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## Linda Yohn, January 23, 2020

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Oral History Interview with Linda Yohn (LY)

Interview conducted by Historic Preservation graduate student Matt Jones (MJ) on Thursday January 23rd, 2020.

Transcribed by Grace Pare

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MJ: We are rolling. Okay it's Thursday January 23rd, 2020. This is Historic Preservation graduate student Matt Jones and today I'm in Halle Library speaking with longtime WEMU music director and radio host Linda Yohn. Yohn is said to have done more for jazz in Southeast Michigan than any other single person in her 30 years with WEMU; I think Art Timko said that. Six-time winner of the Jazz Programmer of the Year award, frequent panelist at national conventions, and universally recognized for her commitment to all things jazz here and everywhere else, Yohn was given Emeritus status when she retired in 2017. I am really excited that you're here. I could pick your voice out anywhere and you're one of the rare people that, I mean I've been listening to WEMU since the early 90's and one of the rare people that I can think of that, even if I can't listen to the station, even if I wasn't listening to the station I knew that you were on the air and I was really happy. Really. So to follow up on that introduction, going through all the things that I read about you, I want to ask, how do you feel about awards?

LY: (laughing) You know, one doesn't do what one does for awards. I guess it's nice to be recognized but that's not why you do what you do, that's not why you care. You just, if you love something you just have to nurture it along and coax it along and be there for it. You have to do whatever it takes. I would say, again, before you and I got started in this discussion I told you that I don't have kids. Well, WEMU was like a child to me and if I

had to stay up until 3 o'clock in the morning to make sure it was well, I did. And if I had to get up at 5 to make sure that it was okay, I would.

MJ: I remember reading that you said that sometimes it was hard to go home. It was hard to know when to go home from work.

LY: Yup.

MJ: Well, I wanted to get that out of the way and we are going to come back to some of the other things that you've been recognized for, but first I want to go all the way back and I wondered if you could tell me about your upbringing? Just where you're from and who your parents were?

LY: I love my mom and dad so much. I'll tell you a side story. I was born in 1951 in Columbus, Ohio and my parents had just graduated from Otterbein College. They got married in 1950. My mom was pregnant with me when she graduated from college. At that point in time my dad was in graduate school for a degree in Biology at Ohio State University, oh *The Ohio State University*. I never forget the 'the' these days. He went on to get a degree in a very new science at that time in the 1950's, virology and immunology. This was a brand new science. So he was going to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Jonas Salk and Dr. Sabin. I'll talk about him first then Mom. After completing that Ph.D at Ohio State he landed a position in the lab of Dr. Sabin at University of Pittsburgh where he worked in the lab on the oral polio vaccine and I am one of the first oral polio vaccine guinea pigs. I'm one of the first humans to consume the pink serum on the sugar cube. My dad. Yeah. After that Dad went on to work on cancer research. So his first cancer research position was with Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo. He was on faculty at State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo as well, but primarily a researcher in a small pox related virus that causes tumors in monkeys and then it was found out to have relations with smallpox. It was the Yaba Tumor Pox virus. I remember this clearly. After working on that and developing the successful vaccine for primates my

father was coerced to go back to the Ohio State University in 1969 where he headed up the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology and worked on the feline leukemia vaccine. They developed it there. After that he worked in international leukemia and lymphoma research and after that he wrote the grant that established the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Ohio State University. He was a researcher, so it's not like he was an M.D. who'd get a lot of the credit. He was a researcher. So he worked quietly behind the scenes, he wrote great grants. Mom, who I speak like, was born in West Virginia in poverty. Her dad schlepped them to Ohio after he finally found a job in the depression and she grew up in a little bitty town in Ohio. She had an incredible singing voice. She was able to go to college where she met my dad who pursued her because she was gorgeous and she sang like a bird. To help put dad through school, mother sang professionally mostly in churches and synagogues. She was a great opera singer. She did sing with the Pittsburgh Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Tanglewood Choir. She had great poise and she was also an incredible cook and hostess so that people from all over the world, like Russia and Italy and France and Africa, would visit my parents home and my mother would throw cocktail parties for them after they'd had their scientific meetings. They would then ask at the end of the night, would Mrs. Yohn be so kind as to sit down at the piano and play and sing a song for everybody.

MJ: After she'd been talking all night?

LY: Yeah, and she'd do it, and then sometimes the next morning she'd get up and she'd sing the solo in church.

MJ: Wow, so don't we hear a lot of musicians here talk about being able to make a living like that.

LY: She had to learn how to drive in Pittsburgh because she had to get to her gigs and so my dad had to teach her how to drive on the hills of Pittsburgh in a 1954 Ford station wagon three on the tree. That car sucked. All four of us kids were in the back.

MJ: How did they find time to have four kids?

LY: Because she was gorgeous.

MJ: That makes sense (laughing). So when did you start singing? You considered a singing career too.

LY: Bam you got thrown into church choir as soon as, I guess I was probably in church choir when I was 5. It's what you do. Church had been a big part of my life and church is still a big part of my life. I tried but I'm not my mom. I'm not my mom. You know what that's fine. I had to come to terms with that. My mom had great ears, great hands. She also, perhaps because her life was a lot more desperate than mine, she was willing to stay focused and learn how to read music. She could read both base and treble clef and a range and everything. She was good with the printed sheet music. I was horrible with it. I just wanted to sit down and play. I could hear it, I didn't want to look at that damn notation. I'm a horrible reader.

MJ: Well do you have any recordings that were....?

LY: Actually there is one. I did find it, it is the Christmas record of the North Presbyterian Church in Williamsville, New York and yes there are recorded solos.

MJ: Wow, it's on vinyl?

LY: Yes.

MJ: Have you ever thought about having it digitized?

LY: Yes.

MJ: You want me to do it for you?

LY: Sure

MJ: Okay. It's part of my job.

LY: Really?

MJ: Yeah here.

LY: Oh. Okay I'll be in touch. My brothers and sisters would love it because I'm the only one who has a copy of that record.

MJ: Yeah, you should definitely have it transferred. I'll do that for you.

LY: I know, and one of the saddest things is, oh God, so there was this giant stack of 78s in boxes in the back of my little brother's closet. This is when we lived in Pittsburgh. And I remember one snowy day, stuck in the house, and my little brothers, who I think were 3 and 4 at the time, find this box in their closet and they open it and it's these records. They look at them and those things break. They threw them at each other. They didn't know what they were, they weren't labeled, they were just in brown paper sleeves. What they threw at each other was my mother's final recital. My parents were like oh no! But my parents hadn't listened to my mother's final recital in years.

MJ: Well, how were vinyl records made? Do they make a tape first then transfer it to vinyl?

