

The following recording features Don Deadman being interviewed by Cindy Kus and Carole Cadarette.

#### Don Deadman Transcript

CC: We're here at the Alpena County Library, this is August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, and it's approximately quarter of three in the afternoon. And we're speaking with Mr. Don Deadman, a musician from Alpena and played all around the area, lot of, ah, groups. Welcome.

DD: Well, thank you.

CC: Carole Cadarette, I'm interviewing, ah, Don. Ok Don, to begin with let's talk about when you first got into music- how old were ya and what gotcha there?

DD: You're not gonna believe it.

CC: Tell us.

DD: I was going to bring a record- they made a record of me playing the piano on my 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday when I played "Happy Birthday" to myself. Well I played piano, pretty well, at the age of one.

CC: At the age of one!

DD: Yes (laughing).

CC: And, at the age of one- was this because you had music all the time in your home?

DD: In my home- Austin Deadman, Shirley Deadman, all of 'em, they, they played piano, my grandmother. And- it goes, my, my music background goes back, way back to my great-grandfather was a cellist in Queen Victoria's orchestra. And that's where, it all boils down, comes down through the Aris Family, to the Deadman Family, and all of the Deadman's could play musical instruments and through my family and now in to my son and my grandsons and granddaughters are excellent musicians.

CC: Ok.

DD: Yeah. I have a grandson right now that's singing and playing trumpet with the young Americans in Europe and he's travelling through Spain, Italy, Germany, and possibly England.

CC: Ok.

CK: So, were there instruments all around your home when you were...?

DD: Not instruments- pianos. When I was that age of one year old- they just, pianos- there were two pianos and I was not allowed to get near them; but I crawled up onto the piano bench and I started playing "Three Blind Mice", and they were ready to jump on me. And they noticed I was playing with my left hand- I'm right handed. My left hand-"Three Blind Mice." And they were so

surprised- I thought I must have done something good! And I played it all the way through- and I've been playing ever since. I wrote my first music when I was four. And I was taking lessons then from Mrs., Mrs. Steele- Fred Steele's, you know-

CK: Olive.

DD: Olive Steele, yes! Very good friends of ours. I knew Olive for a lot of years. Then I took lessons from Mrs. Fenton. And I quit many, many times. You, you know- a little kid four years old taking lessons.

CC: Yeah. (in agreement)

DD: But I do remember some of the songs that I memorized- and after the first time through, I memorized it. You know, I just, I think I have a good memory.

CC: Sure, sure- so you can actually, Don, you can play by note and by ear.

DD: Yes.

CC: Ok.

DD: And I wrote music so I had to be able to read and write it, so-

CC: Mmhuh, mmhuh.

DD: And I played through the elementary school, trumpet, and Alpena High School. My band director at Alpena High School was Bob Dunstan, later on in years he became my saxophone player in my band. And he was also my son's, ah, teacher- Carey's, ah- and he played along with Carey in my band.

CC: Ok.

DD: We have some movies of that; it's kinda nice to go back and look at them days, you know?

CC: Yeah.

DD: And then I went to the Army, went to the Army band and played in big bands for the Kay Cass Orchestra. Came back here, and hung the horn up for a while, a couple of, few years anyway. I was working at a factory here, Abitibi actually, and then I got into business, I went into the music store business, and I'm back in music again. Just kept going and I really got heavy into the classical music and piano. Then I got into playing organ. And then I thought, "I better learn some of these instruments." So I learned every instrument I could possibly get my hands on. I did pretty well on the violin, saxophone, flute, bassoon, oboe...you name it, I played it- and I could read it. You know, you have to-

CC: Mmmhh.

DD: You have to be able to read it, I think you do. What else?

CC: Well where, when you were in Alpena and playing music, where did you play?

DD: Everywhere.

CC: Everywhere. The Armory and-

DD: Yeah, if you go by a bar, I probably played in it. I played the Tray Club Dances at the Alpena Armory and all across the state and downstate. I played in Germany a lot; I've, not too long ago, about 15 years ago, I was playing in Czechoslovakia, trumpet.

CK: What- how did you end up in Czechoslovakia?

DD: I, we travel all over, and when I go, I take my mouthpiece with me, and if I get into a jazz club, I'll ask somebody if they have a trumpet. Well one time, this guy brought out the most beautiful Bach trumpet. It was an original- I said, "Well, great!", I wasn't dressed yet, so I did a couple of songs there-"Stardust" is one of my favorites, and that's the one you missed when you went to that... and, ah, I wowed 'em with it- that just flows...

CK: It's a beauty.

DD: It was a lot of fun. I don't remember all of the places I played.

CC: Of course not. But you would-this is your hometown of Alpena, so if you say you played all the places, ah, I, I, I, understand.

DD: You put your thumb on Alpena, and draw that circle-and I've, I've, hit 'em all. Not all of them- some of the bars I won't play in...

CC: Ok.

DD: ...because I don't belong in there.

CC: Ok. Ok.

DD: But I'm jazz orientated -jazz and classical. I love all kinds of music. I love country, I love country; but I don't play much of it.

CC: Ok.

DD: We lean toward the old swing era.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Sinatra things. You know I've always done them.

CC: Mmhuh.

CK: Did you have regular gigs, like, that you played at every week, and you-

DD: Yeah, we used to, ah, we used to play at the Thunderbird, but, my band and the Cheerful Earful. But my band, I haven't mentioned that yet, did I? That wasn't, that's not in here, that was um, a lot of fun at the Thunderbird. And my band consisted of Beryl Schuster and ah, Jim Calamunce- Jim on the drums, Beryl on the guitar. And sometimes it was Jim Calamunce, Jim LaCross and I. So, I have-

CK: Was that the Don D. Trio?

DD: I have probably a hundred people here that played in my bands. And they're from all over the world. And they're all great- they're really, there's not a bad one in the bunch. In fact there's a couple more that I just thought of while I was working out at the health club and I thought, "I gotta get their names on there," and I just hope by the time I get home I remember who they were.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Cuz they were good.

CC: Yeah. Ah-

DD: I didn't have you in my band, I didn't have Carole in my band, but I thought, "You know, if Carole was a man, I would have had her in my band too."

