

CK: This is Cindy Kus speaking to Mary Ann Hubbard at the Alpena Library on August 10th, 2015 for the first time. Hello, Mary Ann.

MAH: Hello.

CK: I'd like to start with your role as a music educator. Tell me first about your experience teaching at Alpena Community College, when did you start working there and how has your curriculum developed over time?

MAH: I began at the college in 2001, January 2001. I had been studying at Central Michigan to get a Master's Degree in Music, not in Music Education; but my Bachelor's Degree was Music Education; but my Master's Degree was in Flute Performance. And at that time, I'm not sure if it's the same now; but at that time the college was not hiring persons to teach unless they had a Master Degree. So, the department chair knew that I was off getting my Master's Degree and so he called me and asked me if I would like to apply for a job with the college, directing the jazz ensemble. And I said, no, I think you have the wrong person, I wasn't studying jazz, and I had never been actively involved in the jazz ensemble. So I gave him a recommendation of a person that I thought would be good for the college; but I did say, if you ever, ever want to have chamber ensembles at the college, that's what I'm studying right now at the University and I just love chamber music and I would like to know if that ever happens at the college. And he said well, I think we haven't talked about that yet but I think that would be a good idea to evaluate that. So he did evaluate it and the next thing I knew I was hired to direct chamber ensembles at the college and this was in January 2001 that I began there. And so I really, really enjoyed that, chamber ensembles are small ensembles, they're not big concert band or the big symphonic orchestra but they're um, notably chamber ensembles mean one person is on a part so in other words there's only one person playing flute, and there's only one person playing oboe and what have you, so it was a very, very different kind of ensemble than the people in Alpena knew. But it grew and grew and we had some semesters we had twenty people in the chamber ensemble and sometimes we had ten people in the chamber ensemble

CK. So the number can vary and the instrumentation can vary, too?

MAH. That's what makes it a challenge is that every semester there was a different instrumentation and different people in the group. So, sometimes it was very similar to the semester before but oftentimes it was quite different, especially at the beginning. So we grew from a first semester, five people in the chamber ensemble to at most we had around twenty people in the chamber ensemble. That chamber ensemble went on for several years at the college until about two years ago, um, financial problems came to the college as it came to everybody else and finally all the performing groups were eliminated from the college. Which was too bad, um, because what we had at the college was not just groups for college students but also groups for community persons who wanted a chance to play, even if they didn't get a credit from it, if they didn't need a credit but they could play in the group. So we

had chamber ensembles - one major ensemble, but from that ensemble there were several smaller groups within it, and my specialty was always flute groups because I was a flute major. So we had the chamber ensemble, we had a very active jazz band at the college and we had collegiate singers, too. So we had instrumental, jazz and vocal. So it was a really, really a good program but it came to an end, unfortunately. We don't have those anymore at the college.

CK. What's left?

MAH. What is left are small classes, very small classes being taught by many different people, each one having their specialty. We have music theory, and we also teach music appreciation, there's music fundamentals being taught by another person, there's um, I think I said music theory, and then music for the classroom, elementary classroom teacher. So really we're kind of unique at Alpena Community College in that we don't have a music program, but we have a lot of classes being offered and without music students there's not a big call for these classes. So we all have very small classes when we do run a class, it's just a few students in the class. So . . .

CK. How many faculty are there who are teaching things related to music?

MAH. Six of us . . .

CK. That's impressive, considering that there isn't a music program.

MAH. Yeah, but it's almost like there are too many classes because there are too many ways for the students to divide up and none of us have full classes anymore. We also have still at the college, private instruction in piano, and voice, and flute. And those are the only three private instruction instructors that we have in the college.

CK. But there isn't a focus on performance anymore.

MAH. No.

CK. Would that be true to say?

MAH. That would be true except for the vocal, the voice teacher, the piano instructor and myself, the flute instructor. We'll have recitals of our students every semester if we have enough students to have a recital and that's performance-related but . . .

CK. Is there a place in the community that serves that purpose?

MAH. The performance of a major ensemble? Yes, there certainly are, yeah, we have the community chorus, Thunder Bay Arts Council sponsors that, and that has

concerts twice a year and they have a lot of people singing in their chorus. We have the Alpena City Band which just performs in the summertime, I believe that their season is over right now as of the end of July, beginning of August.

CK. What about chamber music?

