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## Don Menza and Sam Noto

*Saxophonist Don Menza was born in Buffalo, NY on April 22, 1936. He attended SUNY at Fredonia, New York but left in 1962 to join the Maynard Ferguson Big Band. After a short stint with Stan Kenton he worked in Germany for most of the mid-60's. Don joined the Buddy Rich Big Band in 1967 and became known for impressive solo on "Channel One Suite." He became an integral player and arranger for Louis Bellson's jazz orchestras and has returned to Europe numerous times in the '80's and '90's.*

*Sam Noto is also a native of Buffalo, born on April 17, 1930. He has played in the trumpet sections of the Stan Kenton, Count Basie and Louis Bellson Big Bands and led a Bop based quintet with saxophonist Joe Romano. Sam has spent a good deal of his career in Toronto and has recorded numerous records with Rob McConnell's Boss Brass. He can be heard on the Xanadu label and his sidemen include Blue Mitchell, Al Cohn and Dexter Gordon.*

*Don Menza and Sam Noto frequently perform together in Central New York jazz venues. They were interviewed by Monk Rowe at Hamilton College on January 28, 1997.*

MR: We are filming today for the Hamilton College Jazz Archive, and we don't often think of the area of Upstate New York as a hotbed of jazz, but a great deal of jazz musicians have come out of Upstate New York and we have two of the finest here today — Don Menza, saxophonist, and Sam Noto, trumpet. Welcome to Hamilton.

DM: Thank you.

SN: Thank you.

MR: You guys have shared some common experiences, you're both from Buffalo, is that right?

SN: Yeah.

MR: When you were growing up in Buffalo, what was their jazz scene that helped spawn your interest in this kind of music?

DM: Well, just for the archive, Sam is older than me, and by the time I was starting to get into music and starting to play, Sam was already on the scene, and I wasn't old enough to get into a lot of clubs, and he was just past the age limit so I used to hear him play like at the ... the first time I saw him really was at The Flamingo on Delaware Avenue, Delaware and Tupper — Chippewa. And I remember seeing him and Larry Covelli, also another great saxophonist from ... jazz saxophone player from Buffalo, New York. And yeah there was a jazz scene. And there were a lot of people around. In those days there were two different unions, there was a Black musician's union and a White musician's union, and unfortunately they merged, which became the demise of the Black musician's union.

42 But it was a place to go play. Sunday afternoon jazz sessions, I mean sessions where you  
43 could play and you used to have to go in and almost sign up backstage and get in line and  
44 wait to play. And everybody was very — I mean so far as I was concerned — everybody  
45 was very encouraging to help me play and learn how to play, and a lot of great names —  
46 the Hackney brothers that played with, they both played with Dizzy didn't they?

47 SN: Yeah.

48 DM: Elvin Shepard — I mean there were a lot of people there. Georgie Clark, saxophone  
49 player, and Otis Sutton.

50 MR: When you say that unfortunately the unions merged ...

51 SN: Well I think that, I'm in the executive board of the local now.

52 DM: No, we don't want to get political about this now. I mean I was joking about it.

53 MR: I'm interested in the scene between Black and White musicians at that time, and ...

54 SN: It was healthier back then.

55 DM: It was healthier then than it is now.

56 SN: Now the Blacks don't want to stay in to the union. They feel that they don't get enough.  
57 But the union doesn't get you work, it's just an organization that in case you're in trouble  
58 and nobody pays you ...

59 DM: It was a protective society and a collection agency. And it isn't like the AF of L or CIO or  
60 ... the musician's union was sort of a gathering of people that wanted to form some kind  
61 of common bond and be able to like have somebody protect them against club owners  
62 that weren't going to pay them, or minimum wage scale. If you go back and look at the  
63 beginning of it it's rather strange.

64 MR: But when you got called for a particular kind of gig at that time, was it a mixture of  
65 players?

66 SN: Oh yeah, oh sure. It was very healthy at the time in Buffalo. We all thought of course  
67 things aren't happening, but back in those days they really were happening. It was like  
68 Miles and all of these bands, Dizzy, they were all coming to Buffalo. There was a venue  
69 for them there.

70 DM: And more than one.

71 SN: Oh yeah. There was a lot of places that really had top-notch, world-class musicians you  
72 know. And it was healthier in town. There was a lot of local things happening you know,  
73 and much healthier than it is now, although it's picking up again in Buffalo. On the same  
74 street we mentioned, Chippewa, it's like a rejuvenation. All the college people have  
75 discovered that area, and they're all coming in and digging the music and hanging out  
76 and whatever they do you know. But it's just coming back. In fact Don and I are playing  
77 there Friday night at this club right on Chippewa. And it'll be mobbed. Of course they  
78 love Don in Buffalo. Me? I don't know.