CC: But you did, Don.

DD: I did?

CC: You did. I vocaled for you two or three songs at the last dance at the Alpena High School.

DD: Ooh man, wasn't that a great time- that's right!

CC: And I actually got to sing, ah, your style of music and mine now.

DD: Put your name on it, make sure your name's on it. (Hands her a paper) Geez-

CC: (Laughs) Yeah, ah...

DD: The Last Hop, I remember that.

CC: The Last Hop, um-

CK: What was the Last Hop?

DD: It was the last dance at the Alpena High before they tore it down- the old Thunder Bay Junior High School.

CC: Before they tore it down, we had a big party.

DD: And I got part of that floor in my house.

CC: Do you?

DD: Yeah, I did, I fell on that floor a lot of times in gymnastics. I think I broke my foot in there someplace. I know I did (laughs). But, I, that Last Hop was really wonderful. And Tom Twite, he was my saxophone player, if you remember.

CC: Yeah.

DD: He sat right next to me. I played trumpet, he played – I don't remember who was on keyboard, probably Don Smith. I don't remember.

CC: We had three bands, Cindy. We had it all covered. We had ah, Don D. Trio, we had ah, ah the, for country we had Al Zdan and I'm trying to think, the Kirchoff Brothers I think, and then we had um, lives, he's a writer now.

DD: It was a rock band there.

CC: Yeah, just let me think, um, I went to school with him. Here we go with names again. Um, I'll think of it. Was there many places to play back then though really?

DD: Yes, because the, the, the attorneys weren't out looking for work, you know? And, and, and the police weren't, they were a little more lenient and a guy could drive home and have more than two drinks and they'd leave 'em alone, as long as he stayed straight. You know, it just, things have gotten, and changed so much because of liabilities.

CC: That's right. Mmhuh.

DD: But I'll tell you there were some nice places-one of my favorite places to play, and I know you played there was the, um, VFW Hall before they rearranged it. It was a longer building, the acoustics were perfect in that place, just perfect. I always liked playing in it. My son Carey, played his first paying dance job there with Larry Sawasky's Orchestra.

CC: Ok.

DD: He's on this list too.

CC: Yeah, we gotta get Larry interviewed. Um, if you have to... and I know it's hard when someone says to you, what style of music did you play Don?

DD: Jazz.

CC: It was jazz.

DD: The name of my boat is "Jazz", my son is Ja- everything is jazz in my family-

CC: Ok.

DD: and then we- and that's the hardest music there is to play. I don't know if you've ever played piano, classical piano, or jazz piano; but jazz is harder to play than classical because the notes are out in front of you in classical music, you can-it's simple you know? When you're playing jazz and improvisation, you're making the notes, you're, you're ah- composing it.

CC: Ok. Ok.

CK: Did you have- were there any musicians that you particularly admired or whose style you- were in tune with?

DD: Almost every one of 'em. My best drummer, one of my best drummers was Jerry Ruczynski. And my best saxophone player, wait is this gonna be aired? It's not gonna be aired is- is probably, is definitely Jim LaCross, definitely Jim LaCross.

CK: But I'm talking about popular music.

CC: Who was your influences from-

DD: Oh!

CC: -the big names?

DD: Oh, oh way back then, um, in jazz...I started out when I was really young and I went to the Second World War. Ah, the big bands were Glenn Miller and Tom Dorsey. Of course, my dad was a trombonist and it was Tommy Dorsey, you know. And ah, Artie Shaw, (sighs) man... I can ju-Les Brown and His Band of Renown-

CC: Yeah-

DD: all of these bands. And I played all of that kind of music. And I played some of their charts.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: And the big bands, I had a big band myself and we played that stuff.

CC: Did you, did you play the high school dances at all?

DD: Yeah.

CC: Or were you. Ok. Even when you were in high school, Don?

DD: No.

CC: No. Afterwards.

DD: I don't think I did; no I didn't.

CC: Ok.

DD: Should've and I, I was asked to and I just didn't.

CC: Yeah, because that style was being played.

DD: That's right, that's right.

CC: Did you ever play with Dolly Gray?

DD: Pardon?

CC: Did you ever play with any of the guys from the Dolly Gray Orchestra?

DD: Yeah, I played, I sat in with my dad's- yeah, I played trombone, I played a second trombone part, but at the Twin Acres.

CC: Ok.

DD: But at the dances I just goofed around like the rest of the kids, you know? Watch you girls dance- and we just punched each other in the arm, and never ask anybody to dance, and-

CC: Oh there was some good dancers though. There was some good dancers when I went to high school.

DD: Oh man, I tell you. Mmhuh.

CC: Yeah, Mr., Mr. Titus was a great dancer. He could move around that floor pretty good. I remember the name of the other band at the last dance. Doug and Eve Allen, they were called The Devil's Triangle.

DD: Yes, no, whoa, whoa...

DD: Doug Allen.

CC: Doug Allen. Doug and...

DD: D.A. and the Witnesses was the name of it. D.A. and the Witnesses.

CC: I, maybe, *really*???

DD: D.A., Doug Allen, and the Witnesses.

CC: I see...

DD: He was a very good friend of mine.

CC: Ah, he was just in town. Ok.

DD: D.A. and the Witnesses- him and his wife, and I've forgotten, well he had a couple...

CC: Their drummer, would, they, when I saw them, at least, the drums would go around in a circle.

DD: Yeah.

CC: And they had, they would do the, the light show and the smoke and all that stuff.

DD: Mmhuh.

CC: Yeah, they did- right here in Alpena.

DD: They played Twin Acres for a long time.

CC: Yeah.

CK: He was on a platform?

CC: On a platform that would go...yeah, um, yeah, he's a, he's a writer now, a renowned mystery writer.

DD: I know, I know.

CC: Yeah.

DD: He's been at that a long time.

CC: Yeah, he has.

DD: Dougie Allen.

CC: Um, great differences in the music, do you think, from when you started to today?