MAH. Well, yeah, we do. I can explain that after . . . um, we have also the Alpena Symphony Orchestra and that serves all the string players that we can find. Unfortunately, in an orchestra you can only have small wind sections so some people want to be in the orchestra but they can't because they're just waiting their turn for an opening to come up in the wind section. But string players, if we could have more string players we would certainly take them. So as far as chamber ensembles, the orchestra three times a year sponsors a recital for their members, and it's for their members to do small group work or even solo work on the recital. So we get to play solos with an accompanist if we want to, or we can form a small group – I usually get together a flute trio to do something. And, ah, yeah . . .

CK. It gets picked up in other ways. Who are the students that enroll in your classes at the college?

MAH. The most common denominator would be the education program, which has a requirement that students in elementary ed. take a class called music for the elementary classroom teacher, and so we have elementary ed., these are people who are not going to teach music, but are going to teach general ed., like in an elementary school, and they need to have a background, a one semester background in music fundamentals. Um, the other class that seems to be popular is music fundamentals, and that's for people to just learn to read music and to make sense of musical notation. Then, music appreciation is a popular class for people who are looking for a humanities elective, and they usually use it as an elective - it's not for a music program class.

CK. Ok. Do people just from the community who aren't necessarily college students, can they enroll in those classes?

MAH. Yes, and they do. They do, occasionally. I've had many people from the community, just adults who want to get to the history of music. Music appreciation is also a music history course. So that's been a popular . . .

CK. I can see where it would be. What do you think is your greatest asset as a teacher?

MAH. I definitely think my background is my greatest asset as a teacher. We were going to talk about background in a little while so I can talk more about that later . . .

CK. We'll flip back to that

MAH. But, um, that and the fact that I enjoy one-on-one teaching in my choice, which is flute teaching, and so I think that I'm valuable that way because that's a very valuable way for students to learn how to be good musicians, not only players, technicians, but musicians also, but we can talk more about that.

CK. Ok, we'll get back to that. It's come to my attention that music classes in the Alpena Public School System have dwindled over the years and that the program is smaller than it once was. If this information is correct, do you have a sense of what's caused the decline in classes?

MAH. Oh, absolutely. It's the- the major one is the decline is the number of children in schools over the past several years and that's been declining probably fifteen years or more. I think that that's definitely the biggest factor in the decline.

CK. Because staffing has been cut, or there's less money?

MAH. There's less children. Less children to enroll in the program.

CK. Ok.

MAH. I mean, we're also facing decline in the number of students in the public schools in Alpena.

CK. Ok, but . . .

MAH. As the number of children decline, staffing has to decline, too. So, we do have less staff than we used to when I first started teaching at Alpena Public Schools.

CK. OK. So has that affected the enrollment at the college? Are most of the students who come to the community college, they've gone through the Alpena school system, the majority, I would think.

MAH. Many of them have, a lot of them have gone through the Rogers City schools, some of them Oscoda, but those mainly stay in the Oscoda campus of ACC. Um, Alcona. But, you know when you have, for instance Alcona, we're here to talk about Alpena, but Alcona is our neighboring

CK. It's northeast Michigan, that covers our . . .

MAH. It's where ACC gets its students from . . . they have no band program, that was ended many, several years ago, and so when they don't study music in high school, they don't . . .

CK. They don't continue. No, ok. And so, in addition to ACC, you also teach, or you have taught in a variety of other facets – you do private lessons, the Resurrection Lutheran School of Music and Blue Lake Arts Camp?

MAH. Fine Arts Camp

CK. Fine Arts Camp? To name some . . . would you talk about the kinds of students you work with in those environments?

MAH. Ok. Where should we start? With private teaching?

CK. Let's start with private teaching.

MAH. My private teaching students are all – right now they're all young ladies, sometimes I have men, too, but flutists generally are an instrument that girls take to more than boys and my students are all either in the elementary program at, um, in Alpena or the junior high or the high school program in Alpena or the college program in Alpena and, um, they come to me one at a time – they're, I'm contracted by the parents and they come to me one at a time and we work on flute techniques and things about music that they wouldn't get from their regular band classes in school and um, we do recitals and we do performances and I try to keep them busy with performances because I just think there's something within people that makes them competitive towards each other sometimes, but I like them to be competitive towards themselves. So I try and motivate them with their performances, not with being better than this person, but rather with what they are performing and we're performing a lot of small groups and as solos. They go to festivals during the school year through the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, and that they do through their school, but I prepare them for that, and that's a good motivation effort for them, but I think just as well as that are the opportunities they have to perform in recitals in town for their peers and for their parents and their family and their friends and that, and we do a lot of that. The biggest one that I do during the school year is called "Flute and Friends", and we do that in the fall, and that's where we have many, many different people – including Marlo Broad, by the way, who's been involved in Flute and Friends for a few years now - um, everything that we do has a flute or flutes in it, but it also has another person that plays another instrument or sings or dances with the flutes or does a narration with a narrated story. It's just a lot of variety but it all has to be premised on the fact that every act is a different musician, not just a flute player, so, um, I get the variety that way but my students seem to really like doing that.