79 MR: He does all right. We've heard a lot of different stories about how musicians actually  
80 learned the craft of jazz. Some of them that were born in the 20's mostly learned it on the  
81 road. Was this something that you guys — how did you learn your craft?  
82 SN: Well by doing it really. I mean you can go and learn all the tunes and the changes and all  
83 of that but unless you're out there doing it — you do sessions all over the place. Free.  
84 You play free, but you were learning. And under the right guidance and with a lot of  
85 great players, and they would help. And that's the way I learned, just by doing it. It  
86 probably was the same for you.  
87 DM: Absolutely. There were no schools. Academia still really hasn't accepted jazz as a quote  
88 art form, and they really don't know how to deal with teaching it. I mean there are so  
89 many, scores of different approaches to it. And some of them work, some of them don't. I  
90 find the shortcoming — or backtracking — when I learned to play it was learn from  
91 records, I had to listen and then I started to copy, I started to... people say well if you  
92 think he plays good you ought to listen to this other guy play, and it was always it was a  
93 79¢, 89¢, 99¢ for a ten inch 78 RPM and go out, wear it out and go out and buy another  
94 one until you got the solo down.  
95 SN: He's not as young as he may sound.  
96 MR: That's right. 78's.  
97 DM: Well, slightly younger than Sam. And not much. But in those days, three years was a lot.  
98 Or four or five years was a great deal. If you're 15 and somebody else is 20, that's a big  
99 span there.  
100 SN: It gets closer as you get older.  
101 MR: Right.  
102 DM: And by the time I had really started to get to the point where I felt I had some technical  
103 and musical prowess, Sam was already out on the road in Stan Kenton's band and by the  
104 time he came back I was in the Army and then I came back again and he was gone, and  
105 then he came back to Buffalo and that's when it all started.  
106 MR: But you had an interesting anecdote about your college experience and the practice  
107 room?  
108 DM: Oh, at Fredonia.  
109 MR: Yeah.  
110 DM: I went to, I never did graduate from Fredonia. I went there for three semesters, and two of  
111 which were separated by a short tour on the road, and then I went back to school, and  
112 while I was at school, I remember the signs on the practice room walls and doors — 'NO  
113 JAZZ PLAYING' and if they caught you, you were suspended.  
114 SN: A felony. Dixieland is a misdemeanor.  
115 MR: A major infraction.

116 DM: And it's strange. I wanted to go back to school, and I mean it was two weeks before final  
117 exams, and I got a call from Maynard Ferguson. I didn't even say "goodbye." The next  
118 night I played my first note at Birdland.

119 MR: No kidding.

120 DM: I mean I just packed up my 55 VW with a cloth sunroof and the idiot stick directionals on  
121 the side, jumped in the car and drove to New York.

122 MR: No question, right?

123 DM: There was no question in my mind. Well I was sort of misled. I didn't have enough  
124 money to go to one of the bigger universities. I didn't want to go to North Texas State,  
125 for some reason I didn't want to be that far from the east, from New York. I'm a New  
126 Yorker and I'm not particularly thrilled about the fact that I moved to California. It was  
127 very good to me but getting to New York and being in the thick of it — feeling all of  
128 those jazz players around you, there was so much history there man, I couldn't wait to get  
129 there. But it was a major infraction. And the jazz players were on the Dean's List. I mean  
130 the "Black List." So really, and I'm not trying to belittle them, they didn't understand  
131 what it was. They didn't understand who we were and the creative part of it. And when I  
132 wanted to go back to school, they turned me down. They felt I was going to be a bad  
133 influence on the kids there. A short eight or ten years ago, maybe ten years ago, I got an  
134 honorary, not really a degree but a special commendation from the Alumni Association.  
135 Dr. Jewett is the man — remember Jewett Hall? He invented the orthopedic pin. They  
136 gave him a special honorarium. He went to Fredonia. There was another woman who was  
137 on the State Supreme Court. And she got an honorarium, not an honorarium but an  
138 honorary certificate or whatever it is, they honored us, and me. And I was bewildered. I  
139 said I never graduated from Fredonia.

140 MR: "You wouldn't even let me back in and now..."

141 DM: And here comes, and when they called, I said "who is this?" And I thought it was some  
142 sort of a put on. But I went there and I very graciously received it, with a great deal of  
143 thanks, and everybody went up and gave ten, fifteen minute speeches, and I got up in  
144 front of them and I had a drink of water and I looked at them and I held it up and I said "I  
145 just want you to know how thrilled I am about this, and it's not for what I've already  
146 done. I promise you it's going to be for what I'm going to do."

147 MR: I think you're making good on that. Applause please.

148 DM: And I do. I get out there and I'm very energetic and I give a thousand and one percent to  
149 clinics and symposiums and master classes that I give. I mean there's not anything that I  
150 can't help them with. And so be it. And if I can help spread not just jazz music but music  
151 in general — I'm a classical music fanatic — I would give up every note I've ever played

152 or written, if I could just once sing the first act of *La Boheme* in the style of Uchi Berling  
153 or Pavarotti.

154 MR: Well you can't. I'm afraid you have too many good things on record. You can't give  
155 them up.

156 DM: I would. I'd give it all up if God came down right now and touched me on the shoulder  
157 and put that tenor voice up here where it belongs you know, in that nasal passage, in a  
158 minute it would be over. No question.

159 SN: He has influenced my wife because my wife used to listen to jazz records. Now I walk in  
160 the house and there's like Luciano Pavarotti on. He gave her the records. It's constant. I  
161 mean I love it you know, but it's constant and she used to be a jazz freak, you know,  
162 loved jazz.

163 MR: Well I guess, as Ellington said, "there's good music and bad music." Did he say that? He  
164 said a lot of things. It sounds like something he might have said.

165 DM: Yeah, I think he did say it, yeah.

166 MR: Sam, how did the thing with Kenton come about?

167 SN: That was another strange story. I mean a bus had an accident on the Pennsylvania  
168 Turnpike coming to Buffalo to perform. And when they got to Buffalo, Conti Condoli  
169 and a few other brass players had hit the seat in front you know, and they wiped their  
170 chops out. And Conti's wife was pregnant and she cracked her back, her vertebra, and so  
171 he had to leave the band. When they got to Buffalo they needed two trumpet players, so I  
172 got the call because I could play high notes. They called the union, you know, said "you  
173 got somebody that can play high?" "Well I mean he gets high, but I don't know..."  
174 Georgie Hobni, you know a Black trumpet player in town, we played on the concert that  
175 night, and Buddy Childers was the first trumpet player, and we had a little rehearsal in the  
176 basement of the theater and then Stan came up and asked "how'd he do?" He said "well  
177 he read the chart and everything's fine." So he says "you want to go on the road for a few  
178 weeks until Conti comes back?" I said "sure." So I went out and Conti decided not to  
179 come back and called Stan and said he was going to stay in California. So that's how I  
180 stayed on the band. It's a weird way to get on the band, but you know, that's the way it  
181 happened.

