did they have the Institute of Ethnomusicology at that time? 1970, you said, was Professor [J. H. Kwabena] Nketia [born 1921] here? What were your undergraduate years like?

DJEDJE: Now, I came here [to UCLA] as a graduate student.

ARMSTRONG: Oh that's right! Sorry.

DJEDJE: No, no problem. I spent my four years here as a graduate student. This was another period of transformation, a period of learning. Just as I was [a] country bumpkin from Jesup, going to Boggs and interacting with another larger world, leaving Fisk and coming to UCLA I felt as [if I was] a country bumpkin, being introduced to a larger world, a totally different kind of world. And then, similar to before, when I was very insecure about my abilities and my acumen or ability to succeed at Boggs, [it was] the same at UCLA. I was very insecure. I did not think I could match the accomplishments, the learning, of all the people I was interacting with. But it was a very supportive environment. You had people from all over the world from various backgrounds and it was an extremely culturally diverse environment. That's one of the things that I liked about UCLA: all of the faculty, and especially Mantle Hood [1918-2005], he was extremely interested in cultural diversity; just the fact that he had all of these ensembles in the Institute of Ethnomusicology. [Mantle Hood, a UCLA faculty member in the Department of Music from 1954 to 1974, received both his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the UCLA Music Department in the early 1950s with a specialization in composition. For his Ph.D. degree, Hood studied Indonesian music under Jaap Kunst at the University of Amsterdam. After completing his doctoral work and field work in Indonesia, Hood returned to UCLA to teach and eventually became the founding director of the Institute of Ethnomusicology when it was formally approved by the university in 1961. Hood encouraged his students to learn to perform the music they were studying. Called bi-musicality, this practice was unique at the time and is one of the primary reasons Hood invited master musicians from different cultural traditions serving as faculty in UCLA's ethnomusicology program.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantle_Hood - Accessed 5. September 2016.]

The fact he [Hood] had all [of] these ensembles from all parts of the world. And not Westerners teaching this music, but he thought the people who were from those cultures were talented enough and they should be respected in the same way as these other people [i.e., Westerners]. So he had people from Indonesia, he had people from Korea, he had people from China, he had people from Japan, he had people from what

we call, I mean [the Middle East, but] I call West Asia. He had people from Persia; he had people from Ghana. He had people from everywhere here. And these were individuals from those musical traditions – those cultural traditions – what I call "culture bearers." To me, that's what makes UCLA distinctive in terms of, maybe, the teaching of ethnomusicology, compared to [ethnomusicology programs at] Indiana [University] or Columbia [University]. There, it was always – even though it was anthropological – where they were, sort of [focusing on culture], it was always controlled by Westerners. They were still dealing with "the other." I don't think … there were not that many people who were culturally different from them [the white music faculty] who were in those classrooms – learning with them, sitting at the same table with them – as equals. I don't think that existed to a large degree, not to the extent that you had here at UCLA. So here you had people who were teaching you, who were culturally diverse, so that made you feel as if, *"Ok, if these other people can be respected, maybe there was a place for me."* So you had people that were teaching here, and you had people sitting around the table learning.

In my class, it's interesting; there were two of us who were African American: myself, and a woman by the name of Jacquelin Peters [who completed her M.A. in African Studies at UCLA in 1972]. And we were both interested in Africa. There was also an African person – Enoch Aryee [M.A. 1973 with a specialization in ethnomusicology]. He came in during that particular time. He was from Ghana; he was a Ga from Ghana. You also had individuals like Linda O'Brien [Ph.D. 1975] who was originally a Catholic nun, who had given up being a nun to come and sit around the table. And you had people like Dale Olsen [Ph.D. 1973] who already had his master's but had been in the Peace Corp, who came. We had people like Charlotte Heth [Ph.D. 1975] who was American Indian. She had been a high school teacher in English and she came. So you had really a very interesting mix of people sitting around the table, talking about ethnomusicology. So it was a very interesting environment. We had the core curriculum that is somewhat the curriculum that you would have anywhere else. We had the "Proseminar [in Ethnomusicology]," the field [and] research methods course. We had the bibliography course – this was really taught by someone from historical musicology. And so we interacted with them. There was this tension that existed between historical musicology and ethnomusicology. They [historical musicology faculty members] were the ones who were in control. They were the ones who were the chair of the department. They were the ones who had all of the leadership positions in the department. They were not really happy – I don't know if that's the right word – with the fact that UCLA was known more for ethnomusicology than historical musicology, because they were well-established people. Frank Accone [born 1931] – who was very well known. He is Italian, you know, he had done this stuff. [D'Accone, professor of musicology at UCLA from 1968 to his retirement in 1984, is one of the leaders of his generation of musicologists. His primary research interests are Florentine and Sienese music of the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and his twelve-volume edition of this music constitutes a major source for students of the period. His articles in scholarly journals have covered a wide variety of topics, ranging from individual composers to the musical activity in specific institutions in Florence. https://www.musicology.ucla.edu/frank-d-accone; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_D%27Accone_(musicologist) - Accessed 5 September 2016.]

So you had all those important historical musicologists. But because the Institute [of Ethnomusicology] was here, and nothing else like that existed anywhere in the world, when people thought about UCLA, the first thing they would mention would be ethnomusicology. That was a bone of contention, I think, for

them [musicologists]. I think they acted out on that by making it very difficult for us. Historical musicology was upstairs; all their performance ensembles were upstairs. Ethnomusicology, the office, the ensembles, the place [where we had out seminars], we were downstairs, in the basement; so, physically in the basement. And also, kind of philosophically, ideologically, they made sure that, yes, you guys are doing this, but it's not the most important thing. You could get into UCLA without historical musicology, but in order to get out of UCLA, you had to, when you came, you had to take these exams in historical musicology. You also had to take an exam in [music] theory, and there was a third exam – I forget…. [Although all entering graduate students in the UCLA Music Department had to take exams in music history, music theory, as well as form and analysis, no was denied admittance if exams were not passed. However, students were expected to retake the exams (until they were passed) or take courses in these subjects during the regular academic year to satisfy this requirement.]

ARMSTRONG: When you first arrived.

DJEDJE: When you first arrived, during the first week or two. And there were many people who did not pass these exams. You had to retake them if you didn't pass. And to get out of UCLA, you had to, as a part of your doctoral exams, you had to take an exam in musicology. So all of your four years you've been doing ethnomusicology but in order to get out you again had to take musicology and, I think, music theory. But what is significant – I passed the exam in music theory [and form and analysis] – and I think I passed both of them [when I entered the program]. But the one that I passed in music theory [and form and analysis is noteworthy] because the piece we had to analyze was this work by Purcell, Henry Purcell, and I studied him at Hampton, way back when [I attended the summer program at Hampton Institute, before going to Fisk in 1970]. It was interesting how all of that was significant.

ARMSTRONG: Who were some of your teachers in the area of African music, which I presume you did not have much experience with? How did that take place, and how did it evolve?

DJEDJE: When I first came here, I was not really interested in Africa. That was not my area of interest. My area of interest was really African American music. But I did take courses in African music. Rodney Vlasak – he was here. He taught back during that time – 143A – Music of Africa. [Rodney Vlasak was a faculty member in the UCLA Music Department from 1969 to 1977. As a cultural anthropologist who had conducted field work among the Fulani in Nigeria, he taught a variety of courses: "Music of Africa," "Sociology of Music," "Ethnography of the Blues" "Music in Culture and Education," "Psychology of Music" (later renamed "Music and Social Psychology"), and "Graduate Seminar in the Sociology of Music." https://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/rodney-vlasak - Accessed 5 September 2016].
]

Nketia was here, but he was not here on a regular basis. He would come, maybe, one quarter out of the year. [J. H. Kwabena Nketia, who was born and raised in Ghana, first taught at UCLA as a visitor in summer 1963 before becoming a faculty member in the UCLA Music Department in 1968. From 1968 to 1978, Nketia taught several courses in the spring quarter/semester of each academic year. When he retired from his various positions (Professor of Music in the School of Performing Arts, and Director of the Institute of African Studies) at the University of Ghana, Legon in 1978, he became a full-time faculty member in UCLA's ethnomusicology program through the 1982-83 academic before accepting a position

in the Department of Music at the University of Pittsburgh. http://www.nketiamusicfoundation.org/web/ - Accessed 24 August 2016.]

I think it was in the spring of my first year here [in spring 1971], I took my first course with him [Nketia]. That was 143B – Music of Africa. I was very quiet; I'm still quiet. But I remember, what made me be attracted to him, or give interest to him or he to be interested in me is that he sought me out. I'm in class on a regular basis, I may have sat up front, but I never said a word. I never said a word. And I remember at the end of one class, he came to my desk and sat there. He said, "*Who are you, what are you doing?"* He took an interest in me at that particular time. The other thing I remember about that class is that I wrote a paper on the fiddle music of the Luo in Kenya. He played a musical example and it was music of a fiddle. From my background, I never associated any kind of string instrument with Africa. This was mind-boggling. So I decided to write a paper on this. One of the reasons I also wrote a paper on this is because there was someone from Kenya who was a visiting scholar. He said that he would assist me in pulling this together. So I wrote this paper on music of the Luo of Kenya with specialization on the fiddle. That is going to have some impact on what happened later on. I don't know if I should tell you that now or maybe I should tell you now. [Kenyan scholar, Washington Ambrose Omondi, was a visiting researcher at UCLA during spring 1971. After receiving his B.Mus. and Ph.D. degrees in music from universities in Edinburgh and London (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), respectively, he became a professor in the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya. His areas of specialization include: musicology (history, form and analysis of western classical music, general musical knowledge, and advanced theory of music); piano, organ and clarinet; acoustics; and ethnomusicology research. His article, "Tuning of the Thum, the Luo Lyre: A Systematic Analysis," was published in UCLA's *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology, Volume 5: Studies in African Music* (1984). http://www.ku.ac.ke/schools/visual_arts/faculty/faculty-profile?id=142 - Accessed 4 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: We have your wonderful book here. So this is where it actually got started? And you didn't play the violin growing up, so was this the beginning of your interest in fiddle music? And you just continued to this day.

DJEDJE: Right, right. Him [Professor Nketia] playing that musical example [in the Music of Africa class that I took with him in spring 1971].

ARMSTRONG: And how many strings?

DJEDJE: It was a one-string fiddle.

ARMSTRONG: So it had that different sound ….

DJEDJE: It is a different sound from [fiddling in] West Africa. This is East Africa, in Kenya. I think it was *orutu*. I think that's the name of the instrument. It's a beautiful sound. I remember – I'm getting off topic, I remember going to a meeting of the African Studies Association [ASA]. And you know sometimes you go to these meetings and they have these vendors who are selling all kinds of books and things. And I remember going to a meeting in one place, I don't know where it was, but someone [a

vendor] was performing music [playing an audio recording] – this [*orutu*] fiddle music. [The ASA meeting was in Denver, Colorado, in November 1987.]

ARMSTRONG: So this was later?

DJEDJE: This was later, this is later, this is later. This particular musical example [the same example that Nketia performed in class], it was just sound – it was just sort of background sound. And I don't know why this person in this space – they had about a hundred vendors [in this very large room] and I'm passing by and I hear this particular music. /Laughs/

ARMSTRONG: It reaches inside of you, your soul.

DJEDJE: Yeah, yeah! Maybe. Just the fact that very… it's not often that people focus on music – melodic music – when it comes to Africa.

ARMSTRONG: I'm hearing a connection now between your early years playing classical music, and a type of spiritual and this melodic music from Africa. And I guess you can say that you've made a very important contribution in the field? Have other people written extensively? From reading your book it seems like they have not about melodic music in general – have they written much?

DJEDJE: Melodic music, yes. Say, xylophone music, or either the lamellophone; the mbira that caught fire during the 1970s. And also the xylophones, that's how people have dealt with melodic music. But it's still sort of percussive. But no one has really done a lot on string music.

ARMSTRONG: There's an implication here of course. I was a psychology major and we would touch upon intelligence and [Lucien] Lévy-Bruhl [1857-1939] and the primitive mind, and, you know, this sort of thing. [Lévy-Bruhl was a French scholar trained in philosophy who made contributions to sociology and ethnology. His primary field of study involved primitive mentality. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucien_L%C3%A9vy-Bruhl - Accessed 5 September 2016.]

You know the implication is that certain types of music are for – there's a sort of hierarchy of intelligence. Is there an implication here that the fact that African musicians are playing this instrument that's taught to be – that's melodic music…um…

DJEDJE: Yes, I think so. I think in the context of Africa, sometimes the melodic music can be considered to be contemplative. A lot of people use that concept: music where you actually sit and listen and you think; you are using your mind to respond to it as opposed to actively [participating through movement].

ARMSTRONG: I mean they have a lot of music in Africa that is contemplative, like kora music is one.

DJEDJE: Right, the other example is sort of music that's used within these, sort of, very intimate environments, to some extent, primarily because the string is not something that's going to make a lot of sound. It is performed in situations where, perhaps, it is not as open, outdoors, in the same way as drum music. It's outdoors, but it's performed maybe in a much more intimate setting, like the court – for the court, you're sitting there before the king, and you may play [i.e., musicians may perform] the music in the background to entertain him or to honor him or to praise him. Either [that or] you may perform it in a

religious setting where you're communicating with spirits. I mean you can do that with drums, but in this particular case, you have that intimate setting.

You also have what they call the *xalam* [a plucked lute] from Senegal. Those kinds of instruments, they were court instruments, or instruments that are associated with kingship, or people who were rulers again and used for genealogy. *Ngoni* [another plucked lute], it's used with the Mande. These string instruments have a different kind [meaning]. I guess I don't really want to generalize, but in the cases that we're talking about – they have a different function or role in the life of the people that may be different from, perhaps, other kinds of instruments.

I think about James Makubuya [Ph.D. 1995] who did his work on the lyre [in Uganda] at UCLA, and also, sort of, the lyre there in Ethiopia with Cynthia Kimberlin [M.A. 1986, Ph.D. 1976]. They had specific, specific occasions or contexts for performance of that music.

ARMSTRONG: So, you and others have been very instrumental in articulating very detailed information about identity and culture, about various ethnic groups, and how they utilize music for the life cycle of the individual. And then the differences between various ethnic groups, which I'm not sure that a historian could determine that…. It seems like music has the ability to give us information about fine areas of culture.

In a big way, I don't know how hard it is to summarize, I know you have done research and we can connect your research that you have done with your training and how you've been trained at UCLA. You have covered African America, the Caribbean, West Africa, and various cultures of West Africa: Ghana, and, say, Senegambia are two different regions. Is there a connection between the research that you have done in Africa, Northern Ghana, the Caribbean, America? And what is the overall connection? And then, if there's not an overall connection, are there – say I have this major, these are connected in this way, these are connected in this way…?

DJEDJE: That is difficult to say. And I guess I've been thinking about this. I think all of us, maybe towards the end of our lives and careers or professions, we begin to reflect on how all this is connected. And I suppose I've seen people generalize about Africa and African-derived music, but their generalizations are very superficial, at least in my opinion. People look at them as, *"Oh my goodness, I see this is connected here."* They are only tapping into things that we already know, or things that we assume – like the call-and-response, or polyrhythm, or community. But it seems as if they don't have specific examples to really demonstrate this or demonstrate how this is played out. Maybe there are principles, but these are principles that are played out in context, that we already sort of know about, like drumming traditions, or either other kinds of xylophone traditions. But to me, people have not really pulled it all together in a sort of different way to tell a fuller story about the African American and the African experience. I don't know if I am going to be able to do this in this new project that I'm going to be working on. Not a new project, but a continuation of my fiddle project, to show the connections, or maybe I will have the opportunity to write something. But I see some of the same principles – the same aesthetics – in all of these performance traditions, and I can't identify specifically what they all are.

When I think about what was happening in those devotional songs in my town, my church in Jesup, Georgia, and then I hear what happens in praise and worship. I had a student, Birgitta Johnson, who did

her research on praise and worship [in Los Angeles black megachurches], which is a very popular way of worshipping in churches today. The praise and worship has replaced the devotionals. When I hear that and then when I hear, say, for example, fiddle music that is being used in the context of a ruler, and this is sort of music that helps him to prepare for his day. These are rulers in the Dagbamba culture.

ARMSTRONG: Dagbamba is in?

DJEDJE: In Northern Ghana. Dagbamba people, you have the fiddlers, and one of their primary purposes was to soothe [the mind of] the king. In their history, one of the reasons they [fiddlers] became attached to the king was because there was one king who was mad and he was just out of his mind and doing all kinds of crazy things. They [Dagbamba elders] decided to have this fiddler come and play for him [the king]. And that sort of soothes him, to help him come back to his senses. So, as a result of this, they [the Dagbamba] always identify the fiddler as "the wife of the king." The *gondze* is the "wife of the king." Almost every morning, you would find these fiddlers coming to the king's palace, sometimes at four or five-thirty in the morning, sort of on the outside of his particular place [i.e., the king's private sleeping quarters], and they would begin to play these songs, play these praise songs from earlier generations. They go all the way back to the 1700s and so they learn all of these songs. They know this music for this king, or this king. They come and begin to play all of these genealogy songs. So again, sort of in preparation for his rulership, it has this way of helping him to deal with the day. So I'm looking at the devotional service that's performed for the church service to help them deal with the day. You have the praise and worship songs that are used for this so-called big, big service in these megachurches, to help them begin to deal [with life's issues and problems]. That's a connection that no one has really made, showing, demonstrating the function of the music in a way that's more than just saying, *"Yes, we have these libations."* I mean, we play these libations before this particular event.

So I guess one of the things I want to do is to begin to demonstrate [discuss] all these different connections. And then one could go to the Maroon people in Jamaica, and they have this festival for [one of their leaders] called Kojo, Kojo. Right before the festival (it's an all-weekend festival), but before the major festival, there is this ceremony that people perform, and this is a ceremony where people really go into trance. They begin to communicate with these spirits, in preparation for this major celebration. So again, you see the role of music being used in a way to help people prepare for something else that is going to happen, whatever that might be. No one has really made those kinds of connections in that way.

ARMSTRONG: I'm hearing you say something about spirit; either spirit or the ancestors – the past. There is a feeling of connection to the ancestors or spirits. If you play this old music that people used to play generations ago, it puts you in the mindset of the past, your ancestors, the spirits – so you can deal with the present. You have a point of reference – where we came from so we know where we're going. Is that?

DJEDJE: I think so. I think you said it in a very concise way, but I've been rambling. I see so much trouble in the world. I mean, I see a lot of positive things, but I see so much trouble, and it really, really bothers me – especially the young people.

ARMSTRONG: Is it because they don't have a good connection to their past?

DJEDJE: Right, right! I think so. They're only interested in today and themselves. And I see that not only with young people, but I see that with people around us, even the adults, they're just so really selfish.

ARMSTRONG: Maybe we don't know how to connect. Maybe our ancestors, these people who are these musicians, in a culture that utilizes musicians, were geniuses because they knew we couldn't speak on this. The way to stimulate memory is through sound, musical sound, not books, maybe not even talking. I don't know.