CK. Sounds fun, mixes it up . . .

MAH. They meet people that they didn't know had this talent and, um, yeah, I think that's a lot of fun for them.

CK. Did you start that? The Flute and Friends?

MAH. I did. I did. This year will be the 7th one. We have it every year.

CK. This question, I don't know that . . . as I was writing it, I was thinking you could apply it to so many different areas, but the question is, when should students start playing instruments? I think, ideally, is there a time . . . ?

MAH. That's a good question and the answers are very varied – it depends on what instrument you're talking about. Piano players usually start when they're quite young, there's a very, very good method – methods, many methods for very, very young children to begin, it's a reading thing as well as it is a physical thing, putting your actual hands on the piano. Um, there's a wonderful program for young, young children to begin violin, called the Suzuki program,

CK. I've heard of that . . .

MAH. . . . and it takes into account the fact that they need tiny instruments because their hands are tiny, their arms are tiny and their wrists don't work the way a grown-up's wrist does, and then it goes through the different stages of growth of a child. There's also a Suzuki flute method, but I'm not trained in the Suzuki flute method, it involves different instruments, too. But for a wind, a child that's going to play a wind instrument, I think it's very important that their teeth be in, and

CK. Ok

MAH. . . . they be formed so that their mouth is going to be the way it's going to kind of be when they're an adult. I think that's very important, and I don't like to start flutists before fifth grade. I have started some before fifth grade and it's always been a very slow start, but it works. But I think fifth grade is the best time for a flute player, a wind player anyway.

CK. Their teeth are in . . .

MAH. And they can do what they have to do with muscles, facial muscles. And their hands are fine by that time. Their hands are at the growth period where they need to have them, so yeah..

CK. That's revealing, I had no idea that question would give me that answer. That's good. I want to go back, because we talked about the private lessons, then there was also the Blue Lakes and Resurrection. Would you talk about those?

MAH. Sure. Resurrection is a very special school that we have here in Alpena. It's about five years old, I think, and maybe a little bit more than that, not sure on my dates. But, anyway, it is funded by . . . it's the outreach, the musical outreach that Resurrection Lutheran Church does for the community and Julie Wood is the director of that school, and there are five of us right now that are teaching classes. I'm the flute teacher and I also teach wind instruments at the beginning/intermediate level, but I wouldn't do that at the advanced level. We have

two gentlemen who teach guitar, and two who teach voice and piano. So we have those instruments covered right now in our school of music.

CK. Where is it housed?

MAH. Resurrection Lutheran Church is at the corner of Grant and Brook Street, which is also the Tripoint Church, they share the back, near where the back entrance to the mall is, just down a block from there and Tripoint Church and Resurrection Lutheran share the building and that's where it's housed. We give private lessons there, and we have recitals twice a year and we do performances at the Culligan Plaza in the summer, which I have not been able to do any of because I've been involved in other out of town events.

CK. Is there a focus on church music?

MAH. No. No, no.

CK. It's wide open?

MAH. I'm the same teacher that I am with other students – they get the same method books and, no, there's not a focus, it's just being funded and encouraged by that church

CK. Excellent.

MAH. . . . as their outreach to the community. One of their outreaches to the community – they do a lot for the community. But I like it because, I mean I love it, because it's so different than any other place I've taught before. It has guitar players and it has vocalists and vocalists who are also wonderful accompanists. And so there's accompanists there, there's somebody to sing to do something with as a vocalist and there's also guitar players and they have a band called Music For You and sometimes I get to play with their band and I think that's so much fun, because it's just so different for me, I'm so classically trained, so that . . .

CK. It's so good to know that's available, too.

MAH. And we would love to have other teachers in our faculty, but we just wait.

CK. Make it happen as it goes. Ok. And . . . Blue Lake?