182 DM: Stranger things than that have happened.

183 MR: How does Kenton fit into the jazz history, as far as you guys are concerned?

184 SN: Well I mean I liked the man, he was a great man. I thought he treated people right. But I  
185 wouldn't say he was a jazz musician. He just liked anything that was progressive and  
186 interesting. And as you can tell from his music, there was some very interesting things  
187 played but they were nowhere near jazz, like "City of Jazz" and all of these things were  
188 really far out for the time you know. And as close as he got to jazz was in '55 the band

189 we had in 1955 where Bill Holman was writing. and then it started to lean towards the  
190 swing/ jazz thing and they had great soloists — Charlie Mariano, Lenny Niehaus, Frank  
191 Rosolino and Carl Fontana and there was a lot of good soloists on the band. And then the  
192 band leaned a little bit more toward jazz. But actually, Stan wasn't really a jazz kind of  
193 person or musician. He just wanted interesting music. And it leaned toward jazz.

194 DM: Yeah. He was an organizer and he presented and provided a vehicle for the players and  
195 the arrangers. He knew how to find the right arrangers for his music. The Bill Holmans,  
196 the Gerry Mulligans, the Bill Russos, Bill, I mean what's his name, Johnny...  
197 SN: Richards, the Cuban Fire Album, which is a collector's item.

198 DM: A lot of great writers.

199 MR: It didn't necessarily have to swing for Stan.

200 DM: You know what? And he did present, as a front man it was priceless. He was that  
201 Toscanini out in front of a jazz orchestra.

202 SN: He was a great front man.

203 DM: Yeah, I mean he'd walk, he was like six foot seven, he walked out on stage, and I mean  
204 but he gave you that look when he walked out on stage, like he had, I mean he'd spread  
205 his arms and he'd cover the front of the orchestra.

206 SN: I'll tell you a story about the swinging thing. This was in the '55 band, that was about the  
207 swingiest band that I ever was on with Kenton, I was with them for seven years. It was  
208 Al Porcino, and you know, really some swing players. We were in New York, we had a  
209 night off, so Al Porcino, who's got that voice, I don't know if you know who he is, but  
210 anyway, he said "Count Basie's band is down at Birdland. I think everyone should go  
211 down and listen to Count Basie." So we all did, but not because he said it, but we wanted  
212 to hear him anyway you know. And Basie's band was really hot at that time. And Stan  
213 Kenton was in the audience too. I saw him across the room and the whole thing in  
214 Birdland. So the next day we get on the bus now, we're leaving New York and we're  
215 going somewhere, I don't know, to the next gig, and Al says "Stan! I saw you at Birdland  
216 last night. How did you like Count Basie's band?" And Stan says "oh it was great," he  
217 says, "but all they do is swing." And the whole bus cracked up, man, the whole bus  
218 cracked up. But we know what he meant, that wasn't, that was just the way he thinks  
219 about it. He thinks more like in structures and you know...

220 MR: Orchestration.

221 SN: You know, yeah. But the way he said it.

222 DM: And it's funny, he used to put down some classical music and operas and everything, and  
223 yet his concept had to do with that, had to do with that staging, that kind of presentation.  
224 His jazz concept.

225 SN: I don't remember him putting that down...

226 DM: Oh, yeah.

227 SN: The only thing I remember him putting down was Country-Western.

228 DM: Oh no, he talked about Opera and all that, he hated it man. Yeah. And yet it had a lot to  
229 do with, his concept was very much based on that classical sort of structure. But he was a  
230 sweetheart. I know I worked with the band a short time and I mean a very short time, I  
231 had left Maynard's band to go with Stan Kenton, and the second night on the band I gave  
232 my notice. It didn't swing.

233 MR: It was the music, right?

234 DM: Yes. And after Maynard's band it was such a letdown for me, that I called Maynard, I  
235 tried to get my job back and Maynard was furious with me for leaving. And Stan was  
236 very sweet. He says "I understand perfectly." And I didn't tell him it ain't swinging, I  
237 said "this isn't what I wanted to do." And I told him I said "I have the greatest deal of  
238 respect for you," and we remained friends to the day he died.

239 MR: It's also interesting that he left, from what I read, he left instructions that he did not want  
240 a ghost band.

241 DM: He did not want a ghost band. And it's happening all over the world.

242 SN: Well they call them "tributes" though. He willed his whole library to North Texas State.  
243 So that's where all the music is. But there are copies all over the place now, just run it  
244 through the machine.

245 MR: Well his music was pretty popular with the college bands.

246 SN: Well sure.

247 DM: It was popular then but I mean his music was popular. It was a big time band in the late  
248 '40's, early '50's, it was huge.

249 SN: Well the band, when I joined it was an all-star band. It was Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims and all  
250 those people were on that band. And that was ... Conti, and then that was close to a  
251 swinging band also, because those were all pretty heavy jazz players. Frank Rosalinowas  
252 on the band.

253 MR: While we're talking about great arrangers, you guys have written a great deal of music  
254 yourself, and was it a self-taught thing, or did you ... from listening again and trying  
255 things out?

256 SN: Well he's into the writing now maybe more than I am. I was in Vegas in house bands,  
257 and I got a little bored with that so I started studying with one of the trumpet players,  
258 Wes Hensel, who was on the band, as far as arranging you know. And he gave me  
259 pointers and that, so I wrote some charts. But Don is really into the writing, and I don't  
260 write as much as I should really, anymore.