DJEDJE: The memory helps us to deal with today. It helps us to deal with today. And I think with students or young people, when you start talking about the past, [they think] it's irrelevant. But it is relevant!

ARMSTRONG: Maybe it's how it is presented? I know when I first started learning about African history, it was in books and they were talking about this war and that war, this jihad and that jihad – whatever. It didn't penetrate me at all and I said, "*Well I know I'm from Africa but I don't feel this.*" And then the first time I heard Congolese music, I thought of James Brown immediately. Oh! And all of a sudden, Boom! I understand. All those books didn't penetrate anything, but five minutes of Congolese dance…/snaps fingers/… and it goes all the way to the inner core. Maybe it's the way it is presented. Maybe we need the information that you are collecting….

ARMSTRONG: Let's take a few minutes and talk about the places that you have done research when we come back after break.

BREAK

Interview with Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

Donna Armstrong, Interviewer

April 12, 2013

The Green Room, 1230 Schoenberg Music Building, UCLA

PART TWO

Transcribed by Donna Armstrong, JoAnna Schindler, and Helen Yuan

(Transcription revised: January 1, 2014, August 31, 2016, and September 11, 2016)

ARMSTRONG: Okay we're back again with our interview with Professor Jacqueline DjeDje. We're continuing on with: once you completed your degree at UCLA, was there anything else in particular you wanted to mention about being a student before we move on?

DJEDJE: Yes. I suppose, I think there's a question about who most influenced me, and I think it's very important to sort of honor our ancestors, our teachers. And so there were several people, I think, who really helped me to get through this.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: Believe it or not, it was David Morton.

ARMSTRONG: David Morton.

DJEDJE: David Morton. He was the grad advisor. Every program [within the Music Department] had its own grad advisor and so he was the grad advisor for ethnomusicology. He helped me. He had confidence in me; he gave me confidence. One evidence of that is when I came here to UCLA and I think it was in my, maybe, after the very first year – you've done your work and you're trying to assess where you're going. And I just came [to UCLA] for my master's and thought that was going to be it. And then he just matter-of-factly said, "*And when you get your Ph.D."*

Just that statement gave me the confidence that he thought I was important enough or either I had the "stuff" in order to go the long haul, which is not just a little short distance run. But he saw that I could do the long distance.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: You know there's a difference between a long distance runner and the sprinter. The other person, I think, was Nketia, Kwabena Nketia. He's the one who encouraged me. You know the fact that he came to me and wanted to know what I was interested in and I think I learned about the fiddle there. And he's the one who pretty much encouraged me to choose that as my topic for my dissertation.

ARMSTRONG: Oh, what was the topic of your dissertation?

DJEDJE: My dissertation topic was, "The One String Fiddle in West Africa: A Comparison of Hausa and Dagomba Traditions."

ARMSTRONG: Oh yes.

DJEDJE: And so it was really ironic – I'm going to go off track a little bit.

ARMSTRONG: Mmm hmm, okay.

DJEDJE: It was ironic the way this happened because you know, I've done my two years here at UCLA and then I decided to take two years to go abroad, this Education Abroad [Program that is part of the University of California system]. I was tired, tired of going to school. I could've worked [because I had received a job offer to teach in the Music Department at the University of Colorado, Boulder]. But I decided to continue [in graduate school] because I got this offer to go to education abroad. So when I went there [to Ghana], I was going to do it [research] on Asante music because I had done all of this dancing, learning the music of the court tradition, of the Asante people, *adowa* and all of that. Kwasi Badu was here. [*Adowa*, a dance tradition identified primarily with the Akan speakers of Ghana, is performed during funerals and other social gatherings. An *adowa* ensemble normally includes a vocal lead singer and chorus accompanied by several drums, bells and rattles.]

ARMSTRONG: Kwasi Badu?

DJEDJE: Kwasi Badu who was teaching music [at UCLA], teaching [African] drumming and dancing; he's from the Asante ethnic group in Ghana. [Badu was a faculty member at UCLA from 1968 to 1974. During my first two years at UCLA, he is the person who taught us how to perform musical traditions of the Asante and Ewe people of Ghana.]

So when I arrive at Legon, the University of Ghana, Legon, it's with the Institute of African Studies [that I was going to be affiliated. The Institute of African Studies is an academic unit within the University of Ghana at Legon with its own space, facilities, faculty, and staff]. And I was walking around, I mean just getting myself acquainted with the place. I had not seen Nketia at all; you know Nketia had a part-time position here at UCLA. He spent the majority of his time at Legon – he was director of the Institute of African Studies [IAS], and he came here [to UCLA] one quarter out of the year, normally in the spring, but he spent all his time there.

So this is the fall of 1972. And I'm walking, looking [around at the facilities at IAS], and that's when he sees me.

And he was [excited], "*Oh you've arrived!*"
I said, "*Oh yes, I've arrived."*
And he said, "*Have you gotten settled?"*
And I was like, "*Yes*."
And then right there and then at that very moment he said, "*You know something? We have that same thing in Northern Ghana that you did in your particular course with me."*

And now this was way back a year or so ago, and I said, "*What thing are you talking about?"*
And he said, "*Your paper."*
And I was like, "*What paper?"*
And he said, "*The paper that you did on, you know, the Luo fiddle*."
And I was like, "*Ohhh yeah."*
And he was like, "*You know, we have the fiddle in Northern Ghana. [He said it] just like that. You know we have a teacher here at UCLA…"* Not at UCLA… "*…here at Legon, who can teach you how to perform this instrument."*
This was Salisu Mahama [1934-2001], my teacher [who taught me how to play the *gondze* fiddle during my time in Ghana. Born in Northern Ghana, Mahama began teaching at the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies in 1961. Prior to his university appointment, he was a court musician performing for kings and community members in Ghana's northern region where most Dagbamba live].
"We have someone here who can teach you Dagbani language."
And this was M. D. Sulley, who was a language instructor [at IAS. Sulley taught Dagbani, the primary language spoken by the Dagbamba people].
"And we have those who can take you to the North and help you conduct your research."

So he had already planned this out. /Laughs/ It was just a matter of executing it. And with Nketia, you never said no. I said, "*Okay okay*." And then immediately I started taking [fiddle] lessons with Salisu and we went up North in January [1973] and that was my first field work, and the rest is history.

ARMSTRONG: Right.

DJEDJE: I learned much about the fiddle among the Dagomba, but then I wasn't ready to go. It just so happened in the spring of that year [in spring 1973], my first year there, there was a student who lived in my dorm [Mensah Sarbah Hall] and I was talking about my project.

She said, "*You know we have a fiddle like that in Northern Nigeria among the Hausa people*."
I said, "*Oh yeah, I've heard about that but I never…"*
She was like, "*Why don't you go there?*"

ARMSTRONG: Who was this you were talking with?

DJEDJE: This was a student who lived in my dorm.

ARMSTRONG: At the University of Ghana?

DJEDJE: At the University of Ghana, Legon. You know, I lived in the dormitory and you interact with everybody. And there were people there from Nigeria, people from Ghana, all parts of West Africa. And I'm talking about my project.

And she says, "*Well you know there's this thing in Hausaland, in Nigeria."*
And I said, "*Ohhhh, that's interesting."*

What also happened coincidentally is that there was a group of people from UCLA. There were some graduate students who had come from UCLA as part of Education Abroad [for the 1973-74 academic year]. They were a little more mature; they were not just students [in their teens or early twenties]. One was a husband – two were husband and wives [not enrolled in the University of California system but had come to Ghana with their spouses who were graduate students at UCLA]. And in interacting with them around that same time, [I learned that] they were planning a trip to Nigeria.

ARMSTRONG: Okay, yes.

DJEDJE: Planning a trip to Nigeria that next fall [1973]. And I think to myself, *"Okay, now what am I going to do when I go back to UCLA*?" At that time, I had not even thought about going on to grad school for my Ph.D. I was just resting. I was just resting.

ARMSTRONG: I see, after you got your M.A.?

DJEDJE: After I got my M.A. in 1972, I was just resting. I was tired, resting, trying to revive myself spiritually. Interestingly, I had been offered a job to teach at the University of Colorado in Boulder. You know, after I finished my M.A., and I could have gone to teach, but then when I got the money to go to Education Abroad, I did that. I opted for that. And I said, "*Do I really want to go back to UCLA? Hmmm, no.*"

And then I suppose I was involved with a young man there [in Ghana] and I wasn't quite ready to go back. /Laughs/ So I decided to stay a second year. And that's when, in that second year, they [several of the UCLA Education Abroad students who came to Ghana for the 1973-74 academic year] took a road trip from Ghana to Nigeria, to Lagos, and we spent a few days there. Then they decided to drive north up to Ibadan, and they were going to return and come back to, you know, back to Lagos and come back to

Legon. What I did was arrange for someone to take me by road from Ibadan, all further north, all the way up to Kano, [Nigeria].

ARMSTRONG: I see.

DJEDJE: And I'd already made contact with the Institute of African Studies at Kano. [At that time, I believe the research unit in Kano was called Center for Nigerian Cultural Studies. It was part of Ahmadu Bello University, the oldest university in Northern Nigeria, which was based in Zaria, Nigeria.] And therefore there [in Kano] I learned [about the Hausa *goge* fiddle tradition]. People helped me to interact with people [Hausa fiddlers] there. And I began to conduct the research on the fiddle. At the end of my first year there [at the University of Ghana, Legon], I wrote a sort of monograph on the fiddle in Dagomba culture [entitled "The One String Fiddle of Northern Ghana"]. And after my second year there, I wrote a monograph on the fiddle in the Hausa culture [entitled "The One String Fiddle of Northern Nigeria"], because I was still enrolled at UCLA. And so these were courses, sort of like term papers, that I had to complete in order to get academic credit.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: Also, you know, I studied fiddle and I had to give a recital on the fiddle with my teacher at the end of my [lessons with him in spring 1973]

ARMSTRONG: Your teacher Salisu Mahama?

DJEDJE: Yes, he's – I think he was disappointed in me because I didn't continue to play the fiddle. He saw in me more opportunities for him, you know, I mean once your student learns [to play a musical instrument], other people will want to know about it and he could come here [to the United States], he could maybe construct instruments, you know. He saw in me an avenue for him to flourish [as an international performer]. So the fact that I did not do that. So, that's a side issue in terms of Nketia encouraging me.

And then going back to my professors here, Peter Crossley-Holland [1916-2001], he's the person that I worked with perhaps most, in terms of my [ethnomusicology theory] courses. He's the one who really challenged me, academically. He was really, really a tough professor. He always called me Jacqueline [with an accent]. He was from Great Britain, the U.K., and he had certain standards and it was very difficult to meet those standards. He [was] really, really challenging. [At UCLA, where he was a professor from 1969 to 1983, Crossley-Holland taught a variety of courses: "Proseminar in Ethnomusicology," "Seminar in Ethnomusicology," the three quarter series (Europe and the Americas in fall quarter, Africa and the Near East in winter quarter, and Asia in spring quarter) on "Musical Cultures of the World" "Study of Musical Instruments (Organology)," as well as European (Welsh and Celtic), Tibetan, and Pre-Columbian music. http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/inmemoriam/PeterCrossley-Holland.htm; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Crossley-Holland - Accessed 6 September 2016].

And then the one other person would be Mantle Hood. He inspired me. I didn't interact with him that much during my very first year. I was a little too…too insecure. He was a person who was sort of larger than life. [In addition to serving as director of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA during my time

at UCLA, Hood also taught the performance course on Indonesian music as well as the main "Seminar in Ethnomusicology."]

ARMSTRONG: Okay.

DJEDJE: And I felt very insecure being around this individual. One of the things that he always did was to encourage everyone to come to his house and learn to play gamelan. I said, "*No, I'm not going to do that*." Again, marching to the beat of my own drum, I was not going to follow what everybody did. I decided to just stick with the Ghana Dance Ensemble. But I really admired him from afar. I mean, I think the reason ethnomusicology has become so much a tradition in the United States is really because of his efforts.

ARMSTRONG: I see.

DJEDJE: You know, at least in my opinion, you have the academic study of it [ethnomusicology] but to what extent do people know that much about anthropology, you know, around the world? How many people know about [Melville] Herskovits around the world? In certain circles, not just the average lay person. [Melville Jean Herskovits (1895-1963) was an anthropologist who helped to make the study of African and African American culture a serious area of research within the academy. During his tenure as a professor at Northwestern University, he founded in 1948 one of the first major interdisciplinary programs in African Studies in the United States.]

But people know about ethnomusicology [and world music performance], and I think it's because of what he [Mantle Hood] did. A lot of people say he was crass because he was interested in the PR [publicity] and having the concerts and all that. But I think that made all the difference in making it a study that has, you know, become global.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: You know, UCLA, the students. He was interested in including all kinds of students. So those were the people I think have most affected me here at UCLA.

ARMSTRONG: Okay, what an illustrious group of mentors.

DJEDJE: Yeah, and what is also significant, I didn't know that Mantle Hood knew who I was. I was like just a little fly, a little ant, but then I remember, we invited him here, I think for one particular event, some festival.

ARMSTRONG: Maybe the 40th Anniversary of the Archive?

DJEDJE: Maybe the 40th anniversary. [To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive, we organized "Found Sound: University Sound Archives in the 21st Century," a symposium featuring leading scholars from the United States and abroad, which took place in November 2001. http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/-8216-Found-Sound-8217-A-Symposium-2780 - Accessed 6 September 2016].

But I remember right here [in Schoenberg], in this hallway, he came to me and I think this was one of the first times we really had a very serious conversation. This other reason is, he left UCLA between, I think soon after I left, but when I came back he was no longer here, because the Institute had become disestablished [in 1974]. But, I remember seeing him here and we were just talking and he wanted to know what I was doing, who you are – he knew who I was, but he knew me more than I realized.

ARMSTRONG: I see.

DJEDJE: And then he said, "*You are going to become chair of this department.*" [I thought to myself], *"Me? Little old me, I don't have the stuff to become a leader in this particular department in this field. I mean who would even allow me to do this?*" But he saw that in me, so it was just so, so interesting that several years later I was encouraged to become Chair [of the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology]. The other thing, he also…he was a writer at the time, he was a novelist, and so he had begun to write stories about his research. And so he had written something about his research in Ghana, and then out of the blue he sent me a copy of his book.

ARMSTRONG: Ohhhh.

DJEDJE: And so I said, "*Okay, this man knows who I am.*" And so I thought that was kind of interesting. Okay now, let's move on.

ARMSTRONG: Well, so, now you finished…you completed your Ph.D. in what year?

DJEDJE: 1978.

ARMSTRONG: 1978, I see. And then, were you…did you…were you immediately hired here or did something happen before you were hired here? How did it happen that you were hired at UCLA?

DJEDJE: Okay, I have to sort of pick up from where I was, in West Africa, in Ghana. After I was there from 72–74, by that time I realized, "*Okay I think I can do a Ph.D.*" So I came back to UCLA and that's when I took all of my exams, my doctoral exams. And I completed the exams in 1975. Since I'd already done my field work, I didn't need to go into the field. So basically, what I did was to look for a job. Fortunately, Tuskegee Institute was advertising for a job that seemed perfect for me. I looked on the bulletin board somewhere down there [in the basement of the Schoenberg Music Building where the offices for the ethnomusicology program were located], and they were [the humanities program at Tuskegee Institute was] looking for ethnomusicologists who had interests in Africa.

ARMSTRONG: Okay.

DJEDJE: Especially Africa. And what was interesting, there was a woman who had already been working there [at Tuskegee Institute]. She was from Indiana University. Her name is Carol somebody – I can't remember the last name. [Carol E. Robertson-DeCarbo was her complete name. After completing her Ph.D. at Indiana University, she became a professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. In addition to Africa, she conducted research in Latin America, specifically Argentina and Mexico with special interests in music therapy and healing.]

But, she had already been working there, and she had already sort of begun to introduce them to ethnomusicology, and she didn't want to continue because she was commuting; coming down one day [once a week from Bloomington, Indiana, to Tuskegee, Alabama]. But they wanted someone more permanent, and so I got the job. I got the job. I pretty much taught courses on African and African American music. Pretty much as service courses, because at that time they had a music department, but they didn't offer a major, it was primarily a minor. And so their [Tuskegee Institute's] emphasis was science. They wanted to introduce this [one course on African music and another course on Afro-American music as elective courses for non-majors]. Another thing, the position was being…the position had been developed through a grant that they got from the United States Department of Education. Someone in the humanities [at Tuskegee Institute had written a grant and received monies] to introduce an interdisciplinary program; a really wonderful program. In addition to people [different faculty members] teaching in their own [subject] area, we taught sort of a world culture course. There was someone who was teaching English, someone teaching philosophy, someone teaching art, someone teaching history, and I taught in ethnomusicology.

Manning Marable was there at that particular time. [William Manning Marable (1950-2011) was an African American who was professor of public affairs, history, and African-American Studies at Columbia University when he died. In addition to serving as the founder and director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia, he authored several books and was active in progressive political causes. At the time of his death he had completed a biography on Malcolm X, *Malcom X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011), for which he won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for History. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manning_Marable - Accessed 6 September 2016.]

Another very famous guy who's now teaching somewhere in Missouri [Missouri State University], his name is Johnny Washington, a philosopher. He was teaching [at Tuskegee]. He graduated from Stanford. And so you had all of these – a community of really, really interesting people, just at the very beginning of their career – at Tuskegee, at this particular time. /Laughs/ [Johnny Washington (born 1946), who is noted for his research on the African American philosopher Alain Locke, has published several books on the subject: *Alain Locke and Philosophy: A Quest for Cultural Pluralism* (1986); *A Journey into the Philosophy of Alain Locke* (1994); and *Evolution, History and Destiny: Letters to Alain Locke (1886-1954) and Others* (2003). When Washington retired in 2011, he was a professor of philosophy and African American Studies at Missouri State University. http://us.viadeo.com/en/profile/johnny.washington; http://search.missouristate.edu/people/jwashington - Accessed 6 September 2016]

ARMSTRONG: How wonderful.

DJEDJE: Eventually, we all left. I left in 1979. But, it was while I was working at Tuskegee, from 1975 to 1978, that I finished my Ph.D. And in 1978, after I finished, then UCLA offered me a job to come back to teach. I didn't accept it in 1978 because I discovered that I was with child. And therefore I said, "*Would you keep the job for me until '79?*" In fact, when I came here in 1978 to file my dissertation – going back just a little bit to demonstrate to students, I always tell students: I was writing my dissertation for three years, you know, I'm writing, writing, writing, not really writing, sometimes you are writing. I was transcribing [the music and interviews I had collected during my field work]. But then when I discovered

that I was with child, I said, "*I have to finish this dissertation*. *I have to finish this dissertation.*" That was in February [1978]. By May [1978], I finished writing that dissertation. I was extremely disciplined and I realized that it could happen.