LY: Yeah this is probably in the era of the two track ampex tape. You know? Yeah. An ampex tape and then rolled back to an LP. I haven't heard it in ages either, so the fidelity could really suck. Because probably, I'm going to pull out my recording engineer thing, but it was probably what we call bicameral and one straight ahead. So you know it was a 3 mic recording: one hanging down and one over there and there.

MJ: I wonder if that tape still exists somewhere.

LY: Probably not. Probably not but there you go. So that's my story. Mom taught so she made money teaching both piano and voice as well.

MJ: Was radio a big part of your childhood?

LY: Yes.

MJ: What kind of things would she like to listen to?

LY: Okay. Well, this goes back to Grandpa McCoy. Grandpa McCoy was in World War One and Grandpa McCoy was a motorcycle courier in World War One. He carried dispatches along the frontline on an Indian motorcycle. Well, he got shot and his motorcycle

collapsed on him and he was in a pool of cold water overnight. He was retrieved and he lived, but they could no longer send him out because one of his legs was broken. So, they taught him how to be a morse code operator. And so he learned morse code and he did transcontinental dispatches. Upon release from the army, he became interested in wireless. That's what they called it then you know. They didn't call it radio they called it wireless. He became interested in wireless. He also became interested in rubber and so before the depression he went to Panama and he went to the jungles of Panama to learn rubber making. And he took all his money, took it back to Huntington, West Virginia where he thought he could take on Akron and formed, along with another man, the Huntington Tire and Rubber Company. Well, they were on the margin and they lost everything. So Grandpa ended up in Bucyrus, Ohio as a foreman for Swan Rubber making rubber hose. Didn't make tires, made hose. But another way he made money is that he learned how to repair radios, and he had radios with all those tubes and things. And so radio was a big deal for us and he liked to listen to WLW out of the Queen City Cincinnati, Ohio and he liked to listen to the Cincinnati Reds, he was a Reds fan. And we listened to Reds games. And he had recording equipment and he was an early audiophile and he recorded me. I don't have the recordings, but he recorded me singing "Little Sir Echo". I don't have it but there was a recording, probably one of the 78s that got smashed, a recording of me singing "Little Sir Echo". He loved music, he loved listening to the radio and listening to the radio was just a big part of his life and my mom's life. I'd come home from school and we would listen to "Fibber, McGee and Molly" in the kitchen together. We'd listen to other programs, listen to KDKA in Pittsburgh and she wasn't sure if she liked it but I remember hearing Elvis Presley, I was a kid. She wasn't sure she liked it, but I liked it. So I remember hearing Elvis as a really young girl and I remember really liking it. My grandpa liked Elvis too. So, now Grandma didn't like

Elvis. Grandma only wanted church. My mom would play Boogie Woogie and Blues and stride piano for my grandfather. She would play stuff like that. Play a fun one.

MJ: I love stride music. I've tried to play it but my hands would not stretch that far.

LY: No! She could do it. She could do it. Great reach, so she could do it

MJ: Do you really think she didn't know you were stealing her Benny Goodman records? I think I read that.

LY: (laughing) I think she knew. I think she knew. I think she knew. You know what I don't think she minded. I don't think she minded at all. I have the Benny Goodman records, I have the Ellington records, I have the Basie records, the Sinatra records, and the Michel LeGrand records.

MJ: Well, you talking about your grandfather leads me to another question I had and it was based on the fact that when I talked to Arwulf and also talked to, I think it was Michael Nastos, they both suggested that being in radio or being interested in radio seems to run in families. Do you think that's true?

LY: Yeah, I do. I do. My favorite radio story to tell, and I think I've written it down, Mom had given me a radio, this is when we lived in Buffalo, and this radio was a Fada Catalin radio, highly collectable, I don't have it anymore. Even in the condition that it was at that time would be worth somewhere around \$3,500. Tube radio. Big speaker. So, I'd take that radio, plug it in, put that radio under the covers. Remember it's tubes. Thing heats up, and my bedroom was over the garage in Buffalo so my bedroom was the coldest bedroom in the entire house. So one night I'm listening to the radio and Mom opens the door. "What do I hear?" "The radio." "Where is the radio?" "Here." "No! You could have killed yourself, you'd burn the house down and all of us! You can't put a radio like that under the covers." But before she leaves, she turns on her heel and she says "What are you listening to?" And I told her I said "I don't really know." And she said "Do you like that?" And I said "Yeah." She says, "You sure you don't know what you're listening to?"

“No.” I’m making this up as I go but this is kind of really what happened. And I said “Well I like it. There’s no singers.” and she looks at me and she goes “You like jazz. Now unplug that radio.” So I do. She then got in touch with my grandfather who purchased for me, unbeknownst to me, a state of the art transistor radio at that time. The brand was called Channel Master. I remember this clearly. And it had a leather cover and you had to put four big square batteries in this thing to run it. Big speaker for a transistor. Even a little kind of perch so that you could lift it up and you could listen to it that way when you took it to the beach. Well, a box came, addressed to me from Bucyrus and I opened it and there it was from my grandfather because he wanted me to have a radio that I could listen to at night and not wake my sister up. He sent me a radio.

MJ: That’s such a great gift. Did you know it was coming?

LY: No.

MJ: What a great surprise. Alright. Well you considered a singing career I think. What was the point where you decided against it? It doesn’t seem like you’d have to decide between performance and radio, did you have to decide between the two or did you just leave performance behind and find something else?

LY: I left performance behind because I was singing in a pop band and there was one customer out there who was drunk and the place was full of smoke and I had to sing “Jeremiah Was a Bullfrog” for the third time that night. And it was awful. And I was in a lime green Kiana dress and I just decided this is not for me. This is not for me. I called Mom and she said “I didn’t think you’d last”.

MJ: Not I hoped you’d last just I figured you wouldn’t?

LY: I figured you wouldn’t. And then the other thing was, and I was taking voice lessons at the time from a really good voice teacher. And I was kind of flirting with doing this radio thing and she said, “you know, I can help you change that voice from where we’ve got

you modulated all over the place to a more smoother, more modulated, more considered, more professional speaking voice.” And that’s what we did.

MJ: Do you remember your first time behind a microphone in the radio capacity?

LY: Well that would be in college. It was WOBN at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio. I started out reading news and doing the weather and the sports and somebody said “can you fill in on a music show?” And I said oh, sure. So I just grabbed my albums and played them. It was easy! It was fun! So they asked me back, I never had a specific program of my own on WOBN. I was a girl.

MJ: That’s the reason why?

LY: Probably. Think about it. 1971 and she comes in with her progressive rock records. You know? And she thinks she’s hot shit. Yeah. Radio was not a woman’s broadcasting in ‘71, ‘70. It was not a woman or girl’s arena. It wasn’t there yet. There was a thread on one of the forums I participate in online: “Who are your favorite disc jockeys growing up?” I could only come up with one woman and that was Allison Steele at WNEW that was it. Only one woman from like about 1967 could I come up with.