261 MR: You wrote some things for Rob McConnell, didn't you?

262 SN: No, I played on a couple. No I've never written. I've written a bunch of things that I've  
263 played in Buffalo with a local band, you know, we put a concert on. But I've never ...  
264 Louis Bellson played one of my charts in his big band, called "A Couple of Dozen,"  
265 which is based on a row you know.

266 MR: A tone row?

267 SN: A tone row, yeah.

268 DM: Not a Monk Rowe.

269 MR: Not a Monk Rowe. You don't want to base a tune on me. That was good.

270 SN: I forgot.. I made a pun and I didn't know it.

271 MR. Well, Don, I think that there's probably a significant number of saxophone players in this  
272 country who have a kind of a love-hate relationship with you.

273 DM: It's cool. As long as they ... it doesn't matter. You know the saxophone parts, it's  
274 nothing, everything that I've written I've played. It's all based on my small group  
275 concept, all my big band charts. Everything. It's a mood that I've experienced on the  
276 bandstand and I've translated it to the big band, you know, to be able to organize it in that  
277 sense. I started writing in Buffalo a long time ago. I was always very inquisitive. I wanted  
278 to know how does he get that sound, how does he make that, how does he do this. There  
279 were, the early arrangers, early on were Bill Holman, I loved that linear writing that he  
280 did; Oliver Nelson, Gil Evans, and I can't think of any arrangers or writers that haven't  
281 touched me one way or another, and I finally came up with some sort of a concept. The  
282 classical music thing really got to me because then I wanted to know how do I  
283 orchestrate, how do I get this sound, how do I get that kind of sound from doubling. I  
284 went to the scores, I learned string writing from all the operas, from all the classical  
285 writers. There is so much out there, and I have this insatiable appetite to try and do it all.

286 SN: He's a workaholic is what he is.

287 DM: Not really. I mean I do have my moments away from music. Sometimes I even abuse the  
288 fact that I should be, I mean that I'm taking a little time off. I'm into model railroads and  
289 I forget about my practicing my horn suddenly and my writing takes a back seat. But  
290 these last few months I've been real busy at it. I just finished doing about six things for  
291 Orange Coast College, there is some things coming up. And the writing thing I never  
292 really studied, except with the best writers. I tried to copy things that I heard on records.  
293 And it's getting easier and easier. Now when I hear something I recognize it. I can relate  
294 it to something I've seen on paper or something I did ... oh it's that but he added this so  
295 he did, and I never really went to school for arranging. There's a trap in the schools that  
296 teach this, especially with the kids with the computers. They are a slave to that. They  
297 don't try anything. They make the mistake, they hear it there, it doesn't work, they  
298 change it and it's gone. The computer remembers it, but they don't. It's a huge trap. And

299 a lot of the people that write with computers, it sounds that way. If they were going to  
300 pick up the saxophone or their flute or the trumpet or the piano and play it on the piano,  
301 they wouldn't write that. On the computer it's there, they do it very slowly, and then hand  
302 the part to a player and expect him to play it. And there's not a breath for like 16 bars.  
303 Where do you breathe?

304 MR: The computer doesn't need to breathe.

305 DM: I'm just going through this with a saxophone player who is very talented and a very  
306 talented writer, he's going to be incredible. And he came in with a shout chorus. He's got  
307 trumpets starting on a high B above the staff. There's written notes, D, E, F. And he  
308 wanted to use a classical term that's called motor rhythms, which Stravinsky used all the  
309 time. He'd get this one thing going, like [humms] from "Firebird," and underneath it,  
310 [humms]. And he's got these two different things happening [humms], and it's like a  
311 motor rhythm, and the machine starts. And not every wheel turns the same number of ...  
312 it's that effect that you get. Well he's got the trumpet player playing [humms]...

313 SN: Wiping the poor guy out.

314 DM: I says "when is he going to breathe?" You've got to write ... I says "you wouldn't write  
315 that if you were playing it on your flute or your piccolo or your tenor. You realize I have  
316 to take the horn out of my mouth and breathe?" That's the trap.

317 SN: I think the space in music is just as important as the notes. You know you get a person  
318 like, an individualist and an innovator like Miles Davis, I mean he played one note and  
319 the beat's going on, and he waited, and made you hear a bunch of other notes.

320 DM: You would lean forward waiting for the next — trying to guess where he was going to  
321 put it.

322 SN: Space is important then, you know?

323 MR: And you played with another master of that, with Count Basie, right?

324 SN: Yeah, well that's another story. You know when I first got on the band I thought I was  
325 sticking out like a sore thumb, because the band was in its groove and relaxed, and some  
326 of the sections played in different time areas than the other sections, until the ensemble  
327 came, and then it just took off. And at first I mean I was have a little problem, you know,  
328 playing with that much relaxation with intensity. It's like a relaxed intensity that you had  
329 to get, you know. Because it was after a week or so and I started to feel that thing, and it  
330 was quite a treat for me. I mean I played in one of the better Basie bands too.

331 MR: That was in the '60's?

332 SN: I was on two tours I made with Basie. '64 and '65 I think it was. Great man. I loved him,  
333 man, Basie. He never wasted any words, and just the played, just the way he was you  
334 know. If he liked you man he liked you. And he seemed to like me for some reason. We  
335 got along great. I thought he was a great musician too. He never got in the way. I used to

336 play solos on “April in Paris” and all of that stuff and he hit the chord just when you  
337 needed it, man, never overplayed.

338 MR: Did you feel like, I mean in listening to you play last night, it sounded to me like Dizzy  
339 Gillespie listened to you.

340 SN: I don’t know about that. Dizzy was a good friend of mine. Then when I joined Kenton’s  
341 band, Dizzy was on that tour, it was a big package tour, and Charlie Parker was also. So  
342 I got to hear these guys for three months, every night. So I was hanging around with  
343 Dizzy. And there’s a lot of Dizzy in me. He was one of my first influences. And then of  
344 course then Miles and Clifford and Fats Navarro was a big influence. But you know it’s  
345 nice for you to say but it doesn’t work that way.