DD: It went from music to, not even music, I mean, I'm not crazy about the rap- my grandson's like it because there's an art there, you know? But I can't, it's hard to, there's a, the rap is great with background music, let's put it that way. And I'm, I can't- it's not my thing. It's not my thing. Well I was in to progressive jazz, modern jazz, my dad wasn't, Austin Deadman-

CC: No, no.

DD: - he came from the old school, I came from the old- as I was brought up in the old school, you know?

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: But I guess with progressive jazz,



CC: Can you accept the new stuff?

DD: What?

CC: Can you accept, what's, what's...

DD: Yes, I can listen to a little bit of it, and when they start using profanity, then I just, I don't do that; I'm a born-again Christian and I just- I can't buy that.

CC: Ok. Ok. Well, do we have people coming up in, in, in your genre today that ah, that gives you a comfort zone? I mean- that you're comfortable with.

DD: Oh yes you know. And I, I...some of the country, I have some, some ah, country guys, and I'm not a country man myself. But I, I really like guys like Willie Nelson, and ah, um, what was there, he was, his name is- Kenny Rogers, he, he came out with an album, um- do you like Kenny Rogers?

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: He came out with an album, *Timepiece*. I don't know if you've ever heard it; but if you haven't, get it.

CC: Ok.

DD: It's *so* lovely. This guy always wanted to play jazz-

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: -and in Dallas, Texas, his teacher says, "Kenny, forget jazz, because it's a dead-end street in Dallas, Texas; but- get country." And he said, "Kenny, let's quit guitar playing. You, you know it's better to be a bass player, a bad bass player, than a bad guitar player and Kenny you're a *bad* guitar player-you're really bad." So Kenny went on to bass and he became very popular with that group and then come out with some great country stuff.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: You know that.

CC: I do.

DD: Well he come out with a jazz album, something he always wanted to do- and it isn't jazz, it's the old standard stuff that- the Sinatra things and you know.

CC: Mmhuh, mmhuh, mmhuh.

DD: Kids don't know that stuff today; but I'll tell ya, it's, it's lovely and I listen to it a lot. I really listen to him, he's good. I got some stuff, from ah, some albums from ah, Tony Andriacchi, who was the Sinatra of, ah, Chicago about five or ten years ago. And my son Carey wrote all of the music

and it's Carey's big orchestra that backed this thing. And he sent me a, a double album of ah, Sinatra and duets, I'm listening to that and the one I like on there best is "Foggy Day in Londontown," with Frank Sinatra and Willie Nelson. It's outasight.

CC: Really?

DD: If you never heard it, you've got to hear that- it's just great.

CC: Sure.

DD: But anyway- I love the music today-and not too long ago we had a super, ah, jazz band- we've had a, always had a nice jazz band at Alpena High School. I don't, they have a new band director and all, I don't what's in the agenda; but, ah, Bonnie Mo, not- ah, I think her name was Bonnie Moore.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Was a high school band director, the last one we had. She had a jazz band that would really kick- it was great.

CC: Yeah.

DD: A great jazz band-

CC: I remember when the Douglas, ah, Brothers played in that jazz band, and it was awesome.

DD: It is awesome.

CC: It was awesome, yeah, I don't know...

DD: And they keep moving on, the graduates go on, and then the new kids are coming up, well they've had all of this to listen to, and, you know, it's just-we had some good followings, good followings.

CC: Good followings.

DD: My son and his, ah, he was in the jazz band, back in, I don't know, he'll tell you about that- I hope he comes in here. But, his last year in the, um, in the high school, his senior year, he travelled the United States for the Young Americans as their lead trumpet. He wasn't even in the high school. All he had to do was come back and write an essay and, and, he, he was always on the "A" Honor Roll anyway, and he passed on the "A" Honor Roll. But, when he came back in, from the jazz band, back from that tour, they ah, they admired him so much, they put him up in front of that jazz stage band and did he play- the Chuck Mangione things- oh it was so, it was just beautiful.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Yeah, we had a nice, nice jazz band for a lot of years.

CK: Do you ever play together with your son?

DD: My son, well I can't find his pictures; but yes, he played in my band a lot. Him, and the last time we played concerts was in the park, concerts in the park, and he and I played trumpets together with Greg Adamus.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: He's a super piano player.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: And Jim LaCross sat in on that also. I had Dunstan in my band play there- jazz in the park, and there's my son, he's got a couple of days off from Sinatra, and came up here and played in my band-

CC: Yes.

DD:-for nothing. (Laughs)

CC: For nothing-yeah, well, um,

DD: Oh yeah, every chance we get to play together, we do. You know, we might even take a couple of horns out and - the island tomorrow and just play some.

CC: Sure.

DD: Alone, just the horns, yeah.

CC: Yeah.

DD: I got a grandson, that's, like I told you, and he's with the Young Americans right now. And I have another grandson over there that can sit down and play "Dizzy Fingers" on the piano like crazy and he's only sixteen. These kids have been brought up in the music. And then my two grandsons in Chicago- both are better than Liberace.

CC: Wow. (Whispers)

DD: They're much better than Liberace and they're, they, they, they have, ah, they get scholarships from all over the country and -

CC: Wow. (Whispers)

DD: -they stay in Chicago because they got their home is there and they don't have to pay for, you know, but ah, if you want to bring 'em up on YouTube, you can bring 'em up, and bring up, ah, "Hannah Deadman and the Revelation Song" and you'll see what these three kids have done and it's outasight.

CC: Hannah?

DD: Hannah- H-A-N-N-A-H- Deadman.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: “The Revelation Song.” That’ll bring up a lot of things that they have done. And all the choreographies, filming, all of the musical instruments are played by these two boys.

CC: Ok.

DD: They can play everything. They’re like me. I can play everything.

CC: Yup.

DD: And they can to. And it’s perfect, just perfect.

CC: It’d be a sure a wonderful thing wouldn’t it, if you could get this whole family together and they could do something-

DD: That’s pretty hard to do-

CC: -right here in Alpena town.

DD: I can hardly get them home.

CC: Wouldn’t that be something?

DD: Ah jeez, yeah. I’d like to sit in the background.

CC: Yeah, I’m sure. You got anything else Cindy that we could...

CK: I was wondering a bit, about the German oompah band...