MJ: That was in 1967. What about now?

LY: Oh yeah. Where would NPR be without women on the air? The women are the strongest communicators on NPR. There.

MJ: I could be wrong here but most of the men on NPR sound exactly the same.

LY: They sure do.

MJ: So it takes someone like Diane Rheim, the best one I think I’ve ever heard with, it seems like to me, with the biggest vocal challenges.

LY: Yes she did. She surmounted them. She absolutely surmounted them. So that would be OBN. I did a little volunteer work for free access radio in Columbus. WFAC. And then the first time I got paid would be WBBY in Westerville. Actually, the studios were in Sunbury, Ohio. But WBBY and it was jazz and it was wonderful.

MJ: What kinds of things did you have to do differently than the men in the radio industry? Can you think of any specific ways you had to work harder or longer or what kinds of specifics? Because that was one of my questions because I know radio has always been male dominated and I wonder about the specifics of what it actually looks like on the ground.

LY: Well, at that point in time you had to pass an FCC exam. Today with deregulation you don't have to pass an FCC exam to be on the air. But at that point in time you had to be examined by the FCC and you had to pass Elements 1, 9, and 2 to get what was known as your third class ticket. Your third class radio announcer's license. I had to take it twice. I failed it the first time. It was so complex and so much oriented toward electronics and understanding electrical formulas, ohms and volts and watts and all that. What 26 year old woman knows ohms and volts and watts? I taught myself that. I had to teach myself that. Sit there and go to the library and learn it. I had to take the test twice. So finally when I passed it then they allowed me on and basically I had to learn how to modulate a female voice, which we allowed to go up and down. Well all women's voices in general communication to have more emotion. And I had to learn how to get rid of that--how to not be so sing-song. How to make what is not conversational, conversational. I had to learn how to make it not quite so personal and just make it more about general communication. And because there were no role models for me, none, there were no other women on the air at that time in Columbus, Ohio. I had to figure it out on my own.

MJ: Okay this is interesting because some of the male people I've interviewed who have been involved with radio, people like John Fountain...

LY: I love John Fountain.

MJ: Great guy.

LY: Great, great guy. Dear friend.

MJ: I've asked them did you have to find your voice? Did you have to develop your on air voice? And I think they both said no.

LY: Nope. They didn't. And knowing John Fountain the way you do and listeners you should listen to John Fountain's interview. I'm sure it's incredible I will do that when I get home. No because Fountain, Fountain has it naturally. Fountain is one of the lay readers in my church. He's got it naturally. And again there's such a track record of men being on the air, so for John he'd just follow in the footsteps of some of the great sports radio announcers. He'd follow in the footsteps of Ernie Harwell or whomever. Yeah. But he's got it, he's got the gift of gab.

MJ: You didn't have any footsteps to follow.

LY: No! No and I can't be Ernie Harwell. No.

MJ: Was it kind of expected you would go to Otterbein?

LY: Yeah.

MJ: Okay. What was your concentration of studies while you were there?

LY: Well, I started out to be a little French major and I got involved in, oh I took Theatre Appreciation and I decided upon taking Theatre Appreciation that I was going to become a theatre major. There was speech, theatre, and French. All three of them and I got an Elementary, no I got a K-12 teaching certificate as well. But I didn't get a job. The market at that point in time in the height of the baby boomer and recession I didn't get a job. I student taught, I tried hard, I did not get a job.

MJ: Well, take me from Otterbein to New York City.

LY: Well, I had a job for a little while in my dad's lab at Ohio State University. I did cancer research experiments with and for him. I decided that I just couldn't do that. I needed to carve my own path, so I quit. I travelled for a while, I was a carney, I had an Orange Julius business that I sort of leased from another woman, but I drove a truck and I had an Orange Julius concession at State Fairs.

MJ: Your carney experience is the subject of a whole other interview.

LY: Yeah, I don't think we really don't want to go there. The carney life is...

MJ: Oh I've only heard the myth.

LY: I was a carney. I did that and that was crazy. So I decided, alright enough craziness. Go back, go to graduate school. So I enrolled at Ohio State in English Literature. Though alright, if I get a master's degree in English Literature then maybe I could get a job as an English teacher. So I was waiting tables at, it was at Seva in Columbus at that time. Waiting tables at Seva and after waiting tables at Seva, I'd take my tips down to either Pearl Alley Discs or SchoolKids Records in Columbus and I'd buy a stack of jazz albums. And then I'd take these jazz albums to this great bar called Larry's Bar and Grill and I'd hang out with these intellectuals and some pseudo intellectuals too, but they liked to see what I bought. If I bought Andrew Hill or Charles Mingus or Duke Ellington or Jimmy Smith. And there was a great jukebox at Larry's, an incredible jukebox, it had classical music, it had jazz, it had old country, it was wonderful. But there was also a record player and you could bring your albums. And if somebody voted that your album was really really good they'd put it on and everybody at Larry's would listen to it while they were playing chess and drinking. There were cards and chess and drinking and a great jukebox and books at Larry's. I met a jazz fan and he said "Oh, well you should go to work at Clyde's, the jazz bar." Oh yeah I should. So I started tending bar and waiting tables at Clyde's. Waiting tables and tending bar at Clyde's was where I met Norman Grant who was doing the all night jazz radio at WBBY. WBBY had just gone from this screwy format of daytime disco, honest to God disco in the daytime and then jazz overnight. The advertising revenue for the jazz program outsold the disco in the daytime. So the general manager said let's go all jazz. So they did and they needed an extra announcer too. So that's where Norman Grant, who I was slinging drinks to at the time, said you're erudite, I remember this conversation clearly, you're erudite, you know and

love the music, go get your third class and talk to me. So that's where I had to study and pass the third class twice. That's the story.

MJ: So carney, orange julius, chess, drinking and then you wind up working for a publicist in New York City? A seemingly high powered publicist with a pretty...

LY: Yeah, he had a pretty good, for jazz, he had a great jazz client roster. So I was on the air at WBBY and WBBY in my cultural estimation started to tank. WBBY was making money and money people got involved and money people who owned a car dealership wanted all Chuck Mangione all the time pretty much. No Charles Mingus. That crazy jazz. So I found out about a job opening through a friend at WKSU at Kent State University. I applied and I got the job. I even took a cut in pay to go to Kent State and the hours were awful. I did 10 P.M. to 1 A.M. That was awful but it got my foot in the door and then the guy that was doing 7-10 was promoted into underwriting. They said "Oh, you can have his position and you can be the jazz and folk music director." So they just boom, slid me into that position and I took to it like a duck to water. Ah, man. I looked smooth and I was of course paddling like crazy beneath, but I loved it. I loved my time at Kent State University. They changed formats, a solid business decision for them to change formats, because of the new radio station going on in Cleveland which was going to program jazz. So they changed formats. Now I did not go to work for the Cleveland station. I got courted by them, but I was, I think there's one thing you'll learn about me that I'm very loyal, and I was going to be absolutely loyal to WKSU. I mean, how could WKSU fuck with me, excuse me I used the F word, I'm not the first person to use it.

