

Carole Cadarette Transcript

CK. Hello, this is Cindy Kus, recording an interview with Carole Cadarette for the first time at the Alpena Public Library on August 11th, 2015.

CK. Welcome, Carole.

CC. Thank you.

CK. Your musical roots go back a long way. Your mother attributes your love of music to the sounds of bands playing at the Maplewood Tavern when you were just a baby. What are your earliest memories of music?

CC. My earliest memories of music is exactly that – at Maplewood. My dad was a musician and my grandmother had a full band at the bar. Well, it was called a tavern then, still is –ah, she employed eight to ten musicians and my memory goes back to when my mother would get me ready for bed at night and the bands would be playing. She would hand me over to my grandmother, who would take me out on the dance floor and dance with me and everyone that was there knew it was Carole's bedtime. After that, my thoughts are also go to the fact that my father was a musician, my uncle, they had their own band, they played in several configurations with different local musicians, played on WATZ when it was Radio Hill, we would go there on a Friday night and record for a Saturday night, ah, Saturday morning program that they would replay.

CK. They did this every week?

CC. Every week. I do believe you are looking at the early '50s, that's what my memory recalls, from that I didn't get an opportunity to go real often with my Dad but on occasion I went & I remember particularly one that sticks in my memory. It was a song that the band used to do. They were called the Mountain Rhythm Boys. It was Don Cadarette, Henry Cadarette, and a fellow by the name of Bernie Scott. Bernie Scott happened to be a multi-talented musician - played every instrument imaginable. And they played back then, it was called hillbilly music.

CK. Would that be bluegrass now?

CC. No. No, it was actually more in the vein of when things started to change, really, in country music, um, wasn't politically correct to call it hillbilly music back then, but that's what they called it. Anyway, things started to change when like Hank Williams came on board, the style of music started to change. But anyway, uh, this particular night they let me go to the radio station, as I said, WATZ Radio Hill. And they were doing the program and it was right around Mother's Day. And they did the song "Rocking Alone in an Old Rocking Chair." And as a very young girl, I can remember sitting in the dark shadows of that radio station and hearing that song and crying. Wouldn't you know, it's the one that they decided that we'd go back and

listen to it again before they put it on the air the next morning and I cried again. And every time I hear that song played, no matter where I am, that's exactly what I think of is that particular, that particular instance. So I do recall, of course, my father playing. At the age of about eight they started giving me piano lessons. I had a choice between tap or piano, and I took piano. And I can remember the day they moved my Gulbransen upright piano, which is still at Maplewood, it is locked behind some curtains, but it's still there. Uh, they brought it in, I can remember that day like it was yesterday, like I said I was about eight years old. And I started taking lessons.

CK. Who did you take lessons from?

CC. I took lessons from Mrs. Steele. She lived on First Avenue.

CK. Olive Steele.

CC. Olive Steele. Olive was, I understand from an article in the Alpena News, that she actually did play for movies before they ever had sound, she was the piano player. Well, things didn't go real well with Mrs. Steele and me. Um, the lady that used to bring me in, we would ride a bus from -

CK. You were living out at Long Lake.

CC. I was at, right where, still almost where I live today. We would ride a bus for five cents each way, on a Saturday and the lady's name was Jane LaCombe Mellville. Jane would go with me and we both took lessons from Mrs. Steele, and then she was my mentor during the week to make sure that I recalled and would practice what I was supposed to be practicing. Well probably about my memory says three or four lessons in, I got bored. And I just wanted to play a song. And I could - and there became the issue. I was playing by ear.

CK. Ah, ha . . .

CC. That was a no-no. And I will never forget Jane telling me, "She's going to catch you, Carole," and she did. And she was not at all happy with me. Scared the daylights out of me. Sent me home and my dad met me at the door, and said "What is it that you're doing that's upsetting her, she's called us. And I said, "I'm playing by ear." He said, "Well, you come play a song for dad by ear and let me see what you're doing." And he looked at me and he said, "Carole, I'm not going to pay for lessons if you're not going to learn what she wants, so I guess not having lessons is going to be the way we're going to go." I taught myself how to play.

CK. You're on your own.

CC. I was on my own. And at the age of fourteen I was in a band with my dad and my uncle.

CK. What was the name of that band?

CC. Just The Cadarette Family

CK. Ok.

