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## **Michael G. Nastos, March 28, 2019**

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Eastern Michigan University Archives, Oral Histories

Oral History Interview with Michael G. Nastos (MGN)

Interview conducted by Historic Preservation Graduate Student Matt Jones (MJ) and University Archivist Alexis Braun Marks (ABM) on March 28, 2019

Transcribed by Matt Jones

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MJ: My first questions, well, actually I have an introduction that I will read first and then I will jump into some questions. If you need to take a break or something, just stop.

MGN: How close to the mic? Should I do radio style?

MJ: It's nice to have someone who is not afraid of the mic.

MGN: Never have been. I know how to use it. I was trained. I have a background in phonetics. This is an interesting mic though. Probably very high impedance. It looks good.

MJ: It is Thursday, March 28, 2019. This is Historic Preservation graduate student Matt Jones along with EMU Archivist Alexis Braun Marks. And today we are speaking with longtime broadcaster, music critic, jazz and blues aficionado, Michael G. Nastos. Broadcasting in southeast Michigan since the early 70s, Nastos is perhaps best known for his work with WEMU, the NPR affiliate station making its home in King Hall on the WEMU campus. Emeritus Senior Producer, Music Librarian, Assistant Music Director and full-time evening broadcaster at EMU for nearly thirty years, Nastos has written for Downbeat Magazine, Cadence magazine, Coda Jazz Forum, Swing Journal, and a host of other local and national music publications.

MGN: Currently Hot House in New York City for almost ten years.

MJ: He has also traded the sound booth for the classroom as guest lecturer and instructor at EMU, University of Michigan and Washtenaw Community College. I know there are a lot of things that got left out, but if I left them all in I'd be talking forever.

MGN: It's a good thumbnail.

MJ: Not to start off on a somber note, but I was a peripheral acquaintance of Jim Dapogny, and I know that you wrote about him a lot, and he just passed away in the last couple of weeks from colon cancer, and I just wanted to start off by asking you if there was anything you'd like to say about Jim in tribute?

MGN: Well, the early period of my life in learning, is attributed to three people- Dr. Morris Lawrence Jr. who was my mentor at Washtenaw Community College where I was his work study student, and really turned my life around about music and about life in general. Roly poly clarinet player from New Orleans, piper, jovial character, great musician, great band leader and great person. So I was his work study student too. The second person would be Louis Smith, who I got to know at the University of Michigan through peripheral connections, and he was a person that

I also learned a lot about from the bebop era, and the era that he grew up in. The third person would be Bob James, who was my theory instructor at the University of Michigan, who of course went on to Taxi and great acclaim as a pop artist, but great piano player and great mind who was open to progressive music. The fourth person would be James Dapogny who was also at the University of Michigan and was able to show me a lot of the early-period jazz.

I was born in 1952 so I'm not a person what grew up in the swing to bebop era, I did not grow up in the early period jazz era. My initial contact about jazz was Dave Brubeck, who we knew- my family knew the Brubecks. I went to school at Interlochen with Chris Brubeck, one of the songs. We both went to the University of Michigan together and we both lived in Bob Dylan's house in Woodstock, New York. Introduced him to his wife who he has been married to for many years, and have known Chris and Dave and Lola and Matthew and Darius and Danny- all the Brubecks, since my family knew them- my dad was part of the Korean War conflict so they had a connection. But also, that Dave's Take Five was influential on my early listening to jazz. I knew nothing about jazz at all as a kid. But my dad used to gather me around the radio and listen to Ollie McLoughlin on HRV in Ann Arbor- the AM radio station which is now WAAM. WE would sit around and listen to Ollie McLoughlin's Sunday night show. He would play Take Five by Dave Brubeck, I Left My Heart in San Francisco by Tony Bennett and Bobby Darin's Mac the Knife, which I knew nothing about. That's my initial contact to jazz.

Fast forward to the 70s when I got into school, upper level schooling, and still didn't know anything about jazz except for that. Maybe John Coltrane, hearing his name on the radio the day he died, and then research his music by going to the library. But, James Dapogny was the person that introduced me to Jelly Roll Morton, to Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, all the great boogie piano players. Anybody that played early period jazz, but I knew nothing about it and didn't grow up with it. So, I am appreciative to James for giving me that link. I had no prior link. Nothing before Dave Brubeck, obviously. James knows it all. He knows everything. Knows everything about Jelly Roll Morton, research his music, published papers and recording for the Smithsonian, I believe. They were recorded on a pivotal record- the works of Jelly Roll Morton. I'm very appreciative to James for giving me that. And then as I'm looking ahead, you have to kind of look back at the same time to do both things- to find out the roots of the music and what lies ahead possibility for someone's imagination.

So, we're not good friends but I always was an admirer and a supporter of James and I always thought that whatever he did with his Chicago jazz band or his Ann Arbor jazz band, was as unique as anything that was done in the country anywhere, really, in the world. So, I'm really appreciative to have that initial link with James. I saw him in the grocery store while he was suffering the cancer treatments and doing better, and then falling off, and doing better, and going back and forth for nearly ten years. I went to the gig at the Zal Gaz Grotto this past Sunday; it was packed with people, many whom I knew, many more who I didn't. That's the only music they were into; they're not into anything else. But I'm glad the turnout was appreciative enough on a Sunday. I was disappointed that the New York Times obituary got in before the Ann Arbor News, which is shameful of our local paper. I also thought that it was not good for the New York Times obit to talk about all the history of him as a teacher and as a historian, but not talk about the fact that he played right up until his death. He was playing duets at Cultivate in Ypsilanti, he was doing every Sunday with PORK- Phil Ogilvie's Rhythm Kings at the Grotto, at

the Zal Gaz Grotto where he played regularly, and with Easy Street Jazz Band on Tuesdays, and his secret identity as Phil Ogilvie was always a great joke. PORK always a lot of fun to talk about. Who doesn't like to talk about pork? James- I doubt that any other place in this country has a James Dapogny. I'm not sure that New York or Washington D.C. or the Smithsonian archives ever had an in-residence guy like James. I don't think Chicago, maybe Irwin Helper, there are probably other people that have researched this music and done it. We had a WCBN DJ named Dave Crippen; he's on every week with Arwulf doing weekly shows on Ellington. I learned as much from Dave Crippen about Ellington as I did from Dapogny. Those are the kind of people, the kind of irreplaceable, impossible, influences on you that you can possibly imagine. I feel very fortunate. I'm sure I'm not alone, especially with Morris too- I'm sure there were a lot of people who were mentored by Morris. I feel very fortunate to be in that position. Then to take me into the career that I went into. So, thank you, big thanks.

MJ: Can you tell us about your upbringing? Who your parents were, where you came from, what they did for a living.