DD: Yes.

CK: The Dad’s- ?

DD: The Dad’s Combo.

CK: The Dad’s Combo. Describe that music. What...

DD: It’s oompah music and they would play the old oompah,

CC: German.

DD: German, music, and we wore German costumes, they’re not costumes, lederhosen, and the hats and the-everything.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: And we had a tuba, two trumpets, two trumpets yeah, a clarinet, and ah, my valve trombone. And it was lovely, just lovely music and we played all over.

CC: How long ago Don, how long ago was that?

DD: Well back and when the, we used to pay for our millages, we used to vote for our millages and we'd vote 'em down, vote 'em down. We got, had a problem with keeping the elementary schools going. And so the elementary school teachers would get pink-slipped.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Well we needed those guys in there. So we went out and started earning money for 'em.

CC: Ok.

DD: And we also earned money, The Band Boosters earned like \$40,000 that one year to buy instruments for the school.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: We had a, I've forgotten the whole thing, but we earned a lot of money.

CC: Nineteen seventies?

DD: Seventies, yes. That's when I, collapsed, all that stuff collapsed, well.

CC: Ok.

DD: The first thing they kicked out of, of, when the millages are turned down is athletics, right? That's gotta go; and the music department, that's gotta go. That's not important. It is to a lot of people who went through there and then made their careers of it, you know?

CC: Mmhuh. Yep.

DD: Well.

CK: And a lot of people who need that as a form of expression, you know? The kids, that's-

DD: Yeah. We don't need them and we don't need gymnastics and we don't need gym either. Let's leave 'em on my farm and I'll have 'em hauling rocks, that'll build 'em up.

CC: Yeah, yeah.

DD: Yeah. That's the way they, a lot of people think that way.

CC: Well...

DD: But anyway, we played all over the place, and they paid us and we'd give that money to the school system.

CC: Ok.

DD: You can't give it to the school system, because then they, then they deduct that from the money coming from the state, so, but we gave it to the music departments.

CC: Ok.

DD: And it was a lot of fun and I brought all of them uniforms, all of the lederhosen, are very expensive, over in Germany and brought back with me and I says, "You guys are gonna wear this stuff." (Laughs) Oh, it was more fun.

CC: Yeah, for sure.

DD: That's the Dad's Combo.

CK: The Dad's Combo.

DD: And most of us are still a- Chet London and I are still alive. I got to try and remember who was all in there. Tom Wood's gone; Bill Moors is gone; Dennis Artley works out with me. He works out at the A-Plex also. He's still alive. I think that's-

CC: Many new names that we didn't have, that's for sure, that you talk about.

DD: Well you haven't heard the half of it. Do you ah, do you want to hear some of the names?

CC: Yes!

DD: Of the bands? These, this goes back...

CC: Yes!

DD: ...before your time. (Laughs) The Eddie...The Bill Kuchemann Orchestra, well the Dolly Gray Orchestra is what you danced to at proms and things like that.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: It was called the Harmoncers, that's the name of that band- the Harmoncers.

CC: Really? The Harmoncers.

DD: Dolly Gray and His Orchestra that was called the Harmoncers. And I can send this all to you.

CC: Yeah, we, we, we're gonna need that aren't we Cindy?

DD: And on, in that band was Eddie Woerpel on the piano, Sid Pugh on the drums, that's Doug Pugh's dad, Austin Deadman, trombone, Dolly Gray, alto sax and clarinet, Bill Jerome on the trumpet, remember these guys?

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Ok. And I sat in. I played an off combo, once in a while. I was not paid. It was, and then there was the Bill Kuchemann Orchestra. Bill Kuchemann was on sax and clarinet, Joe Emerson on piano, Saul Saretsky on the drums, Torey Osgerby on bass, Howie Arnold on trumpet, and Jim LaCross on the saxophone. And that's that picture- that's where I pulled these off- that was a large band.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Bill had many bands- he had tenor bands, and ten-piece bands, and I had a twelve-piece band; but I don't remember who the people who were on there. I got your phone number here, good, ok, I can call you.

CC: Yeah, I gave it to you.

DD: Then the Don D. Bands. Whoa. These I remember almost everybody. I was on trombone, trumpet, saxophone, and I have, I have a picture of that quintet- that, we played the first Junior Miss pageant. It was the Don D. Quintet. And Chet London on trombone, trumpet, and saxophone. I made 'em learn that saxophone. Larry Sawasky was on the organ, Larry Sabourin on drums, do you remember him?

CC: Yep.

DD: Earl Haines on guitar, later on, we, we switched instrumentation and Jim LaCross, saxophone and clarinet, and some vocals, Johnny Stevenson was our drummer then, and he also played, and he also sang. Joe Emerson on my, he also played in that band once in a while. Then we had a Dixieland Band with Joe Emerson on the piano, Ron Whitney on drums, remember Ron?

CC: No.

DD: Torey Osgerby on bass, ah, and, well we had to keep going down here. That's part of that band. Trios- Don D. Trios- I played organ and the trombone and trumpet and vocals. Jerry Ruczynski-vocals and drums. Jim LaCross- vocals, saxophone, and clarinet. Other members- Jim Calamunce- drums, vocals. Remember Jim?

CC: No.

DD: Cal? You don't remember Cal? Bob Rohn on guitar. Chet London, trumpet. Russ Esterbrook, you don't remember him- saxophone. Saul Saretsky on drums- for years, we played- he played with all three generations of the Deadmans.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Tubby Rigg on drums, Bobby's dad. Bobby Rigg, for years, played with me. Bobby played vocals, did vocals and, and some of them were rock things, you know?

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Bob Dunstan on tenor sax and clarinet. I played in a big band, Kay Cass band through Europe for two years. Donny Hartman, you've heard of him? He played in my band. He says, "I don't know how to play the jazz solos, I said, "Play a rock solo, and, who knows out here?"

CC: Yeah.

DD: But that's not a rock solo and it fit perfect. With the chords that I play, you can't make a mistake because I've got fifteen notes in there sometime. And it was just beautiful, just beautiful. Beryl Shuster?

CC: Love him.

DD: You know Beryl?

CC: I love him.