CC. Uh, in fact a week before my Dad passed away, he was only 44 when he died. Uh, we played a wedding across town at McRae Hall. When my dad passed, I gave up music totally. At that point I was playing accordion and piano, and everywhere you went there was a piano. Now it might not be in tune, but the guitar players could re-tune to that piano. Anyway, I gave up music almost totally. Didn't go out and play.

CK. Your heart was . . .

CC. My heart was not in it anymore. And so I gave it up for a long, long time, until the autoharp found me in 1979. My brother come in one day and he said, "You know that thing you talk about with all the strings on it, they got one down at Ripley Music. I think it's called something like an autoharp or a chromaharp or something like that . . . "

CK. Describe it to me, cause I read in the notes that-

CC. The autoharp? Well, it's . . . it was made famous by Mother Maybelle Carter. Mother Maybelle Carter took the autoharp, it used to be played on a flat surface or on your lap, she's the one that raised it up, put it up in her arm, took it on the stage at the Grand Ole Opry and her first, one of her first songs and my first song to learn to play on it was "The Wildwood Flower". And in '79, like I said, when it was bought for me, um, my ex-husband bought it for me and I practiced about a month till I could make some sense of it. Now remember, there's thirty-six strings that need to be in tune.

CK. Wow.

CC. Yeah. And back then, you didn't have as we speak today, the electronic tuners that you have, you had a tuning fork or you had another instrument or whatever. I learned to tune it probably by ear fairly well . . . I can remember doing workshops & tuning maybe thirty in a row. Autoharps. One right after another.

CK. Are there things that you can do to help keep it in tune?

CC. No. Not much. Play it and just hope for the best. If a string breaks on it, I can guarantee it, the strings either side of it's going to be out of tune. So now you're One of the biggest things with the autoharp is keeping it in tune. It fell out of favor because a lot of musicians didn't want you around with it because most of the time

they weren't in tune and they sound just awful when they're out of tune. Any instrument does, but an autoharp in particular, ok. With all those strings on it. So, in '79 with the auto-harp found me, I was now back into music, my brother had now started a band and I kind of would be their guest. I was the oddity because I'm playing this funny-looking instrument, you know, and different sounding instrument. So I would go out, I would do festivals, I've done several festivals in the state of Michigan, used to teach it . . . Now remember, again, I do not read notes. I can remember one lady – this was one of my proudest moments – she wanted to learn to play the autoharp and she was not sighted and she couldn't figure out exactly what to do with her hands, how to hold the instrument and I can remember setting it up in her lap, she was a little lady and I put my arms right around her, put my hand on top of each one of her hands and she learned to play at least one song and she was grateful and I was grateful to have the opportunity. Um, like I said, I taught that for a while and then, um . . .

CK. You taught all over the state?

CC. I taught at Evart, at the Hammer Dulcimer Festival and I taught at Wheatland and I had many, many workshops here in Alpena, with the help of my dear friend Carolyn Szatkowski and Luanne Jerome. We would get together, we would do a workshop, we'd get everybody playing one song and then we'd kind of do a concert at the end of it. Ok. Over in Evart, in fact, I've been searching through some of my cassettes and putting them over to CDs, and I've found cassettes with 30 people playing on stage. So I kind of gave that up back in the year '99, 1999 I quit going to Evart, and just - but I continued to play the autoharp. In the meantime, my brother asked me to learn to play bass guitar . . .

CK. Oh!

CC. . . . which I did. Back in the uh, back in, probably I'm thinking the 1980s, and I played bass guitar for many groups in Alpena.

CK. What were some of those groups?

CC. I played for Jack Schultz & Company., uh . . . there was, he entertained back in the 1990s, I played bass for him, also played autoharp with him; I played bass for Ladies' Choice. Um, I've played bass in jam sessions, the tractor show, my brother and I did music, organized music for 20 years for the tractor show. Once a year, we'd get every musician that we could find to do our stage Friday, Saturday and Sunday. With . . . there was no money, everybody played for the same amount- that was applause, we called it – that was your pay. Um, along the way, I've recorded. I've recorded on autoharp, I've recorded with Three on a String, I was the autoharp player with Carol Witherbee & Diane Madsen and we recorded in the early 1990s.

CK. What were the instruments in that group?