MJ: I'll probably use it too.

LY: Pardon?

MJ: I'll probably use it too.

LY: Okay! And they did. They really smashed my hours around and they did what they had to do and I understand it as a solid business decision. Today I remain friends with that

general manager at WKSU because I understand what he did. He had to be a change agent. It's okay. It's alright. So, I parlayed one of my connections in New York. I did interviews for this publicist. I went to New York, looked for a job, and I didn't get one right away. So I went back to Kent, Ohio and the guy who was working for that publicist called me and he said "What are you doing in Peter's office?" and I said I was looking for a job. He said "Do you want one?" and I said yeah. He said "Well, you should take my job." So, he said "I'm going to turn in notice so would it be okay if I mentioned you when I turned in notice to Peter?" and I said sure. He mentioned me, Peter called me, and I turned in 2 weeks notice at WKSU and 2 weeks later I moved to New York.

MJ: Were you doing any radio in New York?

LY: I wanted to. It didn't happen. That was really my dream, but it didn't happen. I'll never forget my time in New York. I have contacts even in 2020 that I developed in 1986 while living in New York. In publicity, radio, production, all of it. All of it. And we're still all in it. I mean I think if this jazz business bug bites you and you're willing to nurture it along and love it and stay positive and roll with your damn punches, you'll stick with it and if you keep your promises that you make in business then you'll be respected and so I kept my promises to people like oh yeah I can interview so and so, oh yeah I can put you in touch with so and so, oh yeah I can play that, oh I'm sorry I cannot play that record and here is why. And always a why you can't program something. Always a serious and honest why, why you have to say no. And people will respect you. I ramble but...

MJ: No rambling is great. We like it when people ramble.

LY: Okay.

MJ: So how did you get back to EMU? I mean...

LY: So I was in New York, I was in New York and I was unhappy. I found about myself that I'm not a good New Yorker. You have to be really born with it or just really take to it well. And I found out that I like the slower pace and I like open skies and I like birds, I like

water, I like clean air, I like to talk a little slower. I like being able to stretch out a little bit in my living space. And that cannot happen there. So I got back in touch with my buddy at WKSU and there was, at that point in time, a posting of jobs in public broadcasting that was called the DACS system. I asked him, would you do me a favor? Could you look at DACS and see if there are any gigs open that might suit me? And he did. It was Al Bartholet and Al Bartholet looked at the DACS and said there's two. There's one in Detroit and there's one in a town I can't pronounce. And he read them both and he read that stuff to me over the phone and I applied for the one in Detroit and I applied for the one in Ypsilanti. And I got the one in Ypsilanti. I remember clearly talking with Art and Art asked me why would you relocate, something to that effect. I said well I think I'm your girl. I really think that I could talk to the people that live there, I'm okay with Universities, I'm okay with a smaller community, I will be patient, I will listen, I will be a team player, I will coach. I think I'm your girl. And he laughed. I remember him laughing. Says well I look forward to your package. So I sent him my folder with an 8x10 and a resume and the cover letter and the cassette. So then we interviewed and upon returning I had an open reel box of Ampex Tape. 207. I sent him the open reel. I said okay this is not the finished product this is unedited me, warts and all, and I said there's even a mistake on this tape.

MJ: What was the mistake?

LY: He listened to it and he told me after I got the gig he said you know what it was getting yourself out of the mistake that sold me. That you were willing to show how you knew you made a mistake and you got yourself out of it.

MJ: Yeah, that's big. When I watch musicians play, I never want to see a perfect show.

LY: Me neither!

MJ: I want to see their mistakes and how they get out of it. That's exciting.

LY: Yeah, and that's the essence of jazz. The essence of jazz is the note that you hadn't planned on so how are you going to resolve that. That's the essence of jazz. There are no wrong notes.

MJ: Mm-hmm. What were your first impressions of Art?

LY: That Art was one of the kindest, most honest, most forthright, most generous, most sympathetic, most respectful individuals you'll ever, ever know. His passion for what he did, his love for his family, his love for mankind, his integrity, and his willingness to speak the truth sometimes when some people didn't want to hear it and he did that to University administration.

MJ: And how did that turn out sometimes?

LY: Sometimes not the intended result. So you go back to the drawing board.

MJ: It sounds like he probably knew that was coming sometimes.

LY: Sometimes

MJ: But it was more important to say what he needed to say.

LY: Yeah. Yeah. Patient, long suffering, The essence of his rigid family upbringing, his religion, his study for the priesthood, and then his time in Vietnam all really came together to create a human being, I think of very early wisdom.

MJ: I wish I could get a chance to talk to him. That's what I think any time I talk to anybody from WEMU.

LY: Really?

MJ: Yeah. Yeah! That's a name I hear all the time and it's written everywhere and every quote he has in every piece of literature is praise of somebody else who worked at the station like yourself or anybody else.

LY: Well, here's back at you Art. Here's back at you. You learn so much about cohortment, about just about truth, energy, so much from Art and he wasn't afraid of rolling up his sleeves and working side by side with you. Physically on a project, and I think one of the

mottos that I would say to someone who would report to me when I worked for Art, and I probably feel this way throughout my life in general, is that I would not ask you to do anything I haven't done or wouldn't do. I think Art was the absolute same way. He'd be schlepping gear from a Montreux- Detroit remote broadcast or Frog Island Festival remote broadcast, you know? And he was in there in his t-shirt and his jeans and his sneakers with everybody else.

MJ: What was his title? What was he? Because it seems like he was all things.

LY: Well, as I understand, he started out as a radio announcer doing all sorts of different radio shows when he was completing his master's degree here at EMU and then I believe he got promoted to program director and then when Dick Jaques went down to Ohio State University I think that's when Art got promoted to general manager and then, or station manager, something like that, and then his final position that they sort of crafted with HR here at EMU was Executive Director. So he was an Executive Director and he was kind of working on getting Molly Motherwell at that general manager executive director position and it was a very wise choice on his part. It was a really wise choice. I think she's done an incredible job with the station in his footsteps.

MJ: Were you hired as director of music programming?

LY: Yup.

MJ: Was there any ill will about some outsider coming in to take that position?

LY: Yeah. Yeah. You don't want me to name names.

MJ: I could take them off (laughing). Well you said when you arrived you could tell the station had the potential to be a class jazz station. Was there anything you saw right away that impressed you and also was there anything you saw right away that you knew needed to change?

LY: There was a kid on in the middle of the afternoon who we had to get him off the air.

MJ: Was he a student?