MAH. Blue Lake- Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. That is in Twin Lakes, Michigan, which is near Muskegon. Michigan's very fortunate to have two top-notch music camps, summer music camps in the state of Michigan, both over on the west side of Michigan and I became involved with Blue Lake over twenty years ago, as my father was involved there and so I came to visit him and see what he was doing there – he was a conductor. And I got to know some of the people and then pretty soon they

were asking me if I would like to apply and do some things, and I did, and I was accepted, and I started out at Blue Lake as teaching the bands – they have, every two weeks they have enough kids there for four or five bands, and orchestras and choirs, but I was in the band department, and I was directing bands for six years and then finally I thought I wanted to try teaching flute. And so I started asking them to let me know if a flute vacancy came up, and after a while a flute vacancy came up and I auditioned for it, and was accepted, and so I've been teaching flute ever since.

CK. Ok.

MAH. In flute classes, instead of having the full band rehearsal, we have just small groups of flutists who are there to learn techniques that are unique to the instrument. So . . .

CK. So is it a certain time of year?

MAH. Yeah, it's in the summer.

CK. Is it a summer camp, or do you just teach in the summer?

MAH. It's a summer camp, yeah. And they do, before camp begins, and after camp ends, they do other things, like Suzuki violin classes, and adult chamber ensemble classes, but I only teach during the actual camp. And it's an eight week camp, I don't teach all eight weeks, I usually teach just two weeks of the summer. I just got back from that, as a matter of fact. And so, yeah, I like it, it's just very different than what you do in public schools or at the college.

CK. Yeah, it's kind of fascinating, because it seems like you've got your hand in a lot of different areas.

MAH. Yeah, I'm lucky that way.

CK. You are a performer – how does your time spent performing compare with your time spent teaching?

MAH. Well, that's a good question, because I think people think, "oh, wow, now that you're not teaching, you have all this time to practice, and actually I have to practice so much more, I have to spend so much more time now because it's when you're teaching you tend to do things that you've done before, use

CK. You know the program.

MAH. You know what's coming next and you know how to, what piece of music would be good for this group and what piece of music might be good for that group, and you, there's a lot of effort behind the scenes and a lot of work behind the scenes, but with performing, I just find, as you noted just a bit ago, I am doing so many

things, I'm like performing with the orchestra and I have that to . . . I'm still getting ready for a concert that's the day after tomorrow, and I just got back from Blue Lake, and I had four bands, four flute sections from four bands, and I had all that music to learn, because I can't teach it unless I know what I'm teaching, you know I have to – there is an awful, awful lot of work to it. But I really enjoy it, it's so much different work than what I have done my entire career that I enjoy the performing part of it. I'm having a really good time with that right now.

CK. Good. That was the next question – do you prefer one over the other?

MAH. Well, I wouldn't want to do without my private teaching for Resurrection and other private students that I have that are not Resurrection students. I wouldn't want to do without that and I wouldn't want to do without the performing, so I can't really say that I have a preference, no.

CK. Ok. So, would you please touch on some of your collaborations – I have note of the Windsong Flute Quartet,

MAH. Oh, yes.

CK. Quintelo Sonare . . .

MAH. Quinteto Sonare

CK. Ok, Quinteto Sonare, the Alpena Civic Theatre, Besser Chorus, and the Alpena Symphony Orchestra.

MAH. Ok, alright, well, let's start with, um, and one that you didn't mention was the Arioso Trio, which was one of the first chamber ensembles that I started outside of the college, and this is two ladies who I had met at the college through the chamber ensemble, and we wanted to get together and create a group that could play at weddings, and so we did. And we called the group the Arioso Trio – I was the flutist, and we had Liz Nicholson played viola and Sally Vince played cello. Sally still lives in Alpena, but Liz Nicholson has moved a few years ago. And so we played a lot of chamber music for things other than, we ended up doing things other than weddings. We played at dinners and receptions, and things like that. So, we had a good time together, but we are no longer together because Liz moved and it's pretty hard to replace a viola player. So, and I think that at that time we were ready to move on to other groups. One group that was really, really important to me was Quinteto Sonare. That was a woodwind quintet and, um, my father was a musician, and he gave me one day he just gave me – he was probably downsizing, and he said "here, I want you to have this music" and it was all woodwind quintet music that he had gathered as he was a director at a very fine high school in Detroit, Michigan, and it was just a great library of music that he had put together and used with his students. And so, we formed this group, we had this base of music and got a lot more music as the years went by. But that group unfortunately is no longer playing