CC. Hammer dulcimer, autoharp and bass. Uh, as I said, I played the . . . on occasion Carole would play the lap dulcimer, but only occasionally. We went out, did a lot of, a lot of concerts in and around the Alpena area and across state. Um, about four years ago, we had to re-organize a band that was playing out at Maplewood Tavern, one of our main players had a stroke. And it was obvious to his wife that he wasn't coming back from that stroke. So, we had to rebuild the band. So I ordered a keyboard and had it sent to Florida, where I was. And, I say this: I am an auto harp player, yes. I'm a bass player, but I just play it. I am a keyboard player. That is my love. That, well, that has taken me through some really rough times . . .

CK. It's where you started, too.

CC. At that point, between worrying about my friend who had had the stroke, and some other things that was going on in my life, the keyboard came in at the right time. Just as the autoharp did. Came in at the right time.

CK. It found you.

CC. It found me, and . . . uh, uh . . . I don't know what I'd do without music. I really don't. Now, um, having crushed my wrist a year ago, I now cannot play the autoharp or the bass. I am playing the keyboard. But I'm hoping that I will be able to get back to it when they take the plates out in a few weeks.

CK. I hope so, too.

CC. Yeah. For sure. In fact, I was just listening to a recording that I found where I'm playing all three instruments and back in the day to be able to do that, I credit my ex-husband with being able to overlap the instruments, the dulcimer, the autoharp and the bass, and we've come up with a fairly decent recording. And it's . . . But it's deja-vu. It's wonderful, but it's sad. Because, there I am, I can, the keyboard is part of my life, those other three instruments are my history and hopefully, if nothing else, my grandchildren will be able to say, "That's Grandma".

CK. Yeah.

CC. Ok. Other than that, I mean, I'm involved with, as the years went on, um, you know, I've played with so many musicians that, the names are just, many of them are not with us anymore. Just since we started doing some music at Maplewood, for the last, what 10 years, how many we've lost. It's mind- boggling, how many we've lost already. And their genre has been lost with them. Because, I don't - if you're this person and you take, you're singing a song or playing a song, it sounds different from this one - to this one. Does that make sense? If Sam Smith did a song - and he was one of the ones that I played with - and now we give it over to the likes of a Danny Ager ...

CK. It's going to be a different song.

CC. ... it's going to be different. And because most of us play without notes, we're not playing from a set of rules and a set of notes, everything is different. You take the same song, give it to somebody else, or even me – if I play that twice, it's going to be different. Because I'm just playing the mood at the moment; and the mood at the moment for me, in this year of two thousand fifteen, if someone would have told me, back when I was playing music with my father and my uncle, and then as I moved up and played music with Carol Witherbee, and that style of music, and now the music I'm playing now, I'd have said, "That's not going to be." Because I'm playing jazz, I'm playing big band, I'm playing all different styles of music.

CK. On the keyboard.

CC. On the keyboard. Because these new keyboards allow you to set it up with different styles and then if you can put the music together . . . um, you know, ah, I'm very, very – I don't want to brag, but it . . . like I said, somebody said to me, "can you play 'Stardust'?" I said, "Yeah", and they just kinda looked at me. Are you kidding? Country girl can play that? You know, um . . . so, it's taken me a long ways and I guess if I have to say other than miss – dear, truly missing my father. He has got to be amazed to what his daughter, what she's playing today. Would he be happy? I don't know. But you know what? It wouldn't make any difference, because I'm going to play what I'm going to play, you know . . .

CK. And that's so great, that you are able to . . . to explore new areas and new territory.

CC. Yeah, well, it keeps your mind, it keeps your mind active. And you know, I mean, I'll wake up in the morning and say, "Ah- I'm going to try that song . . ." maybe I heard it on the radio or on television the night before. I'm going to give that song a try. If it don't work, I'm not going to go out and stand in traffic and get all upset, but I'll give it a try, you know.

CK. Are there particular groups that you're playing with now? Do you play solo?

CC. I do a lot of solo work, and I am playing with, uh, you know I am playing in a jam session situation at Maplewood – we never know what we're going to be playing. In fact, one week . . . four weeks ago, the old Playboys, that haven't played together in 33 years, played. At Maplewood. A week later, we had a guy that's in the polka hall of fame, who not only plays polkas and that kind of genre, but can play any other style.

CK. What's his name?

CC. His name, uh, I've got it at home, I'm going to say . . . is Eddie Siwiec...that, Siwiec is not exactly. He lives down in Swartz Creek I think is where he lives. Um, but . . .

CK. He showed up?