LY: Yeah. He meant so well but he was just unlistenable. That had to be changed and he'd been listening to some direction by other people and had a little bit of a different vision than some of the other people and this young man was just choosing also some really unlistenable stuff for the afternoon. There was that immediate change.

MJ: Was there anything sort of structural or did you see programs that needed to be improved?

LY: The schedule that I inherited at WEMU was weird. It really didn't jive with people's lives but Art and his team were trying what they thought was like counter programming and that's really not the way to program.

MJ: "Counter programming" what does that mean?

LY: Okay, what I mean by that is, so instead of airing "All Things Considered" from 5-7 P.M., they aired an obnoxious, absolutely obnoxious, children's radio program called "Kid's America" and then they aired "All Things Considered" until like 9 P.M. If people want news, they want news in drive time. You don't want to wait through "Kid's America".

MJ: That was playing on people's drive home?

LY: And there was a program called "Cafe du Jazz" too.

MJ: And that was yours right?

LY: Yeah that was "Cafe du Jazz" too. I think then there was "Kid's America" then there was "All Things Considered". "Cafe du Jazz" had an appeal, but there was one thing I learned at WKSU and that's really, you gotta program to people's lifestyles. You have to program for what you really perceive a listener's need and I perceived, even though WDET was airing "All Things Considered" and 'KAR and 'GTE and maybe even 'UOM at the time, I still perceived that you know what? We should take that "Cafe du Jazz" off the air and you should put "All Things Considered" in that slot. I lobbied to move things around. As wonderful as that program with a sexy girl voice and it was to be easy listening jazz for the dinner hour. As fun as that was, I thought that they would do better

financially with the audience and then with listener support by going with a more reliable, dependable and what people need at that time.

MJ: What was the listenership in '87 when you showed up? Approximately.

LY: Gosh, I don't know.

MJ: I think I read in the 90's sometimes it was 54,000 a week.

LY: Yeah, I think we were looking somewhere at probably around 25,000 and you could just tell that the station had incredible potential. I mean, it's the Ann Arbor market and you've got to deliver very intelligent, very entertaining, very focused, no mistake radio to Ann Arbor. You can't mess around with Ann Arbor.

MJ: Was it in King at that time?

LY: Sure is.

MJ: Has it changed since 1987?

LY: No! It's still there in that little bitty room. A lot of the original gear from '87 is still there.

MJ: I was kind of marveling at some of the photos I saw of you throughout your career here. There's photos of you at the booth and I was paying attention to the rest of the room. Some things changed, but that board never changed.

LY: I think there was an older board in '87. There was an older board. So the board they currently got I think in '92 or maybe '90 even. So it's an analog board and to maintain both those analog boards is really something because you have to get the, what we called the modules that you put beneath the fader bays, you know. Those things are rare. I mean you've gotta, you know, cannibalise another board. They don't make them anymore.

MJ: Well, Patrick took me back to the room where all the stuff is. It's like a workshop. It's incredible!

LY: Oh yeah. Ray's old office.

MJ: It was like a hardware store.

LY: Oh it is. It's amazing. Yeah. There's tubes back there.

MJ: Yeah! And he was saying do you need any of this stuff? Because no one has touched it in years. The reason I was over there, just as a side note and I'm going to come back to this I think, but I was over there talking to Patrick and Mary Motherwell, we're actually, we transported all of the Montreux Detroit reels and Frog Island reels and Heritage Festival reels and all probably....

LY: Okay so that's where they are!

MJ: Yeah, they're in the Archives now.

LY: Okay, good.

MJ: Yeah, and they're safe and they're in temperature controlled, humidity controlled rooms and we're working on grants right now to have all of that digitized.

LY: Okay, good.

MJ: Yeah, and, so when I was there that's actually where this soundphone came from.

LY: Oh, I recognize this stuff.

MJ: I figured you would. I mean, maybe if you have time I could take you downstairs because in order to do this digitization project they gave us, really graciously gave us a bunch of equipment. There's reel to reel machines, ...

LY: They gave you the Scullys.

MJ: Yeah, one Scully.

LY: Okay you got a Scully very good shape.

MJ: It is in very good shape!

LY: I know! Those things are workhorses!

MJ: When I pulled it out of that kind of store room it was just caked in dust. I brought it over, cleaned it off, and I can't believe it. I popped it open, put a tape on there and it was perfect.

LY: Sure. Those old German motors.

MJ: Okay, yeah, alright. Well, today or anytime you want to come over and tell us about any of this gear because they gave us a ton of stuff. They basically gave us a digitization lab here for the Archives, which is incredible.

LY: You can do the bake the tape thing?

MJ: If necessary, yeah.

LY: If necessary. There was one night one young man whom we did overnight jazz, he wanted to air some of this cutting edge material at the time, it was really avant garde, that was recorded at a Detroit jazz festival and I gave him permission to do so. So he played it and then when he rewound it all the oxide particles flew into the studio. I said we can't do that anymore, we can't air it. So I don't know what he wanted. I don't remember what he wanted to air, but I couldn't allow anybody to air anything anymore.

MJ: We did do a little kind of cross section of the different formats, and that collection is in really good shape. I mean at least the samples that we took. Played maybe 15-20 reel to reels.

LY: Good.

MJ: Yeah, I mean that collection boggles the mind.

LY: Yeah.

MJ: Not just for the content but also because of the context. I mean, the jazz festival being in Detroit I think we have '80-2000. It's such a voice of that city and I can't believe it's preserved. It's amazing. We're really excited. But anyway, okay.

LY: That's good news.

MJ: Yeah, but I asked if it was in King at that point and if it had changed, I remember you said something about headphones and when I was over there going through the gear I found a big postal bin of headphones. Did you know they were bad back then or were they like state of the art? Because they were like the kind of things you'd see in like the '80's control room of the space shuttle lift off and stuff.

LY: Oh I know. I know. Well, I think when I was on the air at BBY I was so poor that I didn't buy my own headphones but I always wondered why one guy used his own headphones. He was older and he was a serviceman and he had his own headphones. But I guess it never occurred to me and I remember when we were on the air at WKSU we had fabulous headphones because there were two audiophile companies based in Cleveland and one of them was Audio Technica, the turntables, and so Audio Technica used WKSU because of its format, both classical and jazz, and Telarc, also the audiophile label, used WKSU as a test. WKSU believe it or not was one of the first stations in the nation to test a compact disc and got one of the first radio compact disc players in the nation from Denon, would be Japan, and I remember seeing my first compact disc and this thing shined, you know, how you make a CD and then we all went into the studio to listen to the 1812 overture on CD for the first time. Boom! Boom!

MJ: What a great first listen.

LY: Yeah, 1812 yeah. So there were great headphones at WKSU. So when I get to WEMU it doesn't occur to me that the headphones are going to suck. Well there's all these students using these headphones and I never really worked in a situation with all these students.

MJ: Yeah, what was that like? I want to talk about that too.