DD: He was my guitarist for a long time. Mike Jones on clarinet and saxophone. Kenny, Ken, "Scooby", "Scooby-Do", Scooby Edblad on drums and vocals.

CC: Yep.

DD: He used to play with ah, Hank Williams, did you know that?

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Carey Deadman, trumpet, that's my son. Dick Niemi, accordion. Bob Bartlomicj, you know him?

CC: He's my neighbor.

DD: -accordion. Nick Pellegrino, did you know Nick?

CC: No.

DD: -accordion, wow, he was good. Doctor Greg Adamus, drums, pianos, vocals, sax- he played drums and saxophone at the time I play organ and trumpet at the same time we had a four or five piece band. It sounded good. We had it together. Jilla Webb. Remember Jilla?

CC: Yes.

DD: She played, she sang with Harry James.



CC: Yep.

DD: She was in my band; she did the vocals. Al Sparling, trumpet. George Wysocki on drums- he had the shiniest, shiniest cymbals in the world; you could see your face in 'em.

CC: I don't recall.

DD: You couldn't touch his cymbals. Don't touch 'em, He had 'em so polished they looked like mirrors. (Inaudible) Whoo. Ah, Tom Twite, sax.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Ah, Don Smith, piano. Al Sabourin LaCross- saxophone and drums- he played drums with me before, and Vince Ramos, alto sax, he's from Mexico, if you didn't know him. Dave Abend.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: -drums, Don Parrish, trombone. And the German band I already gave you- Bob, Bill Moors, Tom Wood, Dennis Artley, Chet London and myself. Norm Seiss- accordion and vocals. Cal Howard on congas. Jeff Smith on drums. Dan Ager, you know Danny?

CC: (whispers) Very well.

DD: Brad Moors on trumpet. Man, we did a couple of things on trumpet, because I'd pick up the trumpet, and I, he would play a song and I'd say, "Carry it an octave higher." And he would and I'd play an octave lower and he went way up on the high notes and people would turn around and say, "How can you do that?" Then they'd see there's two trumpets playing, it was beautiful man, just beautiful stuff. Brad Moors on trumpet and you. I got your name. No, you put it there- Carole Cadarette.

CC: Yeah, I did. You told me to put my name there, I did.

DD: That's right, you got it.

CC: Yeah.

DD: And there's others and I just can't- started remembering them today, I just, you know. They were all good or they weren't on my bandstand. You know-

CC: Yeah

DD: they just didn't come up to my bandstand.

CC: Yep. Music- ah, I know what it does for me and I know what it's done for me. It, it, in your life, how important has music been, Don?

DD: I can't, I can't be without music. It's with me day and night, it's in my boathouse, it's all through my house. It's in my car- right now I'm listening to Karen Carpenter-

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: -again.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: Carey, Carey really thought of, Dick Car-, Richard Carpenter, a lot of him, I think he played with them, you know, before Karen died. Ah, I just got done with Sinatra albums again; I'm always listening to...

CC: It's never far away from you.

DD: That's right. Yeah, when I get out in the car, Karen's gonna sing to me again. Yeah it's always with me, and when I sit down at the organ, I don't even realize that it's one o'clock in the morning and my wife comes in and said, "Are you going to bed?" cuz I'm playing, I may be playing hymns, "How Great Thou Art"-

CC: Unhuh.

DD: I just love that, if I played that for you, you'd have tears in your eyes. I did that with Carey last year and he says he had tears in his eyes. And my grandson started clapping his hands, and he's sixteen years old. I got an arrangement that the Lord told me to play it this way and I *did* it. And it's beautiful, it's just beautiful. I wish I, I should record it. I haven't but...

CC: You should. Don't say you should, do it.

DD: I have a recording setup already on the organ, I could just turn it on, you know?

CC: Mmmhuh.

DD: And my grandson David who is with the Young Americans, learned a new song, "The Young Man with the Horn" and I did the background music for him, and it's just- a Ray Anthony thing, Ray Anthony was one of my favorites, and that guy just... buh, buh, buh, buh.buh, buhbadee, doden doo... with that trumpet and it was just a golden song. Well I gave David my trumpet, that's an eighteen hundred dollar Conrad Gozzo trumpet, silver.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: And that's what he uses with the Young Americans now. Does he get a tone with that-woof- I used to get a tone out of that horn, you know? Tone is the whole key. My son Carey, come home from college one time, and he says, and he was practicing, he goes ba, ba, ba,ba,ba psssss, and he hits this high note and he says, "I bet you can't do that."

I said, "Well what was it?"

And he said, "A double high C."

I says, "Give me your horn," this is not my horn, this is not my mouthpiece, here we go. Pssssssss. I hit it and I said, "Nice horn."

He said, "I can't believe it, you don't even practice, and you're doing a double high C, nobody in this town can do that!" I know they can't.

He said, "How can you do it?"

I says, "The difference between you and I is, you do it all the time, I was gonna do it or die right here. I'm not gonna miss it one time. And I don't care if I ever play again, you're gonna hear me do it and I did it!" (laughter) It makes a difference.

He says, "How do you get such a nice tone out of the horn when you play a song?"

I says, "Because I'm gonna get all the way through this song, and every note, there's not one note in the music. I used to teach my students, pick out a note in here that isn't important. I don't see anything here. Right, because the guy that wrote it wanted you to play every note, so don't skip any of those notes. Don't play that real weak or out of tune, make it, make it, play it, make music." And so when I play a song, when I'm playing that organ and trumpet at the same time, every note is going to be as good as I can possibly do it and if I never play a note again the rest of my life, I'm going to finish that song and it's gonna be as- the best, you're going to get the best. That's all, that's the way it is.

CC: You talk about teaching music Don, how many do you think you've taught?

DD: How many- what?

CC: How many students do you, how many people do you think you've taught over the years, including all the instruments?

DD: All of the instruments- I taught, I taught 'em all. I had students that couldn't play, couldn't play a thing and were talked into playing things like, you know, in sixth grade or seventh, whenever they start, sixth or seventh grade and talked into playing instruments that- the parents said, "Well, she's good enough, I'll buy the instrument." Oboe, bhhbhh, buy an oboe?" Come on. And here's this kid that can't play it after six months of playing this thing. So the parents come in and say, "Can you help? The teacher's can't...she can't play it."