CC. He just showed up. We never know. We just never know who we're going to have.

CK. Is there a particular night that happens? Or . . .

CC. If it's going to happen and we have enough musicians, it's going to happen on Friday. It's a Friday night thing. But, as I said, we're not always sure that we're going to be doing this, but my brother and I make ourselves available, the bandstand is set up permanently, we don't have to tear anything down or set it up – it's all set up. And if musicians come, we have enough instruments, if they, if you don't bring your own, we can supply you with whatever it takes to . . . one of the gentlemen that was the head of one of the bands that was hired to play the big tent at the Brown Trout showed up and said to me, "do you have a dobro?" I said, "No, but I have an electric slide guitar." He said, "That'll work." And he played it and played it wonderfully. We never met him before. So now we have another new person, you know that, uh . . . And I think the reason why I'm here with you today, Cindy, is to . . . I think it's a great idea what you're doing, I think it's daunting . . . my mind is going in a hundred directions. I'm thinking about all the friends that I have in different types of music and how they can be helpful to this project. Because I go back a ways, but I don't go back as some of the – we've discussed some of those musicians that need to be talked to, so . . .

CK. Well, we'll get to them. We'll get to them as soon as we can. I also have in my notes that you're a vocalist -?

CC. I am, yes.

CK. So, in most of the performing that you, do you sing as well?

CC. I do. Yes. In, again, all different styles. From . . . I stay away from new country – the 2015 new country is not part of my genre. But I sing some of the stuff, you know, from the '60s, and some . . . I do at least one Neil Young song. I do a few Patsy Cline, not all of them – there are some I feel you just should leave alone, they're so iconic that no one else should be doing, like "Crazy", I don't do that song. I will play it instrumentally. I am also doing, sad to say, within the last month, I've done two funerals.

CK. Oh.

CC. Now, I don't go into the funeral home and play there . . . there, uh, it's usually an organ. But if someone lets me know soon enough, I'll go in the recording studio and record the music for them. Ok. In fact, like I said, I just did two.

CK. That's good to know.

CC. Yeah. Yeah. Uh, and I, what I believe I'm going to be doing in the next few weeks is going in and doing that type of music, and so that if someone calls me, we can just clip it off of what's pre-recorded and put it over onto something that can be used at, by the funeral home.

CK. What kind of music are you recording for that?

CC. Uh, well, the lady that I did the first one for, she was 105 and I took music - because she was originally from Scotland, and she loved animals - I did instrumentally "Old Shep", we didn't sing it because that can really make everything even more gloom and doom. Her favorite song was "Danny Boy", so I delivered that vocally. And then I finished up with, ah, "Scotland the Brave", I played that instrumentally, and I played "Auld Lang Syne".

CK. That's wonderful! So, you sort of put a program together on the information that you get from the family.

CC. And then, just two weeks ago, a very well-known lady in this town, business owner, Marie Marzean of Marie's Fabrics, her family called me and of course, I play music with her son, John, and her favorite hymn was "Amazing Grace". So I took that song, and I did it in a way different way than has ever been done. So. Waaay different way than it's ever been done. It's, ah, I'm quite proud of it, how I did it.

CK. How did you get started in that? In doing the funeral music, was it for a friend or ...

CC. It was for a friend, yeah. Now, before this, with the autoharp, I have went into nursing homes, I can remember a dear friend of mine, I played her funeral - with the autoharp, and I think, if memory serves me right, I did my mother-in-law's funeral. With the autoharp. So I got started there, and I can remember also what my, one of my friends, this is years ago, that was, uh, she was going from this life to the next, and I sat by her bedside and played her favorite hymns. Yeah.

CK. That's a gift. That's a wonderful gift.

CC. You have to really put your mind in someplace else.

CK. Uh huh.

CC. You really, really do. You know, you've got to, you've got to think about what to do and what not to do, that's for sure. Yep.

CK. Ok, I don't want to put you on the spot here, but I do wonder if you can tell us back in the, this time, the early '50s when your family, your dad and his brother had

a band - who were some of the other bands, what was some of the other music in this area at the time?