together either. Groups don't last really long generally because people are moving, changing jobs, and moving here, and moving there and two of our members were moving on and we just never were able to get a group back together again. But I still have all the music and all the desire to have a woodwind quintet, so maybe someday. But the most long living group that I think I've ever been in is Windsong. Windsong's been together over ten years, the same four people, um, it's a quartet, the four of us, the same four people have been together for over ten years and we just do all sorts of things. We just last weekend we played , or last week we played a tea up in Presque Isle and we play oftentimes for breakfasts and lunches, luncheons and receptions at the college and we're always the big part of Flute and Friends, of course. And we have a lot of opportunities to play, and we spend a lot of time at it. We are the kind of group that gets together every week, whether we have to or not. Even if we don't have a performance breathing down our necks, we still make sure that we get together because I'm a firm believer in a group that wants to play together needs to be committed weekly to it – if not daily. But with people who aren't necessarily in that business, weekly is good. And so we just make sure we are together every week.

CK. How did that group form?

MAH. How did it form? I was at the university and again, I was doing a lot of chamber music while I was getting my Master's Degree in flute and I became aware of a lot of flute quartet music that I'd never been aware of before and I thought, this really, this stuff is worth performing, whether it's for . . . popular music or classical music there's still a lot of music that's worth doing. And I had known long before I went to the university to get my Masters I had known other flute players in the area and so I decided that before I came back from my degree work that I was going to see if we could get together. And everybody was anxious to do it and so, we did. And it's just been really a good thing for all four of us.

CK. I hope I can track you down sometime. Look for it . . .

MAH. Yeah. I'm trying to think, the next time we'll be performing, for sure would be in November, at November 8 at Flute and Friends, um, but I'm sure we'll be performing before then sometime. Oh, um, the Peace Concert is another . . .

CK. Is that an annual concert?

MAH. Yes. That is October 4th, it's a Sunday, it's at St. Anne's (do I mean that?) . . . I don't know where it will be this year because of the reorganization of the Catholic churches but yes, I think this is the 7th Annual Peace Concert that the community is doing, it's not just Windsong. It's a lot of musical groups in the community. But we get around. We sure are lucky.

CK. That's great. That's great, yeah. And the Civic Theatre? Is that . . .

MAH. The Civic Theatre no longer uses live music. They um, they use um. . . they use . . .

CK. Recorded music.

MAH. Recorded music, yeah. I think I played for something like eighteen years with them, eighteen different plays. And I liked it, it was as important for me as it was for them because I was learning a new musical every time I played. I played in some musicals when I was in high school and college, but they were the ones that were popular then and the Alpena Civic Theatre went towards a lot of the really new musicals and a lot of the really old musicals like “Dolly” and “Mame” and those kind that I never played.

CK. They’re at both ends of . . . ok.

MAH. I did a few musicals for Thunder Bay Theatre, too, but they’ve been into recorded music for a long time.

CK. You recently played a significant part in organizing the Alpena Symphony’s tribute to Alpena music educators – where did the idea of that program come from?

MAH. Well, I don’t know if I was significant, but I did help with it.

CK. You put all the . . . didn’t you . . . ?

MAH. We had a . . . yeah, we had a . . .

CK. You put the PowerPoint together, I think.

MAH. I got everything together for it, somebody else actually put it up there, but, yeah, I got the things together. That was a bigger project than I thought it would be, when I said yes, I would get involved in it, but the whole idea was, I believe it was David Sawtelle’s idea. David Sawtelle is the Alpena Symphony Orchestra’s director. And I believe he came up with this idea. Carole Witherbee had been the one who had suggested that we do the Farkle McBride that she narrated. She talked to David about it, and I think that from that collaboration, they came up with, either they or David came up with the idea of making this concert, not only the Farkle McBride concert, but a chance to kind of honor all the present and past Alpena music teachers. It was just unbelievable getting all those names together. I still worry that I have forgotten somebody and they’ll never speak to me again.

CK. That was impressive

MAH. Nobody’s said anything to me yet. But, yeah, I think it was funny because immediately when I sent out these requests for information, pictures, there were certain people that sent them to me right away, and then there were certain people

that just didn't and didn't and didn't. And I would call them and, "Oh, yeah, it's coming pretty soon, pretty soon . . ." and some people never did. Some people just... I remember one of the women I particularly liked, as a matter of fact, she is now at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp as a very important member of their broadcast station, their radio station and she used to teach here, and she would tell me, "Oh, yeah, I'll get the picture to you, I'll get it to you", and finally I said, "Bonnie, you're not going to send me that picture, are you" and she said, no. She said, "Just put my name in, I don't want to send a picture." So, so many of those important people, people I thought were important didn't have pictures up there, but they had their names up there, and ok, whatever. If that's ok with you, it's ok with me.