I say, "Well, let's set her up."

So he set her up for lessons once a week.

And I said, "Every week you come in and same with French Horn, every week that you come in you should be able to play this better than I; because you're going to be practicing all week, right? And I'm not going to practice all week. So when they come in, I take an oboe out and I play right along

with them and I can play it. And pretty soon their playing oboe, they're playing French horn and one, one girl went on to national, ah, all-state, or whatever they call it and toured Europe and everything, a French horn player. Man, she had me going, I'll tell ya, she could really play, so I am really gee, I'm focusing and I'm outplaying her, you know and I got her up on high notes and all. A lot, all of the instruments- bassoon, I taught bassoon, I taught everything.

CC: Hundreds, hundreds of students, Don?

DD: Yeah, I was in business for thirty years.

CK: That was part of the store?

DD: My music store.

CC: Yeah.

CK: What was it called?

DD: Alpena Music Center.

CK: Where was it?

DD: Down on Second Avenue, Alpena. Alpena, Michigan, Northeastern-that's right up here in (indicates on his hand)

CC: Yeah, but you, you were on one side and then you moved over to the other, if I remember.

DD: Yeah, the bank bought out the buildings there, from Jerry Ruczynski, Jerry owned those buildings, and bought 'em out and they built their bank.

CC: Yep.

DD: Well they built offices over there and moved me over to the Printing Studio.

CC: It's where the old, the new Black Sheep is, you were in that building, weren't you, Don?

DD: Yeah, yeah.

CK: Ok. Ok.

CC: Yep, yep.

CK: And did you sell instruments?

DD: I sold- I had a full line music store. If you came in and wanted a kazoo, I had a kazoo. If you came in and wanted a French horn or a, a pipe organ, I could get you one. I had all instruments- pianos, organs, every instrument- it was a full line music store.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: I had some of the best trumpets in the world in there. Really, I'm not kidding.

CC: Mmhuh, mmhuh.

DD: I'm not kidding. French horns too-

CC: How many years, Don? How many

DD: Thirty years to the day. I opened up Janu- I opened up November the 30<sup>th</sup> on November the 30<sup>th</sup> in 1963, I'm getting it all back together again, and I closed it November the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1993- thirty years to the day.

CC: Wow. Yep.

DD: I retired. I was an old man when I retired. I was 55 years old.

CC: Wow.

DD: Geez. That's a long time ago.

CC: Umhuh.

DD: Umhuh.

CK Sooo- do you play now?

DD: In church, and once in a while, I'll sit in with Greg Adamus or somebody down at the Center. Where did I play last?

CC: Jam sessions type situations?

DD: Yeah, I just sit in.

CC: Ok.

DD: I, I don't want any money. I don't want to be obligated. I don't want to say, "You've to be there Thursday, "

CC: Mmm.

DD: No I don't...like Tuesday, "Be there in the afternoon." If I do, I'm gonna have to drag my son along..."Will you...?" He's done that to me.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Both of us walked in there with trumpets, and it's pretty nice. Greg...he's, he's the best. He's really the best piano player in this town except for Austin Deadman. Austin Deadman was really good.

CC: Ok.

DD: Um, I play in church and-

CK: Which church?

DD: I've been asked to take the organ out and play. I don't want to drag it out, it's, it's dying. I mean it's just, it's falling apart. I gave one away to the um, ah, flea market.

CC: What are you playing at home?

DD: I have two, had two of the same organs.

CC: Which is?

DD: One of them in my house and one, exactly the same organ that I gave away to the flea market. And it's for sale there- you can get it for a couple of hundred dollars and brand new that organ was fifteen thousand dollars; both of them- fifteen thousand dollars apiece. I still got that one.

CC: Yeah.

DD: One of them.

CC: Ok.

CK: And I play my piano, once in a while I'll sit down and play some Mozart or Beethoven, not even Beethoven. I play ah, my favorite is Chopin.

CC: Ok.

DD: In classical.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Then I'll use the automatics once in a while; but not a lot, because that's like cheating to me.

CC: (Whispers) That's what I use. Cindy asked what church do you play in?

DD: Ah, Word of Life Baptist Church. I think I may be there, if it's next Sunday or the Sunday after. Donna Pollard asked me if I would and I said, "Yeah, let me know ahead of time." So I can my chops up. Now, I got to practice.

CC: Yeah, so you play trumpet in church?

DD: Yeah.

CC: Ok. Do you ever sit in on those, like the, the organ at Trinity Episcopal, that lovely...?

DD: No, I have played the old Skinner Aeolian Skinner they had there; but the new one I haven't, no.

CC: Yeah.

DD: I used to repair that old one as a matter of fact.

CC: Did you?

DD: They couldn't get anybody up here to repair it and I'd have to go there with some, ah, Alpena Music Center tape and tape up some of the things that were leaking and...

CC: Yeah, yeah.

DD: Yeah, that was a long time ago.

CC: Yeah.

DD: I miss that church. I, I go there once in a while.

CC: That's my church.

DD: I know, I show up and they say, "What happened? What are you doing here? Ah, I love it. But ah, you know if I'm asked to jam once in a while, I might show up, depending on who the keyboard man is. And I did go to that, ah, that bash they had out here last Friday and Saturday-

CC: (whispers) I missed it.

DD: Out in the ah, ah- and Greg Adamus played; but he played the, the rock and roll band that he has-so I left the horn in the car-

CC: Ok.

DD: -I'm not going to take it out for that. But I had a nice time. It was a great thing that Wayne Kendziorski puts it on. What a super guitar player. I remember when he grew up and, he used to come in to the store dreaming about playing like Donny Hartman and all this stuff.

CC: Yeah.

DD: Ah, man. Bobby Rigg was there. I had a nice time with him. And Jerry was there.

CC: Yeah

DD: I had a nice time talking with them old guys. These are great musicians.

CC: Yep.

DD: What else do we need to know? You need pictures. I'm gonna dig 'em up. I'll get some more pictures for you.