CC. At the time, there was ah, big band music, um, I can remember back in, when I was in high school, the mid-fifties, when my Dad was still playing country music, that was big band music. Um, Don Deadman's father and . . . we didn't . . . I'm trying to remember what - I don't want to put a name on it and it's not correct but it was, it was Big Band type music. And there were other musicians that had . . . there were a lot of bands, a lot of country bands that was around. We talked about the Burns Family, they had a band. Bob Bartlomiej had a band, um, his father, um, Walt, was back in the '50s was still playing. Clint Kirchoff- my dad played with him . . . um, there used to be . . . I wish I knew, could remember all the bands. Where the Civic Theatre is right now - that was the old Eagles Club?

CK. On River Street.

CC. Yup. And every . . . not maybe every, but often, they would have a what is now - what was referred to later on as battle of the bands. They put three bands across the back of where your seats are now.

CK. Ok.

CC. And they, they'd have a contest. Ok? There'd be three bands, and they'd pick a winner.

CK. The audience would pick a winner?

CC. Yeah. Yeah, they'd go by applause. Um, and I can't rightly remember, it usually was not, you know, three country bands, it usually was different uh, different genre, each from the other. Um, every establishment in town - bar, tavern, whatever, and there was plenty of them - had a band. They had a band every Friday and Saturday- there was a band and you're looking at five, six, seven places, plus all the outlying ones, out - out in Hubbard Lake and you know...

CK. Club 32.

CC. And I mean, this is what people did. Not only that, they, uh I can remember as a kid, going down just a mile down the road and playing music with the Desormeau family. You know, we'd push, they'd push everything out of the way in the big living room and the folks play and the kids would watch and some would dance. That's what we used to do for entertainment.

CK. That's entertainment.

CC. Those days, sadly, are gone. Uh, you know there's very little getting together at people's houses anymore and playing music and that's very, very sad.

CK. I know that when I watch movies and that someone sits at the piano and everyone...

CC. Yup, yup.

CK. It's just so attractive as a way to commune and . . .

CC. Bill, The Bill Desormeau Family- the father played, the mother played, son played . . . my dad would sit in with them, um, and we've kept that line of communication open with that family. So, you know, we tried, not only as we talked, trying to preserve names and what they did, any time that I can talk to someone that has a recording of their family and it's setting, usually, on cassette – if it's on reel to reel, we've got an issue, trying to find a reel to reel that'll play these things and not tear the, you know, preserve 'em. But anybody that's got things on cassette, they can be transferred to cd. And that's what I'm doing right now – I told you, I'm sorting through my things and I'm coming up with stuff that I did years and years and years ago.

CK. Do you have the equipment to do that?

CC. I don't, but my friend does, that does my recordings. And he will do them. He will do them. He will do . . . He doesn't have this great big huge, ah, recording studio, but what he needs with his computer and his knowledge, he can clean an awful lot of things up and make 'em sound really wonderful. And even - even if they didn't sound wonderful, it's important that you kept...

CK. A record-

CC. A record- of your family. I have it of my dad and my uncle. I do, I have 'em. And the first time my dad's granddaughter, she never knew him, she got to hear a recording of her grandfather. And she was just blown away. She said, "I can hear you and dad in grandpa." So, you know, as I said, my dad died very, very young so, you know I know there are folks out there that can come up with probably actual names of bands. I can come up with a lot of names of musicians.

CK. Well, we'll work on it. It's a work in progress. Speaking of recordings, I have a note that when you were talking about the Radio Hill program, do they, does the radio station have recordings?

CC. No. No, back in the years when Don Partyka was at WATZ, he looked and searched. He searched for those things maybe that were kept, but remember, when they moved from Radio Hill, and they moved over here on the lakeside, a lot of stuff was destroyed. Just thrown away, including not only that, but records and things like that, were pitched. So yeah, I checked that out, cause had, had that, I had a pretty good in with Don, and he checked all over trying to find – but again, that was late 40s, early 50s, and probably, you know, that old Radio Hill, it was hot in there and there was mice in there and there was all kinds of things in there.

CK & CC. (laughter)

CK. Who knows what would've happened to it. And that would have been . . . And what would they have used, what were they using to record then?

CC. Reel to reel.

CK. Reel to reel, ok.

CC. Reel to reel. And then, of course, the next thing out was 8-tracks and those were *terrible*, those were terrible things! I mean, cassettes were pretty nice, that was really nice, and then came the CDs. You know. And now those are down within a reasonable price. I can remember when Three on a String recorded, we had to make a decision, were we going to put it on cassette or CD? CD was cost-prohibitive, there was *no way* we could afford to put, you know all of that in and pay that kind of price, so we went with cassettes. *But* one of the first things I did when I started thinking about preserving stuff was I took that cassette to, to Gary Cahoon, that's my guy that does recordings and he put it on CD. And we bumped up all the information in it, uh, the High Notes, we did that from their record, uh, he re-did that and it's wonderful. Took it from a thirty-three and a third . . . there were scritch-scratchies & he's able to take them out. So, uh, yeah.

