

COMMUNITY MUSIC NOW!

A USC Libraries Exploration

Sue Tyson

Community Music Now! features Build an Ark and the Dublab Soundsystem. These pioneering artists celebrate a rich Los Angeles tradition of using music to nourish collective thinking, cross-cultural alliances, and social change.

To add to your enjoyment and understanding of this event, the USC Libraries present a selection of resources that illuminate the history of community music and arts traditions in Los Angeles.

Community Arts and Music in Los Angeles

The idea of community arts has deep roots that include influences from African and African American traditions. From communal rituals, festivals, and storytelling to the oral history passed on by griots and griottes in Africa, to the arts and oral traditions of African Americans during slavery, a view of the importance of community provided a foundation for subsequent developments in African American music and art.

Key figures and moments in this history in Los Angeles include the Central Avenue jazz scene in 1940s; developments in free and avant-garde jazz in the 1950s and 60s; community arts in Watts in the mid-60s and in Leimert Park starting in the early 90s; and the musical/arts communities sparked by Horace Tapscott, including the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, the Underground Musicians Association (UGMA), and the Union of God's Musicians and Artists Ascension (UGMAA).

Please click the links below to find selected resources on these topics at USC. For databases, journals, and Web and other resources, please see the sections below.

A General Overview of L.A. Community Arts

The Dark Tree: Jazz and the Community Arts in Los Angeles (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) by Steven L. Isoardi provides an excellent overview of this rich history, from the "ancestral echoes" of African communities to the work of African American community artists today.

This book, which includes a CD of performances featuring Horace Tapscott and his associates, includes much information about Central Avenue in the 1940s and beyond; Horace Tapscott, the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, UGMA, and UGMAA; and the vibrant community arts movements in Watts and in Leimert Park (which Isoardi describes as "cultural resurgences" after the upheavals in these communities in 1965 and 1992, respectively). It is available in the Music Library under call number ML3508.8.L7I86 2006.

Background on Specific Aspects of L.A. Community Arts

- [African and African American Arts and Communities: Background](#)
- [Jazz in Los Angeles, from Central Avenue to Free Jazz and Beyond](#)
- [Community Arts in Los Angeles \(includes resources on Horace Tapscott, the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, UGMA, and UGMAA\)](#)
- [Community Arts in Watts and in Leimert Park](#)
- [CDs and DVDs](#)
- [Selected Databases and Journals of Interest](#)

Web and Other Resources

- **Eighth & Wall** Begun by Judge William C. Beverly, Jr., whose family arrived in Los Angeles in 1897, this organization helps to document the history of African Americans in Los Angeles by presenting "the history of the people and cultures of Los Angeles through art, literature and the media."
- **Leimert Park movie**
- **All About Jazz.com** article about Nate Morgan and the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra
- **California African American Museum**
- **UCLA's Jazz Archival Collections** including the Horace Tapscott Jazz Collection; the John Coltrane Transcriptions Collection; and the Eric Dolphy Transcriptions Collection; and more
- **Mark Weber Jazz Photographs Collection** including photographs of performances by Tapscott and the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra
- **Online Archive of California** – Steven Isoardi interviews Horace Tapscott
- **Los Angeles Jazz Institute**
- **Nimbus West Records** – Tom Albach's record label, featuring Horace Tapscott recordings and background information
- **LA Weekly Article on Tapscott**

For more information or if you need help with your research, please contact Sue Tyson at styson@usc.edu.

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