LY: Okay, so this is where my ears come in. So I'm wearing the same headphones that some of the students are wearing. I developed an ear infection and I got pimples in my ear.

MJ: Oh no!

LY: Have you ever had one there?

MJ: No.

LY: Agghh!

MJ: I have had ear infections, yeah.

LY: I immediately went over to Snow and got fixed up and they cleaned my ear and the lady at Snow, it was Snow Health Center at that time, she said, "You have to go buy your own headphones. You can't use anybody else's headphones. I'm surprised that you professionals haven't been doing that all along." And I went and bought my own headphones and I've been using my own ever since. But yeah, and headphones are such a problem. They're fragile, they get pulled in and out of the board all the time, the little connections, they fall apart, so I imagine that you had a mail crate full of headphones. Yeah, oh yeah, and some of them are just....yeah.

MJ: I didn't know that it was possible to contract any kind of illness from, but I guess, you know, you can catch just about anything from a college student. So what was that like being kind of dropped into a University setting where you had to supervise a bunch of students?

LY: Well, you know, having been a real University brat sort of myself I was perfectly comfortable with that. I come from--my dad's family's really big. I'm the eldest of 5 kids so, no, didn't phase me at all. Big family. Didn't phase me.

MJ: Well when I think about a radio station I don't know if it's just me or, I don't think it is just me, I think it's a lot of people who don't know what it's like to work in radio, imagine that a station is full of a lot of big personalities. I mean it seems you have to be one to get on the air and talk for two hours. So I wanted to ask you about some of the other people that were there like Jim Dulzo, what's he like? I've had a little communication with him.

LY: I think he's wonderful. I just respect him so much. He's got a really good sense about people and he has a real sense of himself and what he can do and who he can be and how he should spend his precious time.

MJ: Yeah, didn't he just take off and move up north or something?

LY: Yes. I admire him for that. He worked really hard at the Detroit News with Detroit Jazz Festival, with WEMU, with all of the other radio that he did. But I know that he made a

wise decision for his own health to go up where it's a little quieter, it's a little easier, your pace of life is a lot healthier up there.

MJ: Yea, I recently contacted him about that, those reels that we have and I wanted to talk to you about that after the interview too because we are going to need a little bit of help for some of the reels that don't have any information on them. Just figuring out who is this, you know.

LY: Okay.

MJ: But, when I wrote to him he first of all Mary Motherwell could not find his info, but I tracked him down, e-mailed him, and he wrote me back just the nicest e-mail. He was just like not a day has gone by since I left WEMU that I haven't thought about those recordings. I'm so happy--he was so excited--sent me a huge list of performers and has been so helpful already and we didn't even have to ask.

LY: No! Again, you know, it's what I talked about. If you love it you're going to go to the mat for it, and you're going to share. A good professional shares contacts, shares information, for the greater good. People I do not respect and don't want to work with are people that I say hold on to information because I know and you don't.

MJ: I was going to read a quote of yours that echos that and I think it was when you were giving some recognition for working with other radio stations and you said, "the reason I do all these things is that you have to network, you have to support each other, you have to find out what works, you have to find out what stations are taking what kinds of chances and would that work for you?" You also give some good advice when you're talking with other stations, other programmers "You have to feed off of others' success, you have to learn from others failures, and you just support each other." That seems like really obvious advice but did you have to work to develop that kind of culture at WEMU?

LY: No.

MJ: Was it like that when you got there?

LY: I would say so. Again, it goes up to the top and it goes up to Art Timko, and Art believed in collaboration and communication and Art did have the great respect and the great support of John Fountain.

MJ: Does John's Fountain support go a long way for WEMU?

LY: Oh, I believe so.

MJ: Because he was connected to administration too?

LY: Yes, he was. He was our Vice President. So, Art reported to John Fountain.

MJ: Oh wow, that's lucky.

LY: Oh, that is.

MJ: Okay, two guys that sound like they're pretty great working together.

LY: They were very, very good together. Yeah.

MJ: I think about it outside of any college, you know, so being reminded sometimes that it's connected and that issues at the station are taken notice of by administration is hard for me to swallow sometimes. How often do they get involved?

LY: Oh I think Walter Kraft today is involved all the time because, think about it, that radio station is the University's major public relations outreach tool.

MJ: Yeah, it's a good one too.

LY: It's very good. On that unique format of jazz and blues and of course the NPR news and the sports too.

MJ: Sure, do they do a lot for the funding of the station? Do you have to do your own fundraising or does the University....

LY: Over the years fundings been cut back, well because, you know, I think a university's first responsibility is to academics. It really is. I mean, I've had to make business decisions like President Smith has to do today, or the Presidents before him, or Don Loppnow, and say yeah radio station you're wonderful but dammit we really need a new laboratory for scientific testing, like the new labs and buildings and Halle Library where

we are right now. You should have seen the library that was here when I first joined EMU.

MJ: Was that the one in Porter?

LY: Yeah.

MJ: Yeah.

LY: Yeah. Good God.

MJ: Well I heard there's some possible, I've heard there's some rumblings about WEMU moving out of King. Maybe they're just rumors.

LY: Well, I think it would make Molly Motherwell very happy to have studios and facilities that are built with radio in mind instead of crammed into an old women's dormitory. Right. With those little teeny, squirrely rooms and the walls that crumble.

MJ: Yeah. I was standing in the store room with all that gear and I looked around and I was like oh, this used to be a bathroom. Because it has tile on the walls. Okay, well just switching gears here I want to talk about the festivals. What was your role with Montreux Detroit Jazz Fest? What did you do out there?

LY: I did radio or was a master of ceremonies.

MJ: Like live broadcasting? Like remote?

LY: Yeah.

MJ: Master of ceremonies

LY: Or MC, stage host.

MJ: Is getting on stage easy? Is it like sitting down behind a microphone?

LY: Yeah. The interesting thing about being on stage is that you're safe. Believe it or not. It's not unlike being in the booth. No one can touch you. When you're up there, you're an object.

MJ: I wondered about that. About how....

LY: It's actually one of the safest places to be.

MJ: In the booth?

LY: Booth or stage. Both.

MJ: Well when you're sitting in a radio booth maybe you know you've got 50-60,000 listeners per week and to me it sounds daunting to think about how many people are listening to my voice right now and I can't see you. I can't see a reaction. But you would get reactions.

LY: Because you're only talking to one person at a time.

MJ: Oh really?

LY: And that's not bullshit.

MJ: Explain that.

LY: Well, I mean that's the best communication. You think about the way people use radio and you think about what somebody's going to need or desire at that time and you have somebody in mind and you just talk to that person.

MJ: Okay, that's good advice. Did you give that advice to the students?