But then when I came out here, in June [1978], to file, that's when I came in contact with the chair of the [music] department. It was a female, I can't remember her name there, and she said, "*I'm not so sure you should come back*." And she said [this] on a very practical level because of the insurance. You know if you had not had insurance for at least a year, that insurance company will not pay for all of the expenses to deliver a child, so [she] said, "*You may want to stay at Tuskegee for that practical reason before coming*." And so that's why I stayed.

ARMSTRONG: Right, that's good advice. Was she Marie Louise Göllner?

DJEDJE: Right, yes. She was the only female around [in the UCLA Music Department at that time. She became a UCLA faculty member in historical musicology in 1970]. And it was very interesting because she's a very, very formal person. So, for her to sort of come down and speak to me from woman to woman in that way – that was very, very important, very significant. So that was why I waited, and I came in 1979 – that's when I began, with my child [Dominique], a one-year-old.

ARMSTRONG: With your one-year-old – wow – that's really something.

DJEDJE: Yeah, I think she was born in November, so she was about nine months.

ARMSTRONG: Okay, so now, here you are with a one-year-old and a college teaching job. What were you assigned to teach?

DJEDJE: I think, when I look back, they were really kind; they were really supportive. They allowed me to teach something that I really knew, or either something I had already been teaching. At Tuskegee, I'd been teaching courses on African American music and African music. And when I came here, because Nketia, by that time in 1979, Nketia had become a permanent person at UCLA, so he was here full time. So I pretty much taught courses on African American music. It was Music 154A and [154]B and it was cross-listed with Folklore 154A and [154]B. So I taught 154A in fall and 154B in winter, and 154A in spring. I think I was also helping them [the university and the music department], because this was a time when there were lots and lots of people from African American culture who were on campus, and they were hungry for anything that had to do with black culture. And so the course used to take place in Schoenberg, I mean not Schoenberg, but in Popper Theater – 120 people – and it was full every quarter that it was offered. [During my first few years at UCLA, the course (Music M154AB/Folklore M154AB) was cross-listed between the Music Department, Folklore and Mythology program, and Afro-American Studies program. When the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology came into existence in 1988 and the folklore program and research center were disestablished, the course numbers were changed to M110AB. The formal title of the course has also changed over time. During the 1970s and 1980s, the course was called "Afro American Musical Heritage" but later the name was changed to "African American Musical Heritage."]

ARMSTRONG: Right.

DJEDJE: Every quarter that it was offered, it was full. It was full.

ARMSTRONG: Wonderful. Did they have other large courses like that? Where non-majors can take?

DJEDJE: I think the jazz course, the jazz course, "The Development of Jazz," that was being offered in Schoenberg Hall [auditorium] with five hundred people, with Paul Tanner, every quarter that I taught that course. And in the second year, this was when the performance ensemble was established – the African American Music Ensemble. It was [not] always [listed as a performance courses because] I think they weren't quite sure [if it should become permanent]. It was 81-91Z because they were not really firm on it [or] they may not have been firm on me. Because that first year, I think I was a part of what they called the Faculty Development Program, where they brought in new people [faculty] for the first year and it was almost similar to what was happening in Tuskegee – the money was being paid by somebody else. But in that second year, then that's when they hired me on the faculty [as an assistant professor] and I was being really, you know, being in the Music Department. And that's when this course, the African American performance ensemble [came into existence]. Actually, some students came to me and asked me if I would organize an ensemble. And so, that's when that began. It became sort of a very controversial performance ensemble over the years. The chair of the department, Abraham Schwadron, was concerned about the fact that the music had too much [of a] religious component to it, and [he] said, "*That is not acceptable in a state university*." [Abraham Schwadron (1925-1987) became a faculty member in UCLA's music department in 1969, teaching courses on music education, aesthetics, and systematic musicology. He served as department chair from 1980-1983.]

And unbeknownst to me, whenever we gave performances, and I had someone from the community to perform this so-called "down home" gospel music. This is Charles Johnson, who was from, he was [a choir conductor and church pianist] from Mount Zion Baptist Church [in Los Angeles]. But at that time he'd just received a position at Saint Brigid Catholic Church, which was interesting because he was introducing gospel into the Catholic Church. But right before performances, he always felt you needed to have a little prayer, a little prayer. And I remember we had a little prayer, one of the students prayed, and the person prayed and prayed and got happy and all of this. [Several students in the choir responded to the prayer by encouraging her vocally to pray more, similar to what would have occurred in a black church setting.] I think [after] the next two or three days, I was called into the chair's office and told that, "*You're not really teaching music, you're having church."* And I don't think it was the chair, I think it was the counselor's office – what was her name? Mary, Mary Crawford, [the undergraduate advisor for students in the UCLA Music Department], said that a student had contacted her and said that she was concerned. I never knew who this student was. I don't know if it was female or male, who was concerned about some of the things that were happening in the class. I tried to explain to her [Mary Crawford] that was one incident and I had no control over it. Once the person started praying, I couldn't just stop them [all of the students], and that's not something that happened on a regular basis.

But then that [incident] sort of began to get magnified. For the chair, Abraham Schwadron, that became a bone of contention for him. That also became an issue for my tenure case – my teaching that particular course [the African American music performance ensemble] – but I was determined. I continued to teach it.

ARMSTRONG: It was a very popular course since I've known of it. Was it as popular then as it is now?

DJEDJE: Yes, I think I may have controlled the enrollment for many reasons. I was not in the…I couldn't deal with that many people, and I think the students used it as a social setting – a place for them to come together. The majority of the people taking it were African American. There were a few people who were European, there were not that many Asians at that time, but primarily white. So we used to meet, actually in [Room] 1118 [in the Schoenberg Music Building], but now it's [that room is] a part of the [Music] Library. You know that section over there, towards the end [of the building]? Where the librarians have their offices?

ARMSTRONG: Okay.

DJEDJE: That used to be a classroom. In fact, that used to be a class where we used to have for the [ethnomusicology program]. When I was a student here, that's where we had 140A[BC], which was Musical Cultures of the World.

ARMSTRONG: Oh, okay.

DJEDJE: And then eventually, after that, we used to have it [the African American performance ensemble meet] in Room 1325.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, the Choral Room.

DJEDJE: Right, the Choral Room. Then after that we began to have it right over there in Room 1344. So I maintained the [class] size based on the classroom. We had about fifty or sixty people at one time.

ARMSTRONG: That's a nice number right there.

DJEDJE: But the kids, they wanted to not sing; they wanted to get there, and they wanted to talk. These were one of the few times when a whole lot of African Americans could come together in one place and talk and get together and know [find out] what you're [each person is] doing. So all of that. /Laughs/

ARMSTRONG: And so you had that class, you had the Music of African Americans and at some point you started doing African as well.

DJEDJE: Right, this is when Nketia decided to leave.

ARMSTRONG: Oh okay.

DJEDJE: He decided to go to the University of Pittsburgh, and so I began teaching that course [Music of Africa, Music 143AB]. So I would alternate between African American one year and then Africa another year.

ARMSTRONG: Okay, so when did you start teaching the Africa class?

DJEDJE: That had to be during the mid 80s. Let me see, I can perhaps tell you even more exactly when I started to teach the Africa course. I was sort of curious myself when I saw your question.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: So I decided and go and look myself to see when did I begin teaching this particular course. So, this had to be in say what…this was in 1985-86 that I began teaching the Music of Africa [course].

ARMSTRONG: I see.

DJEDJE: Prior to that, I was teaching the African American Music course. Around that same time, I also began to teach some of the core courses like the Proseminar [in Ethnomusicology].

ARMSTRONG: Oh the grad courses – around the mid-80s?

DJEDJE: Right, in the mid-80s, the Pro-Seminar. And then I began to teach the, you know, the main seminar [Seminar in Ethnomusicology], which we used to call 280 at that particular time.

ARMSTRONG: So you didn't teach the grad courses when you first started teaching in the mid 80s?

DJEDJE: No, no.

ARMSTRONG: Since we're at that time period now, when did you all start working on clarifying the nature of your relationship with…you know, you had needs to accomplish in order to get people to study ethnomusicology, such as, say, language. You needed to study – if you were going to study in Ghana – you needed to speak that language, or whatever country you're in, you need to speak the language and I hear that there were only certain languages that could be used for second languages. That was difficult, right? And so, you know, you all started wanting to gain greater control over your ability to determine your curriculum.

DJEDJE: That did not occur until we became a separate department.

ARMSTRONG: Oh okay. But you had, so maybe it was a couple years before you became a separate department that you were kind of pushing or maybe…

DJEDJE: Yeah, we were pushing. These were all of the arguments.

ARMSTRONG: So when were you making these arguments?

DJEDJE: Ohhh, Nazir Jairazbhoy [1928-2009] was a soldier. He was a soldier. He arrived here [as a faculty member] in 1975 to replace Peter Crossley-Holland, you know, there were for a few years there. Not to replace [Crossley-Holland]. I think to replace Mantle Hood. You know Mantle Hood left in '74 and the Institute was disestablished. So they wanted to bring in someone who was somewhat a leader in the field. In fact, I remember my last spring here, in 1974-75, I had an opportunity to hear Nazir Jairazbhoy when he came and made his presentation for the job. And you could tell he was not a person who was going to follow the line. [Nazir Jairazbhoy became a faculty member at UCLA in 1975, and he retired in 1994. In 1988, he was the founding chair of the new UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology. His primary focus in teaching was the music of India.]

ARMSTRONG: Right.

DJEDJE: /Laughs/ He was a person who was going to challenge whatever. So when he first arrived – I was not here from '75 to '79, so I don't really know what took place. But when I arrived in '79, he was

always talking about how we were just under the control of the Music Department. And we needed to make changes. And he always talked about mutiny -- in other words, [arguing] that we needed to have our own department. /Laughs/

ARMSTRONG: Okay.

DJEDJE: …our own program…but of course no one allowed that to happen because the powers that be, primarily Musicology, didn't see that it was in their benefit for that to happen. I don't know if it even went to another level, you know, with the [university] administration…for him to actualize on that. But this room was always a very interesting place. [The Green Room, where my interview is taking place, is located in 1230 Schoenberg Music Building. Adjacent to the Green Room is a kitchenette area for preparing and serving refreshments.]

This [the Green Room] is where we had the faculty meetings and there were all of us. Everyone was sitting here; this is where these so-called leaders [would be seated]. And Nazir, he never sat down; he never sat down. One of the reasons is [because] he was a smoker. And at that time you can smoke any place but in order to please people, he didn't smoke amongst everyone. So he always stood right there in the [kitchen] door and whenever he wanted to take a puff, he would go into the kitchen. He was always standing there. He was always this person who was articulating his opinion against any and everything that was being put forward by Musicology.

By this time, Abraham Schwadron and all these people were in charge. And when we used to have our sort of [meetings for the] Program [in Ethnomusicology], you know, in addition to the Music Department meetings, there used to be these separate program meetings for each of the different divisions: Ethnomusicology, Music Education, whatever. And in those meetings, he [Nazir] was always challenging the fact that we can't admit the students that we want to admit because they had to take all of these sorts of exams before you get here: "*No one has studied Western music. I know nothing about Western music, I know nothing about [Western] music theory and I'm here [as] an ethnomusicologist. I don't know how to speak German, or either French, and none these European languages, and I'm an ethnomusicologist. So why do our students have to go through all of this? They're preventing us from encouraging, being able to recruit, people from the diverse cultural backgrounds."* He always, he always, sort of, challenged that.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: So, that occurred when I was here during the early '80s. And it was not until, perhaps, Musicology decided that it wanted to have a separate department for a totally different reason, that Ethnomusicology could go to the same entity [the university administration] and say, "*If you're going to allow them to have a separate department, then we should have the opportunity to have our separate department.*" So that's in '87.

ARMSTRONG: '87?

DJEDJE: Yeah, it was '86-'87 that all of those meetings began to take place, and the administration said, "*Why don't you guys talk about it, think about it, really, really seriously indicate what would happen; develop some plans.*" I guess in '88-'89 people began to really vote on it and really began to put it into place. And so, it really became official. In a way, it became official for some of us in '88, but it was not

approved by the UC system until a little later in '89. But yeah, he always, he always…I really admired him. I guess – based on my own background of sort of challenging the authority, having to do this or to do that when it doesn't really benefit you – I really admired him in doing that. And I suppose, he may have been the only one who could do that because all of the other people in the faculty had already gone through this Western music program, and so they sort of knew the benefits of it. And I think they may have been a little afraid of really, really jumping overboard and doing something totally different. But I think because of his background and his training – you know he never really had any kind of training, formal training, in Western music – at least as far as I know. [Nazir attended high school in India and England and received a B.A. in Geography from the University of Washington in the United States and a Ph.D. in 1971 in Indian Music from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. https://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/nazir-jairazbhoy - Accessed 6 September 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: It must've really affected…okay so you were telling me a few minutes ago that Mantle Hood, besides hiring part-time faculty – master musicians from these various countries – and they were also admitting students from these various countries, did it hamper their ability to get the students admitted? Or did these students just know Western music? Had they studied Western music and were able to pass these exams; they were able to pass the exams?

DJEDJE: Right, these are students…[from] these colonized countries, colonized by Great Britain, by France, and whatever. You had those colonizers in those countries, teaching those students [Western music].

ARMSTRONG: Right, so they were "bi-musical" before they got here?

DJEDJE: To some extent, they were "mono-musical." They knew more about Western music and they did not know anything about their own traditional cultures. I think they grew up the same way that I grew up as a child, sort of dismissing the importance of your own traditional culture and feeling as if, in a really elitist way, that Western culture was the superior one and this [Western art or classical music] is the one, the legitimate one. And so, I'm sure their background was really no different, and I think we all went through this transformation.

ARMSTRONG: Transformation.

DJEDJE: Right, we all went through this transformation.

ARMSTRONG: When you encountered this environment where now, all of a sudden, this [traditional or indigenous] music is legitimate, it is legitimate.

DJEDJE: Akin Euba went through the very same thing. It was not until he arrived at UCLA that he began to have respect for his own traditional music. [Akin Euba (born 1935) is a Nigerian Yoruba who was awarded his M.A. degree in composition from UCLA in 1966. The composition he submitted for his master's is entitled "Four Pieces for African Orchestra." In 1974, Euba obtained his Ph.D. degree from the University of Ghana, Legon, completing a dissertation entitled "Dundun Drumming of the Yoruba."]

ARMSTRONG: Now did you have to…you had to have two languages, so you must…use the languages that were acceptable…you couldn't use – what other language did you use? What are all the languages that you studied?

DJEDJE: The two accepted languages here were French and German.

ARMSTRONG: French and German.

DJEDJE: And I had French in college and also in high school, so I was able to do that. German, I never had before, so I had to take courses in German. And what was required at that time, you had to take a standardized test in these classes [to prove that you knew the language]; almost like a GRE or SAT test. And this is how you passed, there were no departmental languages, no nothing. So I had to start from scratch to learn German and it took me a few years. I think, the first time I took the exam, I didn't pass it. Second time, I just did pass it. But there were some people from these other parts of the world, who were here a long, long, long time just dealing with trying to get through the languages.

ARMSTRONG: And then you had to study the languages for your field work. Which languages were those?

DJEDJE: When I was in Ghana, I studied Hausa, when I was there. Actually I studied Dagbani because that's what Nketia suggested that I study. And I learned some Hausa, but I did not really study Hausa formally until I came back to UCLA. And I knew that I was going to be conducting field work [i.e., writing my dissertation using material from field work that had been conducted among the Hausa in Nigeria]. So I did a whole lot of things backwards. So I studied Hausa formally in the School of Linguistics here at UCLA at that particular time [in 1974-1975], which was extremely helpful because I had a lot of song lyrics in Hausa – transcribing song lyrics and translating them.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, very interesting. So moving on with your research, tell me about your research. Once you became a professor and were able to travel and, you know, pass your dissertation work, although you may have continued, you know, that same work, but how did your ideas evolve? And I know from your bio that you have conducted field work and travelled to several countries in West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Senegal) and then Southern Africa (South Africa and Zambia) and then Northeast Africa (Ethiopia, Egypt) and the Caribbean, as well as the western and southern United States (including California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia). How does the research that you have conducted in these areas relate? Or does it relate?

DJEDJE: Well, I did not conduct serious research in Southern Africa. Pretty much, I visited those areas and I suppose when you visit those areas, you conduct research, maybe make recordings or you talk with different people, but I never used it [the material] for a major project. I have always believed that one should use the opportunity that's available to you to conduct research.

So when I came back to UCLA, when I was at UCLA [as a faculty member], I was dealing with this gospel music choir, I had begun to seriously conduct research on gospel music. Before it was a comparison between spirituals and gospel, but during that period, very little had been written on the history of gospel music [in different regions of the United States] and then because this individual

[Charles Johnson was encouraging me to research gospel in Los Angeles Catholic churches]. I was writing things on gospel music generally. But because this individual [Charles Johnson] who I had hired, or the department had hired, to become director of the group that we had here, the gospel choir, because he was Director of Music at the Saint Brigid Catholic Church, and he was explaining to me, he said, "*Jackie, you should go to this place. I mean, you would never think that this is a Catholic church with what you see them doing.*"

And so one Sunday he invited me to go. And I went there and I saw the people standing up and clapping their hands, and getting happy, and he has this choir of about eighty people performing gospel music. One couldn't tell the difference if you were in a Catholic church, at least the Catholic churches that I knew, as opposed to being in a Baptist church, so this was fascinating to me.

So I decided to conduct research on gospel – I guess it wasn't necessarily Catholic churches – but I was able to get money from the African American Studies Center [at UCLA to] study gospel in what we call "non-traditional" black churches. And so I wanted to look at the Lutheran Church, and the Presbyterian Church, the Unitarian Church – all these churches where you find black people [who are] a member of. But you know, these were churches that would have had a European or Western liturgy. But as result of that particular project, for about year, [or] I think two years, I began to see really there was a whole lot of synergy happening in gospel music in the Catholic Church. So that's when I really focused on the Catholic Church, and I conducted research on several different churches in the area, and it was just, you know, really, really marvelous finding out what had happened. As a result of that, someone from the Black Music Research Center – Samuel Floyd [1937-2016] – who was director of the Black Music Research Center, which was [just] getting off the ground [at Columbia College in Chicago]. It had been at Fisk University, but now it was…[going to Columbia College]. They [the administrators at Columbia College] had given him money [When Samuel A. Floyd Jr. started as Professor of Music at Fisk University, he founded and served as Director of the Institute for Research in Black American Music. In 1983 he moved to Columbia College Chicago to establish the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR), which became an internationally respected research center under his leadership. Critical to the creation of the CBMR was the establishment of the CBMR Library and Archives, which has grown to be one of the most comprehensive collections of music, recordings, and research materials devoted to black music.... In 1980, while at Fisk, Floyd founded the *Black Music Research Journal*, a scholarly journal that moved with him to the CBMR in 1983. http://www.colum.edu/cbmr/index.html - Accessed 12 August 2016.]