CK. Yeah, Sometimes, like you said, sometimes those scritch-scratchies are . . .

CC. Yeah, yeah.

CK. . . . kind of nice to hear, it really gives you a sense of time when you hear that.

Ok, in addition to local bands that were playing in the area, which popular musicians influenced your style and taste? When you were first starting – well, I'm thinking your teens. Were there-

CC. My taste - in music? Of course, I was the first one in Alpena to buy an Elvis Presley record. We had the tavern, we had a jukebox. We supplied our own records, we didn't have someone come in. So we owned the jukebox, we bought the records. And I can remember going into Northeastern Music right down on Second Avenue, and the lady in there said to me, "you have to hear this new artist, Carole". And it was 78 rpm record and it was Elvis. And I just said, "Mother, we gotta to get this," I have the record today. Slightly worn, "Heartbreak Hotel".

CK. Where did you get it?

CC. Right here at the uh, at the music store. Right down on Second Avenue. Approximately . . . and today, who is in there? I think it's the parking lot for the bank right now. It was right where Jerry's . . . Jerry's Barber Shop, right in there.

CK. I can picture it, I just don't remember the name of it.

CC. I think her name, the lady in charge, her last name was Hatch-- Sadie Hatch. I think that was her name. That was your record store in Alpena. I bought him, Jerry Lee Lewis . . . for sure

CK. "Great Balls of Fire".

CC. (laugh) Yeah. In fact, today I own everything -- I own every song he ever did, right to his last CD. Um, but -- and I got to see him twice. Those were the influences, and I think the reason why, especially with Jerry Lee, was that I loved to dance, too. I have a love and I wasn't too bad at it. And those were the kinds of that driving beat, ok. And those are the kinds of things that influenced me. Now, did I go on to play that kind of thing? I do some of Elvis' stuff, some of the slower stuff, um, but um, as far as the country side there were ones that I *didn't* like, I wasn't really thrilled with country twang, the twangy the nasally type stuff, that wasn't anything ...

CK. An example of that?

CC. Ernest Tubb. In my book, he sang out of tune. Of course again, we have to realize that when we listen to them today, that including the instruments, back in those days, they didn't have the electronic tuners and things -- of course now, even if you're out of tune in the big recording studios, they can bring your voice back in. They can alter it, ok?

CK. Kind of like Photoshop for sound.

CC. That's why today, when you hear -- I'm a good example -- if you hear me out singing with the band, and then you hear my recordings, I sound altogether different. Because you're not fighting that sound all the time, you're not pushing your voice, you have a whole lot more control over your voice and if you listen today and you go to somebody's concert -- I've done that -- and then you listen to the recording, it's altogether different.

CK. Yes, yes.

CC. It's altogether -- and I don't think that's any different for any of us that perform.

CK. I know so many times, people are disappointed because they've had an experience at live,

CC. Yes. Exactly.

CK. This doesn't sound the same.

CC. That doesn't sound the same. And, I mean, when they go into the recording studio, they have sometimes a lot more musicians than they have onstage. So, you're not fighting the wind, going through the microphones and all that stuff. (37:23) But, as far as did I . . . As I can remember being fascinated by the likes of Dell Wood on the piano, because she was so different. She was a piano playing – she was an instrumentalist and I can remember being fascinated by the way she played, and I play some of her music today. Like “*Down Yonder*”, just as instrumentals. But when I play it, I think about her. I don't think other than the ones I've named, that I had any favorite-favorite lady singers. Except maybe uuum, um, trying to think, we just mentioned her-

CK. Patsy?

CC. Patsy Cline, probably. That would be about it, on the female side. Um, and like I said, on the male side, I don't think I had any – Hank Williams, certainly. Um, sad songs. Somebody said “we don't like country because it's always sad”. Well, guess what – that's life. Country music is written about life. I've gotten to see a lot of the uh, uuh, like, as of today, Gene Watson is one of my very favorites. Ray Price absolutely was one of my favorites. He – I got to see him three times.

CK. He died recently.