LY: Of course. You're really only talking to one person at a time. Very few people listen to radio as a shared experience. Radio is an intimate experience. Now, you might be listening to say in the 50s or 60's even 70's, when radio might be a shared experience, and you all would get together and listen to a favored host's radio program. You might do that. It's not that way anymore and it really has actually never been meant to be that way. I think radio still is a very singular, intimate experience. It's the experience say in 1938 of a broadcaster reading a recipe for apple pie to a woman listening at 12:30 in the afternoon or the futures reports. I read farm futures reports. I did that too. So it's just a really intimate, one on one communication. I think all the great sports broadcasters would tell you yeah it's me telling one person the story of okay he's at bat, he's warming up, the catcher, dah dah dah.

MJ: That's a great way to put it. Is it hard to do that on stage?

LY: No.

MJ: You can still speak to one person when you're on stage?

LY: Oh, I think so. I search and I do eye contact. Yeah.

MJ: Okay, I think it would be really difficult for people that might be new to Ypsilanti to imagine a large scale jazz festival on Frog Island these days. What was that like?

LY: It was great.

MJ: Was it fun?

LY: Oh God it was charmed. I was like ahh the throes of 1967 happening in 1987, 1990, right in this muddy little park. It was wonderful. It was wonderful. Such a community feeling, such creativity. The fact that this community was willing to take a chance with music like Sun Ra and some of the great blues that happened down at the Frog Island Festival and that they were there to support the local artists along with the national and international. Taking music from Africa, from Senegal, to take in oh Brazil, crazy Brazillian music oh man!. Crazy stuff.

MJ: Wow, it's hard for me to imagine. I never attended any of them. I wasn't living here but what was attendance like? Was it good?

LY: mm-hmm! My understanding from The Ark who ended up being the primary production arm and funder at the end was that the fees for infrastructure and for liability were just too high and it didn't make it cost effective to produce plus the toll that it was taking on their own staff after producing that event, you know, they'd have to go through a physical recovery of a week and I relate. I know about that.

MJ: You're kind of impressing me with some of the things you're saying because earlier you said you need to be able to kind of roll with the punches and everything that's happened, even if it's been negative, you understood why it needed to happen.

LY: Yeah. It was big and sad, and there were people up in arms, but they just didn't understand. Beer sales is not going to make it and if you do sell beer then your liability

goes up really, really high. But you don't want to do a festival without beer sales. So you've got to have some sort of revenue stream to do that and that revenue stream could not be found at WEMU. I think one of the things that Art had to come to terms with was the fact that events are wonderful and they did build community. Face to face, hand to hand, you know, body to body dance floor contact. Really builds a bond, but probably the most important thing a broadcaster has to think about is the day to day operations of his or her radio station. What am I putting out on Tuesday afternoon that will be compelling? Am I sacrificing, you know, tens of thousands of dollars putting on this show for three days when really I gotta think about Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning.

MJ: Yeah, yeah. So that's the reason why The Ark took it over?

LY: Yeah and then The Ark had to think about the long term operation of the Ark as well.

MJ: I read about how you would work with, well usually work with record stores around the community. They would call you and say somebody heard something on your station and we don't have it so what was it? And I'm wondering how, this must have changed drastically with the internet. It's changed everything. So I guess how has your role in radio changed since the internet and also where do you see it going? I'm sure you're asked these things a lot.

LY: Well, what you had to do was get net savvy and social media savvy as this became more and more of a force. You're going to social media postings that support what you're gonna do on the air. Intrigue somebody. Say, you know, we will be honoring Jimmy Smith, you know organist Jimmy Smith, here's a little taste of Jimmy Smith from 1959 and if you want to hear how he morphed and grew into 1979 tune in for 89.1 jazz at 10. So you gotta use that and then you would make sure that your playlist is posted and then we went through all sorts of imaginations to get those playlists posted. You'd have to type them up in an excel form and then you'd have to save it as a CSV and then you'd have to upload it to the web and God that was obnoxious.

MJ: I bet.

LY: But you did it. You did it because that's what the listener wanted. The listener wanted to know what you played at 12:37. You had to be responsive and responsible to them and you always let them know what the label was so they could get it. One of the things that, and maybe this is changing, but I still, and call me old school, I really want to play something that is available commercially, is available either online or retail or that my listener can download. So you share a single with me, you go this is the greatest thing since sliced bread and they say "yeah, it is." How's the listener gonna be able to get your music? Because that's who this is all about in the end. So, I think maybe, some independent musicians don't realize that you've really gotta have a strong platform for your downloads and the like.

MJ: Yeah, sure. Have you ever thought about doing a podcast?

LY: I don't know what I'd say in a podcast.

MJ: If this were a podcast we'd have a lot of listeners.

LY: Really?

MJ: Yeah! Because people know who you are and they'd tune in just for that.

LY: Yeah, you know, in a podcast because of rights, you cannot air copyrighted music. Well what would I talk about?

MJ: Right. Um, everything we've talked about. Talk about being a carney.

LY: You know, pardon?

MJ: Talk about being a carney.

LY: (laughing) No!

MJ: It would be rated R.

LY: No, uh-uh. No we will not discuss that. Uh-uh. Gosh. No! People have asked me that but I think if you're podcasting you really have to have a strong opinion, very strong opinion, about your topic and you have to have known your topic and researched your topic

really, really well. I love cooking, but I'm no Mark Bittman. You know what? I'm not. I'm not Ruth Reichl. You know? I don't have that. I can't talk about my cooking. It's not special, it's not unique enough. Mark Bitma? Yeah. Bam. Emeril? Bam. Talk about it. Your cooking is really, really good and somehow you got in on it early. You can't just tell a jazz story. You can but it's the music that really tells the story. So, if I were to tell some story about Jimmy McGriff, I'd really have to play "All About My Girl" by Jimmy McGriff to illustrate why he was such a wonderful and soulful organist and great musician, but because that's copyrighted I can't do that in a podcast. A podcast is just all about you and your ideas. I'm frankly not confident enough to do one.

MJ: Could you be talked into it?

LY: No, I really don't think so. Again, who wants to hear my stories about growing up in Pittsburgh? Because they're just, I think they're just the same as anybody else's stories. Now, I could write them down and maybe you might want to read them.

MJ: Do you think that...

LY: I like writing down. I like writing down. I like editing myself and coming up with the best word.

MJ: Do you think that people might have the same stories but that's why they want to listen? I'd love to hear about Pittsburgh, half my family's from Pittsburgh.

LY: I love Pittsburgh. I do.

MJ: It's a special place.

LY: My growing up experience in Pittsburgh was incredible. Maybe, but I think I would prefer to write.

MJ: Alright, well I'm gonna wait for that memoir. Well, I only have a few questions left. I know that there are lots of things that we're not talking about. We always leave the door open for a second interview. Is there a time allotted that, like an acceptable time to talk about

a piece you're going to play or just didn't play? Because yes, sometimes on student radio it goes on forever.