MGN: I do more research on this every day. I'm fascinated by the PBS program, "Finding Your Roots" with Henry Louis Gates. That is a great show. Every week, he has some artist or person or figure that I am interested in. It takes me back to what I think is an interesting background here at Eastern Michigan University. My mother went to school at the old Roosevelt School, the building stills stands, right next to King Hall. She went to high school there. My mother is the daughter of Eleanor Lutz and the daughter of George Lutz. The Lutz's, my grandparents, grew up in Germany, took the boat from Germany to Ohio, settled in Ohio, and then lived up here just south of Ypsilanti in Milan on the outskirts. Platt Road, Judd Road. My grandfather was a farmer; he had all that land out there that is now completely single family housing. I worked on the farm for him. He was eventually the property inspector, the building inspector for Ann Arbor for many years. My grandmother Eleanor was a housekeeper, raised a family, raised 4 daughters. One of them is my mom, Marianne Caroline Lutz. She, after the Korean conflict, my father Gus was enlisted, in the Navy, and moving to Laingsburg, Michigan which is just4 outside of Lansing- I think they met at an ISO or USO dance. They became entwined and had four children. My grandparents housed us in the 1950s for a few years in the apartment in their farmhouse, that's where I first heard radio.

I first head old rhythm and blues and race records on CKLW and any of the other radio stations that might have played swing and doo wop era music. Then we moved into a house just down the road on Platt when my dad built the house, with my grandfather's help. So that's where I lived- on Platt Road between Judd and Willis. Commuted to the Milan school district via bus to go to school. If I had lived on the other side of the road I would have gone to the Saline district. We went to church at the Ypsilanti Lincoln, Stony Creek Methodist church- the old church. My grandfather, with my help, built the newer church, which both of them still stand on Stony Creek Road. So I am a resident and lifelong person living in this area.

MJ: I read that you also lived in Depot Town too?

MGN: We had a house in Depot Town when I was just a baby. That is the first place that we lived, then we moved into the farmhouse. I know where the house is, I don't have any recollection of living there but I know that we did. It was jus4t down the street from the Cemetery.

MJ: Maybe you were on River Street?

MGN: We were. About a quarter mile from the cemetery.

ABM: Can I ask a question in regards to your mom attending Roosevelt School? With the family being down south in Milan, I was always under the assumption that those students were bussed to the Lincoln Consolidated school but it sounds like she was in Roosevelt?

MGN: I don't think she went to Lincoln.

MJ: Besides your mother's connection to Roosevelt, did you have any affiliations with Eastern growing up? Do you remember what its role in the community was?

MGN: I would say no. No. I would say that I was much closer to the things happening in Ann Arbor. I didn't really hang out in Ypsilanti as a youngster. Now, we had a cousin and uncles who lived on Grove, so I would come to Ypsi every once in a while. They would just drop me off, I'd go to the ball park and play baseball. Not that much connection, no, not really. Not until 1969 when I decided to enroll and applied and was accepted at Eastern.

MJ: I was listening recently to, well, reading an interview with Arwulf, and also we did an interview with John Fountain, and he said that broadcasting seemed to run in their families. They thought maybe that was common. Do you have that experience?

MGN: I am the first of my generational but I can imagine John and Arwulf both having that in their blood. Especially John.

MJ: Why is that?

MGN: Working with him and seeing how professionally they were. Especially John because he would do the broadcasts of sports games and I would follow up. He would interrupt my jazz programs. He was a magnificent man. Arwulf is magnificent in his own right too. But no, I don't have any back ground in that at all. My dad was a State Farm insurance agent, he was also working on the railroads before he got the job with the insurance agency. Worked selling furniture, so I imagine he had some gift of gab for whatever reason. My mom, I can't say, had any gift of gab at all, so my dad, I lost my dad when I was 11, and he was 36, in 1963. I knew him for the first ten years of my life and that was it.

MJ: I have a question here about your first impressions of jazz and blues; you answered that a little bit when you said that you started to discover these things with people like Dapogny and Lawrence-

MGN: Really dig into the history of it. The only thing I can remember as a kid was some rhythm and blues sax playing on the radio as a small kid in a log cabin out in Whitmore Lake on vacation. That's the only recollection that I have, but then going into my teenage years, I became more aware of it and not really into it.

MJ: What were you listening to prior to getting the bug?

MGN: What everybody else listened to. Hendrix, Janis Joplin, the Doors, Iron Butterfly, all the psychedelic bands. I was very in tune with the local rock music scene and played in some of

those bands. Played in a couple of bands, played music that maybe stretched the parameters of what instrumental music, non-popular and non-rock music would be. But I mean, we listened to everybody, Zeppelin, Obscure bands like Captain Beyond, well known English bands- the Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Who; we listened to everything that everybody listened to between 1966 and 1970.

MJ: Did you ever have to decide between playing music and writing about it and broadcasting?

MGN: There was no doubt I was not going to play music as a professional. I saw how thought a life it was. If I wanted to play, and I still play on occasion but only for myself. I don't play for anyone else or for a living. I see a lot of people playing music in the evening and teaching during the day- that is a rough life. That is a constant life. You don't vary much from it. You don't have much option to do anything else. But I was a fairly good writer, I had an idea of what I could do in radio although I didn't have any idea I could be a professional. Certainly didn't think I'd be a professional at writing. It wasn't an ambition. I was in the med tech program, I was going to be a doctor. I have a medical background; I'm certified to do certain things as a certified healthcare professional. So, I mean, that was going to be my life. I think that playing music heals people so I think it's kind of a double-standard for what you can do with assistance. I thought I'd just in in the medical profession. I was also into sports so I became a sports announcer. I was the announcer at Milan Drag way for 15 years. I pretty much did everything that I might have envisioned.

MJ: As a radio broadcaster or announcer, does it take work to find your voice?

MGN: No.

MJ: Do you think that people often do that? Do you know of people who try to practice something until they get something right?

MGN: I see too many people on television who are so phony. So many people on radio who try to do something like this \*speaking in dramatic radio voice\*. I just hate that. It's so clear that they're not themselves. That they are trying to be somebody else or they are being told to hype something up. I think that you don't need to hype it if it's good. So yeah, that's a good question. I would say that my idea of trying to be thoughtful, somewhat provocative, and informative, is more important than somebody trying to hype up something that isn't what it is. Trying to be somebody that you're not. I think a lot of people have that problem.

MJ: You must hear a lot of music like that too.

MGN: Some. I don't really dwell on that music. I don't pay much attention to the country music awards. I don't care much for American Idol. I was happy when Laith Al-Saadi did well on The Voice, or when Josh Davis was on The Voice. I was on it, voting for them, but I don't have much interested in pop music because it is not cool to me. Everybody says it's cool but they don't know what cool really is as far as I'm concerned. People can disagree with me if they want but I'll give them the alternatives. It's a great question though, as far as what is out there and what needs to be done.

MJ: I've always wondered about that, when people make a living from their voice- it's one of my other questions: I wanted to ask you about your first experience behind a microphone on the air because as a performing musician, which you have been doing, you can see your audience. They can see you. How does the relationship change once you're in a sound booth with no audience but you are still talking to a large group of listeners?

MGN: I've always been told that you speak to one person. I think it's accurate. The person is paying attention, make sure your diction is good, and make sure you say things that are accurate and truthful. You are talking to one person- the person who is listening and is interested in what you have to say about John Coltrane. They may have their opinions about him; you don't really give your opinions except "That was 'Trane playing 8<sup>th</sup> notes and 16<sup>th</sup> notes like a madman. How can he do that? How can anybody play that furiously fast and that harmonically rich and still be relative and universally loved? That person says "I know why I listen to it?" That's the way I've always approached it. Give them a little kernel of information. Thank you, Art Timko, for giving me that. Give them a little kernel and let them run with it. You don't need us anymore. You don't need our expertise because everybody's got all the information at their fingertips. That's the saddest part about my job is that we are not needed. DJs with depth and perception and a knowledge of the music are not needed. I like John Coltrane- I'll just download it. I don't need this guy telling me what he thinks of John Coltrane; I know what I know. It's unfortunate and yet I understand.