He [Floyd] saw some of my publications and he learned about my research on gospel in the Catholic Church in Los Angeles [See Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, "An Expression of Black Identity: The Use of Gospel Music in a Los Angeles Catholic Church," *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, Volume 7, Number 3, Spring 1983, pp. 148-160; and DjeDje, "Change and Differentiation: The Adoption of Black American Gospel Music in the Catholic Church," *Ethnomusicology: Journal of the Society for Ethnomusicology*, Volume 30, Number 2, Spring 1986, pp. 223-252]. And he said, "*What about what's happening generally in Los Angeles in terms of gospel music?"* I said, *"I don't really know."* I had been going only to the Catholic Church and I didn't know what was happening in the larger community. He said, "*Why don't you conduct some research [on Los Angeles gospel music generally]?*"

Because at that time, he was trying to break open, to sort of begin to open up the narrative [about the history of African American music]. Rather than telling the story, of say, take for example, jazz. It started in New Orleans, went up the river to Chicago, then it went to New York – that's the narrative that everybody tells. No. You know, there are too many other stories; there are many other branches. So what he had begun to do is develop, sort of, symposia on [the history of black music in] various parts of the country that had not received a lot of research. I think he had a symposium looking at the music of St. Louis, looking at the music of Atlanta, looking at the music of just New Orleans (you know, not just the jazz thing). I think he also wanted to do something on Los Angeles or California, just California, rather than cities. [The material presented by different scholars at symposia sponsored by CBMR was often published as a special issue of the center's publications, including its newsletter, bulletin and journal. For example, my articles on gospel music in Los Angeles were published in CBMR's bulletin and journal: "A Historical Overview of Black Gospel Music in Los Angeles," *Black Music Research Bulletin*, Volume 10, Number 1, Spring 1988, pp. 1-5; and "Gospel Music in the Los Angeles Black Community," *Black Music Research Journal*, Volume 9, Number 1, Spring 1989, pp. 35-79.]

And he said, "*I'm pursuing this [research project on California black music], and so why don't you begin to conduct some research and perhaps you can do this since your area is gospel?*"

So as a result of that, I began to start looking at gospel in Los Angeles; I started at my own church [Trinity Baptist Church, 2040 Jefferson Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90018], asking people there. And again, [when you begin to conduct research], you turn over this rock and you see all of this, these jewels, these jewels.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, Los Angeles.

DJEDJE: Los Angeles is a very important, important center for gospel music generally. People just don't know the degree to which it has affected gospel music globally.

ARMSTRONG: When you're talking about the migration, the African American migration patterns, and the music reflects those patterns.

DJEDJE: Right, but once they got out here, once these people came from Louisiana and Texas and all of those places, out here, this environment changed them, the interaction of the people changed them. And so, it's only in California, and also the cultural diversity that exists here.

ARMSTRONG: That didn't exist elsewhere.

DJEDJE: So it's only in California you had something like contemporary gospel.

ARMSTRONG: Contemporary gospel.

DJEDJE: It came into existence in California. You had people like the Hawkins Singers in the [San Francisco] Bay Area, and Andraé Hawkins [Crouch] here.

ARMSTRONG: Right, that's right!

DJEDJE: It all happened, I mean Andraé Crouch [1942-2015] here! You had people like James Cleveland [1931-1991]. [Edwin Hawkins (born 1943), who is founder of the Hawkins Singers; James Cleveland (1931-1991); and Andraé Crouch (1942-2015) are all internationally known gospel performers and composers. While Crouch and Hawkins are natives of California – Crouch was born and raised in Los Angeles, while Hawkins was born and raised in Oakland – Cleveland was born in Chicago and settled in Los Angeles in 1962.]

ARMSTRONG: James Cleveland.

DJEDJE: James Cleveland came out here and he's the one who acknowledged that, yes, it could only happen out here because you had…I guess the people out here were not so set on tradition.

ARMSTRONG: Right.

DJEDJE: They were open to new ideas, so they did not mind, or either they could tolerate the combining of, the fusion of, so-called traditional gospel with all of these other secular sounds, you know, with the instruments and perhaps with the different kinds of melody, different kinds of harmony – that could only happen here in California. And so, now you have contemporary gospel, which people here perform everywhere. You know, that is the main kind of gospel that you find globally – in Asia, in Latin America, and in Europe – everywhere! It started right here in California.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, yes.

DJEDJE: And so you began to see all of those sorts of things, and as a result of that, you know of course I encouraged my students to conduct research on this particular place. And so, that's the whole thing with the gospel in Los Angeles.

ARMSTRONG: Are there other types of music in Los Angeles? 'Cause you have a book called *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West* [that was published in 1998], and teach a class on it.

DJEDJE: Right, right.

ARMSTRONG: What is the class called?

DJEDJE: "African American Music in California" [Ethnomu CM112/212]. And this [the publication of the book and the introduction of the course in the UCLA curriculum] is the result of research that my students have done. This is probably one of my favorite courses, one of my most favorite courses, even though, for whatever reason, I have not been able to generate the interest of the larger [student population], say [students in] the ethnomusicology department, in this. Maybe it's too narrow for them, maybe they're looking at the exotic, the different, but they don't want to look, necessarily, at what's right around them.

So it's the publications from my students and other colleagues, who've been here in California, or especially in Los Angeles, that enough material has been produced so that one could teach a course on African American music in California.

ARMSTRONG: Does it incorporate jazz? I mean unique jazz styles?

DJEDJE: It incorporates everything. I mean, I look at the development here, at African American [music here] in the same way that you would look at the course, "African American Musical [Heritage]" -- you know, the course CM110A, CM110B. I just demonstrate the contributions that people here have made [to music history], and people are surprised. The whole thing like rhythm 'n' blues – it had a very, very important role in the popularity of rhythm 'n' blues around the country. The first recording of jazz by a black person took place here in Los Angeles.

ARMSTRONG: What was that?

DJEDJE: This was Creole jazz, [a song called "Ory's Creole Trombone" by New Orleans trombonist Kid Ory (1886-1973) and His Sunshine Orchestra].

ARMSTRONG: Okay, what year?

DJEDJE: I think there's some debate about whether it was 1921 or 1922. And the authors, I mean, the [name of the] performer [Kid Ory] is not coming to me right now. He's a trombone player and he…umm…so you know the very first recording was by this white guy, I mean this white group: Original Dixieland Jazz Band – that was this white group [that made the first jazz recording] in 1919 [the correct date is 1917]. A black person [jazz cornetist Freddie Keppard (1889-1933)] was offered to do it [make a recording in 1914 or 1915], but the black person [Keppard] decided he didn't want to do it because he didn't want his music to be stolen, so that's when the people went to this white group. And that's why I think this term "Dixieland" is [became] associated with jazz, but "Dixieland" to me is a white term; black people, from what I can gather there, would never call their music "Dixieland." So in my classes, we call it "New Orleans Jazz." "Dixieland" is nowhere … [the term it is rarely used by early black performers]. But because of this white group that performed it; [they made the first jazz recording, this may be the reason the term "Dixieland" is popular]. And so if you look at the white group performing, and then, you know, look at [or listen to] this group here, you know this group, that [their music is different]. I can't think of the name, the first recording of jazz [by a black person] first occurred here in Los Angeles. You know something seminal like that, and there are other little jewels, things that people don't realize about Los Angeles [and] the contributions that it has made. [Most jazz historians indicate that Reb and John Spikes (the Spikes Brothers), who owned the Sunshine record label, recorded six tunes by trombonist Edward "Kid" Ory and his band in June 1921, but four of the masters melted in the sun while being transported from California to a pressing plant in New Jersey. The two songs that survived – "Ory's Creole Trombone" and "Society Blues" have the distinction of being the first recordings made by an African American instrumental jazz band. See Michael B. Bakan, "Way Out West on Central: Jazz in the African-American Community of Los Angeles before 1930" in *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie S. Meadows. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p. 41; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ory%27s_Creole_Trombone - Accessed 9 September 2016].

You know William Grant Still [1895-1978], the fact that he's considered to be the Dean of African American composers, although he was born in the South [in Mississippi], and he spent time in New York, but he chose Los Angeles as his home base because he felt this was a place that one could be creative –

free to do what you wanted to do. [William Grant Still (1895-1978) was a conductor and composer, and the first African American to have major productions of both a symphony (*Afro-American Symphony*, composed in 1930 and premiered in 1931) and opera (*Troubled Island*, composed in 1938 and premiered in 1949). After visiting and working in Los Angeles for one year (1929-1930), Still returned and permanently settled in the city in 1934.

I remember reading an article about Esa-Pekka Salonen, who used to be the director of the L.A. Phil [Los Angeles Philharmonic]. [Esa-Pekka Salonen (born 1958) is a Finnish orchestral conductor and composer who served as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1992 to 2009. At present, he is Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, Conductor Laureate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Composer-in-Residence at the New York Phiharmonic, and Artistic Director and co-founder of the Baltic Sea Festival. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esa-Pekka_Salonen - Accessed 15 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: The L.A. Phil?

DJEDJE: Yes. The L.A. Phil. When he came back [for a performance in Los Angeles] and someone interviewed him, and someone asked him, "*What do you think was special about your Los Angeles years?*" And he said that being in Los Angeles gave him the freedom to be creative in a way that he could not have [been] if he was elsewhere. And so I think, you know, this environment and the fact that it's not built on traditions – there were no traditions – with all these different groups of people, creating their own sort of traditions developing it from [people who were migrating to the city].

ARMSTRONG: Did free jazz develop in Los Angeles?

DJEDJE: I wouldn't say it started here, you know that's something that was a mass movement. I think that may have been something, you know, [that started with] post-bebop and all those people [who] were on the East Coast. [Yet, some Los Angeles jazz musicians – for example, Charles Mingus (1922-1979) and Eric Dolphy (1928-1964) -- who were either raised or born in the city became well known for free jazz after their move to New York.]

DJEDJE: So even though jazz was here, it doesn't [play a major role in jazz history] – except for that very beginning. And that's just a little footnote in history – people don't look at Los Angeles as an important jazz place. But I think it is important in its own way. [Ferdinand Joseph LaMothe, popularly known as Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941), and Edward "Kid" Ory (1886-1973) were two of the early transplants from New Orleans who helped to make Los Angeles an important place for jazz before the 1930s. Although he had visited California as early as 1912, Jelly Roll first re-located in 1917, while Ory arrived in Los Angeles 1919. For more discussion, see Michael B. Bakan, "Way Out West on Central: Jazz in the African-American Community of Los Angeles before 1930" in *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie S. Meadows, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, pp. 23-78.]

ARMSTRONG: Okay. Let's keep moving. So now, you mentioned that you had a daughter, and I imagine that, you know, as a mother, that that must have kind of structured your life a lot, you know, raising a daughter and being a professor. And I have heard you say that the fact that you put your

daughter…you had her study violin with Suzuki pedagogical technique. And that maybe added to your interest, I mean maybe, it strengthened your interest in the violin or the fiddle that was already begun? You know when you start hearing the fiddle music?

DJEDJE: Right, right. Actually she's the one who decided to do this when she was about four or five years old. She was interested in studying piano, and I was teaching her piano. But they [staff at her elementary school] invited this Suzuki teacher to the school that she was attending, and he pretty much introduced a Suzuki class for those who were interested. And so she and I continued to try and do piano and violin together, but that didn't work. So she decided that she was going to do the violin. And so the man who introduced the music to her at the time, his name was [Neal] Donner, she continued with him through high school until she went off to college. [Born in 1942, Neal Donner began his violin studies in 1950 with William Schroeder in Washington, DC. His education includes a Ph.D. in East Asian Philosophy and Religion (University of British Columbia, Canada, 1976). In 1982 he began teaching Suzuki violin professionally. https://suzukiassociation.org/people/?id=neal-donner - Accessed 15 August 2016.]

And yes, when she was playing violin and studying violin, and you know she's out there [interacting] with other people and she has the violin case, and people would say, "*Well, what [instrument] are you playing?*" People knew that her father [Antoine DjeDje] was African. He's from Côte d'Ivoire, a Bete person from Côte d'Ivoire, where you have all this drumming and dancing. *"So [people often asked] why are you playing the violin? A European or Western instrument, you know, what's up with that? Why aren't you out there dancing or whatever?"* I didn't say anything, but I said [to myself], "*Wait a minute now, people don't recognize that the violin is very much an African instrument."* And not only that, it was one of the first instruments that black people here in the United States performed. It was more probably prominent than even the banjo. So the earliest record of instruments of [black] people playing music dismisses [or negates] all the drumming, it was the violin. And during slavery, there were more black violinists than anything else. They performed the music for black people and for white people. And it continued to be the dominant instrumental form, string band music, through the 1930s. So this was very much an African tradition. And my argument is that, whereas the drum was outlawed, because the white person was afraid of it, and there was always already evidence that they [enslaved Africans] communicate with each other, you know, the Stono Rebellion [in South Carolina] in 1739. And that [is part of the reason the drum] was outlawed. They [slave owners] tolerated, they accepted the violin, not thinking [or knowing] that it was also an African instrument.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, not thinking, not realizing.

DJEDJE: Right. And so my argument is that the violin maintained the African tradition.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, interesting.

DJEDJE: African tradition is still there.

ARMSTRONG: I guess, you know, you can speculate about the scales they were using, the blues scale, the flattened seventh, or you know, where did the sounds that they were…emanating from the violin in the early days. We can only speculate; we weren't there.

DJEDJE: And so that sort of caused [or heightened] my interest in the violin and I began to [research it] Initially I wanted to do a comparative study looking at the African and the violin in the African and the African American culture. But the project became too big and so that's when my husband, Eddie Meadows, encouraged me to separate it and I said, "*No. No, no, no*." Then I was invited to make a presentation at the University of Michigan on a topic that I can't remember. So I decided to just do it on African violin – African fiddle – and it was successful. [The presentation at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, took place on October 23, 2002, and was entitled "The Impact of Class on Dagbamba Fiddling in Ghana." The presentation was a lecture series in the Africa Workshop sponsored by the African Studies Initiative of the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies and the Distinguished Faculty and Graduate Seminar Program.] And I said, "*Okay, maybe this will work*." And that's when I began the work on this book.

ARMSTRONG: Began to work on this book, *Fiddling in West Africa,* that you won several awards for -- very comprehensive. Now, this book covers so much – we're going to jump to the book – and I know that it covers so many aspects including socialization practices and pedagogical techniques that are used to pass on this tradition. Is there anything interesting that you want to say, briefly, about the…well you know, I've read some of it, and you're looking at identity, for one thing, and the distinction between the Fulbe (am I pronouncing it correctly?) and the Wolof, the Manding – where they've done a lot of research already on these other groups, but very little research on Fulbe. And, I thought that there was one interesting statement: for example, I don't know if that was a metaphor for the identity, you were saying there was a radio station and when they're talking about Fulbe news, they play the fiddle, and when they're talking about Manding news, they're playing the kora. In other words, the sounds of these two different string instruments represent culturally the two different identities. And so, was that made clear by your research? The nature of this…well I know you're also talking about griots or *jalis* and the use of the string instrument to – there were so many different points, I don't know if there's a way to summarize it, and maybe that's why you won the awards – because of so many different topics that you covered in this very wide research.

DJEDJE: I supposed I wanted to show the whole, the whole. In other words, they're really all connected, but they're also distinctly different. And there are reasons why they're distinctly different – because of their experiences, their lived traditions, and that's why, for each one, I deal with the history, the social organization, religion, and philosophy. And those are the factors that make them really distinct, but they're also part of the whole. You can apply that to the African world too! We're all part of the whole, but we all have our individual differences. You know, our creative differences are slightly different. We're different creatively, primarily because of our lived experiences in the Americas as opposed to, say, India, or as opposed to, say, South Africa. All of this is a part of the African world, so you can sort of see this in this particular story, because this is one little story about the fiddle. And I'm proud of the fact that it is about the fiddle. It is about the fiddle, an instrument that is normally ignored with regard to African culture, African people. And I think I'm proud of the fact that – I really wanted it to be African-centered. I think in my introduction, maybe in the footnote, I said, "*This is an African centered book.*" I could care less if ethnomusicologists read it; I could care less if all the cultural theorists read it. I wanted it to be an African-centered book so I'm giving back to the people what they allowed me to have, to tell their story.

So that's why I wanted to present it in a way so it is accessible to anyone who picks it up. And this…I think I was somewhat successful because I took it, I sent it the son of Salisu Mahama [my fiddle teacher in Ghana]. Unfortunately, Salisu passed away before the book was published. I was sad about that, but I sent it to the son of Salisu, and one of the things that he said, and he read it, he could pick it up and read it, he said, "*My father would be so happy with what you've done*." And he could actually read it, read it and understand what's there. I think too much of our material that we produce, it is so, so involved with theory, very abstract, dense language that only a few people around the table can understand what is being written. And I suppose – maybe that's the beauty of ethnomusicology – that each ethnomusicologist can come and bring to the field their past experiences, you know, their training, their, you know, disciplinary kind of method. And then we also have different purposes, you know. I think one of the things that I believe is that: All of us have different purposes and so we should all be allowed to present the material in a way that serves your particular purpose. So whereas some people may want to bring the material so that it addresses a very narrow audience of scholars, or researchers – that's valid – but if there's someone who wants to present the material and make it accessible to a larger audience, I think that is just as valid. Both are equal.

ARMSTRONG: I think you made this accessible, but at the same time, because you have spent so long thinking about and looking at this issue, that it was so rich with data, I mean, data that any social scientist could appreciate. But you know it takes time. And you know, if you don't take that time, then, but what I was going to say was also, with what you just said, the fact that the son of your primary – would he be called your primary consultant?

DJEDJE: Salisu Mahama.

ARMSTRONG: Salisu Mahama was so appreciative. My question is: What is your relationship with your consultants? I've heard about a concept that consultants have their own reasons for wanting to cooperate with a researcher, maybe sometimes researchers give them money or, but they have…but maybe that has nothing to do with it. Sometimes they feel that researcher can do something they can't do which is to tell the world about their culture. So what is your relationship with your consultants? Do you both have your own goals and reasons for doing this? How do you get people to want to do it? To answer your questions? To participate in the research?

DJEDJE: Well, I think first of all, I think I try to respect my consultants, the people that I work with. I see them as people that I revere. The same people that I revere, like Nketia, or PCH (Peter Crossley-Holland). So they're people that I have great respect for, and in my interactions with them, I try and reflect this. You know, I think that in some cases, with ethnomusicologists, we go into the field because we are from the West. There is this dynamic power relation – that, I'm a little better than you, and I'm here to sort of help you to present your material in certain ways. To me, that's something that I put out the window; that's not really who I am. So, this element of respect [is important to me].