LY: And it shouldn't. I used to tell WEMU hosts: think about Charlie Parker and what Charlie Parker could say in 64 or 128 bars, and he could. Could you do it? Can you distill the essence of your solo down to 128 bars?

MJ: Yeah, that's a great way to think about it, your solo.

LY: It is, it's your solo, and you have to and what's important? And, you know, that was blank on drums, so and so on bass, so and so on piano, so and so on the tenor saxophone, on the alto saxophone, the trumpet player and the flute player all directed by, composed by, for the label of, and it's not the way, it's just, no. If Jimmy Heath was the soloist, Jimmy Heath who recently passed away, yes why is Jimmy Heath important and maybe JJ Johnson who echoed Jimmy Heath's solo, but you don't have to do everybody else. It's too long.

MJ: Why did you retire when you did?

LY: EMU offered a buyout.

MJ: Ah, okay.

LY: And I would have been an idiot not to take it. That's my standard line, and the other things and this is sad, this is really sad, the mom and dad were both in bad shape and EMU offered this buyout in 2017 and you had to make a decision by the early part of June whether or not you were going to take it and everybody said you should take it and I said you know what, if I take it, I can't be part of celebrating 40 years of jazz for WEMU at the Detroit Jazz Festival. I can't celebrate. I can't go up there. I can't be on stage. I'm nobody without WEMU. I can't be on stage, I can't be part of it. Molly was kind enough to go to bat for me and to say we'll pay you on an hourly basis and you can work through the end of the year and you can be part of the whole WEMU 50 years of jazz and 40 years of jazz at the Detroit Jazz Festival because that was all happening at the same

time. Great. This was going to work out because then I could help my sister take care of mom and dad. Well, mom died on the 17th of September that year, during the middle of a fund drive. A pledge drive. So I had to leave a pledge drive to go down and work with my sister on my mother's funeral and my mother's memorial and after that I came back and was gonna work out the end of my tenure and did a lot of driving down to Dayton to work with my sister on mom's and dad's things and my dad's situation. My dad was in really bad shape, so we had to get dad out of the two bedroom assisted living apartment and get dad into memory care. So we did. We did that Thanksgiving weekend 2017 and dad died the 7th of December 2017.

MJ: Oh, wow.

LY: Dad died without mom. Once we had taken dad out of the surroundings and he was surrounded by some things that still said mom. A china cabinet with those little china dolls in it and some of the other things. The paintings, the furniture, they were all mom's choices and she was very artistic. Once we took dad out of that and put dad in a little room where we had to because we couldn't afford to pay for the two bedroom apartment for the two of them and put dad into that little room, he just decided to die. So he did, and when the 16th of December that year I gave dad's eulogy, the 17th I drove back to Ypsi, the 18th was my last show at WEMU and the 18th was my final day.

MJ: How did that last show go?

LY: It was great.

MJ: Yeah?

LY: I just, I dedicated and I didn't go overboard about it, but I said, you know, talk a little bit about him as the eldest and he's my dad. My first boyfriend. I played him a couple of pieces that I knew he would like but I had pretty much in my mind, and then the final song, and Art heard this tune and he agreed with me, you ever heard it? Peggy Lee's "Is That All There Is?"

MJ: No, I can't think of it now.

LY: Listen to Peggy Lee's "Is That All There Is?".

MJ: Okay.

LY: You gotta listen to it. It's wonderful and that was the final song and Art, who came to the party for me that night, which was a total surprise to me, Art said for a last show, that is the tune I'd pick too.

MJ: Wow

LY: I'd pick that one as well. I don't wanna spoil it for you. I want you to hear it on your own.

MJ: I will.

LY: It's a really, it's a great approach to life.

MJ: Okay, I will listen to it.

LY: Mm-hmm

MJ: Wow, well this has been very special. I don't really, I don't have any more questions.

LY: Okay.

MJ: That was a great way to end it. That was really great. Yeah. I really enjoyed this, and I'm going to listen to that song. I'm gonna send you this transcription and if you think of anything else you want to talk about let me know because they don't let me out of here.

LY: They don't? Actually it's a very nice office.

MJ: Yes, it's just for interviews. I'm still a grad student. I'm a grad assistant with the archives so my time is disposable and I'll be here from 10AM-2AM sometimes.

LY: But see? You're committed to it.

MJ: I am. Absolutely.

LY: You love it. You love this kind of project.

MJ: This is what I've always wanted to do.

LY: Yeah

MJ: And I always wonder how it was done.

LY: You and the Smithsonian, you know?

MJ: I mean, lucky for me I got a boss like Alexis. I don't know if you know the Archivist Alexis Braun-Marks

LY: I have met Alexis once.

MJ: She is incredible. She will let you pursue it as long as you're passionate about it and you get results. It doesn't even matter what it is. It has to do with archiving, historical preservation, yeah. Pitch it and run with it.

LY: Well I think that especially, you know, that for the 70's and 80's and the end of the early 90's the involvement that WEMU had with the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival and the Depot Town Association which led into the Frog Island Music Festival and also those live events at the Depot Town Freighthouse. These were, I mean, these really helped put a culture of jazz and appreciation of Black music in Ypsilanti on the map and it's an appreciation of Black music that Ypsilanti really had. There's still an affection for many jazz players in Detroit for Ypsi because of that. Because they knew that they would be respected and treasured and appreciated when they played Ypsi. Might not be as understood when they played Ann Arbor.

MJ: Sure, yeah. Well, I actually would like to hear a little bit about those Freighthouse shows because, again, for somebody that wasn't going out then or maybe didn't even live in Ypsi then it's hard to imagine because now the Freighthouse, I mean I love the place, but I would want to see it used for things like that not just weddings. Well, I actually do want to ask you one more question. It's a big broad one. Is there something that you think is your greatest contribution to EMU or WEMU or....? What do you think your legacy is? Sorry to spring that one on you.

LY: I remember when I first joined the crew at WEMU. It was in this kind of skanky setting in King Hall with some rag tag student employees and I thought I don't know how long I'll be here and then I fell in love with Ypsi. There is a soul in Ypsilanti and its surroundings

that once it catches you, you just love it and I think one of my things that I'd like to be remembered for is to be an Ypsi booster and of course then EMU tangentially, but the community of Ypsilanti, it's plucky, it's creative, it's artistic, it takes chances, it really does care about human rights and people and I know I've been to City Council meetings. People scream about this and that but in the big picture I'd like to be remembered as a strong Ypsi booster.

MJ: Alright. Okay. Oh, you will be.

LY: Okay. Yeah.

MJ: Okay.

LY: Alright.

MJ: Well, that concludes it. Thank you so much I hope you had a good time.

LY: You're welcome. I did.

MJ: Okay.

LY: Yeah, and I could hear.

MJ: Okay.

LY: Tomorrow I get to go and have my first hearing test.