MJ: Will the stations stick around? Stations like WEMU? WCBN? The places where, I don't like to inject myself into these interviews, but the places where I feel like the person playing the music had that depth of knowledge.

MGN: I don't equate the two stations at all, and furthermore, I would say WEMU is falling further away from what I'm trying to do, and what we are trying to do, and there are hardly any radio stations at all that let the DJ make the choices. They don't trust them. It's too bad because if you trust someone who is really good and knowledgeable and has background, you should just let them run. But you're accusing them of being indulgent and self-preserving, and trying to do something that they don't want you to do.

MJ: That's what's happening at CBN you mean? That station's been falling further?

MGN: Oh no.

MJ: Oh. WEMU.

MGN: [pause]

MJ: OK.

MGN: I don't really want to talk about the current state of that radio station. I really don't.

MJ: Ok. One of my next questions was about WCBN. Do you still have a show there?

MGN: I started off in the early 70s as a part time host at WCBN. Then, I grew into a role where I was the music director and I did that for almost 4 years. During that time the people at the office of the Major Events came up to us, Suzanne Young was running it then at that point in time. She

said “We’re starting an organization called Eclipse Jazz. And we would like to know if WCBN would be interested in focusing on jazz in a certain area or time slot in support of the concerts that we are going to be booking. We are not there yet but we are getting a group together that are going to be booking these shows the University of Michigan.” First of all, there is nothing happening jazz-wise in Ann Arbor except for an occasional concert at the University Activity Center and the then-fledgling Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festivals. Occasional concerts happening at clubs, not a whole lot, no big concerts. So they saw a need for this. There was a big, big influence from our friends at Michigan State University- Terry Donaldson and showcase jazz were putting together concerts and we would go up there every weekend or every time we could to see concerts. They also had record stores up at East Lansing, several of them that were selling at discounts that the records stores in Ann Arbor were not doing. This was before Schoolkids Records. Discount Records, where I also worked, was doing do this; Bonzo Dog records was doing this on a smaller scale. Imports were coming into the arena more. Also, defective records were coming into the arena more and more so there would be a thousand Eagles albums and only ten of them were any good. But they were selling a million of them. But they were all defective. So, there was an opportunity that we saw from the example at Showcase and what was happening at MSU to do something big here.

We immediately jumped into it in 1975, started booking concerts, we established Jazz Round Midnight from 9pm to 1am on WCBN. Five nights a week, we had great, great announcers, me, Teddy Fulkerson, Peter Peadow, Charlie Wolfson, Charlie White, Michael Lang who ran Schoolkids Records, Michael Landy was there. We recently had a reunion of the old Eclipse jazz people- twenty of them from all over the country. All of them have become professionals. Not in the music business, lawyers, doctors, media people, television people, radio people. WCBN right then and there was an incubator of a lot of people who have gone far in the professional world. Hardly any of them didn’t work in some form of media after they got out of WCBN. It was a great period. Carmen Harlan, Ken Burns was hanging out then. I wish I could remember all the names. If I had a list, I could read them down, but you would be astonished. Mark Bryant who ran the Urban League, people who ran Broadway Theater shows. Trying to remember the guy who was in LA, one of the shock jocks from LA radio. Just tons of great people between 72 and 76, who graduated from there or were at University or at WCBN that went on to careers.

MJ: How much have you seen WCBN change over the years?

MGN: We established Freeform when I was the music director so it is my child. It is my 40-some year old child, and it has changed a lot but it has only changed with the times. I think that a lot of students who are doing radio right now are doing one of two radio styles: current pop music, or they’re doing music they grew up with, with their parents. Very few students are doing true freeform radio that is, you play Bob Marley and then King Sunny Ade, then Taj Majal, then Muddy Waters, and then you play Led Zeppelin, and then you play a new recording by the Cinematic Orchestra, and then you play a local. If you can put the dots totter between all the linkages of the music, of all the musical styles that we have at our disposal, you can come up with a true freeform. Very few people are doing that. Very few.

MJ: I don’t think I would have survive4d my 20s without WCBN and freeform because it was just so exciting.



MGN: I think there are a few students who are in there to explore and I like that aspect. We encourage them to really go out and not worry about anybody listening and if they do listen, they understand it and if they don't understand it, they are calling and asking to play Patsy Kline when I am playing Rachmaninoff. I'd like to play that; its good music, but it doesn't really fit with what we are doing, yet if we were doing a freeform show, you could! You actually could! You could find almost anything that would work with that.

MJ: I also like that everyone had the phone number to the station. Everyone I knew had the phone number and you could just be driving and call them like they were you were their friend.

MGN: People calling up because they are thinking that they are your friend and they're not. They are interrupting you from doing the radio. We have those people and I think it's the nature of the freedom of the radio station to want to know that you can call that person and they are your friend and that they'll listen to you and we just really don't have time to listen to them. I would like to take time to listen to them if I wasn't on the air. I would love to meet them off campus and hang out with them and have a cup of coffee. I had a listener a few months ago, call me while I was doing Jaffa Jive which was the Israeli/Mediterranean program which has morphed in to Mediterranean diet- she called me and says ;'Why are you playing this?>' I'm playing Jewish, Yiddish music for Hanukah in September. And it's a song that's talking about the rebels- it's the Dance of Maccabees," which is the rebel Israelites. The perfect song for talking about freedom. It's embedded in a Hanukah theme. :'"Why are you playing this Hanukah music in September?" Because it is about freedom. I tried to explain that to her but she kept saying that it was Hanukah music in September. Well, it's a freeform radio station. We shouldn't be restricted to playing this during Hanukah and I did it. But I had a conversation with her and she was not happy with my answers, and I said well, I'm sorry you didn't like it because it is a really interesting song. She called me back fifteen minutes later and says "'d really like to continue this with you." So we met over coffee and conversation about what the radio station can be. It was great and she is my friend now. So, I mean, the accurate input of what you need from listening to something that heals you or gives you benefits, unlike other radio stations, who just put it on in the background. Most radio stations, they claim to be community oriented and they're really not. WCBN is not like that. They give you unlimited concert and events information without asking for a cent from the promoters. These other promoters, they get pushed out by other radio stations because you can't afford them and they can't afford you. They can't afford to be on the air without people who pay and you can't afford to be with them because you don't have enough money.

There is a discrepancy there. I'm disturbed by it but when I worked in commercial radio for many years...I know what it's like to have commercials be the main focus of the shows. You get to play a song that somebody else tell you to play. It wasn't like that in the 70s; we had real progressive radio on many different stations which were unformatted. Burkhardt Abrams and the Jacobs Brothers came in, that was the end of it. All the progressive radio stations were gone. CBN is the last bastion of it all and has been for many years. There are only 15 or 16 radio stations, just like there are only a handful of radio stations of the NPR world that play jazz. You just don't have many choices. You have to go to the internet. Your laptop is your oyster. Everybody knows it. So really, why are we needed? Why are any of us DJs needed?