346 MR: Well, in playing with Basie, did you have to alter your style some to fit that, or did it just  
347 seem to work?

348 SN: Not my style, it was just where the time was you know. Because we’d usually play up on  
349 the time, and that band played right on the time, sometimes a little back, so that was a  
350 little bit of an adjustment. But style, no, I played that Thad Jones chair, which was the  
351 modern kind of trumpet, and then Joe Newman played the other trumpet chair, which was  
352 more traditional. But Joe wasn’t on the band when I was, it was Albert Aarons, who was  
353 also a fine lyrical player, a beautiful player. I know Don knows him too. And it was great,  
354 I mean it was a great experience.

355 MR: And you both have been with Louie Bellson on and off — Don for quite a while, right?

356 DM: My stints were Stan Kenton — I mean in the beginning it was Al Boletto with a band out  
357 of New Orleans, and then Maynard Ferguson, Stan Kenton, and then the European thing  
358 with the Max Truffer Big Band in Munich; and then coming back I went with Buddy  
359 Rich and then Louie Bellson and of course Henry Mancini, I worked with Henry for like  
360 almost 30 years. But I have to say in all the band leaders that I worked for, Buddy was  
361 the one. It’s a great shame I didn’t get to work with Basie. I talked with Basie a couple of  
362 times. He heard me play with Louie and he said “I’d like you to play with the band  
363 sometime,” and my heart started beating. I would have loved to have gone on that band  
364 and played with that band. And it’s after the fact now. I don’t want to do it with the ghost  
365 band, I wouldn’t consider it. But to have done it when Basie was there, and been around  
366 him, and been able to like have hands on with all the history, yeah, that would have been  
367 a thrill. Because my likes lean towards that kind of big band, and that kind of swing, that  
368 kind of energy. I loved it. But getting back to it evolving, because like this has to be  
369 documented, Buddy Rich was the only real band leader I ever worked for. He told you  
370 the truth, mediocrity did not exist in his vocabulary. He was very hard on people and he  
371 expected them to give as much as he did in the band. But if something went wrong with  
372 the band, I mean if something happened, if there was any kind of scene, he pushed

373 everybody out of the way and he'd say "you deal with me, this is my band." And some of  
374 the leaders, and they were all very good, they'd back up and "it's your problem, you deal  
375 with it, you got it." Buddy was incredible. He knew exactly what he wanted out of a piece  
376 of music, and he'd sit out front, he didn't read — he had a lot of insecurities and he never  
377 gave you that impression by how he played. He had a lot of insecurities. He didn't read  
378 any music. He didn't know a lot about music, except he knew what was good and he  
379 knew what he liked. Nothing more, nothing less. And if you stood up to play and you  
380 stepped on it, you can be sure you'd never stand up and play again.

381 SN: He was a hard man.

382 MR: Well it's good to hear — I mean you phrase it in a positive sense, that he was a...

383 DM: Well the people that put him down are the people that were mediocre and that couldn't  
384 play. And they hated him. I think it's very typical. I mean you talk to Sweets Edison  
385 about Buddy and he says "oh man," he gets like rekindled. You'd get ready to play, and  
386 Buddy'd be there and he'd be propelling you along, making it easier for you to play.

387 SN: He had upstate people too. Joe Romano, Pat Labarbera, Sal...

388 DM: Sal Nistico played for him.

389 SN: He loved those upstate players because there was a certain energy coming from the  
390 upstate people you know, right from Buffalo all the way down to New York.

391 DM: And you know of course the great line from Buddy Rich when he was getting ready to go  
392 in for brain surgery. The anesthesiologist asked him, they were getting ready to wheel  
393 him in and they said "Mr. Rich, is there anything you know of that you're allergic to?"  
394 "Yeah," he says, "Country music." On his death bed, he still had that kind of wry sense  
395 of humor. I have a video somebody just sent me, of Buddy Rich singing and dancing and  
396 playing. I mean it's an hour long video of him on "The Ed Sullivan Show," on this show,  
397 on that show, and he does a song and dance routine on "The Steve Allen Show," and you  
398 should see him tap dance. I mean it's nothing short of Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire. And  
399 he could improvise. He could get out there and do the whole thing.

400 SN: I saw him in Batavia, New York, a long time ago.

401 DM: He as an incredible talent.

402 SN: At the Mancuso Theater. And he was dancing then.

403 DM: It comes out of the Vaudeville training.

404 SN: I may have been about 15, 16, I went down there with my older brother.

405 MR: Well what a great thing for a drummer to start with.

406 DM: And he could sing too. And on the tape, it's like a song and dance and play routine. He  
407 comes out, he sings the song, he does a little tap dancing with a big arrangement that they  
408 had done for the "Steve Allen Show," and then he sings some more, and then he suddenly  
409 winds up on drums and plays this tremendous shout chorus with the band and then this

410 tremendous solo, and then he stands up and he says “that was nothing,” and for him it  
411 was.

412 MR: Well you know I have to ask you about the recording you made of course. Even in “The  
413 Grove Dictionary of Jazz” it mentions the “Channel One Suite.” And it seems like there’s  
414 been certain times in jazz history where people have recorded things, you know Illinois  
415 Jacquet with I guess “Flyin’ Home” and Coleman Hawkins “Body and Soul,”  
416 DM: And Stan Getz “Early On.”

417 MR: And this particular recording, I’m interested in. Was that the only live recording done of  
418 that particular chart first of all?

419 DM: No. There is a new recording that’s coming out on CD, it was live at Ronny Scott’s, it  
420 was Buddy Rich’s 50th birthday, and they’re re-issuing that. There’s also a beautiful  
421 concert hall where Benjamin Britton used to go and give his premier performances north  
422 of London called Maltings — it’s like a swamp are, a bog...