CK. The pictures did add, it was like, and, sitting in the audience, I was kind of fascinated to see these people meeting up again, after many years of not seeing, going in different directions or retiring or whatever had happened. And there really was a sense of camaraderie.

MAH. Yeah, it was really, really important, it was just like, at one time, I was out in the lobby, and people kept walking in, "Maryann, Maryann, thanks for doing this", and it was just really moving to have some people I hadn't seen in ten years, twenty years. Archie Best I had never met. I mean, he was a legend, so I had heard about him, he was apparently, just when I moved here he was here, and then he left. And then I became more involved in music after a while. And even though we'd never met, we had so much in common because he had known of my father and so we got to talk about my father and his career, and Archie's career. Yeah, it was very moving to meet those people.

CK. That's great. How long have you been with the symphony?

MAH. Oh, wow, I don't know. At first, when the symphony first started, which had to have been around ten years ago, I was off and on as flutist and then I finally went back regularly. John Shubert was the conductor at the time and he encouraged me to come back regularly to the orchestra, and so I did and I've been with the orchestra ever since. So, um, oh, my gosh, it was more than ten years ago because at that point it was probably twelve years ago, so maybe I started with the orchestra about fourteen years ago. That doesn't seem right, it doesn't seem like it's been . . .

CK. Was it something . . . was it called something else?

MAH. There was an Alpena Civic Orchestra a long, long time ago and that was not related at all. That was . . . the Alpena Civic Orchestra was way back in the 80s, and I did play in it. But it was one of those orchestras that was formed because we had string players in Alpena, and then the school dropped the string program. And it just pulled the rug right out from underneath any string playing in Alpena. Because after a while, there was nobody feeding into the orchestra like it had in the past, with young people. And if you don't have that constant feed, you eventually end with a bunch of people that are just ready to retire, can't play anymore for physical

reasons or health reasons, or interest, or they moved away or they moved into a retirement home. So, an orchestra will just fizzle if you don't have that, I mean, any group will just fizzle if you don't have those young people coming in. And so, what is taking up that slack now is Eric Lawson's Alpena String School, which is starting students, he's been at this for a few years now and he's got students almost to the point where they're ready to come into the orchestra, and we are just ready to welcome them with open arms because we are so anxious to get that string section built up like an orchestra needs.

CK. I'm so glad to hear that that exists and it sounds like Resurrection, that string school – people are really making an effort to keep the music alive.

MAH. Yeah.

CK. Alright, let's go to the final section on your background: would you describe for me the roots of your music training- how and when did you get started?

MAH. Well I, like most children I started an instrument - a band instrument, when I was in 5th grade, and I was in Livonia Public Schools, in Livonia, Michigan. But before that, my parents had, at the time I thought they were *insisting*, but now I think I was lucky – that they insisted that I study piano. And so, my parents, this is when we lived in Livonia, too, my parents would take me and my sister every weekend we would go to Detroit to take a piano lesson at the Teal School of Music. And Lawrence Teal set up this school of music kind of like the Resurrection Lutheran School of Music, only it was bigger and he was a fantastic musician in Detroit, very well-known musician in Detroit. His wife taught piano and that's who I took my piano lessons with. And so, at the time it was something that I did, and my parents wanted me to do, and I didn't know why they wanted me to do it, but ok, whatever, I'll do it, and then when I started playing flute, pretty soon my parents decided that, ok, you play one or the other, but you don't have to play both, because I think they were tired of fighting me to practice both of them, and so I stayed with flute, but I have always played piano. I had enough piano background so that I could keep on until just the last few years and I kind of let it go since then.

CK. Ok.

MAH. So, I started with piano, and then with flute. I guess the most unique thing about my background, my musical background was that my parents were musicians, and a lot of people have parents who were musicians, but my father was an incredible musician, he was a leader in the American School Band Program, Programs, and recognized right now as a leader in the band programs. So I got about the best background in bands as anybody could get.

CK. What was his name?