MJ: Were you always comfortable with the name “DJ?” I couldn’t help but wonder, as you are a music historian, you are a librarian, you give lectures, you play, you’ve written. What’s in that name “disc jockey?”

MGN: We did have a large discussion about this for several years and there were no conclusions that everybody was comfortable with. Are you a broadcast journalist? Are you a disc jockey? Are you a radio host? What are you? Well, I think broadcast journalist is what I am because I am trying to tell stories through music and I am trying to write about music through stories. But there are very few storytellers anymore and I don’t hear any of them, maybe on RCJ, talking about classical music and the history and movie themes that are symphonic ilk. I’m a voice that talk about music. Disc jockey- that was a term for people that played rhythm and blues in the nightclubs, or disco. I did disco in Ann Arbor at the Rubiat and other places where we did dances in the 70s. I had a friend from U of M- Sparky \_\_\_\_\_ who had the equipment- he was a rich kid with a lawyer dad and we would go out and sling disco. Make a lot of money- a lot of money. But the disc jockey, boy, now with the internet, who slings discs? You know?

I’m a “file jockey.” I’m sure there are people who play music at weddings and things like that who do that. It’s a great question.

MJ: Thank you.

MGN: We talked about it, all of us at the radio station for many years. What are we? What really are we? What do we call ourselves?

MJ: Did you listen to WEMU prior to working with the station?

MGN: Yeah. They were nothing.

MJ: Tell me about what it was like.

MGN: They were nothing. They had no power, no content, and no consistency. They really had poor broadcasters who thought they were professional. It wasn’t a very good station. It wasn’t good for a very short period, before we came. I do want to say that Jim Quinlan, who was a friend of mine at WEMU, was doing a concert series here in Ypsilanti at Pease Auditorium. Jim’s orientation was as a very European modeled person. Came from Dearborn, studied in Arts Management here, and was doing a radio show that was really interesting. I was doing a radio show at WIQB called The Night Train which was a jazz show and he liked what I did. We both liked what Gary Lanehn did at WKAR; Gary was extraordinary. Great musician, great person, great mind. We were listening to him, listening ECM music and world music and music that was different. So, Jim was doing concerts series’ and he called me up one night on the Night Train and asked if I would help promote it. I said “Who are you booking?” Leon Sanders, Oregon Leon Thomas, Pharaoh Sanders, Don Pullen, Art Ensemble of Chicago, and he as affiliated wat that point in time with the creative music studio in Woodstock New York,. Eventually we became friends, he would come on my show, I would sub for him on WEMU which was the first shows I ever did in the late 70s. Then he graduated- he went to the Creative Music Studio- he went to work for them in Woodstock New York. A year later, he offered me a position at Creative Music Studio as the publicity director, worldwide. I had to think about it because that’s a big leap moving from here to Woodstock. But I did. WE were under a seeder grant- that’s the

Comprehensive Education Act from the Jimmy Carter Institute. I went there with my friend Tom Simonian, our U-Haul truck loaded with our stuff to move into a tiny little room in the lodge at the Creative Music Studio- the older lodge in Woodstock. Started working with Jim and with the other management staff, and some 24 musicians who were getting paid by Seeder to do gigs, practice, play in nursing homes, and play free concerts- that was what it was all about. It was the kind of thing where it was- it was heaven. Being played by the government to play jazz and play out music and creative music and work with dancers, and poets and artists. To go to New York City and play in the upper New York area. Oh my god! What better thing could you want? 6 weeks later, Jimmy Carter cut the funds by two thirds. 22 of the 24 musician's positions were gone. They knocked 6 of the 7 maybe 8 management positions and mine was one of them.

So, CMS offered give me room and board and meals to keep living there and working. I couldn't do it because I owed money. So I worked for another few weeks, ate the best organic food I could have ever had, hung out with the best people that possibly could. I was watching the William Burroughs on PBS the other night, reminded myself I was sitting next to William Burroughs ins a place in New York City- just couldn't believe it. Hung out with Patti Smith and Frank Zappa and all these people. It was crazy. So, tail between my legs, I headed to Washington D.C. where I lived with my mom and my stepfather for a few weeks, tried to find a job, couldn't do it. Big story that I won't tell about Washington- being there during the farmer's strikes. The cherry blossoms blooming on a Sunday and having twenty four inches of snow in 24 hours. Paralyzing Washington completely. I'm zipping around in my 1964 Dodge Coranet with push button transmission and snow tires. Trying to get up the big hills on Wisconsin and slipping and slipping. They weren't ready for it. But looking for a job and having some good connections, hearing some great music, realizing what a culturally rich area DC is. Then I was re-offered my job at Discount Records and came back, got the job at WEMU. That was history. We did Eclipse, and everything happened.

MJ: Who was the station manager when you came back to WEMU?

MGN: Dick Jacques. He was the program director and then became station manager. Art Timko was the station manager after Dick, and then Clark Smith came on as the news director. Dick didn't stay much mlonger0 he was ready for retirement. He stayed to at least put the installation of WEMU in as a jazz station. That was Art's dream. Art was the one that did that.

MJ: How did that happen? I've always been interested in that.

MGN: Like Same Waterston says in News Room: We decided to do it.

MJ: Did you need any kind of approval?

MGN: IM sure that the University had to say something about it.

MJ: I wondered about that too- the relationship between the administration and WEMU. How much oversight is there?

MGN: I think Dick Jacques and Art Timko did everything they could to make it happen. Once again they just decided to do it. There was no opposition, there was no audience prior to them. They had just gotten a power increase. WCBN also got a power increase but they had to wrangle for seven

years of legal problems to get the right frequency to have the right place where it wouldn't interfere with anybody, to get the circle of the broadcast range proper. They traded logos and they traded frequencies. WCBN and WEMU have been at war forever.

MJ: I've never really thought about that.

MGN: I'll just say briefly- WEMU considers WCBN to be nothing. They consider them nothing. WCBN doesn't even think about WEMU. WCBN does what they do with their power and now we have a power increase so we have a little more punch. WEMU wants to be WUOM and they never can be and never will be. It is unfortunate that they feel that way. They should concentrate on being themselves. All the NPR stations try to be something they're not.

MJ: Does WDET fit into that?

MGN: Sure. When they dropped all their music programming and then people were outraged- 100 people showed up for a rally. That just showed you it didn't have the support.

MJ: When was that?

MGN: 15 years ago. UoM, they dropped all their classical music. I mean, people abandon really good stuff with really good people for no reason at all. The problem is they don't know how to market and promote it. WCBN has no clue about how to market or promote itself. Because we are all working with students that are there for a few years and they don't put out a marketing plan because they can't even get that far. It's unfortunate. There is no marketing, there is enough research. Research shows that pop music is more prevalent in people's bias. Of course it is. But jazz was the mainstay of pop music in this country. People don't understand that it is probably the basis of every music we listen to. That is true worldwide. People all over the world respect jazz and listen to jazz and understand the artistry of jazz. But it only takes one person in the case of Diane Kroll or Elvis Costello to make them realize there is some content there, but it pop music. There's nothing wrong with that at all- Diana is a great person- she made her initial thrust into the music community here in Ann Arbor when she was working with Ray Brown the bass player. They played at the Bird of Paradise. I remember seeing her so many nights when she was nothing. And look how monstrous she has been. She's not getting off the gravy train either. She's not going into Herbie Nichols tributes or a Thelonious Monk tribute. She's not going to do that. She's going to keep doing what she's doing because she's really good at it and people like it. She'll do it until the day she dies and maybe when she's 60, do something different. The record companies don't want her to do that. They say "Do the record you just did only do it backwards." That's what she does. She's good at it. That doesn't answer your question. Am I talking too much for the regents?