The other thing that I don't want is for them to think that I'm becoming the authority. You have learned this tradition that you know Salisu began studying this tradition when he was five years old. I met him when he was in his mid-30s. So thirty years of playing this tradition in Africa, among his people, all around the world, because he was traveling. How am I to come and maybe spend ten months, a year, or whatever, to learn from you, and then write this book, and I'm the scholarly authority? No. No. That

person will always, at least in my opinion, be the authority about this particular tradition. And what I want to do is sort of be a vessel to sort of tell the story, or to tell something about the tradition in a way that would respect and sort of give value to that particular person and what is important to them and their particular culture. So if I get that point across to them, then they're really ready to open it all up, you know. Because they see the benefits and their benefits may be different. You know I don't say, "*Well no, you should really do this*." No, it is what they really want to do.

ARMSTRONG: So they're moving it along.

DJEDJE: And I'm trying to follow, except if they put me in some really, really negative situations that ethically or morally I don't feel is appropriate for me, I'm not going to go there, of course. And they will know who and what I am.

ARMSTRONG: You have to be strong.

DJEDJE: You have to be very strong.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, you have to be very strong. You have to follow what your mom and your dad told you.

DJEDJE: Yes. /Chuckle/

ARMSTRONG: Very good. Okay now, I'm going to move a little bit. I would want to…I also had another question about gospel music. Oh, one more question about your research and then I want to talk about UCLA. And that is: when you're doing research on gospel, so have you done research in your own community since that first paper? And when you're doing research on gospel music, because it's something that you grew up with, is there…obviously there's a special relationship that you had with your consultants because you are, you ARE one of them even if you, okay now you work at a university, you're doing it to write a book, so that makes you have your own reasons for doing it, but do they feel that sense that, *"Yes, she is…she grew up…*. Can they tell that this is a part …I know you had your own…I don't know, is there. Obviously you have a deep knowledge, so that allows you to say, talk and gain a lot from your consultants because you have such deep knowledge of the subject matter.

DJEDJE: I treat gospel musicians, especially those who are performers, in the same way that I was just speaking about Salisu Mahama. As you can tell from my background, I performed gospel music, but I didn't perform it like some of the people, these really "down home" musicians, who grew up not just observing people, but they may have been in those sanctified churches, actually participating, maybe not in the same way, but in a different way. So when I'm interacting with gospel performers, I want to make them understand that, because when they begin to talk to me and ask me certain things, they can tell that I am not really a "down home" gospel musician who may get happy by shouting. You know, I may get happy, but I may get happy in my own way. /Laughs/ So I make them understand that, and once they understand that, I think they have a greater respect for me. I think sometimes consultants are very, very put off by people who come and interact with them and they like to put on airs.

ARMSTRONG: Pretend they're someone they're not.

DJEDJE: Yeah, or pretend that they can do this and they can do that and when they're given the opportunity to do it, they can't really act on it. So I think it's really important to come to people very honestly, very honestly and so once they are aware of that, then they accept me for who and what I am. And they appreciate me, again telling the story, or providing information about the tradition in a way that perhaps they can't do.

ARMSTRONG: An avenue.

DJEDJE: An avenue! I mean I think about the person, who was part of a wonderful project – Margaret Pleasant Douroux. This project that we had with her, at UCLA, between the [Ethnomusicology] Archive and her organization, the Heritage Music Foundation. [From June 2004 to May 2005, the Heritage Music Foundation and the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive partnered in documenting gospel music in Los Angeles. http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/archive/collections/2004_06/ - Accessed 16 August 2016.]

It was one of the most wonderful projects I was involved in, in a way that I had not experienced in any other setting. And I think it was the level of participation, the level of cooperation, the level of understanding, the amount of work that we were able to accomplish. I mean, it was really, really, very much on the same wavelength. I mean we had in every project, in every research, there are little differences here and there, but that's always the case. But I think I learned so much from her and that experience, and I think she learned very much.

ARMSTRONG: She had written a lot of the gospel contemporary music, is that what I've heard? That she had written a tremendous amount of music.

DJEDJE: Right, but I don't consider her to be a contemporary gospel musician in the same way as Andraé Crouch.

ARMSTRONG: Yeah that's right.

DJEDJE: Her music is extremely – and I suppose we have different definitions of contemporary, and often times, when people think of contemporary, they're thinking of music that's really very secular – it sounds so secular that you don't really know if it's religious or non-religious. But her music is really steeped in the church. When you hear her music, [it sounds like church music].

ARMSTRONG: The teaching?

DJEDJE: The teaching, but the words, the text, and the way [it is performed]. And it's very, very simple, very straightforward, but it really tells the story of what someone is experiencing at that time. You know, I think her first song was *Give Me a Clean Heart* [composed in 1970. It was] a text from the Bible, and the basic words are: "Give me a clean heart," you know, [it's] very personal, very personal. And I remember when we were doing our research, someone at some event indicated that Margaret Pleasant Douroux's music is probably being performed at some church somewhere around the world every Sunday. Every Sunday. It's really church music, music in the church. It's not music for entertainment, to be on TV. It's really music for worship.

ARMSTRONG: For worship.

DJEDJE: For worship.

ARMSTRONG: To feel it.

DJEDJE: Right. And when you hear it, it really…it has, as you say it: teaching. Sort of, to help you, it teaches you the principles of living each day, guiding you each day. So learning that from her, you know, [was very special].

ARMSTRONG: So I know, let's move on. Speaking of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, and speaking of the [Ethnomusicology] Archive, let's talk about your experience with archives. And I know that it goes back to those early days when you were a student and interacting with our archive maybe and eventually you become the Archive Director. And I know before you became Archive Director, I know you had a number of projects, I don't know if that's separate, but projects, archival projects. And then, maybe include in there the fact that you were able to bring some of these artists to campus when you had concerts. That's how I became familiar with the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, when she came to UCLA and I heard that wonderful music myself.

DJEDJE: Back when I was a student at UCLA, depositing your materials into the Archive was a must. That's something that was expected of all of us. So every student, once you went into the field, you would come back and you would deposit your material into the Archive. And one of the things [factors that influenced us] was Ann Briegleb [Schuursma, the first archivist]. She would come pounding on your door, or phoning you: "*When are you going to deposit your material into the Archive? Is there anything I can do to help you?*" And she was interested in anything and everything. So I grew up, learned from being here at UCLA, of really depositing our material into the Archive. And so, I think at that time, the Archive also was a center for our community life. You know we [faculty and students in the UCLA Institute for Ethnomusicology] were downstairs, in the basement [of the Schoenberg Music Building]. And the Archive was the place that we went to either meet with each other, or to find out what was happening. We didn't have the Internet, [or someone] like yourself. The Archive was there for that particular purpose. /Laughs/ Anyone who needed to know anything about anyone would go to the Archive. [As the Chair's Assistant in the Department of Ethnomusicology, Donna Armstrong was responsible for communicating and sharing news about what is happening in the Department.]

So, I think it became important to all of us, all of us who were [ethnomusicology] students at UCLA. And so it was at that point that I began to, first of all, conduct a project on spirituals actually here at UCLA. One of my field work projects, I think, when I took the field and lab course, [I] was looking at spirituals in Los Angeles, and then it wasn't until that summer, in the summer of 1971, that I began to record the people in my community [Jesup, Georgia]. [The field work I conducted for my spring 1971 seminar, "Field and Laboratory Methods," taught by Jozef Pacholczyk, who received his Ph.D. from UCLA in 1970, focused on recording Angeline Butler (a classmate in ethnomusicology at UCLA) performing spirituals. This initial project provided the framework for the research I conducted in summer 1971 for my M.A. thesis. The thesis, entitled "An Analytical Study of the Similarities and Differences in the American Black Spiritual and Gospel Song from the Southeast Region of Georgia" (1972), was later published as a book, *American Black Spiritual and Gospel Songs from Southeast Georgia: A Comparative Study* (1978).]

So I had…that was my first project. And there was this woman, Angeline Butler, who was actually someone from Los Angeles, [she] also did some work here at UCLA, who was my primary consultant. [Born in Columbia, South Carolina, Angeline Butler received her B.A. from Fisk University with a major in music during the mid-1960s (before I arrived at Fisk). Although she took classes in UCLA's ethnomusicology program, she completed her training and obtained her M.A. in music with a specialization in ethnomusicology from Columbia University in 1974. http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/faculty/angeline-butler - Accessed 16 August 2016.]

So that was my first project, and from then on I always continued to deposit my material here into the [Ethnomusicology] Archive, not only because I thought it was important, but because I wanted the material to stay safe.

So I always thought the Archive was essential. When Ann Briegleb left, things changed a little bit. You know, you had other people [who] came in with different philosophies on archiving and had different interests and ways in doing this or that. And so that spirit of giving [depositing material into the Ethnomusicology Archive], I think, changed; I think the entire field began to change. You know, people [researchers in ethnomusicology] were not dealing with sound so much. You know, in the United States, anthropological theory began to take over much more [in studying ethnomusicology] Even though the music was there, [some researchers believed] it was much more important [to focus on social theory]. Once you were done [with your field work and] writing up [the dissertation], it wasn't so [important or less emphasis was placed on] looking at the music [to determine] what that can tell you about the subject matter. But you were looking at maybe the ideas or social theories in developing [your study]. And so, the importance, at least in my opinion, the importance of archiving, and all [preserving] of that [field] material [that researchers used to collect], began to be less important in terms of our [final] product. And so, [researchers might say], "*Why do I really need to contribute [to the Archive]?*" You may have documented this, but you may have just kept it in your own particular place [home or office], rather than depositing it.

So when Tim Rice decided to sort of transform the [Ethnomusicology] Archive here at UCLA, and he's the one who came to me and asked me if I wanted to be the new Director of the Archive and I said, "*What? No."* It's interesting that when people ask me to do things and I've never thought about it.

And I said, "*No, I don't think I have the ability, the skills, or whatever*."
And then he said, "*Yes, you can do it, you can do it, you can do it.*"
But I said, "*Well I'm working on something else right now, let me think about it*."

And so I did become director, I think in 2000, and I remained director until 2007. So one of the things that I attempted to do was, first of all, to give the Archive a little more visibility, let people know what we were doing in the Archive. Once they knew what we were doing, maybe they will, perhaps, maybe actually begin to deposit materials into the Archive. We began to, much more strategically ask people to give material. And so we began to have much more material deposited into the Archive. You know it's interesting, that started in the early 2000s and it has continued, it has continued more so [now than] what was happening a little earlier. We began to try to contact a lot of our former students to get them to deposit materials here in the Archive. We began to contact our faculty, who are here, and asked them to deposit materials into the Archive, in order to make it a living sort of thing, a living sort of thing.

And then, the university [UCLA] began to develop this initiative on Los Angeles. They began to think, you know, we are here in Los Angeles, but to what extent was Los Angeles involved in the [university] community, or if we [as UCLA faculty members] are involved in the community there's really no evidence of that. So what can we do? People who live in South Los Angeles – we may be only ten to fifteen miles away – but in terms of our embracing each other, it's almost as if we're a thousand miles away. People really think this ivory tower really has no connections. So there was this initiative, UCLA in LA, that came into existence, and I think Frank Gilliam was the director of this, and one of the things that he attempted to do was to ask various entities on campus to submit proposals that dealt with projects that will [would] link us as community partners, link us in partnership, on an equal basis, with groups in the community. [Gilliam, a UCLA faculty member in political science and public policy (from 1986 to 2015) before leaving to accept the position of chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, created the UCLA Center for Community Partnerships and served as associate vice chancellor of community partnerships from 2002 to 2008, forging academic and community collaborations to improve the quality of life throughout Los Angeles. In large part, UCLA earned its first Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement classification because of Gilliam and the UCLA in LA initiative. http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/luskin-dean-leaving-to-lead-unc-greensboro - Accessed 16 August 2016.]

And we did this, first of all, with the Filipino community, the project [was called] AFAMILA. [AFAMILA (Archiving Filipino American Music in Los Angeles) was a yearlong archiving and documentation project initiated by the UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive and community partner Kayamanan Ng Lahi. Support for the project was provided by a UCLA in LA grant from the Center for Community Partnerships, 2003-04. http://www.ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/content/highlights-ucla-ethnomusicology-archive-archiving-filipino-american-music-los-angeles - Accessed 17 August 2016.]

And then after that, John Vallier, who by the time was director [of the AFAMILA project], he was, sort of [looking for another project to pursue]. I'm not quite sure, and I guess I'm the one who suggested, why don't we do something on gospel music. And I think – I don't know if it was in the end – he's the one, after investigating, who thought about her [Margaret Pleasant Douroux] more specifically. I'd been introduced…. I already knew her. But after looking at a whole lot of different groups, or different entities, she had this organization that she was trying get off the ground you know, the Heritage Music Foundation – it was called the Gospel House. [I first met Margaret Pleasant Douroux in 1987 when I began conducting research on gospel music in Los Angeles. She is the founder and CEO of the Heritage Music Foundation (HMF) whose mission, according to the HMF website, "is to preserve and nurture gospel music as a viable fine art form for all people, through the building of the Gospel House. The Gospel House will stand as a facility of education, information, and a repository for Gospel research, technology and history." http://www.hmfgospel.com/#!dr-douroux/cw53 - Accessed 17 August 2016.]

We learned she had all these materials that were in her garage and were not really being cared for in the right way. We saw that perhaps we could help her in certain ways; helping her [learn] how to manage the material, help her in maybe developing proposals that perhaps she could use to submit to various granting agencies, so that she could have funding to go to the next level. And we wanted to sort of document her activity over the year. So, it was really a wonderful project.

ARMSTRONG: And this was the GALA Project? What does GALA stand for?

DJEDJE: Gospel Archiving in Los Angeles.

ARMSTRONG: I see. What year or years did you do that project?

DJEDJE: I think this was in 2004 or 2005. Birgitta Johnson, one of our [UCLA ethnomusicology graduate] students here [M.A. 2002; Ph.D. 2008], was the director, sort of director of that because I was doing something else at that time. I was serving as Director of the [Ethnomusicology] Archive! /Laughs/ But I was there in [spirit and physically]. I did not miss any events. I was there. So I had the camera, I was doing [some of] the audio [and video recording]; I just didn't want to be responsible for getting all the students together, making sure they're there, and making sure that the…the community people knew what we were doing, so I didn't really want to do that. Well, what's sort of noteworthy, sort of indicating how these things mushroom – she [Birgitta Johnson] was able to get an article published in the *Ethnomusicology Forum* about her activity. And evidently some people are finding interest in this [as a research topic], and have begun to contact her on writing other articles or publications on archiving, which is sort of interesting. [For Johnson's article, see "Gospel Archiving in Los Angeles: A Case of Proactive Archiving and Empowering Collaborations," *Ethnomusicology Forum*, Volume 21, Number 2, August 2012, pp. 221-242.]

ARMSTRONG: Yeah and so you have this big part of yourself…maybe we should, after this question, take another break and then go to the end. But as a document…as a person who documents, I mean I guess all ethnomusicologists to a certain extent are documenting something, but beside your own research, there's just this idea that, you know you're…you've gotten into being an administrator, so that means as head of the Archive, you've been the chair of the Department, but besides that you've been…even before you were chair, you had conferences, you document everything, you put it in the Archive, you document it from the sound perspective, from a visual perspective, so just answer this question and we'll take a little break: what is it…why is it… what are your thoughts on documenting, on documenting events and keeping it for use… keeping it for future use just so we know this took place; why do you document everything?

DJEDJE: I think part of it is being a black person and we have so few documents available about what we've done, what we've accomplished, and what we've achieved. We have done so much, but people have either ignored it or dismissed it because, you know, we are an oral people – we do it orally – and no one either thinks or either has the expertise or the knowledge to perhaps take that oral and create a project…a product. So for me as a black person, whatever I do or whatever We do collectively, I think it should be documented for future generations or for just world knowledge. Just like we now know about Chaucer [Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*], because it was oral at one time. But someone documented it and now we look at it as a seminal product that we all refer to. [I am incorrect in stating that *The Canterbury Tales*, a collection of stories written by Chaucer (1343-1400), who is regarded as the father of English literature, during the late fourteenth century, were originally oral. Presented in verse and prose, the tales are noteworthy because they were written by Chaucer using vernacular English. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer - Accessed 8 September 2016.]

So I think that's one of the primary reasons, I think also as an ethnomusicologist, we are just taught to always document, document whatever exists, because many of us are working with traditions or people around the world who have not documented, or they don't have the evidence of whatever they've accomplished. You know, sometimes they base it on memory, or sometimes they base it on some event or whatever, but there's, there's no real evidence, at least in the Western tradition, to say, "*Yes this is something that happened in 2010 or 2000 or 19 whatever the case might be.*" So that's why it's sort of important for me. And I suppose in what…regardless of the organization, or regardless of the event, I think it always should be documented. I think because of my interest in Africa and African American culture, you see, I documented all of those things. Hopefully, it provides evidence of all of us who came through here. /Laughs/.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, that's right.

DJEDJE: Came through here. And then I think, the other thing, this is something that...man what's his name...Mantle Hood, Mantle Hood. You know the fact that he went to Ghana and he created this film: *Atumpan: The Talking Drums of Ghana* [that was published in 1964 by the UCLA Institute of Ethnomusicology]. He didn't know that much about it [the *atumpan* drum tradition], but he was there [at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon] for a short time [during the early 1960s] and thought it was valuable and he went back and he came and he [made a film about it]. I think what was also the beauty of it, he used many of the students and faculty there in helping him put it together. And now that may not come across in the film because you know he's talking, he's the talking head, but that was sort of typical of what was [done] -- the types of film that you made during that time, this authoritative figure. It [the film] doesn't have or you don't have the person from the culture talking; you have this Western person who is talking [narrating the film], giving it authority; giving it legitimacy. So you have that, but I know, at least from talking with people, when he collected his research, he really relied on the students, the faculty, and people from that area [at the University of Ghana, Legon], to suggest to him what should be researched and what should be documented. And I think he…he gets, to some extent, some of their perspective. There are a few things in there that are not quite right, I'm told, but the fact that he was interested, you know, and he was interested in all of these recordings that he created; no one else was doing this. You know, the video, no one else was doing this.

ARMSTRONG: Which started our publications program.

DJEDJE: Yes, yes, yes! He was really a visionary. You know, he…he…I think he recognized, or maybe he was just feeling his way, of things that perhaps needed to be done in order to not only promote, but really give, give substance to what we're doing here [in ethnomusicology]. We're not just sitting in a classroom and talking to each other, but we are really, really challenging the educational system; challenging the way we learn.

ARMSTRONG: The way we learn.

DJEDJE: The way we learn. We're learning from people, from other cultures, and we're respecting them, and that's making us better people. I know that sounds so, so very cliché, but I think, you know that was extremely valuable. So I think that, that spirit of documenting and realizing the importance or significance of all this material, we need to preserve it in some way.

ARMSTRONG: Yes. Okay let's take a break.

DJEDJE: Okay.

ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Dr. DjeDje.