423 MR: A marsh?

424 DM: Bogs and marshes, that’s what they are. But Maltings is a beautiful old concert hall, very,  
425 very experimental and a lot of flat surfaces reflecting and anyway, we did a television  
426 show there and it was recorded there. There is a studio recording of that same album of  
427 the “Mercy, Mercy” album that got shelved because we were in Buffalo, New York on  
428 my birthday in 1967 or 1968, and I remember Buddy telling me as I was playing more  
429 and more as the cadenzas got longer, he says “stretch out.” So in Buffalo, on my birthday,  
430 I really took it out and did a five minute cadenza in one breath, you know circular  
431 breathing and everything, and he went out front and dropped a cigarette and he said  
432 “Oops, it’s one of those Don Menza roll your own.” This is at Kleinhan’s Music Hall,  
433 and I’m saying, oh no. And I was going to be the brunt of his jokes all night. He said  
434 “why didn’t you play like that on the record?” And I said “well you told me to play  
435 shorter.” I said “but now that the band sounds so good, why don’t you do the record  
436 live?” He said “get your own band, kid,” you know, in front of 3,000 people. Well the  
437 wind up was two days later he gets on the bus and he says “I want everyone to get your  
438 act together,” he says “if we’re playing good now I want it even better. We’re going to do  
439 the album live at Cesar’s Palace in July.”

440 SN: I was backstage when you guys did that. I was working across the street.

441 DM: And we did it, and that’s the gospel truth, that’s exactly how that ... and Liberty or Pacific  
442 Jazz still has those tapes, the studio recordings of those tapes.

443 MR: Well you’ve probably had people tell you this before, but you know my roommate and I  
444 just used to sit and listen to that piece over and over. And I was one of the unfortunate  
445 people that, of course our college band got the arrangement, and I had the part. So no

446 matter what you did, you could play really well, but everybody's "well it sure wasn't  
447 much like what Don played."

448 DM: You know I played it every night and I had a bag of tricks, and the bag kept getting  
449 bigger and bigger, and I had all the space in the world. He never told me, hey cut it short.  
450 Never once said that, no matter how long or how absurd or bizarre I got with what I  
451 played, he said "you got it, that's you..." And people said you have to see him on the  
452 drums in back of you — he's got his foot up on the bass drum and he's listening and  
453 looking at me, laughing you know, and like sometimes he'd egg me on — "yeah, that's it,  
454 play, yeah," he'd be screaming at me you know. And it was great. He gave me all the  
455 space in the world, he never once handcuffed me. I'll tell you one night Joe Romano and  
456 I partied all day in New York. My daughter had just been born, this was October of '68.  
457 And we were working at The Riverboat. And Joe Romano and I walked in and I had a  
458 box of Havana cigars and we had been drinking all day. And we walked in and we did  
459 look a bit disheveled, you know, and I'm trying not to look at him. And at The Riverboat  
460 they had buttons on the floor right where I sat, and I had to press the button to turn the  
461 lights on and there was another button to step on to open the curtain. Well I could see him  
462 looking at Joe and Joe has this classic look about when he's been partying too much, his  
463 hair down in front of his face. I didn't have that luxury you know. And Joe is sitting there  
464 and he's like warming up, and Buddy goes over and pulls his locks from his eyes and he  
465 says "uh huh," and then he looks down at me and I'm fooling with my reed and I'm  
466 trying not to look at him, and of course with me my eyes are bright red and I'm trying not  
467 to look at him and he says "uh huh," and he says "okay," he says "Willowcrest," which is  
468 a tenor-alto feature. And he used to play it fast [humms] in three [humms]. And he'd start  
469 playing and he'd scream "Willowcrest" he says "Menza, get the lights, get the curtains."  
470 Well I reach over and press this thing and all the lights go out, I pressed the wrong  
471 button. And then he says "the lights, the lights!" And the lights are blinking on and off  
472 and I can't get the curtain thing to work, and finally I stand up and I'm trying to find the  
473 button, and I'm looking at him and I'm like this, and I press the button, the lights go on,  
474 the curtains open, and I'm out in front of the band looking like this, and he cut the band  
475 off and he says "this isn't your band." He comes out, closes the curtain, and he got on my  
476 case and Joe's case. He says "if you guys ever come on my bandstand like this again..."  
477 and then he started laughing. He says "what have you been doing all day?" And the  
478 people are waiting for the concert. I said "my daughter was born last night." He says "oh,  
479 congratulations," he says "you didn't bring me anything?" I says "yeah, I got you a cigar,  
480 I got a bottle of wine, I got a bottle of Cognac." He says give me these things. He took  
481 the cigar and the bottle of Cognac and the curtain opens and he starts talking to the  
482 people about my daughter.

483 SN: He was nuts man. Buddy was a natural guy. He did what he thought at that minute you  
484 know?

485 DM: And that night is the night where my father-in-law and all my relatives from Long Island  
486 were in to The Riverboat to hear us play, and we went up to the bar and they wouldn't let  
487 us stand at the bar. They says "uh huh, this isn't for the band, you guys go down." I says  
488 "don't move." I says "hey Buddy, they won't let us — my family's up there." He says  
489 "who?" And he's in the dressing room, slippers, this was after the first set, with a  
490 bathrobe, and he had his "toupe" off, and he says "who?" He walks straight through the  
491 club, up a big circular staircase that looked like "Gone With the Wind," he says "where?"  
492 I says "that guy over there." "If you ever mess with my band again," he says "we're out  
493 of here." He says "guys, the drinks are on me."