MJ: No no no. I should also say even though I don't think you'll use it, but you do have the option of going off the record if you want to.

MGN: Yeah. I just don't have many good things to say about WEMU.

MJ: I have a lot of questions about WEMU!

MGN: I may say no comment.

I'm happy to talk about Art Timko. He was really the great progenitor of the radio station. Well Jim Dulzo was the music director and I was his assistant, I was pretty much the music director. I did all the adding and we formed a partnership. I've known him from WIQB. I've been an admirer of him all my life. If not for Jim Dulzo, I wouldn't be here.

MJ: I'd like to hear more about him, because you single that time out as important.

MGN: I listened to Jim when he was on the radio at WNRs and WNRZ in the 60s and 70s. Late 60s. Early 70s. That was our main focus of listening to radio. Of course, WABX was in there too. But Jim and the group at WNRZ were pivotal- I would listen to them in my earphone on a little crystal radio, and he would play Iron Butterfly, "Inna Godda Davida" and Arlo Guthrie's Alice's Restaurant, which are long, long pieces. They were the only radio stations that would play anything like that. They were on after hours so I would go to sleep listening to Jim. I would love what Jim played because Jim played everything. Anything and everything. On Earth Day in 1970, my friend Rob Devie and I went to his studio and did an interview with him about what we were doing at my high school for Earth Day. I was like "Wow I'm in here with Jim! Talking about Earth Day! And seeing the studio that he is in!" Eventually, I started working at Washtenaw Community College doing things for the A/V Department, and during the A/V time when I was by myself, I would do audition tapes. I would take them to various radio stations pretending I was on a radio station already. That's inspired by Jim Dulzo for sure. Then eventually I worked as a janitor at WNRZ, and one night the disc jockey couldn't make it and I said I can play some songs if you need a sub. From 1am-6am. Then, I was working at WAAM selling gift checkbooks on the phone, and they thought I had a good voice. People at NRZ said I should do an audition for them. I didn't work for them, I was working at WCBN but eventually I started working at both places- CBN and WNRZ. That's where I started getting good. If you do shows once a week, you don't progress, you don't do well. You just do what you do and go home. If you were on the air for 6 nights a week, you find out how good you can be.

So that is how that all happened. Jim and I went to work at WEMU, he was hired as the music director, I was working overnights, and that was ok. He moved him to the afternoon show, I moved into the evening show and we became a force. Jim left, Jim worked at the Detroit jazz Festival, ran that for a few years, and then just left the music business altogether to work in environmental protection in mid-Michigan, which he is doing now. Not sure if he's retired but he is doing that. When left, Linda Yohn was hired as music director, and between me, and Linda and Michael Jewett, we turned WEMU, and I will put this on the record, from a force to a powerhouse. Five days a week, good crew on the weekends, good presence. If not as good as a presence as any place in the country. For quite a period of time.

MJ: Did you have to do a lot of new hires to take it from a force to a powerhouse?

MGN: Just Michael. When Linda and I were there we were fine but when Michael came on board, we were a powerhouse. We ran the roost. Yeah. We had some pretty decent overnight hosts who were students and we had some very decent hosts who were on the weekend who were actually pretty professional.

MJ: I've got other names here that I saw a lot. Mary Motherwell?

MGN: No comment.

MJ: OK. George Kline?

MGN: Great guy, great broadcaster. Even though not a professional broadcaster, very knowledgeable. Couldn't go without him.

MJ: You said he was not a professional...

MGN: He was a teacher, and knows so much and is able to translate it.

MJ: That can balance itself out.

MGN: If you know your stuff, it makes all the difference in the world.

MJ: I want to ask about one of the controversies at WEMU that involved Art Timko and the Bone Conduction Music Show. Would you like to comment on that?

MGN: I'm curious as to what everybody else thinks about it. Because he was fired for insubordination and he was insubordinate. Probably deserved to be, at the very least suspended. That was a very difficult time for the radio station during Desert Storm. We were being preempted constantly because of it and NPR was putting the squeeze on financially. Do this or we cut your funds. Art stood his ground and deserved to stand his ground. I believe that Thayrone stood his ground and probably deserved to stand his ground but he was wrong. He portrayed it in a different way.

MJ: Could you talk a little about the backstory of it? What happened exactly, for the record?

MGN: He refused to put on a broadcast about the Desert Storm issues. Thayrone. We were going to preempt his show as they preempted all of our shows and he refused to do it.

MJ: He was taken off the air?

MGN: that's right.

MJ: I read that his letter that he wrote, a public letter.

MGN: He went on television and rode the station publically. That'll get you fired immediately.

MJ: He did that before he was fired?

MGN: I have to say even though I don't agree with any of his policies, his right wing idiom and concept is not mine, probably isn't Arts, as a Vietnam veteran; probably isn't a whole lot of people except that small percentage of people. If he wants to appeal to that on his radio station, that's fine. I wouldn't mind having a radio show on his radio station, but I wouldn't be politically inclined. He wouldn't think the jazz holds enough of an audience, but I might. I wouldn't collaborate with him in a heartbeat if we4 wanted to a blues series. If we wanted to do blues together, I have never had any problem. I've always felt a mutual respect for him. I know that he had clashes with Art and the management and Eastern Michigan University people. That's a story that's not told as deeply as it should be.

MJ: Your comments earlier about being a broadcast journalist reminded me of that situation because I remember Thayrone saying that he was uncomfortable with journalism being any part of this show, but Art...

MJ: I can see that.

MGN: Maybe he's not telling you the stories and the blues- he's just playing blues according to his perspective. It maybe a little more badass attitude, but, you know, we do our first amendment rights. You can't say everything you want to play in the language that you want to say it, but I think that language is a necessary. I thought maybe at times his language was unnecessary. That was different. He was a moneymaker and he really did a lot for the radio station financially, as did I. we made a lot of money for that radio station.

MJ: Where was the funding coming from prior to being an NPR affiliate?

MGN: We were an NPR affiliate for most of that time but there was a point in time in the mid-90s where the University cut our funds by three quarters. We had nothing. So, all of us were laid off. Except for management, and management was doing the radio shows for a whole month. You have completely unqualified people on the microphone including Art, including our Chief Engineer, our marketing and development director, and maybe a couple of others who were not musically-oriented to do the music shows. We were off the air for an entire month. We were done. I was told to go home. We went to great lengths to try to do some sort of fundraising to bring us back, there was a lot of publicity about what had happened to us and there were generous people in the community who loved us. But in particular, Dr. Jan Winkleman, who has a 501 jazz series- the regular series, which still exists, was named after, and what he did for our community to generate funds so the radio station could go back to where it was. But we lost all this budget. About, I'd say, going on three weeks into the layoffs, many of us convened to go to the Ponchartrain- the jazz series in Detroit on a weeknight to see Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. We piled into a couple of busses, about 15 of us, and went to eh Jazz Series to see Blakey. I will never forget that night because Blakey played so well and his band was on fire, and it was beautiful night on the Jazz Terrace upstairs, outdoors. We just loved it. We loved seeing Blakey.