MAH. Harry Began. He taught at Cass Technical High School in Detroit, which at the time that he was teaching there in the '40s and '50s was a magnet school for the arts and for science as well, but of course his bent was the arts. And he had fantastic students come to that school and he had fantastic groups and they just did all sorts of wonderful things, and that was what I was going to do because I was going to go to Cass when I was in High School, and I was going to play in his band, and I just couldn't wait. I mean, this is from when I was a little girl, too. And then all of a sudden, I get out of Junior High and he leaves Cass Tech, and he goes to teach at a university. And my parents wouldn't let me go to Cass if he wasn't there, and I was so mad at them I couldn't believe it, I mean, I always teased them, that I'll never forgive you for, for doing this to me. But, anyway, now that I'm grown up, and thinking about it in a different way, I'm realizing that my father thought, "Well, what do you want to go to Cass for if I'm not there?", because I had wanted to go to Cass to play in his band. So, I guess I don't know the answer to that question except that Cass is a special place, and I had so many friends that were in that band that got to know me because of my dad and we were just looking forward to being together. And when I was little, the people who were his students were also involved in Motown, I mean, that's how diverse these young musicians were, they go to Cass Technical High School, but yet after school they'd go over and play for Motown, they'd be the wind and string players in the Motown groups, you know. And, um, what's her name, the Supreme . . .

CK. Diana Ross

MAH. Diana Ross went to Cass Tech, and she was a student of my dad's. I mean, I was small at the time so I didn't know her, but I knew *of* her, and of course later on, my dad would say, "Remember, she was in my classes at Cass". And so, but I remembered also, Diana Ross was not allowed to sing for Motown until she graduated from high school. So, Barry Gordy, Mr. Motown, was telling her "No, you go back and finish high school and then I'll talk to you", and she did. And the rest is history. But anyway, so I had as good a background, especially in the band world, as anybody could have asked for. And I did a lot of traveling with my Dad during his career, which was a remarkable career. So that's probably why I wanted to go into teaching music, because it was part of my life, even when I was younger. And so, we lived in Detroit and then my dad ended up at two different universities, Michigan State was the last one that he taught at in Michigan, and then he left and went to the University of Illinois. Well, I had *just* got into Michigan State when he left it, and so I wanted to follow him to the University of Illinois, 'cause I still wanted to play in his band, and I'm glad that I did. Um, I went to Illinois, and ended up with an Illinois teaching certificate, so I got a job up near Chicago, actually near, between Chicago and Waukegan, Illinois. And, you know, we had been told when we were in the university, take advantage of these wonderful performing organizations that you have, because you may never play in one as good as these again, and it was true. I even up near the Chicago area, I'm going . . . oooh, my gosh . . . I knew wanted to continue playing as well as teaching. Some people don't, but I wanted very much to continue playing as well as teaching.

CK. Is that Wilmette?

MAH. Well, it's near Wilmette, yeah. It's Grace Lake, actually, is where I taught. Do you know Grace Lake?

CK. I don't know Grace Lake, I just know that somewhere in my notes there was, I had something about Wilmette.

MAH. Oh, uh-huh. Yeah. Well, I did find, though, that there's a north shore concert band in Evanston, that was not as good as the groups I played in at the University of Illinois, but it was, they were very good and so I was very happy to play in that group for a long time. And then my husband moved up here to take a job with the college and when we came up here, I was lost, for a long time. Because I couldn't find a teaching job; um, the school districts are much smaller here than they were in the Chicago area, there weren't as many teachers in each school district that taught music, and so I was lost for several years and I didn't know about the, I don't know why, but I didn't know about the civic orchestra at the time – or maybe I did and there were flute players already established in the orchestra, so there wasn't room for me. But, I think it was for almost five years, I just kind of put my flute away and I worked at other jobs in the area, but nothing that had to do with music. I got out my flute one day and said, 'nah, I just miss this too much', and so I went through that routine of getting it back. It's painful . . .

CK. It sounds heartbreaking, just losing it, I mean, and you know . . .

MAH. Yeah. I try and tell my students when they leave high school that, "don't put it away", um, because it's just, yeah, it is heartbreaking. So, I finally got back into teaching, at Alcona, I taught everything from beginning instrumental music to high school and I really like that, because I had a high school band that . . .

CK. So it was K – 12

MAH. Mhm. Well, actually it was 5th through 12th because I just did instrumental music, I didn't do the vocal, or I didn't do the elementary vocal, I had choir in high school, but . . . Yeah, and I was there for several years and then I went to Traverse City and taught for a year. We thought that we might be me becoming full time and possibly moving, but it didn't work out. Ken, my husband was still here and so I taught there for just one year and then I got the job at Alpena

CK. At ACC?