CC. Yes. Such a gentleman, always gave accolades to his band. Um, would say, would look at them and say, “Look at this band”, you know, they'd be all dressed up. Which to me, when I go out and entertain, I dress up. I mean, I don't do the flowing dresses, but, you know, I have a thing about looking the part . . .

CK. Mmhuh.

CC. Ok, looking the part. Um, so . . . I . . . there are some that I, the new country, I just don't listen to it. Maybe I should and give it a little bit of a break, but to me, some of it is just noise.

CK. What distinguishes new country? I heard you talking about it earlier & I'm not familiar with it.

CC. Well, I had a discussion not very long ago with someone, I said, “When did it all start to change?” It started to change in my . . . now, I'm not saying in anybody else's thought, but in my book and I think my son would be better . . . I should've asked him, he was in, Rich Spicer, he worked for years for WATZ. He could probably tell me better. But in my world, country music started to change with like, Garth Brooks.

CK. Mm hm.

CC. He started to go onstage and putting on a show. He wasn't a stand and deliver, he started puttin' on a show. The one thing I liked about Garth Brooks, in the beginning – he had his sister, played bass for him. Ok? Aaah, one thing about Willie Nelson, he has his sister, usually, playing music with him. But, anyway, I think when it came to . . . Willie changed, definitely changed the way country music was delivered. But HE would not stay where they wanted to put him, he moved out on his own, became his own man and did it his way. Garth as I said started changing what I knew as country music. This stuff, in the year two thousand fifteen . . . again, I could ask my son when did it start to change, because he was playin' those records, he was playing those songs from the mid '80s on up. He does a . . . um, he has a whole library that he has put together of number one country songs that's old - older country. Ok. He's got that. He's put it together himself with the hope someday that someone will give him an opportunity to do a true country gold show. We have a country gold show with J.R. Wooster on Sunday mornings on WATZ. And it's only an hour, there's only so much you can do with those hours. Um, but Rich has got he's taken it to the point where it's like number first, second, and third from so many years back. So that's a question I think I'm going to ask him. 'When did it all start to change for you, Richard?' Yeah.

CK. Yeah, yeah.

CC. But for me, it was Garth Brooks. Now, I liked what Garth did, but along about that time, everybody seemingly had to one-upsmen, one-upsmen, you know, and the girls started changing their looks, um, you know and they were not so much vocalists anymore but they were also doing vocal and they were playing the instruments and things like that. So. I don't know. I don't know. It's not my thing.

CK. No. But when you say 'Garth Brooks', that gives me a picture. I don't listen to country that much . . .

CC. Garth was here - he was in Alpena. We got him very recently, like – I could check, but he had already made his mark, and he was, "I've Got Friends in Low Places" was coming right up number one and they'd booked him X number of months before, so they really got him a whole lot less – you couldn't afford him now.

CK. Was it for the fair?

CC. For the fair. Oh, yeah. Yeah, my son got to interview him. I was about as far away as . . . but, yeah. Yeah, so.

CK. Do you go to festivals anymore?

CC. Not anymore. No, I have family commitments that . . . when you go to a festival, you need two or three days, and you really need a trailer and someplace to stay. The last festival I went to was two years ago over at Evart, and things had changed so much, 'cause I hadn't been there, like I said, since 1999. There were still a few

people there that I remembered and they remembered me, but, uh, you know, life evolves and I've certainly . . . the electronic keyboard, the keyboard that I play is not part of the genre really over there, so, you know, if I was still playing autoharp, I told you why I'm not, on account of my crushed wrist, but . . . I could still play it on the table, I'm sure, but maybe I'll have to do that one of these days, just to say that I can – hahaha!

CK. And what projects are you involved in right now, what sort of things are you doing musically?

CC. Ah, well, I'm, as I said, I make myself available if there's musicians that want to play on Friday nights, I will be there for them, ah, we'll accommodate them any way we can, including using my keyboard, if that's what they want to do . . . um,

CK. You mentioned the funeral music . . .

CC. Yeah, I do the funeral music, I have went and done the . . . the, uh, adult living, like Turning Brook.

CK. Ok.

CC. I've done most of the nursing homes in Alpena, they haven't called me as of late, I don't want to leave anybody with that impression, but they know I'm out there and they know I'm available.

CK. When you do that, do you just perform, do you involve the people at all?

CC. Depending on whether they're-

CK. The situation . . .