BREAK

Interview with Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

Donna Armstrong, Interviewer

April 12, 2013

The Green Room, 1230 Schoenberg Music Building, UCLA

PART THREE

Transcribed by Donna Armstrong, JoAnna Schindler, and Helen Yuan

(Transcription revised: January 2, 2014, August 31, 2016, and September 11, 2016)

ARMSTRONG: So…We're going to continue on with our discussion, and I want to talk a little bit more right now about your relationships within UCLA, and your influence…your various institutional relationships, and your influence on people—faculty and students—here at UCLA. Let's start with your relationship with the Afro-American Studies Center and the African Studies Center, which, of course, now Afro-American Studies is called the Bunche Center, but when you first started working with them, it was called the Center for Afro-American Studies, and now we have courses that are cross-listed. But could you tell us more about those early days, when you were part of their administration?

DJEDJE: Well…I think for all of us, the Afro-American Studies Center was really sort of this home base. Even though some of us had attended school at UCLA, and we established relationships—but that was at the student level. But once you became a professor here, it's this whole new…a whole new game. You're dealing with a whole lot of other individuals, a whole…another institution that is very, very…can be very, very racist. You know….

ARMSTRONG: And you're referring to…?

DJEDJE: I'm talking about the administration here at UCLA. They were just beginning to hire quite a few people of color, especially African Americans.

ARMSTRONG: And this was around…?

DJEDJE: 1978, around 1978, 1979…1980. A whole bunch of us were hired around the same time. Richard Yarborough [in English] was hired around this time, Robert Hill [in history] was hired around this time, the guy in sociology—I forget his name.

ARMSTRONG: Melvin Oliver.

DJEDJE: Melvin Oliver was hired around this time. So all of us, sort of this mass [of black professors], came in, and I don't know if this was an initiative from the administrative that said, *"Yes, we need to respond; these people are saying that we need to have more African Americans here."* People agitated for courses, more visibility of African Americans…So that was a mass [hiring of black professors]. Hal Fairchild.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, Hal Fairchild…
DJEDJE: Yeah. So…

ARMSTRONG: Psychology.

DJEDJE: Yes, [Hal Fairchild] in psychology…And then also the woman, um, Vicky…

ARMSTRONG: Vicky…

BOTH: Mays.

DJEDJE: All of us…

ARMSTRONG: Also in psychology…

DJEDJE: All of us came in around the same time, so Afro-American Studies Center was this sort of base….

ARMSTRONG: I see…

DJEDJE: …that held us together, helped us…

ARMSTRONG: Right…

DJEDJE: …to get through this maze of stuff. And so, um, I suppose, because the course that I taught on African American music, the "Afro-American Musical Heritage" [Music 154AB] was already established earlier on as cross-listed between Folklore and Afro-American Studies, and I guess Afro-American Music…no, no, no I take that back. It was really cross-listed between Folklore and Music. It was some time later before it was cross-listed with Afro American Studies. So…but…it [the UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies] was sort of a base for us to come together as a community…

ARMSTRONG: I see…

DJEDJE: …and help us maneuver through the maze of, um, you know, networks at UCLA as a faculty member. I think we also helped the Center because they were just beginning to sort of establish their um, their program, their undergraduate program. Sometimes they would want us to have input on their program. So I was pretty much in Afro-American Studies, and because Nketia taught the courses on Africa, he's the one who interfaced with African Studies. I didn't really become involved with African Studies until after he left, which was perhaps in the mid-1980s. And then I suppose my other involvement with an institution here was the Fowler program [Fowler Museum of Cultural History, also known as the

Fowler Museum at UCLA, was established in 1963 with special focus on the art and material culture, past and present, from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific.].

ARMSTRONG: Okay, the Fowler Museum…

DJEDJE: Yeah, the Fowler Museum, and um…um…What was the name of the director?

ARMSTRONG: Doran Ross?

DJEDJE: Doran Ross [served on the staff at the Fowler for many years, and was director of the museum from 1996-2001]. Doran Ross has always been interested in Africa. He's been to Ghana a million, a gazillion times [conducting research], and especially on the Asante culture. I think it was in the early nineties, he approached me about this idea of putting together an exhibit, a major exhibit that allowed them to display all of the musical instruments that the museum had collected over many years. You know, I think anthropologists, all of these old people, not old people -- these researchers from long ago. They go to different parts of Africa to collect materials, and they wanted to put them someplace, so the Fowler was the place. And at that time it was just put in storage; so he [Doran] thought it would be a good idea [to organize an exhibition that would allow the instruments to be placed on public display]. So he approached me about, perhaps, serving as a curator for something like this, and I said, *"Well, you know, it sounds somewhat interesting."* In order to get it off the ground, he thought it'd be a good idea to have, perhaps, a symposium on African music, and I suppose he found the money. This was really [a project he initiated]; he had the resources…resources either from his own budget or from elsewhere. And so, as a result of that, we invited major figures in the field of African music, like Nketia, who is no longer here; [he was still teaching at the University of Pittsburgh]. I think we invited, um...Akin Euba who came, and some other individuals whose names I can't remember. So that was a, sort of [the beginning of the plans for the exhibition. Organized by myself, the one-day symposium was held on February 23, 1996, in Room 1659 [the Gamelan Room] of the Schoenberg Music Building and included presentations by UCLA ethnomusicology faculty -- **Cheryl Keyes** ("The Africanization of Popular Music in the U.S.") and **Ali Jihad Racy** ("Africa and Arabia: Performance Traditions of the Arab Gulf Region") — and scholars from other institutions: **Lois Anderson** ("Regalia, Empowerment, and Status: Musical Instruments of East African Kingdoms"), **Ernest Brown** ("Transformation and Resilience in Caribbean Musical Instruments"), **Akin Euba** ("African Traditional Instruments in Neo-African Kingdoms"), **Lester Monts** ("Tradition, Islam, and Modernity: Music Celebrations of Death in a West African Society"), and **Cynthia Schmidt** ("Networks of Music, Work and Leisure: The Palmwine Guitar Styles of the Kru Mariners"). The event concluded with a presentation by **J. H. Kwabena Nketia** ("Sounds and Spectacle as Expressions of Consciousness").
https://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/files/acrobatfiles/ethnomusic/50th_anniv_african_music_symposium.pdf - Accessed 8 September 2016]

ARMSTRONG: And that was what year?

DJEDJE: I think this was 1996.

ARMSTRONG: 1996.

DJEDJE: This was a very small symposium, closed…primarily because this was supposed to be a working symposium. Even though it was open to the public, it was really an opportunity for us to really begin to think about it, to see a major project that he wanted to pursue, later on. So, as a result of that, that led to this "Year of African Music" that took place in 1999 and 2000…um, which was, at least in my opinion, was enormously successful, because it grew into something larger than I ever expected. He [Doran Ross] was able to get a partnership with other entities within the city of Los Angeles—the Los Angeles County Museum of Art [LACMA], as well as the Center for African America.

ARMSTRONG: California African American Museum.

DJEDJE: California African American Museum [CAAM}, which is [significant for] both of them are in downtown Los Angeles. So, whereas LACMA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, focused on these instruments as works of art, their focus was there. And then CAAM focused on, sort of, the functional aspects of, um, [of] these musical instruments. And here, at UCLA…no, I take that back. CAAM focused on the [African] Diaspora, you know, the African Americans and Diaspora [blacks in the Caribbean], whereas here [at the Fowler], we focused on, sort of, the functional aspects, looking at perhaps the instruments for court, or instruments for work, or instruments for whatever, these different occasions, these different contexts. So we collaborated in terms of programming.

But what was special for me was the fact that I was able to raise funds to bring in visiting artists. And what I did was to speak with my students at UCLA, in our department. I said, *"What do you think would be good? We are going to have this major event for a whole year. What kind of artist would you think would enhance our program?* And they're the ones who wanted to have musicians who performed contemporary music. They appreciated traditional and indigenous [music], but they felt as if we needed to bring attention to contemporary music. So I, you know, talked with various individuals and…and…there were certain recommendations, and so we were able to bring in someone from Mande culture, Cheick Tidiane-Seck. And what was ideal, sort of in the spirit of UCLA, they came in as teachers, respected teachers, teaching an academic course, and also, they taught a performance course. In the process of doing that, we decided to create a product – going back to archiving. Again to document that these events actually took place, and the documentation was documenting all of the courses that took place, so every class that anyone taught [was recorded with video]. It [the collection of recordings from these classes] is somewhere in the [Ethnomusicology] Archive, both the performance course and academic course.

But the students were so excited. [After] they learned all of this music, they didn't just want it to just dissipate into the air. They decided they wanted to go into a studio and actually make a recording. So we prepared [music material] after each concert, and went into a studio and we made these recordings. And I think I have to thank all of the administrators in all of these places -- African Studies, Fowler Museum as well, here at the UCLA [Department of Ethnomusicology], who supported, you know, they were all very, very supportive of these things. We made a recording of the music of Mande culture, which was Cheick-Tidiane Seck's [tradition]. [Born in 1953, Cheick-Tidiane Seck is a Malian musician, arranger, and composer, who specializes in keyboards and vocals. He has composed music and performed with a variety of African pop musicians, including Salif Keita (Mali), Youssou N'Dour (Senegal), Fela Kuti (Nigeria), Mory Kanté (Guinea); jazz performers (Hank Jones and Dee Dee Bridgewater), and rock

musician Damon Albarn (Rocket Juice and the Moon).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheick_Tidiane_Seck - Accessed 18 August 2016.]

We also made a recording of the person who came from Malawi, and his name is escaping me right now.

ARMSTRONG: Donald Kachamba.

DJEDJE: Yes, Donald Kachamba [Kachamba (1953-2001) was a composer and bandleader who also played the pennywhistle. Although he was born and raised in Malawi in Southeast Africa, he was noted for his performance of South African *kwela* music.]

He [Kachamba] was wonderful—very, very, very, very informative. And this was a good experience for him, because he had rarely gone off on his own. He always worked in collaboration with Gerhard Kubik [an Austrian ethnomusicologist who specialized in African music] in presenting his [Malawi] culture. So he was sort of uncomfortable being in a position where he's really the authority. You know, he's [Kachamba has] always been the authority; but he didn't have to have it [the English language] translated for him [at UCLA]. He did it himself [without Kubik]. And um, I know there was a lot of communication between Kubik and Donald Kachamba about [this arrangement].

ARMSTRONG: Who is Kubik…?

DJEDJE: Kubik is a very well-known, established ethnomusicologist. His area [of research] has primarily been, I think, in East Africa.

ARMSTRONG: Yes…

DJEDJE: But he's [Kubik has] done quite a bit of work in Bantu-speaking Africa, or East, Central, as well as Southern Africa. And he's been writing enormous publications, and he's also done work on the [African] Diaspora, here in the United States especially. So he and Kachamba—Kubik and Kachamba had already collaborated. [Born in 1934, Kubik has published over 300 articles and books based on his field work in Africa, Latin America, and the United States. He has compiled one of the largest collections of African traditional music, with over 25,000 recordings, archived at the Phonogrammachiv Wien in Vienna. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerhard_Kubik - Accessed 6 September 2016].

There's also Kachamba's brother, [Daniel] — they'd collaborate in terms of performance, and also academic presentations. But Kubik felt as if he needed to be here to help him. But we all felt as if, you know, Kachamba could do it himself, and so, um, it worked out well. In the end, we also were able to have a product from that particular[concert].

ARMSTRONG: A CD…

DJEDJE: A CD recording of that [musical tradition], along with a song book. [For CD recordings and song books by visiting artists from the Year of African Music, see *Cheick-Tidiane Seck. West African Music Meets Jazz*, Ethnomusicology@UCLA Artists Series Vol. 2; and *Donald Kachamba at UCLA*, Ethnomusicology@UCLA Artists Series Vol 3.]

ARMSTRONG: Yes, a song book, yes…

DJEDJE: A song book and a recording [for Seck and Kachamba]. And in the end [for that spring quarter], we had Joseph Shabalala come. [Joseph Shabalala (born 1941) is founder and music director of the South African a cappella choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, which is noted for its performance of *isicathamiya*, a South African popular music style that became popular during the 1960s.]

ARMSTRONG: Yes…

DJEDJE: Shabalala…[*Laughs*]

ARMSTRONG: [*Laughs*] Yes.

DJEDJE: Okay, sorry. Um…From South Africa, [Joseph Shabalala is the leader of the group] Ladysmith Black Mambazo. And instead of the group, we invited him as an individual, which was somewhat different. He was only here for two weeks, I guess, because of his visibility. Of all of the three, he was perhaps the most professional, in terms of his notoriety. He came with his manager, and actually his wife, and they participated here in not only courses for our students, but he made presentations in some of the other courses, and he also participated in our spring concert. We didn't do a product with him, because he's a different type of person. So that was something that occurred during this "Year of African Music," and I don't think anything like that [had] occurred [earlier at UCLA or the Los Angeles community].

It reminds me of almost like the "Pacific Standard Time [exhibitions] that took place in 2010, 2011 where [when] the Getty Museum gave money to all of these museums here in the city, and the city focused on Los Angeles, looking at Los Angeles art from 1945 to 1980. So [when] all of this collaboration [occurred], I thought back [to our Year of African Music programming] -- that we preceded that, you know, ten years earlier, even though it was only three [art institutions], it was the same sort of conception, the same idea. [Pacific Standard Time began in 2002 as a Getty initiative to recover the historical record of art in Southern California. Fueled by a series of Getty grants, it grew into a region-wide collaboration among more than 60 cultural institutions, culminating in a series of exhibitions and events from October 2011 to April 2012 across Southern California called *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980*. The initiative resulted in more than 40 publications documenting Los Angeles' impact on art history during the postwar years, dozens of traveling and related exhibitions all over the world, and unprecedented international press attention focused on Los Angeles' art scene. For more details, go to: http://www.getty.edu/pacificstandardtime/ - Accessed 19 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: It seems like, as I recall, a lot of students got all kinds of experience, side experiences, maybe, um, Karin Patterson [M.A. 1999; Ph.D. 2007]—did she do something to translate Zulu, or she did something with the African American Ensemble? She played some role, some leadership role with helping Joseph Shabalala work with the African American Ensemble. I think they performed a piece that he wrote, and they might've sung in Zulu or something like that and she helped them do that. You know, I think…anyway, I think the students all played organizing roles. I think you put them in those positions so that they would learn how to do that.

DJEDJE: Definitely so. Maybe this also goes back to my earlier time at UCLA. But there was always…again, the community; there was always the community between the faculty and the students. There was not a whole lot of separation between the two. There were a whole lot of opportunities that took place amongst us, and so social activities and also academic activities [occurred often]. So the distance [between students and faculty] wasn't there. We respected each other to such a degree that we felt comfortable giving the student this particular responsibility. I think sometimes—some people took advantage of the students. Sometimes students who took all of their time editing or copyediting their particular product [with the faculty member] rather than actually doing their own work, and they [students] may have delayed their progress to degree. But there was a different, yes, there was a different kind of spirit between the students, as well as the faculty. And so, yes, at that particular time, because it was the students, in my opinion, who had generated that idea, you know? My field has been really traditional African music. And even though I can teach about the contemporary, I did not feel myself as an expert. So they really had to take the lead. So not only Karin…. It's interesting…depending upon who the individual was…some students came to the project in different ways, and took on leadership roles. I think Amy Wooley [M.A. 1999; Ph.D. 2003] was very much interested in the music of Malawi and learning the guitar, and she even built or helped [Kachamba build a musical instrument. Christie Burns was one of several undergraduate students involved in Kachamba's performance ensemble at UCLA in fall 1999. Her experience working with Kachamba led her to include comments on her blog post; go to https://dulcimergirl.wordpress.com/2008/01/30/24/ - Accessed 19 August 2016.]

ARMSTRONG: Donald Kachamba…

DJEDJE: [Several students helped] Donald Kachamba to build this *babatoni*, which is like a washtub bass. You know, here in the United States we have the washtub bass [that was commonly used by black and white performers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries]. So she [Amy Wooley] took him to Home Depot to get him all of the materials, and to pull that together, and she actually wrote an article [that was published in the Kachamba songbook] on how to build a, you know, a *babatoni* [is constructed] So she and this guy Charles [Sharp, M.A. 2000; Ph.D. 2009] were very close and helpful to Kachamba.

ARMSTRONG: Sharp.

DJEDJE: Yes, Sharp…were very much involved in that particular project. And then Billy—what's his name?

ARMSTRONG: McCoy.

DJEDJE: Billy McCoy was instrumental in getting [Cheick Tidiane] Seck here. You know, he's the one who put that into my head and felt as if [Seck would be an excellent choice for a visiting artist at UCLA]. And what's so interesting is that he didn't really follow through with it. I'm not quite sure what happened. But he was the one who was very much involved with that. [During the late 1990s and early 2000s, Billy McCoy, a well-known jazz pianist who is active as a performer in the Southern California community, was a Jazz Studies major in the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology.]

But Seck was an individual who was like a sponge: whatever he came in contact with, he just absorbed. So he didn't necessarily have one or two people assisting him; he was just all over the place. He was in the Near East Ensemble, he was in the West African Ensemble, he was in the Indian Ensemble…I mean, and he was always inviting everyone to come and participate [in the performance course he was teaching]. And he was very much involved with the [Los Angeles] community, so he had all of these people, you know, Wolof or Mande, from the community, all just coming in. So that was a really, really a wonderful kind of experience there.

And then I suppose, again, Shabalala, um, I suppose Karin had a lot of contact with him, more so than anyone else, because at the masters [M.A.] level, her interest had been on music of the Zulu; she wrote a very important work on what she called "Pre-Colonial Music of the Zulu," because most research has been done on, say, what's happening now [contemporary culture], but very little had been done on the earlier times—indigenous music. [The complete title of Karin Patterson's M.A. thesis is "Zulu Traditional Performance Culture in the Precolonial Context" (1999).]

So yes, students were either…they were all taking pictures, they were also behind the camera, they were the ones who were sort of doing things in the studio. They were doing various things in terms of putting together the project, you know the end product [the CD recording and song book]. So yes, they had very important roles. So it's similar to what Birgitta Johnson did with that particular project [Gospel Archiving in Los Angeles, GALA], and see how it leads to something else, later on in life that helps them.

ARMSTRONG: Well that kind of leads to a question that I wanted to ask you. I didn't want to skip over the oral history program, what you did with Professor Nketia, but we can talk about that in a minute. And that is, working with Ph.D. students. As we know, you've been influential with undergraduate students, with your course, your undergraduate courses, but when you start working with Ph.D. students on their major projects, that's a whole other undertaking. Could you tell us a little bit about your Ph.D. students? What they have done, research-wise? Where they are now? Just a little about that…

DJEDJE: Just a few weeks ago, I was honored by many of my students, which just took me by surprise. I've never felt such a joy, appreciation, from individuals in that way. So unbeknownst to me, there was this project that was being organized. I understand that Kimasi Browne [M.A. 1995; Ph.D. 2005], who is now a professor at the School of Music at Azusa Pacific University, he may have been the one who sort of spear-headed this several years ago, three or four or more years ago, and I knew nothing about it. And he, along with Jean Kidula [Ph.D. 1998; who is now professor of music at the University of Georgia, Athens], the two of them sort of began the groundwork for pulling together a book that became a festschrift, and it was presented to me March 6, 2013, at Azusa Pacific. [The title of the book is: *Resiliency and Distinction: Beliefs, Endurance and Creativity in the Musical Arts of Continental and Diaspora Africa. A Festschrift in Honor of Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje*, edited by Kimasi L. Browne and Jean N. Kidula. Richmond, California, Music Research Institute, 2013.]

