

# I'll Make Me A World: A Century Of African-American Arts

This February, Thirteen/WNET is proud to present I'll Make Me A World: A Century Of African-American Arts, an unprecedented six-hour series that captures the stories behind 100 years of tumultuous struggle for identity, equality and self-expression, and celebrates the creation of an extraordinary artistic legacy. Produced by Henry Hampton's Blackside, Inc., in association with Thirteen/WNET in New York, the three-night series is a rich tapestry of sights and sounds that highlights a stellar roster of black artists—from legends to lesser-known innovators in every creative discipline—whose distinctive talents shaped American culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

"This production is a soaring, celebratory journey into African-American culture and the larger American society," said the late Henry Hampton, founder of Blackside, Inc., and executive producer of the new series that will launch public television's celebration of Black History Month where it premieres February 1, 2 and 3 at 9 P.M. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

Now I'll Make Me A World: A Century Of African-American Arts gives voice to the jazz, blues, and rap that have defined American music, and the fiction and poetry that have challenged conventional ideas about family, community, race, and democracy. It also showcases powerful visual artists, from canvas to movie screen, who interpreted the African-American experience, as well as the dance and theater that have found new forms of expression and inspired enthusiastic audiences. To bring this exciting series, I'll Make Me A

World, to PBS," said Tamara E. Robinson, vice president and director of national programming for Thirteen/WNET. "People have looked to Henry Hampton's work for a broader understanding of our culture and history. Airing this series is a tribute to his legacy—it will give viewers insight into some of the most provocative artistic contributions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

Over the course of three evenings, I'll Make Me A World: A Century Of African-American Arts will profile the musicians, writers, visual artists, filmmakers, and dancers who changed forever who we are as a nation and a culture.

Evening one begins with the trials

with redoubled energy and commitment. The third evening begins in the 1960s, a time of integration and creative "crossover" when black artists make increasing inroads in Hollywood, on Broadway and in popular music.

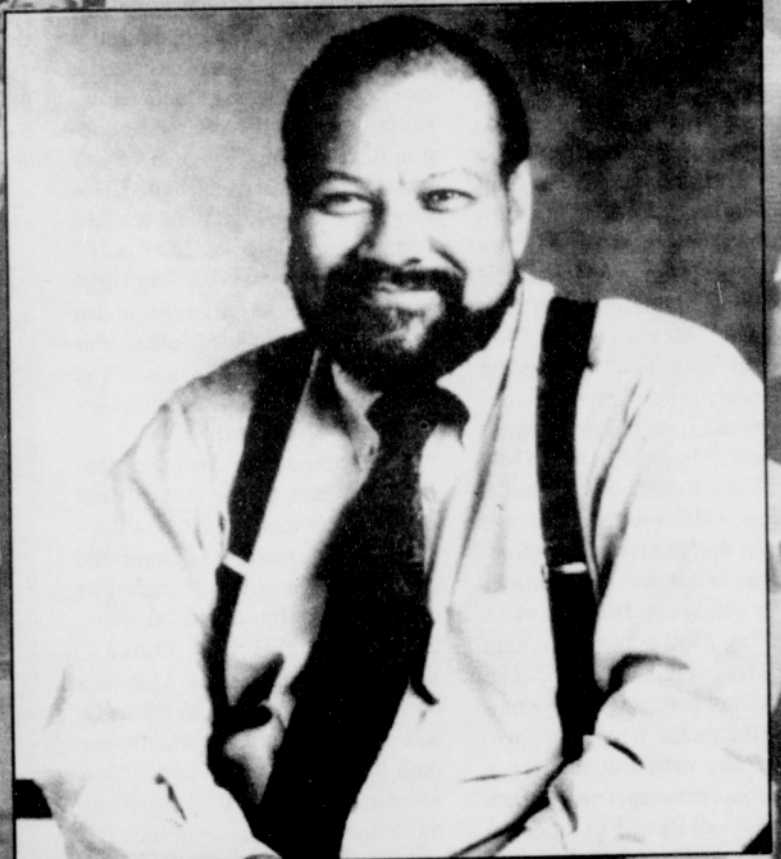
To help communities launch engaging local arts programming, in conjunction with the PBS broadcast, Blackside, Inc. has provided mini-grants, technical assistance and programmatic materials to coalitions in 11 target sites: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Nashville, New Orleans, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C. Blackside also invites organizations active in cultural programming and education (e.g. schools, museums, libraries, and community centers) in other cities to become partner sites and plan I'll Make Me A World local events using free video, print, and on-line resources available from Blackside on a first-come, first-served basis.

The I'll Make Me A World Web site <http://www.blackside.com> includes a chronology of 20<sup>th</sup> century African-American art; a comprehensive description of film, literature, music, and visual art education programs in grades K-12; and much more.



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Henry Hampton (left) was one of the preeminent documentary filmmakers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For 30 years, he made uniquely important contributions to the body of American documentary film—Eyes on the Prize, The African American, America's War on Poverty, and many more. On November 19, 1998, Henry Hampton died, leaving behind a tremendous legacy that not only shaped the world of documentary film, but also the American conscience. I'll Make Me A World: A Century Of African-American Arts continues his mission by celebrating the extraordinary contributions of the African American creative spirit that vitalized and modernized American culture over the past 100 years. The new six-part series premieres February 1, 2 and 3 at 9 P.M. (ET) on PBS, and is produced by Blackside, Inc., in association with Thirteen/WNET.



Raven Wilkinson,

company. Mavis Smith (shown left) pictured with her jazz band. She was the first African American woman to lead a jazz band.

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