MAH. No, at Alpena Public Schools

CK. Ok.

MAH. And then I taught beginning band for a long time and then I kind of worked into beginning band and some general music and then I went to get my master's degree. When I came back, I did that general music then, with beginning band, and then I did a few years at the junior high, and then I retired. And I have been more busy since, since then.

CK. So, when you landed in Alpena, I've got a picture of it, but what was, do you recall having a perception of music, of what music was in northeast Michigan?

MAH. Well, I think I did, and I know that it was probably guided by the fact that I came from a pretty sophisticated background, musically, and a pretty sophisticated area when I taught in northwest Chicago, the northern Chicago area, and so I probably, um, it probably was based on that fact, but I thought, you know, I don't find anything here that fits me . . . and I didn't think I was being a snob, I just thought, you know, how can you do something so different and um, so I just didn't know where I fit, musically. Then, I think it was Mike Moors that suggested that I might try the orchestra, the Alpena um,

CK. Civic?

MAH. Civic Orchestra. Apparently there was a flute player that was leaving. You know, when you're a wind player in an orchestra, you have to wait for somebody to leave, because there's only space for 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, 2 oboes, that, so I think Mike suggested . . . and at the same time, around the same time, this friend I was talking about earlier, at Blue Lake, who was in the broadcasting,

CK. Oh, yes.

MAH. She came and played oboe and so it just got to be kind of a friendly thing, friendly thing that we did. And so her, and Michael and I organized a trio way back then, that was one of the other chamber groups, but that was way, way back then - "the Classique Trio", we called ourselves, but then Bonnie, the oboist in the trio, moved to Blue Lake to take this job, she wanted to be in broadcasting, so, she's a public broadcaster, for a public radio station, they play classical music, and she does a very good job at it. So, yeah. I kept playing in that. And then you know, once you start playing in a group, you meet people, and that's the important thing about maintaining yourself in groups, is that through those groups you meet people. And if you just play in a little practice room at home, you're just not going to make those important

CK. Connections . . .

MAH. Connections that are so important for people who want to play. And I don't even mean perform - some people like to play and perform, some people just like to play, and that's important, too. To just be together with people who play at your level and . . .

CK. And make it happen. Yeah . . . Well, thank you. Thank you for contributing to the music scene in Alpena.

MAH. Well, thank you for being interested in this project. I think it's a wonderful project you're doing and, yeah.

CK. It's interesting to see the evolution over time and I think with your particular story, it's very telling because you came at a point when there wasn't that much going on and it seems like your contributions have helped that and now it's interesting to see that, in some ways at least, on the public school level, it's kind of receded a little bit, too. But, it's good to know that there are a lot of people independently doing things outside of that.

MAH. Yeah, one thing that somebody told me, one of my friends from my university days I was probably complaining to – and they said something that I thought at the time was so simplistic, I thought, “oh, come on”, but they said, “You know what? If they don't have an orchestra there, or a band there that is of the quality that you used to play at, you can't be surprised by that, but you have to go out and you have to make your own chances to play in something.” And I thought that was so simplistic, like, ok, like, right – but where do you start? You just have to, you just have to start wherever and it just keeps on getting better and better and better.

CK. You infiltrate

MAH. Yeah, and it just has. If I hadn't taken heed of that, and done that, I would have had a flute quartet twenty years ago instead of ten years ago, or thirty years ago, actually. That's been here for more than thirty years. But I just thought, “No, I don't know how to start a group, I just know how to go into a group that's already started”. Well, so I did find out how to start a group . . . as a matter of fact, I wrote an article about it and it was accepted by the National Flute Talk magazine. And so my article is in the Flute Talk magazine.

CK. Is that recently?

MAH. It was about a year and a half ago.

CK. Ok.

MAH. Yeah, it was maybe a dry article, but it was all the things that I've learned that you have to do and the things you do not have to do, that you shouldn't do, if you're getting together an *adult* group – adult groups are different than student groups, they have different goals and so it was based on getting together an adult group and how to make it successful and Windsong is the group behind that whole article, because I think we did a lot of things right.

CK. Well, I will be looking for Windsong, now that I've got a few dates . . .

MAH. Yeah.

CK. So

MAH. Yeah, I'll let you know. Thank you for this time together, I've really enjoyed it.

CK. Me, too.

MAH. Good.