494 MR: Oh, man that's a great story.

495 DM: Buddy was incredible. Yeah. You hear a lot of bad stories, a lot of people don't like him.  
496 A lot of people, oh, hey, he was too arrogant and everything. He was a pussycat. He  
497 really was. And I'll tell you he is sorely missed. That's the kind of drummer that helps, he  
498 knows about playing the time, he knows about when to get exciting, you know maybe not  
499 my favorite way of playing, but I never heard anybody play any better.

500 SN: There's really a little bit of a negative story on that thing, it's a joke, but this guy calls  
501 after Buddy had passed he called Buddy's number and gets his wife or somebody, his  
502 daughter, answers the phone. And he says "is Buddy Rich there please?" Big lull you  
503 know. "Well Buddy passed on." He says "oh, okay, I just wanted to make sure."

504 DM: I heard the same thing about Benny Goodman too.

505 SN: Well sure, they had a whole hour program, Benny Goodman.

506 MR: Right. We've had some stories, but you know most musicians are fairly protective of one  
507 another.

508 SN: Oh, yeah, most of the time.

509 MR: I really enjoyed your perspective on him because...

510 DM: It's different from what you ... I mean it's unreal. When he was in the hospital I  
511 remember going to see him. I was on my way to Europe and Chuck Findley and I and Joe  
512 Romano to see him. We had a ride to the airport so we stopped at UCLA and this was just  
513 after his operation, and his left arm was gone, his left arm was totally paralyzed. We  
514 never saw him again. He had died while we were in Europe and his left arm was  
515 paralyzed. And he'd be laying there. And every time he'd yawn, his arm would raise.  
516 There was something in the nerve system and his arm would go up and then fall. And  
517 while we were there Jake Hanna came in. And Jake went over and gave him a hug and  
518 Buddy started crying, and he was a very humble man, really. And he said "oh, Buddy,  
519 you're going to be all right, you play more with one hand." And he says "no, Jake, look at

520 this,” and he picked up his hand and dropped it, and Jake in his quick sense of ... his  
521 sharp sense of humor looked at Buddy and he says “now you know how we feel when  
522 you play.”

523 MR: That’s great. Sam, when you played in Vegas, that was a pretty happening town for  
524 music, live music.

525 SN: You mean when I was living there, I lived there for seven years, and I just played in  
526 house bands and that you know. I wasn’t too happy there, it was just a one dimension  
527 town, show business.

528 MR: Yeah, I mean there’s things that musicians do throughout their career that ...

529 DM: You make compromises.

530 SN: You have to.

531 DM: You do what you have to do.

532 SN: I worked days, too. I drove cabs and worked in a car battery factory and the whole thing.  
533 It’s just whatever comes up. I mean I’m a family man, I come from a very strong type  
534 family so that’s the way I felt. I mean if I couldn’t do it playing the trumpet I had to do  
535 something to keep some bread coming in you know. So I mean I’ve done a lot of things.  
536 And that’s why I decided to move to Vegas. I was making \$82.50 a week in a car battery  
537 factory, and that’s 5-1/2 days a week. So I figured well, you know, I could make more  
538 money by blowing the trumpet, even if it’s not the way I want to blow it. So I went to  
539 Vegas and got into house bands and making five hundred a week and everybody was  
540 happy except me. But we played though, we used to play in people’s houses after the gig.  
541 You know Roy Shane, he had a big...

542 DM: I used to go up and see him, we used to go up and see him, we used to go and hang out.

543 SN: He had a big studio in his garage. He’d turn the tape on and we’d play all night. He must  
544 have tapes that ...

545 DM: My wife — it’s interesting, this was one of the first times I could really show her what  
546 was happening. She wanted to come with me and we drove up to Vegas and we went to  
547 see Sam, we saw a couple of different shows and everything, and I said “you’re going to  
548 come up and you’re going to hang with us for three days, you’re going to see what we  
549 do.” Because anytime, you know, four o’clock in the morning, six o’clock sunrise, you’re  
550 walking in after leaving at like six o’clock the night before. “Where do you go? What do  
551 you do?”

552 SN: They think it’s another woman.

553 DM: I says “you’re going to hang with us, you’re going to see.” Well after a day and a half she  
554 says “drop me off at the hotel. Do what you want.” She couldn’t believe it, the life of  
555 hanging out and playing. In those moments, more great choruses were lost forever, had  
556 disappeared into air, at sessions at three o’clock in the morning in Harlem and at the

557 jazzkellers in Germany or little roadside cafes where somebody felt like playing and took  
558 out the horn and went up and played with the rhythm section you know, on a Sunday  
559 afternoon. There used to be places in Buffalo where, I mean all over the world there were  
560 places where you could go and play and you could practice. Now you'd practice, but  
561 you'd go out and show your wares.

562 SN: Couldn't buy any groceries though.

563 DM: And it was for the love of it. We learned to play for the love of it, not because we thought  
564 we were going to make a living on it.

565 MR: You owned a club too, didn't you?

566 SN: Yeah, I had two actually. The first one was in the mid-60's it was a coffee house. I  
567 couldn't get a booze license. That lasted about a year and it was great. People, we'd stay  
568 open until six in the morning, after the bars closed, they'd all line up and have steak and  
569 eggs at my place and hear music all night. Joe Romano and I had a group there, like for a  
570 whole year. But then the last venture was about '82, and I had the whole ball of wax then,  
571 the bar and the booze and the whole thing. But it was in a bad area, it was between the  
572 Black and White line there and the Whites were afraid to come and the Blacks wouldn't  
573 come because it was a White owner. So that place went down fast, real fast. That was all  
574 my money, too.