CC: Yeah.

CK: Recordings?

DD: Well, I hope I can...pardon?

CK: Recordings?

CC: You got any recordings at all of your music?

DD: Probably. Probably tapes or DVDs.

CC: Well, DVD's fine.

DD: Maybe, I can find something. I can always copy them for you.

CC: That'd be good.

DD: I got, I think I have... I'll have to look through it; because I had DVD's of Jerry and I and Jim LaCross and then they had some stuff that they ah, PBS, or what is that, that radio, television station.

CC: WCMU.

DD: WCMU. They probably threw it all away. The Don D. Trio played some nice stuff.

CC: Well, probably could be contacted.

DD: My Dixieland played there one year. Jerry was -

CK: In Mt. Pleasant?

DD: Pardon?

CK: In Mt. Pleasant? WCMU?

DD: That's where they are, yeah. Isn't that where they are?

CC: Did they come up here, d'ya go to them ...?

DD: They came up here.

CC: Ok.

DD: Yeah, I wouldn't go down there. Take a band down there for free, ya know.



CC: Yeah, I know. You...

DD: Let's say they slipped me five hundred dollars to de-, we could deduct from my taxes.

CC: Yeah, I did I did never hear you mention Dixieland; now you just did. You didn't mention that you also played Dixieland.

DD: Oh. Unhuh.

CC: Wow.

DD: And the bands here, I don't know what they're making now; but my bands always made at least a hundred, a hundred and fifty dollars apiece. And that's back in the '70's and '80's and 90's. If you wanted good music and some, we could play everything. So, if we did a wedding reception, which isn't a lot of fun because there's, there's some music's there that they insist on a lot of it, you know and.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: They want, for instance, a polka band. Get a polka band, you know?

CC: Yeah.

DD: But if you want to keep grandma and grandpa there you might wanna consider our band- we'll play the polkas.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: We'll play music that they can dance to.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: I'm not crazy about waltzes; but we'll play waltzes.

CC: It's called playing to the dance floor, Cindy.

DD: That's right, let's keep everybody there...

CC: Yeah, yeah.

DD: And we, that's the kind of money we'd make. And the quintet, of course, made a lot more than that. We've got five guys in there, there's gonna be at least five hundred dollars,

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: -and then plus travelling expenses, wherever in the state we had to go.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: We used to have to, well, my trio used to go down to ah, Lansing and play down there, you know? And then sometimes, I'd have Saul and I'd haul the stuff down there and Carey'd come over from Chicago and play with us.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: That was a great trio...

CC: And when you did that Don, were you, were you playing by a script, were you, where you'd write off of, were you playing by ear, you, ah, you everybody gotta think-

DD: Playing by memory.

CC: Ok.

DD: Ah, I would go through a song, I knew thousands, I know thousands of songs; but I'd go through a song before I would play it front of the public, I'd play it, practice it, a hundred, two hundred, three, four hundred times. It was perfect, so if I made a mistake, you wouldn't hear it cuz I would cover it up with the most beautiful arpeggio, or something in there, and I might just throw in a whole bunch of chords and then come right back down and you'd think, "Wow, what an arrangement." This isn't an arrangement. That was a damn mis-, that was a mistake! (laughs)

CC: It's called pretty chords, pretty.

CK: Pretty chords.

DD: Yeah. But we did it, ya know?

CC: Yeah.

DD: We knew the song so well that we could do it in our sleep. I've, I've watched musicians play in their sleep and I had to catch one that was falling on the organ. I'm not going to mention his name, I held him back up and, and he started playing again. And then I knew another guy that was sleeping and he was playing. I'm not going to mention his name either, but he was sitting down. I know you know these guys; but he was so tired.

CC: Yeah.

DD: They knew it, they were so good that they could do that.

CC: Yep.

DD: And any key. Ah, I've had people say, "What key did you play that in?"

I said, "Key of B."

“What are you playing in the key of B for- half a step higher or half a step lower, B flat or C, why didn’t you do it?”

Because it’s there...

CC: Mm yeah.

DD: Ya know.

CC: I played a song in all keys. Why? Because it’s there. Why do you climb a mountain? Because it’s there. Ya know...

CC: Mmhum. Yep, yep.

DD: If you know your instrument well enough you don’t have to look at the keyboard.

CC: Well.

DD: But I do, and I, I always had my music in front of me, but it wasn’t music, it was lyrics. And I would follow it; because sometimes I would think, “Is that a E flat with a, is that an E mi- with a flat?” You know, I’d write it down because I would flat that ninth, you know? Or flat the fifth or something like that to make sure I got that part of that; but the lyrics- you don’t want to stumble around on those things.

CC: Mmhuh

DD: So I always had them in front of me. And what kind of settings that I wanted to use in that particular song. If I wanted chimes, I didn’t use chimes, if I wanted vibes, I wanted to make sure that I didn’t start the song before I’d hit the vibes.

CC: Mmhuh, mmhuh.

DD: So you could hear the vibes.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: It’s part of professional, being a professional.

CC: Mmhuh. Mmhuh.

CK: Can you think of one of your best memories in performing? Like an event you were at a place that you played- something about it that was- just sticks out?

DD: Quite a few of ‘em and they come back to me once in a while, when I play a particular song and I’ll think, I remember looking up when I’d start this song. One of them I particular was “The Day of Wine and Roses” it was at the Winyah Club and I took the job, I was a member of the Winyah Club, but I thought, I’ll take the job you know, but I’d rather be at the party, you know. And

I started “Day of Wine and Roses,” I started it with, Jerry, Jerry Ruczynski was playing with me. And there was nothing, and I just sang it, I got the note and I got perfect pitch so I can do C (sounds the C). That’s a C. So I went (sings) “The Days of Wine and Roses,” vroom! and that organ came “laugh and run away.” And people just stopped and say “Oh my God! That was nice!” and it was, it was really nice. And Jerry’d just fall right in with those brushes and... But a lot of times we’d get standing ovations you know and it was just so nice to have them people stand up and- they really appreciated that much. I like that. And it wasn’t a concert, we did a lot of concerts and they would do that, you know, I expect that it in a concert; but not on the dance floor. And, you know, and places like that, we had that, all over the state...it was really nice that they appreciated that much.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: And you know I did a lot of clapping of my hands Saturday night, that jamboree that they had out there. And people just sit there and they, they don’t do anything. Well, these people are up there working hard and they probably are better than anybody that’s sitting down here and when they get done with a song, you should at least attempt (claps hands) to clap your hands and show them they’re appreciated.