So, after I learned about this, it caused me to think about, well what did I do; what did I do to be deserving of something like this? It is not often that anyone puts all of their time and energy in pulling together a festschrift. I've done it. I've done two volumes. And I know how much work is involved in doing this. And so, at this presentation that I…that they organized for me…and I had the opportunity to make a few remarks. And I think I said that, [from all of my students], I learned from them. I learned as

much from them…as I learned from them…no, that I gave them. And I think what is most…what I'm most proud of…is that they all blossomed in their own way. I didn't necessarily have a typecast of, *"Yes, if you're going to go to UCLA, you have to be this, this, this, this, this in order to be successful."* Because everyone is different. Everyone brings to the table their own talents. So whatever your talents are, as long as you work hard, and you develop it, it's all fine.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: So all of my students have done different things.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: You know, some of them have gone into academia, and become successful at universities. Some of them have gone into so-called "applied ethnomusicology," and they've become successful. Some of them have done independent work, in their own way, and become successful. And so it makes me think that maybe when I was sort of nurturing them, I was telling them that you can do what you want to do. It's always going back to what I'm always telling myself [and] what somebody told me: *"You can march to the beat of your own drum."* What you do, you decide, just make sure you always do your best. And I'm going to be proud of you, and I'm going to support you in whatever you do. And once they get on board and they demonstrate that they're serious…and they're willing to work hard, just like people taught me to work hard, I wanted to be challenged…and I think if you do that, I mean, the world is limitless in terms of what you can achieve, yourself. I will respect, and I think you would've done everything you could do. So making them feel sort of special in their own way, not saying that you have to be like this or like this or like this. So if I could get into them [and let them know] that yes, you're special, and you can do it…I would say that if I can do it, if I can get through this, you can do it, too.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: And after they decide what they want to do and just…taking your time to do it. Just…it may take some people [more time to complete their project and decide what they want to do].

ARMSTRONG: Very systematic.

DJEDJE: It may take certain people, what, five, six, seven, eight, ten years? It might take some people two years. It all depends upon the circumstances. But what works for one person may not be what works for you. But it's all okay. It's really all okay.

ARMSTRONG: And they come to you with the idea, and, you know…

DJEDJE: Well sometimes they come to me with the idea. Sometimes they don't have an idea. There's this person—Kwaku Person-Lynn [Ph.D. 1987]. I think he may have been my first [doctoral student]. It was between either Willie Collins [Ph.D. 1988] or Kwaku Person-Lynn. It's interesting, many of my first [doctoral] students were all males. It was not until the mid-nineties or whatever that we began to see females, and I think the other thing is that I had a diverse group of people. [During my teaching career UCLA, I served as chair or co-chair of thirty M.A., C.Phil. and Ph.D. committees. Listed in alphabetical order, the names of students and their degrees are: Jesus Alviso (M.A. 1993; Ph.D. [co-chair] 2002);

Francis Awe (M.A. 1998); Kimasi Browne (M.A. 1995, Ph.D. 2005); Abimbola Cole (Ph.D. [co-chair] 2016); Willie Collins (Ph.D. 1988); Steven Cornelius (Ph.D. 1989); Leigh Creighton (M.A. 1997, C.Phil. 1999); Lee Cronbach (C.Phil. 1992); Kevin Delgado (M.A. 1997; Ph.D. [co-chair] 2001); Dwight Dickerson (Ph.D. 1998); Valerie Dickerson (M.A. 2004, Ph.D. 2009); Amy Frishkey (M.A. 2000); David Gould (M.A. 1999); Clarence Henry (Ph.D. [co-chair] 2000); Michael Holmes (Ph.D. 1998); Kenneth Igarashi (M.A 1986; Ph.D. 1997); Laurel Isbister (M.A. 1999); Chuks Iwotor (C.Phil. [co-chair] 1992); Birgitta Johnson (M.A. 2002, Ph.D. 2008); Jean Kidula (Ph.D. 1998); Scott Linford (Ph.D. 2016); James Makubuya (Ph.D. 1995); Charles Moore (Ph.D. 1999); Karin Patterson (M.A. 1999, Ph.D. 2007); Kwaku Person-Lynn (Ph.D. 1987); Lauren Poluha (M.A. 2010); Christopher Provezano (M.A. 1997); Larry Robinson (M.A. 2012); Jesse Ruskin (M.A. 2006, Ph.D. 2013); Brian Schrag (Ph.D. 2005); Danica Stein-Hunt (M.A. 1994); Katherine Stuffelbeam (Ph.D. 2014); Ty-Juana Taylor (Ph.D. 2016); Sarah Truher (M.A. 1997); Kathleen Noss Van Buren (M.A. 2002, Ph.D. 2006); and Amy Wooley (M.A. 1999).]

You know, although maybe the majority were African American, but there were also those who were not African American. And there were some who'd work with me, in terms of Ph.D., but there are other people who I just sort of mentored, perhaps maybe they were working with someone else because of their area of specialization. But we always just talked or did different things in order to help them just get through the system. But I remember, with Kwaku-Person-Lynn...he had worked with Nketia, and Nketia left, and he was just there by himself, and he was doing something very unusual because he was not in either program, neither department. He decided he wanted to do an independent Ph.D. through the administration so he could formulate his own program [of study]. He was just all over the place, trying to figure out [what he wanted to do]. And he was interested in so-called popular music, and he was interested in some of the changes that were happening in the music industry, and I said, *"Well, what about change? You know, change. Just looking at that as an issue to determine whatever you want to do."* And he was sort of sifting through certain things like Al Bell, [an African American producer-record executive] who used to be one of the administrators, one of the leaders [or co-owners] of Stax. [Stax Records is a record label originally based in Memphis, Tennessee. Founded in 1957, the label changed its name in 1961 to Stax, which is an acronym for the two white siblings and who were also the founding business partners (Jim Stewart and his sister Estelle Axton – STewart/AXton = Stax) of the label. After the death of the label's biggest star, Otis Redding, in 1967 and the discontinuation of its distribution deal with Atlantic records in 1968, Stax continued under the supervision of its new co-owner Al Bell, an African American who expanded the label's operations to compete with Motown Records that was based in Detroit. When several factors caused Stax to dissolve, Al Bell re-located to Los Angeles and, in the 1990s, established his own marketing firm called Al Bell Marketing in Los Angeles (shortened to Bellmark Records). In Los Angeles, his groups included the Dells, the Next Movement, Rance Allen, Johnny Guitar Watson, and rap acts Tag Team and Duice. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stax_Records; http://www.allmusic.com/artist/al-bell-mn0000611888/biography - Accessed 19 August 2016.]

But then he [Bell] came to Los Angeles, and he became sort of a leader [producer] of some of the groups here; and then he went off by himself [and started his own record companies. I encouraged Person-Lynn to start] looking at the changes that occurred in his [Bell's] life and the music he was able to produce. He [Person-Lynn] began to look at some of the changes in the types of music that became popular, and what were the factors that caused that to happen? So I remember it was not until a little later, he [Person-Lynn] said after that meeting [we had before writing the dissertation], he said, *"Change. I never thought about*

change before!" [*Laughs*] He said that's when he began to go through the literature and try to figure out how he was going to do this or that. And I guess I just didn't realize anything. [As Person-Lynn explained to me about Bell's life], I was just talking, just talking…

ARMSTRONG: Well he threw out some thoughts, and you probably gathered those thoughts and just sent them back to him…

DJEDJE: Right, right, right.

ARMSTRONG: That's good. Yeah. So…um…well. And then you eventually became chairman of the Department [of Ethnomusicology].

DJEDJE: Yes.

ARMSTRONG: How did that come about? You know, once your daughter is grown, I mean, I imagine certain things must've come together in your life before you would decide to take on that role. That's a lot of responsibility, a lot of work.

DJEDJE: Yeah…yeah. I think like other things that have occurred, it's not something I sought; it's something that came to me. And I suppose some of the dynamics or politics that were happening at the university, or within our department… um…some people asked me if I would consider becoming chair, and, again, I really needed to think about this. I didn't think I had the necessary kinds of skills, because I knew my people. [*Laughs*] I've been in this department since 1979, and it's [not easy being chair].

ARMSTRONG: Tell me the years you were chair.

DJEDJE: I was chair from 2005 to 2010. Um…so at some point, I guess I also was director of the Ethnomusicology Archive, and I really loved being director of the Archive.

ARMSTRONG: You were director of the Archive from…?

DJEDJE: I was director of the Archive from 2000 to 2007. So becoming chair of the Department meant or implied that I had to give up the directorship of the Archive, and I really liked being director of the Archive. You know, I think, you know we'd done some things, and we'd created a certain kind of synergy, and things were beginning to happen, and I didn't really want to [give that up]. I don't know, I'm not sure. Other people could've come in and done the very same thing, and I think by this time we had other faculty of the department, within the department, who could really pick up the gavel of the Archive and take it to the next level. So I thought about it, I thought about it. And then I began to look around the table and thought, well, who would be the chair of the Department if I didn't become chair? And I began to say, well, maybe I can. Maybe I can. This was um…this was um, um how should I put this? I think it [being department chair] caused me to pull together a lot of, perhaps, experiences that I've had before, but putting it all together into one particular job. I'm a person who likes to be sort of organized. I don't know if people realize it, but I like to be organized, and having things [structured and in order].

ARMSTRONG: I've realized that… [*Both laugh*]

DJEDJE: Not my students! I get, you know, [on] course evaluations, students say, "*Well, she's very disorganized.*" And I'm thinking, *"Well, what in the world? Where did that come from?*" I think whatever's on the list [or student evaluation form] that makes them angry, because they are not doing as well [in class] as they want to, they just check that off. But I consider myself to be somewhat organized, and I think one would need to be organized when you're dealing with all of these different things that would be necessary [in serving as head of a department]. And then I guess, the other thing, I don't mind serving, I don't mind serving. And I think being the leader of something…you're serving, more so than anything else. I'm not a person who feels as if they need to be out front. I'm willing to stay in the background and shape it or whatever, so that whatever I'm supporting is out front. And in that way, that brings prosperity to everybody and everything involved. So I didn't mind serving. There were certain things in the Department that I felt needed a little shaping that I felt as if maybe I could do…But I didn't realize that at the time.

ARMSTRONG: At the time, as you evolved, as you were in the position, you realized what needed to be done?

DJEDJE: Yes. Yes. I think I came at a time when we were going through an eight-year review. And the previous chair, Tim Rice [who came to UCLA as a faculty member in 1987 and was head of the department from 1995-2005], had sort of initiated the first one [eight-year review] and had gotten a response from the administration on the issues or problems or things [that needed to be resolved]. So we [faculty in the department] had to respond to that. And I suppose it normally takes about a whole year [to develop a response]. And one of the things I think I contributed most, at least from my perspective, is the [re-organization of the] undergraduate program, because prior to becoming chair, I knew nothing about the undergraduate program. Nothing. And I'm in the department, a member of the [Music] Department since 1979; we became a Department [of Ethnomusicology] in 1989. I mean, the jazz program came [into existence] in 1996. So I'm a member of this [department], and I knew nothing about it. And I'm thinking, "*Why? Why is that the case?"* I mean, to me, it is at the undergraduate level that you're going to see the growth of ethnomusicology. Just like maybe during, um, Mantle Hood's time…he thought of [new ways to stimulate interest in ethnomusicology]. It [the UCLA ethnomusicology program] was [known and successful] partly maybe [because of] the graduate level, but I think more importantly, it was the performance ensembles [that stimulated interest in ethnomusicology]. And who's performing in these ensembles? Both graduate and to some extent maybe undergraduate students. So this is where you're really going to see the growth -- the growth.

And I think, when we established the undergraduate program, we did it because of pressure. The administration said, *"Well, if you're going to become a department, you have to have an undergraduate program. You can't just be a graduate program."* And so I think we just put together something quick and easy. Or what we thought [students would be interested in]. Maybe it wasn't quick. But we didn't [have any models]. No one [academic institution] in any part of the world had created an undergraduate program in ethnomusicology. So we thought our undergraduate students would be interested in becoming clones of us—scholars or researchers. And I guess they [the administration] gave us sort of a time limit, in terms of how many students we needed to have, over either a three, four, or five-year period. And I think

maybe the number sixty [was a goal for the number of students that should be enrolled]. And I don't remember if this was over a three year or four-year [time period]. But I remember Nazir, you know, going to conferences, announcing to all of our colleagues that we were establishing a department, and they thought we were off our rocker. No one thought that would really work. Who would be interested in studying ethnomusicology? And, more importantly, [who would be interested in] an undergraduate program? You're [also] thinking, *"How you're going to get students [enrolled] in this length of time?"* If I remember, we were able to achieve that number—sixty—almost before, half, before the time period they were going to give to us. Whether it was five years, and maybe we did it in three, I forget. I think this was during the time of Charlotte Heth [Ph.D. 1975]. [Charlotte Heth and I had been classmates; she began her graduate training in ethnomusicology at UCLA in 1970, the same year I started. She already had a master's degree, so she completed her Ph.D. degree much earlier than those of us who started with a B.A. She served as chair of the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology from 1990 to 1992.]

Maybe Charlotte Heth. Maybe Charlotte, maybe Nazir—I forget exactly. But the students that were attracted to our program were sort of a mismatch to what we were. A lot of the students, I think, were students whose parents wanted them to get a degree in music. But these are students who perhaps had been in their garage performing rock music all their lives, and they were interested in rock music, or someone who had been a gospel musician, performing gospel music by ear, oral tradition, all their lives, or either just a student who has learned music in an oral tradition sort of way. They were not interested in scholarship; they were interested in performance. They were interested in creativity; using this music to be creative. And so the program that we created just didn't really, really I think, service their needs at all. We were just…we heard them, but we didn't hear them. I think when we had our eight-year reviews, that [issue] came up, and I don't know if we paid any attention to it. I don't think that the faculty, generally, were really interested in it [the undergraduate program]. You know, we were interested in our graduate students. We were interested in our own research.

ARMSTRONG: Maybe they felt…what could they…what could they…It's a big issue. A big problem. Not easy.

DJEDJE: Right, and we were interested in serving, I mean, we were servicing our performance [ensembles], but not only our performance, but our undergraduate courses. But we didn't have any time, and we didn't feel as if we were trained to deal with an undergraduate program. I guess, at the heart of it, [much of it] had to do with music theory—world music theory—and other kinds of core courses that we felt as if this degree needed to make it comparable to what someone received in a music department. So I think, at that level, I was able, at least I was [department chair] at the right time, in order to really say, *"Okay. This is something that needs to be done. Let's do it."*

ARMSTRONG: Let's do it. Okay.

DJEDJE: And I have to thank the faculty; they were very supportive.

ARMSTRONG: So what did you do? Describe the changes that took place that you created in the undergraduate program.

DJEDJE: Okay, it's not me. It was not me, now. These were ideas; that's what was most important. Not what I thought, but these [were] ideas from the faculty, especially the students.

ARMSTRONG: Right, started from the students.

DJEDJE: The students. The students in that previous year had indicated they wanted to have internships. Many of them wanted to go out and become either producers or administrators or this, and they wanted some experience to do that. Some of them wanted to become, I guess, composers, and they wanted to do that. A few wanted to go into academia and become scholars. So we had to listen to our students. So, as a result of that, the faculty decided that, perhaps, we should have, I guess you would call them tracks. I don't know if you'd call them tracks. But they are not really tracks. What was the term?

ARMSTRONG: Streams is another word.

DJEDJE: Yeah, we had another word.

ARMSTRONG: Well, concentrations.

DJEDJE: Concentrations. The other big thing we had to come to terms with was to have these concentrations.

ARMSTRONG: No. Emphases.

DJEDJE: Okay, but we also had to come to terms with [the fact] that we had two separate concentrations. One was jazz, going its way; we had to accept the fact that they were performers. And the other thing we had to come to terms with was that this was world music. At that time, we [the ethnomusicology faculty] did not want to use the term "world music" for that concentration. For us, it was ethnomusicology, and that was sort of a mind-switch. In other words, no longer was it going to be an academic sort of emphasis; students weren't going to be clones of us. We were going to open it up so that people could emphasize, you know, place emphasis on different things that they were interested in.

ARMSTRONG: Career paths.

DJEDJE: Yeah, career paths that they were really interested in. So we had the, you know, the jazz concentration, and then we had the world music [concentration]. And for the world music, as I said, because students were interested in composition or performance, you know, we had [a] "performance-composition," sort of emphasis. We had sort of what we called the "scholarly emphasis." And then we also had what we called the "public ethnomusicology" emphasis. There were faculty who did not like the term "applied ethnomusicology." So there was a lot of negotiation. There was a whole lot of, sort of, um, people sort of compromising and coming up with something else. So those were the sort of [the] three sort of emphases in world music, and we felt as if there needed to be a…a…what do you call it? Some kind of stone. Um…

ARMSTRONG: Capstone?

DJEDJE: Capstone at the end of each one, and what is so fascinating…What we created was…looked on paper so good that other departments on campus began to use what we had done as a model for their

undergraduate curriculums. So I think I came in at the right time. The other thing is the jazz program. The jazz concentration. We had to get over the fact that it was not a jazz department; it was not a jazz program. It was a jazz concentration. That took some understanding. I don't know if people still realize that. It really needed to have a much more structured curriculum. I think at that point, it was just a whole lot of performance—loose performance—but in terms of the academic curriculum, it needed a lot of work. And I didn't think the people we had in place teaching those courses were … the right teachers to do this. They were exceptional, they were wonderful, they were beautiful, [and] they were talented. But they were not the right people to provide our students with the kind of training that they needed to say they had a degree in ethnomusicology with a concentration in world music. So there were some shuffles here and there in terms of new faculty taking on [new responsibilities], and that was sort of [was] a very difficult time. But it all happened. So that's just the curriculum itself. But to me the service to the students [was lacking]. I know that when I became chair, and I used to interact with the counselor who is in charge of the undergraduate program, and I said, *"How do you make decisions about what students should do?"* And he said, *"Oh, well I just come to the chair and we sit down and make a decision."* And I said, *"What? There's no discussion, no faculty discussion? There's no input from other people?"* I could not do that. So very, very quickly, I began to use the executive committee in a way that I thought would be beneficial to the students, the students collectively, in the whole process.

ARMSTRONG: Let the faculty know what's going on.

DJDEDJE: Yes. For students, and then you have different people who sit on the executive committee, and they begin to learn. It was only when I began to learn, I mean, participating in all of this, that, I began to learn about it. And so, to me, I think that's one of the things [that I contributed].