After the show was over, we got a message: "Mr. Blakey would like to see you backstage." Why? Why would you want to come all the way from Ann Arbor to see Blakey and then all of a sudden, Blakey wants to court you? We go backstage, he's sitting there in a throne thing with a robe on, looking really kingly and regal and glitter and gold. "I know what happened to you. I heard what happened to you. I can tell you everything is going to be alright." Talked to us for about ten minutes, took us under his wing. He gave us encouragement, he knew what we were doing for music, and he knows what we were doing for him- playing his stuff. It wasn't hard to figure out our playlists are going out nationally; he knew. He also knew that we promoted him, and that we were promoting that gig, unlike any other Detroit radio station- we promoted him. Even the management were playing Art Blakey. A week later we were all rehired. He had something to do with it, man. He had connections in every part of the country and every part of the world, he talked to somebody, he didn't give them any money or anything, I'm sure. He probably told somebody "These kids need to come back." And he did. Phenomenal week. So that started the ball rolling toward us fundraising, and then that started the ball for being relatively self-

sufficient. The University reinstated some of our funding and the funding that we made from the publicity and the money that we raised off campus got us back going again.

MJ: When was that?

MGN: I want to say 1992.

MJ: Going on from there, did you have more problems with funding or if you have to keep soliciting funds from the public?

MGN: We were dependent on the public and fundraising. Because our budget wouldn't allow it any other way. Being a non-commercial radio station, you can't just sell ads. You can sell underwriting, but that is not enough. Combination of underwriting, fundraising, and corporate donations, which to this point I don't see much corporate donation on any public radio station level. Corporations want to make money and hold onto it. They don't want to give it away. There are very few philanthropic corporations that give some money to people. Look at PBS. They get some sort of corporate funding, they get some sort of allowance to put on programs that they like. One of the things about corporate fundraising is that it is a double edged sword. You make something that they like and they tell you what to do.

MJ: It sounds dangerous for a radio station to go from...I'm not sure what a radio station would do before they were affiliated with NPR.

MGN: They could be an American Public Radio affiliate, they could be non-affiliated, and they would still have to have programming. The advantage to NPR programming is that it is really good. It's really well-done and professional. The disadvantage is that it costs you money. The disadvantage with playing music is that you have to pay royalties. If you play any kind of royalties, pay royalties, you have to account for it. There are certain agreements with the RIAA and the publishing companies where you can pay a discounted rates if you are a community or a public radio station. Commercial radio stations, clubs who play music in their establishments, they have to pay the royalty. There is no way around it and they will have agents come after you. The artists have to get paid. Musicians who write the songs have to be paid. If they are publishing their works and they are licensed, then they need to be paid.

MJ: What other noticeable changes are there when a station crosses over to being an affiliate? Are there listenership boosts? The reason it sounds dangerous is because all the sudden, you have to solicit public funding, where maybe you didn't before.

MGN: There are two reasons why people listen to the radio: one is that it sounds good to them and one is so they can actually go pick it up. If it sounds good to them, if they like it, whether its background music or foreground music, they'll listen if they like it. If they can't listen to it because it's fuzzy or out of their service area or they don't want to bother listening on the internet, I can listen to \_\_\_\_\_ or Singapore radio right now on my cellphone if I want to. I just have to hook it up. The possibilities are limitless. But you narrowcast in broadcasting with limited format and limited talent. Does that answer the question?

MJ: Yeah, it does. When you mentioned that if it was fuzzy, it's going to be difficult...



MGN: If you can't hear WCBN in Findlay Ohio, you won't listen to them. If you can listen to WCBN when you're in Ann Arbor or Dexter or Chelsea or Saline or Novi, then you'll try to listen. When it's convenient for you. It's only that when it's convenient for you. If I'm on an evening, and someone is working evenings, can't listen to radio, then I'm not available to them. If Linda Yohn is playing music in the mornings and people are working and they won't allow her to be listened to in the office, they won't listen to her. It's just as simple as that. Availability and the knowledge of what you can listen to at what times. I listen to radio in my car. There are some things on some radio stations that I don't like and I'll go to another radio station.

MJ: Do you listen to WEMU?

MGN: No. Not at all. But I'm sure hot on the Tigers game. Its opening day and I'm not hearing it because I'm here with you. But it's perfectly ok.

MJ: I feel the same way. What was the time that you were there- what was the relationship between WEMU and its listeners? When I read about it, it seemed very close-knit. That seems to reflect the larger community of the EMU campus, earlier on.

MGN: I would say it's reflective of the community outside of the EMU campus. The students were never really very interested in us. I see very few connections with exception to only a few of the administration or of the academic areas. Very few connections with Music, Theater and Dance, very few connections with Literature. Very few connections with African Americans. Very few if not no connection with international communities. Unless you listen to All Things Considered or Morning Edition. The University will say "well we listen to an hour of Morning Edition before we go to work." Or they listen to All Things Considered on their way home. No other connections. Very few other connections except people outside of the Ypsilanti area who are interested in cultural connections.

MJ: Were there ever any efforts made to correct that? To connect the station more to the student body?

MGN: I think the music people did. I don't know if our administration really did. Very few exceptions. The connections sponsoring the University of Musical Society event, jazz history, we did great things with the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival, with Frog Island during the summer, but, very few multi-cultural connections, which I think is the basis of the strength of our country.

MJ: For a station that is devoted to jazz and blues, it's ironic.

MGN: We had great connections with the Detroit Jazz Festival, no connection at all with the Michigan Jazz Festival., no connection with anything in Lansing or East Lansing. No connection to Monroe. But I would go down there for their blues shows all the time and promote them. No connection with Toledo, except for me! Linda did a lot of outreach, I have to say. Michael Jewett does no outreach except in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.

ABM: Can I ask a follow up question? I'm always really interested to understand what, if there is a hierarchy and expectation for who is driving the train, as it were. Whose role do you think it was to connect with those faculty members who were maybe teaching jazz appreciation in the Arts Management Program?

MGN: It's not us- we are on the air playing music. The other thing is that in many instances, what's generated in the area of the media these days is the primary goal to be excellent. I know of very few broadcasters right now who are excellent. The ones that are have gone by- they have retired. Most of these people are really mediocre and they don't strive for excellence because they don't have any role models. Our role models were Walter Cronkite and Ernie Harwell. Extraordinary broadcasters. I see very few newscasters that are excellent right now. I see very few sportscasters who are excellent. Every one of them asks the question: "How do you feel?" It doesn't matter if you feel like you've lost or you've won. That's the standard question. Even in the best interviews. "How does that make you feel?" It drives me crazy. Think of something to ask them. Come on! Think of something that is creative and that really delves into "You scored 24 points and four of them were on free throws. But you got inside..." Just ask a questions rather than "How do you feel?" It's the lamest thing. That's what's ruining broadcasting right now- that's what keeping everything at a mediocre low level. We don't know what great is anymore.

ABM: Do you feel like it's something that can be reestablished?

