

Notes From the Black Keys

This study, for the Music Assistance Fund which encourages professional training of instrumental musicians from American ethnic minority populations, surveyed the full-time African American symphony orchestra musicians in the United States. In 19897 there were 106 full-time African American members of major and regional symphony orchestras in the U.S. After a series of informational interviews, oral histories were created with nine of the musicians: Desimont Alston, Charles Burrell, Samuel Gill, Jesse Hawkins, Jr., Sherwood Hawkins, Henry Scott, Donald White, Stephen Wilson, Wilmer Wise, and Henry Scott. Many of the findings were consistent with earlier research on symphony orchestra musicians conducted by Donald Shetler of the Eastman School of Music.

Most interviewees came from homes where they received strong family encouragement, especially from their mothers, to pursue their music and the musical involvement of family members was high. Public schools are where they got their grounding, and teachers and mentors were very important.

Report unavailable.