CC: I agree Don.

DD: They’ve got five thousand hours into that instrument,

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: -to play that for you, you know.

CC: But I think, ah, if I can just interject, and you can correct me if I’m wrong, I notice that is an inherent thing that does not occur, especially in Alpena, where people appear to be setting on their hands, and they’re not giving back to those musicians and some of ‘em are playing for that right there. The applause.

DD: Right.

CC: And I, too, have an issue with that.

DD: That’s right.

CC: I can’t tell ya how many times I’ve started the applause. I just went to a concert, Music For You, swore they were setting on their hands. And I started the applause. Why? Because that’s what we feed off of.

DD: That’s right. We’re, in jazz, we have a band, and the band’s, we, we play a song all the way through. And you now the song, whatever it is... “Day of Wine and Roses,” let’s say. And then, the sax player, or trumpet player, whoever- he plays a solo. Well he’s not playing the melody, he’s playing all around the melody and he took this beautiful rose that God made and just put a golden lining all the way around that thing and nobody appreciates that? Well if I’m sitting in that audience,

when he's done with the solo, the band's gonna come back in and play the song again, I'm gonna applaud (claps) that guy because he just comp-, he composed something for me, and I like that.

CC: Mmhuh, mmhuh, yep.

DD: I wish the world would do that, you know.

CC: I agree.

DD: It really makes a difference; and then when you get many hours into this thing. I didn't do it all my life but, because I'm still alive, somebody asked me the other day, they said, "Don, have you lived in Alpena all your life?"

And I said, "Not yet." Laughter)

Ah, dear. This has been a wonderful place to raise my children, my grandchildren, teach them music and just drive them to get it all perfect, before you play it for anybody. My daughter Charmaine is also equally talented. She was in a concert with Liberace at the Las Vegas Hilton. I don't even have, she sang in my band. With Liberace, and for two months, and then she went on with the Young Americans, travelled in Europe, travelled Japan, then she was out in Hollywood, she was in the movies. She's super talented- she plays piano a little bit and she puts on shows over there with the high school that will blow your mind. Charmaine Leigh, was her stage name, L-E-I-G-H, but her real name is Charmaine Lee-L-E-E.

CC: Mmhuh.

DD: That's me, Don E., Donald E. And she can sing. And dance. And she taught, teaches all these, these high school kids dance steps and they've never done this before. And when they're, when those shows are done you just can't believe it. There just kids. She does it just like the Young Americans, she drives them and they do it and it's really great, man.

CC: And those, all your children was raised right here in Alpena,

DD: Yep

CC: -and they all went on to be in, ah, musicians-

DD: Superstars. Yep.

CC: -show business of some sort.

DD: Yep.

DD: Exciting, the kids, the kids have been exciting.

CC: Anymore?

DD: Auf wiedersehen. I'll call you, you can call me. Let's keep in touch.

CC: Absolutely.

DD: We can play another gig together someplace.

CC: You know what? I've turned my, my thoughts to that, the, your style of music, like "Moonglow"-

DD: Yep.

CC: - and "Stranger on the Shore".

DD: Oh, I had Bob Dunstan playing that; because he did it so nice on that clarinet.

CC: I don't, I have no clue, I mean, what key you do it in, but I'm sure if I told you the key I do it in-

DD: What key do you do-

CC: Bob Bartlomiej comes over and I, and I, I have him listen to the way I do it, I'm not right sure, probably G. Anyway, he'll look at me and he'll say, "Good stuff, Carole."

DD: What key do you do it in?

CC: I think G.

DD: G? That's fine. There's only one sharp in that.

CC: Ok. Anyway-

DD: I'll do it in any key you want to do it in.

CC: See? We go back a little ways and I, like I said, I will not forget the night I sang with his band. I thought, "Here's this country girl singing with this band." And I really changed, I still do a lot of country, but I've, I've added in...

DD: There's a lot of great...

CC: "Fly Me to the Moon" and

DD: (sings) "Fly me to the moon," that's a Sinatra thing-

CC: Yeaah. Well, it, I'm not Sinatra; but I love doing that style of music.

DD: Yeah. Me too.

CC: An old country girl. Since I went back to playing the keyboard.

DD: I'm into doing, or I was before I stopped playing; but into ah transposing songs, transposing the words. Like Sinatra did song I think Dindi, that's D-I-N-D-I and so did Nat Cole's ah, daughter, oh, Natalie Cole, and she did it in Portuguese, so I thought, "You know what? I want to do that in Portuguese." So one time Saul, Saul and I went out and played a job and I said, "we're going to play a song, we've had a request for this, "Dindi" and ah, and here it is in English and then in Portuguese." Then I did it in both. And Saul just went, "Oh my god, that is so cool man, so cool." And did "Spanish Eyes" in Spanish.

CC: Yeah.

DD: And there's another one I want to do and I've just forgotten the name right now; but I'm gonna do it just for me, just.... Why? Because that mountain's there, I got to climb it. I got to climb the mountain.

CC: I just went down to ah, hear ah, Jeff and Sue Hanneford, now they live in Curran. And I, they did Margaritaville, because they're doing a tiki beach in minors. It was all done in minors. CC: And I went, wow this is different.

DD: Yep.

CC: All in minors.

DD: I knew a guy that did that on a trumpet one time.

CC: Really?

DD: Yaaaa...He had two brains working.

CC: Don't most musicians?

DD: Yeah, yeah. People would dance by and they'd say, "Hi Don!" and I had no idea who it was; because right after I get past the music stand, the floor is full. And then later I'll think, "Who was that?" Everyone knows Don D.; I just don't know everybody.

CC: For sure.

DD: It's been fun.

CC: Don, thank you very, very much.

DD: Your welcome.