MGN: I see young broadcasters who are trying to be excellent. Yep. But I see a lot of middle aged broadcasters who are nothing and have been doing nothing for ears and they get paid for it and they just keep doing it and nobody tells them "Hey you need to learn how to pronounce the word temperature." And coupon. Nuclear. Who is teaching these people to do this all their lives and they have been mispronouncing these words all their lives. It's a pet peeve. Sorry- I'll get off my horse.

ABM: You don't have to get off your horse.

MGN: Nah- it's just the way it is.

MJ: I read that you said if there is something you can't say to people's faces you should never say it on the radio.

MGN: I didn't way that but I think it is a good edict.

MJ: I think that for future generations, it might be difficult to imagine a large scale jazz festival down in Frog Island. I want talk to you about that. I remember the Frog Island Fest.

MGN: They sure were glorious weren't they? We went through every imaginable weather situation; lightning storms, tornado, oppressive heat, forty degree temps in the middle of the summer. Booking issues, timing issues. I remember Leo Kotke playing in the field, swarmed by gnats, just a complete swarm if you can imagine, this bed of bugs.

MJ: Up out of the river.

MGN: And yet, it was fantastic. The music was fantastic. Jim Dulzo, give him credit. In those days when we did the jazz competitions that the Heritage Festival, the Depot Town Freight house shows in eh winter, live remotes from the Art Fair in Ann Arbor or "Arts Fairs," I should say. That just all stopped.

MJ: What happened to Frog Island?

MGN: The Ark came in, took it over. We still had the rights. They didn't want to continue it and we didn't have the means to continue it either so it just stopped.

MJ: Were you one of the founders of it?

MGN: I'm a part of the group that helped found it.

MJ: Who were the other people involved?

MGN: Jim Dulzo and the McKeeveres, who were Depot Town devotees- Gary and Carolyn. Tom Dodd, who was on the council- those people really made it happen.

MJ: Do you see any possibilities for a festival, a jazz fest in Ypsi in the future?

MGN: I don't see much for the Heritage Festival, I don't see any interest in anything but Elvis fest. I'm not interested in that. I wish I was but I'm not. I'm just not. I'm not interested in phony fakes playing captured music. Not interested. Could that happen? Yeah. With the right organizer, and the right community mind to bring people together to have enough funds to pay artists what they are worth. Even the New Year's Jubilee that was taking place in Depot Town is not happening anymore.

MJ: New Years Jubilee?

MGN: A series of events taking place all over Depot Town and up River Street to Main Street- Michigan Avenue. On New Year's Eve. A variety of places opened with live music. That took place for quite a few years but it's gone. That's the problem- they don't have corporate sponsors. It could be easily done if someone be a corporate sponsor, a subsidiary sponsor and a bunch of little sponsors. I worked at Milan Drag way for many years as the announcer. You have a main sponsor, and a co-sponsor, and all these little sponsor, so everyone can be a part of it. The title rights is big- if it could be the Ford Frog Island Festival, it could come back. You'd need a lot of people power.

MJ: Is there ever the threat, I shouldn't call it a threat, but the idea to bring in acts that are way more mainstream than what the average jazz listener is accustomed to?

MGN: That's what the Ann Arbor Summer Festival is.

MJ: In order to get people in seats.

MGN: Put them in seats enough so you can do Top of the Park and do the really hip local acts that you want to do.

MJ: Was that ever a possibility with the Frog Island Festival or Montreux in Detroit?

MGN: The Detroit Jazz Festival does it to a certain degree but they bring in more and more big name artists and fewer and fewer locals. That the fault of the festival. It's a free festival- they want to make money so they have to have big sponsors. They have the big sponsor with Carhart and Mack Avenue Records, and more power to them.

MJ: I see the same thing with the Ann Arbor Folk Festival too. I remember it having a lot more smaller, local acts, and they made appoint to invite those people in.

MGN: Well, this is the Ark using Hill Auditorium and the University of Michigan campus to do an event once a years. I don't have any problem with that. I think its fine. I think what they do is just fine.

MJ: Why did you decide to retire? To leave EMU?

MGN: That's a story that I'm not going to tell.

MJ: OK. I guess I'm not sure if you are retired- I know you are still going, still doing stuff.

MGN: I retired from doing full time radio, not from the life. But I would rather not talk about that. That's my personal business. I did return and I put in many productive years as a sub, but I'm not working there anymore.

MJ: Well, we're really close to the end here. I usually ask

MGN: I'm sorry you're unhappy about my retirement situation. So many people tell me "We miss you on the radio." I'm on the radio, just not there. I'm not on every night of the week.

MJ: I knew you were still on the air, it's just that WEMU...I have my times and my days when I feel like listening to a certain station. CBN, WEMU, WDET...

MGN: And you have to parse that out and pace your time with the time that someone might be on the air unless they podcast. We have archives at WCBN and you don't know when I'm on because it's posted on Facebook because I'm not on regularly. I'm probably on most Sundays doing one of the diversity global shows. I sub for Shimmy Shimmy or somebody else that needs me. If I get into a free form slot, let me go! Here I go! I can play anything.

MJ: Next time I hear you I'm going to call in.

MGN: Well, just you know, call in during fundraiser in February- we only have one in February. We raise our money and we go home. The thing is that listeners bought the transmitter. They increased our power. The listeners did that. We also make more money per hour on fundraising than any other radio station in the area. Per watt, per hour, we make more money than anyone else, even UOM.

MJ: I wondered about that. I hear all the fundraisers for all the radio stations and I assume, like most people, that UOM just cleans up.

MGN: They have two thirds of the state and the University of Michigan. They're powerful. They're more than a powerhouse. They're like a juggernaut, but what kind of programming do you get out of them? How much local programming do you get? You get some local news, yeah, no music though. No cultural music. They could put on a show a week, or a show a night, even if it was just late night, and clean up. People flock to it. They're content with what they are doing.

ABM: Can I ask a completely tangential question? Have you listened to Culture Shift on WDET?

MGN: Who hosts it?

ABM: It's a rotating group of a lot of their...Travis Wright did, but they also have their weekend music host- Ann Delisi will do a show, but they are talking about local music and arts and everything that is happening in Southeast Michigan.

MGN: Is it two hours a week?

MJ: It should be. No.

MGN: I don't listen to DET all that much. I listen to CBC radio a lot, and I listen to some sports talk radio because I like some sports. Primarily my listening is to WCBN. I may or may not like it but me also, being fairly well known writer and reviewer, I get tons of music every week. I voted nine different polls, including the Grammys and Downbeat, I'm not a writer right now. I worked for All Music Guide for many years but I don't write for them now. I do publicity campaigns, I'll do liner notes, and I'll work with a person to get more into the music scene as far as getting their music played on radio or doing a full blown media campaign like doing a campaign to get them into television, newspapers, and magazines. You've gotta have money to make money and that is the biggest problem with that. I have a presence that is not like being on the radio every night. Like I used to. But there are events I promote, events that I produce, and I have benefits that I work with and if somebody wants to work with me they are more than happy to call me up. I am easy to get ahold of or message me on Facebook. I'm not underground. But many times I feel like I'm a shadow figure, like I'm not known about. "Oh was on the radio and now he's not there anymore." That's not true. It just seems that way. It does seem that way.