ARMSTRONG: To affect the process. And how our…our sort of organizational structure, how we, how we do things. The process of how work gets accomplished. And maybe make it more participatory? Is that what you're suggesting?

DJEDJE: Yes, yes, yes. I think sometimes when students, or not students, students and faculty…Once you are required to participate in something, I think you have a little more invested interest in it. When you're sitting on the side of the table, or sitting on the benches, and it's just happening, and it's [activities within the department] are presented in the faculty [meetings] every day, but unless you [are] actively there getting your hands dirty—then you become much more invested in it. And I think, to a certain extent, I think the faculty appreciated that. Maybe.

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: And I think the other thing that I think I gave—I reached out to the larger community of UCLA. To me, that was the spirit of what we used to do when we were students here—at least, when I was a student here. UCLA ethnomusicology is not just within these four walls. It's in the community, Los Angeles community, and it's in the national community, and it's in the international community, and so I felt as if it was very important to connect with them.

ARMSTRONG: Send emails out…

DJEDJE: And this was done through sending emails out, becoming much more actively involved in our publications [program, such as] our newsletters, and our letters [quarterly letters or reports that I as a department chair sent to students, faculty, staff, and alumni. All of these initiatives and information became extremely useful when the Department decided to organize the celebration, "Fifty Years of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, 1960-2010." https://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/celebrating-50-years - Accessed September 11, 2016].

ARMSTRONG: The technology helped, right?

DJEDJE: Technology helped. I know that at the very beginning, people would grumble, grumble, *"How am I going to do this? I don't know how to do that. I'm already doing this!"* But then I think sometimes, when this was presented and you realized it could be done. I remember, you know, you were saying, *"Well, can I really do this? I'm already doing all of these other sorts of things."* The same thing for the woman in publications. Eventually, she thought that perhaps it was too much for her. But you just don't know that…I used to get emails from these people around the world: *"Thank you, Jackie. It's so nice to know what's happening at UCLA."* Or either you go to the meeting [scholarly meetings of ethnomusicologists that took place within the United States and different parts of the world] and they would say, *"Oh, I'm so glad to hear this or to hear this."* You have people who are in Zambia who have no notion of what is happening around the world, except for what they see in the media or what they see on CNN or whatever. So to get something, you know a [digital, electronic] newsletter, something from us, giving them [information on] what is happening in our own little world, here, that caused them to be reminded of the days they were here. But it also allows them to see what's happening in the future and what can happen. Many times they would ask me to send them copies of our curriculum, because they learned about what we're doing, and they want to try it out. I remember when I did go to Zambia, I was asked to actually lecture on ethnomusicology. You know, what are we doing at UCLA? People wanted [to know], they wanted that. They want it because this is so very, very different from other people, what people are doing around the world. Maybe that's the reason people are still sort of dissatisfied with a Western music curriculum—because there's no other difference out there, or the people who are trying to make the difference are so steeped in Western music, it doesn't really, really, really work. And so they're really interested, many people, around [the world], you know, our [former] students [who now teach in different parts of the world].

ARMSTRONG: Well, I think during this time period, we've also had this huge growth in websites, and you know, just emails, and everything on the computer has improved, so it came together at the right time. You know, using these technologies…

DJEDJE: Right, right. I was determined to do it, even if we had to do it the old-fashioned way. What is interesting is that some of these other organizations [have gone digital]. SEM, now has moved to the electronic newsletter. Somewhat very similar to what we did, what, five or ten years ago?

ARMSTRONG: Yeah, that's great. You know, I wanted to sort of move to this idea of your mentor, and just mentoring, you know, we've been talking about your students, and we're going to come back around to…I know you said you've had a number of mentors, but you do have one mentor in particular who's still with us, fortunately, and he was there at the beginning, he is there now…You have pulled together, as you just told me a little while ago, two festschrifts in his honor, and maybe have been responsible for

having an oral history done on his life. Could you tell us more about your relationship with Professor Kwabena Nketia and how it has evolved over the years…? And yeah, and where it is now? Tell us about the oral history.

DJEDJE: Okay, um, I just want to correct you: it was one festschrift—one festschrift. But it was in two volumes. And one of the reasons there were two volumes is because with the very first one, everyone just [wanted to be involved]. There were so many people that wanted to participate and contribute, so we [decided to publish a second volume].

ARMSTRONG: Well start with that, rather than the oral history. When did the first one happen?

DJEDJE: The festschrift…I think the first one [the first volume] was published in 1989, and maybe the third one [the second volume] in 1992. [The two volumes are: *African Musicology: Current Trends. Volume. 1. A Festschrift Presented to J.H. Kwabena Nketia*. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center & African Arts Magazine and Crossroads Press/African Studies Association (1989); and *African Musicology: Current Trends, Volume 2. A Festschrift Presented to J.H. Kwabena Nketia*. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA International Studies and Overseas Program (ISOP)/The James S. Coleman African Studies Center and African Studies Association Press (1992).]

And I should also acknowledge that it was William Carter, [co-editor of the first volume], who was one of the [first African American] faculty members here at UCLA. In fact, he was my teacher to a certain degree. He taught the course African American Musical Heritage, Afro American Musical Heritage, when I was a student, here at UCLA. [William G. Carter (1940-1993) worked as an acting assistant professor in the UCLA Department of Music from 1971 to 1976. I was one of his students when he taught the Afro-American Musical Heritage course during the 1971-1972 academic year. Carter obtained all of his musical training at UCLA, receiving the B.A. in 1967; the M.A. in 1971; and the Ph.D. in 1984. He accepted a full-time teaching position in the Music Department at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona in 1976 and served as department chair from 1985 to 1992.]

ARMSTRONG: So I see, he preceded you in teaching the course….

DJEDJE: I think prior to that, there may have been some people in Folklore, or maybe some other part-time people. [The Afro-American Musical Heritage course was first offered during the 1970-1971 academic year. It was a cross-listed course between Folklore and Music and taught by Willie Ruff, an African American who was a lecturer in the UCLA Music Department from 1967 to 1971. In addition to the course on Afro-American music, Ruff also taught courses in jazz.]

But he [Carter] taught it for about a year or two. But I think the Department was trying to pressure him to finish his Ph.D., and when he didn't finish his Ph.D., then that's when they hired me to come in. So he was the one who really came up with the idea of the festschrift. He and Nketia were very close. I think they probably knew each other before I knew Nketia, because William Carter was already a student at UCLA before I came here in 1970, and I think Nketia had already been coming [to teach at UCLA] for several years before that, part-time. And they had a very close relationship; you know they were very friendly with each other — much more of a friend relationship as opposed to teacher and student. So he [William Carter] is the one who came to me and asked if I would co-edit with him a festschrift in Nketia's

honor. As we proceeded, however, at the time, he may have been chair of his music department at Cal Poly Technic University in Pomona; he didn't have a lot of time to spend on the actual details of putting together a festschrift. I think when people go into these things they don't realize how much work is involved. So he didn't have a whole lot of time. So to some extent, the hands-on stuff [especially the copy-editing]—because I was at UCLA and that was the type of thing that was expected of a professor in terms of scholarship—I began to take on a lot of the responsibilities. And I think with the second volume, although we both co-edited, but since I was doing so much of the work, I thought it might be good to have my name listed as editor, as opposed to co-editor. But he came up with the idea. Nketia is a very special person in the music world of Africa or ethnomusicology. He's a very soft-spoken person, a very brilliant person, I think, but he would never let you know that. But he's also what I call the Asantehene, [which is the name (or title) for the monarch or ruler of the Asante people and kingdom in Ghana. Because Nketia had so many leadership positions at the University of Ghana, Legon, I jokingly used to tell him that he was the Asantehene.]

At Legon, he was the director of the Institute of African Studies and the director of the School of Performing Arts, which are two different things [academic units]. So he's always been in leadership positions, and he's always had people underneath him, doing things [for him]; that's why I call him the Asantehene – [he had] someone to this and that. So he expected you to move and do different sorts of things [on his behalf or for him]. When he came to UCLA, you didn't have that -- [he didn't have] people to do those things. His students, whether we realized it or not, we used to do those things for him. We would take him to lunch or dinner, wherever. He didn't drive, so we would be driving him this place or [that place]. If he had this particular event, you're going to accompany him there. So all of us, in our own way, provided him with the assistance that he was used to when he was in Ghana. So when you're doing all of these things for him, you begin to get to know the individual—in a very professional way, a scholarly way—but you also begin to know him as a human being, in a personal way. And remember I was telling you, the distance between faculty and students was not that great, and this was not only with my relationship with Nketia. We also found that…especially found that in Hood's relationship with some of the students he interacted with…. Maybe there're some people [faculty] who kept a distance, but in most cases, you saw them inviting students over to their houses quite a bit, and having meals together quite a bit, and having a whole lot of social activities together quite a bit.

But Nketia was very instrumental in me, I think, becoming what I've become. You know, I told you earlier about him sort of shaping what my dissertation might be, and so I think it was much more, sort of, inspirational, inspiration rather than hands-on, which is sort of different from what I do with my students. I'm much more hands-on. I guess Nketia, he was at a certain level. He…I don't think he…he felt it was his responsibility. He didn't have the time to be hands-on with people. If you had sort of a conceptual idea, you could present it to him, and he would begin to riff [discuss it with you] for about thirty minutes to an hour. If you didn't have a tape recorder, and sometimes you wished you did have a tape recorder to record what he said, because if you go to him the next day, he has totally forgotten, even though it was powerful – words of wisdom. But he could just riff on a particular topic. I say riff not in a very negative way, but in a way that just…speaking so profoundly about an issue or a topic, regardless of what it might be, in the field of ethnomusicology, or even in African music. So he was that sort of that inspirational person who I always tried to please, in my own work, to try to think that it was worthy, to think that, yes, if this is something that I think he would approve of, it would be ok. Toward the end, I was pretty much

on my own. I would always say [to him] that, "*You are the reason that my dissertation was about 1500 pages, because you did not help me when I needed you to help me."* [*Laughs*]. [My dissertation, entitled "The One-String Fiddle in West Africa: A Comparison of Hausa and Dagomba Traditions" (1978), is 1476 pages in length and divided into two volumes. While volume one is concerned with historical and cultural background, aspects of performance practice, and music analyses, volume two includes transcriptions of songs texts and music by all of the fiddlers I interviewed and recorded.]

ARMSTRONG: Wow. Fifteen hundred pages.

DJEDJE: Fifteen hundred pages in length, and a lot of it was a transcription. Transcriptions of texts, you know—song texts and translation [of texts], and also transcription of music. I listened to the music very, very carefully, and I transcribed a whole lot of stuff. So the dissertation itself is about five to six hundred pages, and then the rest of it is something…you know, a lot of it is transcriptions. But towards the end, maybe it was my desire, remember I told you, I was working on my dissertation for three years…writing, writing, writing. In actuality, you're writing, but you're not seriously writing. Then, when I found out I was with child, I decided, and maybe I just went a little too quickly for him. I said, "*I'm ready to finish."* And maybe he didn't believe me. And I sent him things, I sent him things, and he didn't respond. And then, when I had finished, and I thought it was in a condition to be defended, I wrote to him and said, *"I am coming to UCLA to defend my dissertation."* I had to take it in to my own hands:*" I'm coming to UCLA to defend my dissertation."* And then I came, and he arranged whatever was necessary to defend the dissertation, and I think at that time when I came, and he saw me, then he realized that I was pregnant. [*Laughs*] I was pregnant! He said, *"Oh...yes!"* But then the thing that he told me that should not be recorded or whatever…he said, "*You should not have any more children."*

ARMSTRONG: Okay…

DJEDJE: [*Laughs*] Again, he's trying to plan my life!

ARMSTRONG: Yes.

DJEDJE: In other words, I guess he understood the responsibilities of having a child, and how that could affect your career, you know, your academic career, your scholarly career, and maybe he saw things that he wanted me to accomplish, and having two or three children probably was not something that… [would have allowed me to be successful as an academician].

ARMSTRONG: That's like a different career path…

DJEDJE: Yeah, yeah. But…just to…sort of, an interesting note about this: I'm married, and I came and I am defending my dissertation. And one of the things he invited me to do when I was here [is] to present my material to various students. And he invited me to a seminar, and at that seminar was one of his doctoral students, or post-doctoral students. He was Eddie Meadows. He was in that particular seminar, and, therefore, that's when I met him. And he likes to make the joke that when I was making my presentation—I'm five weeks pregnant— no, I'm five <u>months</u> pregnant now—And he's telling me I'm winking at him!

ARMSTRONG: Oh...

DJEDJE: [*Laughs*]

ARMSTRONG: Okay…

DJEDJE: The reason I'm saying that is because I'm now married to Eddie Meadows, and I always like to tell him, *"I didn't even know you were in the seminar. I'm just doing my own work and going back to live my life [with my husband, Antoine K. DjeDje, in Alabama]."*

ARMSTRONG: Yeah. Well, you know, something that's occurring to me as you're bringing it all together—when you're talking about Nketia, and when you're talking about your students, and just thinking about the field of ethnomusicology—I'm not an ethnomusicologist but I do observe ethnomusicologists—there's a comparison that I would make to these musical traditions that are passed, and the method that they're passed—the oral transmission method—sometimes from father to son; they're passed by close proximity to the teacher. I look at these Indian pedagogical techniques and the closeness you live; you're supposed to go and live with your teacher. The relationship of teacher to student in the master musician, the music world in various cultures…. It somehow, it does seem to mirror that among scholars. You know, it has to be close, there's a lot that you cannot transmit. There's a lot that has to be transmitted just by close proximity. Is that the case? And is your relationship with your mentors somewhat of a metaphor for what really needs to take place? Or is that something that's a thing of the past and it's not taking place as much now? What do you think of this teacher-student relationship?

DJEDJE: I'm not sure… Yes, I think that's something that is very important—so important that when we established our new department, when we came to exist as the Department of Ethnomusicology, one of the things, one of several things, that Nazir Jairazbhoy suggested was the fact that we needed to assign all of our students to a mentor. And he thought it needed to be formal. He thought it was just so important. He believed that his career would not be what it was if it had not been between a mentor and mentee relationship between whomever he worked with, I forget who the person is. [Arnold A. Bake, a professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, was Jairazbhoy's mentor. Jairazbhoy completed his Ph.D. degree at SOAS in 1971.]

But he [Nazir] thought that was so essential, so integral, to the learning experience. Not everything happens in the classroom, in a formal setting. There's a whole lot that happens in informal settings—very morally-correct informal settings. I'm not talking about anything that would be unethical. But yes, I think that's very, very essential. Unfortunately, in —maybe I'm not sure, I was not here when that occurred, even though I was [a faculty member] I don't know when this occurred but—there was a switch or a change [in the Department of Ethnomusicology] from identifying the faculty member as a mentor, but rather as an advisor. So right now, we have advisor-advisee relationships, which are sort of okay. But it's different. I suppose the argument was that you can't force a mentor-mentee relationship. It has to develop on its own, and, therefore, you advise the student here and link the student with a particular faculty member, and then, allow the student and the faculty to develop a mentor-mentee relationship if it is so desired. You know, rather than just make them [formal].

ARMSTRONG: Yes, yes, that makes sense. Well, as we come to the end of our interview, maybe you could summarize both in thinking of the future for yourself—you know, you have a lot of plans, I'm sure, for the future—your plans for retirement. But also, thinking in the field of ethnomusicology, to what

would you attribute your success? And what advice would you give to a student, undergrad or graduate, who is just starting out in the field now. I know the field of ethnomusicology has evolved; there are a lot of changes that have taken place, even if not for any reason other than technology. We have access to better equipment, or the world is more interested in world music now maybe than it was fifty years ago. I know I can tell from the phone calls I get from the film industry. So actually, those are two different questions: to what would you attribute your success; and is there specific advice you would give to someone just starting out in the field, say a graduate student, for example. Let's decide what group we're talking about.

DJEDJE: Okay, if I wanted to …When I reflect on maybe the factors that have contributed to my being where I am today, I would think it would be the people around me who have sort of guided me and supported me and helped me to go in one direction. So I think those mentors from the very beginning—my grandmother and my parents and, the music teacher [in Jesup], and the piano teacher [at Boggs], and the people at Boggs Academy, my music teacher at Fisk. She meant well, my piano teacher at Fisk, she meant well. And then especially Darius Thieme, David Morton [having confidence in me]. So all of these people around me, as you can tell, a lot of these events in my life occurred not because I decided to do this. It's really…maybe you may not believe…but maybe it is the spirit. Maybe it was ordained, you know, that all of this was supposed to happen when it happened. Because it was so very interesting how it fell into place. If I had tried to plan it myself, it probably would not have occurred like that. So I think it was the support and I suppose, rather than deviating from what people had proposed for me, I accepted their advice; I accepted their wisdom. I think in some cases, we try to advise people, but they say, "*I know what I want to do. I want to do it my way."* But sometimes it doesn't work out the way they want it to work out because they have not really considered all of the issues. Whereas, when someone is trying to give it them, and they ask, *"Why?"* And maybe the person can't explain why. So when the person can't really articulate ABC why, then they dismiss it. And it's not until maybe five, ten, fifteen years later that they'll say, *"Oh."*

ARMSTRONG: But they see the wisdom and they're trying to hand you something. There's something that needs…there's the next step, the big next step that needs to take place. They can't do it. They're handing it to you. It's a gift.

DJEDJE: Right, right. So I think that has a lot to do with [it].

ARMSTRONG: Those are very good words of wisdom.

DJEDJE: Right, right. And then I think the other thing is I try to do my best and work hard with everything that I do. My husband will tell you that I never take anything for granted. I try not to because I want to respect everything and everybody, the integrity for what it is. Sometimes I think, well, if I'm going to sweep the porch, I'm going to try to sweep it off the best that I could. I'm not going to see that little piece of dirt over there [and leave it there without moving it]. That's something that needs to be done. And I think those are sort of attributes that my parents instilled in me from early on.

ARMSTRONG: So that was first. Your parents, along with all of these lovely, wonderful people…. But it all started with your parents…Is there anything you want to say about your plans for…

DJEDJE: Well…

ARMSTRONG: I mean, we almost want to leave it where we just left it, with your parents and your…

DJEDJE: Well one of the things that I have not finished, and I like to bring things to closure, is this story about the fiddle. I've told the African portion of this, but I have not told the African American portion. So, as much as possible, over the next year or two, that's what I want to do – devoting time to completing this project.

ARMSTRONG: We'll be looking forward to it.

DJEDJE: Yes. I will, too... [*Laughs*] …when I have the time to do it. But I'm going to have more time to do it.

ARMSTRONG: Right. Wonderful. Thank you, Professor DjeDje. I appreciate it.

DJEDJE: Thank you for sitting there and listening and asking questions. I think interviews are always a sort of a very interesting experience for everyone because we are all transformed after that. Things people have never thought about before come to light after the interview.

ARMSTRONG: Thank you.