CC. Whether they're alert. Um, you know I try to stay away from anything that is um, that ah . . . how shall I say, I try to choose the music so that let's say for instance if you can involve an old time song "You Are My Sunshine", "Down in the Valley", whatever, but I try to stay away from cheap music, cheat music, which is usually country, I try to play up-tempo stuff – happy music, ah, when I'm playing those kinds of situations. Uh, it just makes more sense.

CK. It does, absolutely.

CC. You just, you just have to read, more than if you're playing in a band, you have to read the dance floor. What are they dancing to? Ok? If you've played three songs and they're tired out from that, then you change it up.

CK. Talk to me about that a little bit, I've never thought about that from the perspective of being a performer – But, say, do you usually go, do you have a song list that you start out with or is it all . . .

CC. It is Free Willie. You never know. You watch who's there, you know what they like, once you get to know the folks that are there, you know the ones that like to waltz, you know the ones that like to polka, you know the ones that like to slow dance, and there are different forms of slow dancing, ok, and you just play to the dance floor. Um,

CK. And do you talk about that among the band a little bit?

CC. No. In our . . . you need to come out sometime. They, all I can tell you is the guy that's down at the farthest end, I can't even see him. All you hear is the key . . .

CK. On the stage?

CC. Yeah. The key you're going to put it in, you don't even know what they're going to do. Sometimes they'll tell you and sometimes they don't. And that's the thing about musicians that can do a jam session. I always say it separates the men from the boys, because you don't, you may not even know the person that's come up onstage with you. Normally, they will tell you what they're going to do, but if it's the regular backup people, they'll just, if it's their turn, we go around and we do turns uh, and they'll just tell you they key they're going to put it in and you, you're going. I mean, usually, I can look down . . . I don't know how to explain how... you can't see the person – if you've got ten people onstage and all these microphones and amps in the way, sometimes you can't see the person down on the end of the bus. I call it the bus. Ok, um, and that's the way we play . . . and people will come and say, "We can't believe how you can do this". Well, it's, it's just . . . you learn. It's a learning experience and every time I play like that it's a learning experience, and then it comes in where you're dealing with people that's older and doesn't come quite as often, and you try to keep everybody happy. You just make it fun. That's how I want to do it. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it has to be fun.

CK. Right. That's what people are there for, to be entertained.

CC. That's right. Exactly. So, um, it's been a learning experience for me but a lot of playing the kind of music that I play, and who I play with, is common sense. Just use some common sense. You know.

CK. Look around you, see what people are responding to . . .

CC. That's right. You know, if they're yawning, you got a problem. If they're leaving, you got a problem. But if they're out there dancing and smiling and having a good time, now you got 'em right, you know, ah, I can remember about 6 months ago, I did a thing up at – well, it hasn't been that long, probably three – three months ago, up at

up at Grand Lake and I hardly opened my mouth all night long. Played strictly instrumentals and once they got through eating, then I kicked it a little bit more and I told them, "Now, you're going to help me. I've entertained you all evening, now I'm going to play something you're going to entertain me. And I simply played "God Bless America". It was awesome. It was so good I repeated it like three times. So that's what you do, you read it.

CK. Ok. Well, Carole, before we wrap this up, is there anything that I might have glossed over, anything you want to talk about?

CC. Well I think, Cindy, you can tell, with me if you're looking at me you can tell I'm trying to think of what it is that would pique someone's interest. And I think that lastly, the thing I could say is . . . aah . . . Alpena has a rich history of musicians and styles of music and there isn't one more that's more important than the other because it's all people that made it happen, and it's all not only the musicians that made it happen, it's also, just like it is today, the ones that follow and want to keep it going. Whether you're listening to, whatever the style of music that you're listening to whether you're listening to it on a recording or you're there live or whatever it is. This is our heritage, this is our history and no matter where you are, there's music.

CK. Yes. Yes.

CC. Even in a doctor's office, there's music.

CK: Yes, yes.

CC: So, you know, to be able to say that I'm a part of this if whatever part I can do, and I know there's folks out there that's going to be helpful, probably knowing way, no doubt knowing way, way more than I do. But, um, I can't think of anything else – I can think of a lot, but you know, we could go on here, I could be here for the next week with you and ah, I just appreciate your asking me to come in and we'll just see where this goes.

CK: Ok. Thank you so much.

CC. You're welcome.

CK. I'm just writing . . . (end of recording)