MJ: When I was doing the research for this interview, I texted a few of my musician friend and said "Guess who I'm talking to tomorrow? Michael G. Nastos. Got any questions you want me to ask?"

MGN: I bet they were "Why don't you play my music on the radio? Why don't you talk about my gigs?" The thing about what I did in terms, and I did this all of my radio career, do a show, do whatever concerts or jazz date that I could, and promote local artists. It helps if you like them but it even helps more if you like them personally. I know that was something that we were told you don't get close to the musicians. I like the musicians. I am a musician. Well, we're nothing- we're a local musician- no, you are metro-Detroit musician. That holds great weight in the world. You got to Amsterdam or Berlin or London, "Oh you're from Detroit? You're from Ann Arbor? Wow really?!?" It's astonishing how much we can be present in a larger area except our own. I'm still waiting for my Michigan Association of Broadcasters Life time Achievement Award but they don't know who I am. I'm not some big husky voice news guy, or woman. So that is fine.

MJ: Do you think that WEMU shared your support for local artists?

MGN: For a long time yes. Not now.

MJ: What happened?

MGN: They don't want to do it unless you pay them. Or they're a co-sponsor, which in most cases, they don't offer all that much. But that is a sad reflection of the falling off of the radio station. I'm sure they can back that up with figures that say they are doing fine, but I think most people are very resentful of what they do now. They don't have much left. Michael Jewett does what he can, but they are stretching him to the limit.

MJ: Linda Yohn retired.

MGN: Linda retired, I retired, and Clark Smith retired. Very best people that were on that place on the dial, were either railroaded out or they left.

MJ: Has there ever been more of a student presence on the air? Like at CBN?

MGN: No. They railroaded them out too. They had the overnight shows with students running it, and then railroaded them out and put on syndication. So, you know, I think that what the part of the mission of these radio stations on college campuses are, as far as what they should be charged to do is twofold: be professional and grow talent. Find talent that you can grow to be professionals so that you have a constant rotation of a generation taking over for another generation. They should have grown a talent to replace me and they didn't. And now they have syndication. So it's a just easier to flip a switch, I guess. That's reality- that's not a bitter condemnation or an angry reflection that's just what happened.

ABM: It sounds like a missed opportunity.

MGN: To have young people that are interested in this is rare. We have at least five people at WCBN FM that are really into the music unlike all their counterparts. We're growing them- we've expanded our jazz program and not because of another radio presence but because that's what they like. To them, it's an alternative music. It's not like a pop station playing underground hits, it's a group of people that are really interested in being progressive, free form people. That's beautiful. We need more of them. The more we can get, the better.

MJ: I hope you don't leave the air.

MGN: I'm at home with WCBN, as I was at the other radio station for many years. I feel good about it and I like being there and I think I'm still pretty good. If somebody begs to differ because I flubbed something, that's fine; I think that what we are giving out, what we are outputting gives us much more in-depth of a product than anybody else. It's just that it needs to be marketed and developed more, maybe by professionals. Maybe a University should designate a professional marketer and developer and really dig in, and get paid for it by the University. We can't afford it.

MJ: There would be a little backlash from that wouldn't there?

MGN: I don't think so. I think that we would do well with a really good person, who's not dictating terms, but promoting and managing what we offer and understands it. I'll tell you- the general managers that we have had in the last few years, and we have another one coming on board- they understand it. Chief engineer understands it. I think to a certain extent, it's an alternative to WUOM, but you're not competing against them. WUOM is a monster. Michigan Radio is a monster. You don't have to worry about promoting it, it promotes itself by its enormity. If we could get even to a third of their level, it would be fantastic. We have expanded a lot in the last two years with the power increase. I like being WCBN. I like being it.

MJ: How far is the radius now, the listener radius?

MGN: We are on the fringe of Jackson, it just gets up to Brighton, and it gets into Novi and Northville. It doesn't get quite as far as the airport, but it will dip down to Milan, Dundee, Chelsea, Dexter,

and Ann Arbor. Much stronger in Ann Arbor. It is actually the same radius as the early days of what was 88.3, WEMU. It's almost the same coverage area before they got their power.

MJ: What is WEMU now?

MGN: I think it's 16,000. Airport, just beyond, Northville, maybe past Livonia, not quite as far as Troy or Macomb. Certainly just a little bit further past Brighton, way past Jackson but not that far. I've got them as far as Findlay Ohio, way down in Toledo but there is another station there that interferes with them. It's not that much bigger than WCBN and they have ten times the power.

MJ: Was there anything else you like to say on the record?

MGN: I'm just so pleased to be asked to do this. You know, once again, I started talking about depot Town and you asked me about living there. My great great Grandfather, Christopher Nasto, built the statue of Demetrius Ypsilanti, right down the block here. I have a great relationship with certain people in my heritage, and I'm glad to have that. I've recently discovered that I had a cousin that I didn't know about. Her name is Laurie Nastos, she lives out in Northport in New York, on the island. She contacted me on Facebook about two years ago and said she thought I was her cousin. We started doing the genealogy research and in fact she is my cousin. I never knew she existed. She knows about my heritage and, God, I'd love to get on Henry Louis gates' show. I'm sitting here like "Say the words Henry- TURN THE PAGE." I would be shivering. They all do. I just love that show.

ABM: It's getting to be the end of the Teri Gross, "Thank you so much..."

MGN: She's great, and I love the way she treats people. She does throw softballs but that's ok. I can hit them. But I just think we have so much to learn from ourselves and when you grow up in this area, dedicate yourself to being here and not really going the way I did for a little while, if I could win the lottery would I move someplace? Yeah, but I would always come back. I'm telling you- Metro Detroit and Southeastern Michigan and Ann Arbor has so much to offer the people. They just don't care about it. It's never been a part of their lives, and Eastern Michigan University, for its purported third-rate status, is much more important than people give it credit for. I got to these EMU men's basketball games, even if they lose they play their hearts out. Maybe they're not focused, but I love watching them because they are exciting, and the football team is coming around, the baseball teams have always been good here over many years, going back to Terry Collins, and Roland Ostrike and all the people that do the baseball program. I was broken hearted when they dismantled the women's tennis program because I would follow them. I'm glad they are bringing it back. Track teams, outstanding. There's a lot to offer there for students and for community members that gets largely ignored. Just like things get ignored on the cultural and community areas. WE are building new things- we are building the Ann Arbor Jazz Festival, which is now going into its fourth year, we are building the Michigan Jazz Festival; I am on the board for both. Eclipse Jazz, founding member, on and on and on with the things we've built, and now there is a festival every weekend in the area. Where there was nothing before. There was an Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival and nothing else. Now look how many cultural festivals we have. It's astonishing. When the weather gets warm, its festival time, baby. I love it. I think it's great for people to go out and do things and be with your friends and neighbors instead of sitting in front of the television. I will lock into my television when tennis is on, or

Wimbledon or something that I like, that I can see, but there is nothing what we have and the whole world knows it. They really do. But some people know nothing, so we have to educate them and encourage them.

ABM: Thank you for your time today.

MGN: Anything else? I'm sorry I can't talk about my retirement; I'm just not going to do it.

MJ: That's fine. I'm going to press stop if everyone is ok with that.