575 MR: It was called The Renaissance?

576 SN: Yeah. They were both called Renaissance. The first one was The Renaissance and the  
577 other one was The Renaissance too. I had some good players, I had Chet Baker there and  
578 Al Cohn and David Schnitter come in and played with Pepper Adams. I had some good  
579 people there but nobody would come to hear them. They did come to hear Chet and they  
580 did come to hear Don, they just regarded whatever area it was from you know. So Chet  
581 Baker was there for three days and it was mobbed every night. I charged seven dollars at  
582 the door and people were complaining, you know? "Seven dollars, Sam!" I said "hey  
583 man, how am I going to pay this guy?" The drinks were a buck seventy-five. I mean  
584 drinks though.

585 MR: Real drinks.

586 SN: Yeah.

587 MR: Owning a club I think is a tough business.

588 DM: It's a hard row to go. People don't have any idea. The organization of it alone, just  
589 booking somebody for one night a week, 52 weeks a year, is a full time job. Incredible.

590 SN: I go both ends of the stick on that one. That's why I feel for a guy like at Tiny's you  
591 know, and any club owner. I know what it takes to pay the musicians and still try to come  
592 out with your head above water you know?

593 MR: It's interesting to think I guess in the '40's and when this kind of music was the popular  
594 music, that with all the bands touring and so forth, that it certainly has changed.

595 SN: Well there's still a big audience of this kind of music but everybody's a little afraid to  
596 come out anymore. You know like they think the cops are going to be there busting them  
597 if they have a drink and that kind of thing. And they stay home, they play their records.

598 DM: Life has changed. I mean it used to be where the urban situation was centrally located. It  
599 was easy. There were a lot of people there, there was a certain amount of security, you  
600 didn't have to worry about being bowled over by a bunch of thugs or by some gang  
601 members. I mean there was still problems but in any large city that's going to happen.  
602 But there seemed to be a certain amount of safety or you felt secure going downtown. A  
603 lot of bright lights, everything was there. The theaters, the restaurants, the jazz clubs, the  
604 little bars. You seemed to know everybody. They've done away with that. If you want to  
605 go somewhere to hear music you have to drive clear across town to some dark little  
606 shopping plaza that's closed except for this one thing, and park like a quarter of a mile  
607 away...

608 SN: Or else you go to a concert hall. I think some of the things that ruined the whole club  
609 scene were the concert halls and the big money that these bands demanded.

610 DM: It's a big business.

611 SN: Thousands and thousands of dollars you know.

612 DM: Not to mention what they're presenting as jazz in the concert halls.

613 MR: Well it's interesting because I've often wondered when even with guys like yourself,  
614 when you were learning jazz, did you think of it as an art form? Did you think of it as  
615 high art?

616 DM: Absolutely.

617 MR: You did.

618 DM: Yes. It was a creative art form. And I don't remember using those exact .... but there was  
619 a mystique about it and any time I got ready to ask a musician who I thought was  
620 accomplished at all, maybe not a jazz player, but when I asked him about the jazz players  
621 and how do you learn to do that, they didn't know. He says "oh he just makes that up."

622 MR: Plays anything he wants.

623 DM: Yeah. Anything he wants. A lot of wrong notes. He plays out of tune and that. And I  
624 didn't hear that, what I felt was the spontaneity, the inventiveness of it and it was always  
625 exciting to hear three saxophones playing on the same horn, same mouthpiece, and they  
626 all sounded different. It just didn't sound like twenty violin players sounding the same.  
627 And that isn't quite true either, you know.

628 SN: With me, I never thought of it as an art form or that, I just heard it and I said well this is  
629 what I want to do. And I thought if I got good enough at this, you know, I could possibly

630 make a living doing it, which was a big mistake you know. Even like the Charlie Parkers  
631 couldn't make a living, who was, to me, one of the best or the best jazz player around  
632 ever. But I'll tell you there was some vital — something vital about it. It tells the whole  
633 story about life and I mean I just fell in love with it. And before that, I used to listen to  
634 Harry James as a great player and everything, but when the Bebop thing came out, it  
635 changed my whole life you know? And I keep telling all these guys, man, I could have  
636 been another Harry James.

637 MR: The timing was a little off then.

638 DM: I think the thing about what Sam says, we agree on it a thousand percent. I think it was  
639 the unpredictability of the jazz players. I mean you could go there and you never knew  
640 what was going to happen. And this is what makes for — puts the vitality in the music.

641 SN: I play in Toronto a lot you know, I have a group up there, and all college kids come to  
642 hear us now, and they're really into it. The more we get into the music, the more they like  
643 it. I mean it's really intriguing — improvisation is intriguing in every aspect of the word  
644 in every business. So when something happens like that man, it's great, you know, the  
645 spontaneity of it and a quick, good idea, no matter what you're doing, no matter what end  
646 of the business or spectrum.

647 DM: And it's funny, the whole world looks at jazz players and jazz music as a vital art form,  
648 as a very important art form of the last fifty or hundred years — not here. Now they're  
649 just starting, sort of like coming around to it but not here. If Woody Herman had gone  
650 through his number like he did when he was dying and when the IRS was ready to wheel  
651 his bed out in the street and take his house from him, anywhere else in the world he's a  
652 hero, he would have been a national hero. But not here. It's rather sad.

653 SN: I think that somebody bailed him out. I hate to mention his name because I can't stand  
654 him.

655 DM: Yeah, it's okay.

656 SN: Frank Sinatra bailed him out a little bit, helped him out you know.

657 DM: Yeah he did.

658 SN: I think he let everybody know it too.

659 DM: Not one of my favorites.

660 MR: Well I've always felt that sometimes we look on music that comes from somewhere else  
661 as being more worthwhile, having the exotic end of it, and something that's home grown  
662 we sometimes take advantage of it. But I also think maybe when dancing, for whatever  
663 reason became separated from the music that that changed it somewhat. And sometimes it  
664 seems kind of odd to be listening ...

665 DM: They used to dance to jazz.

666 MR: Right.

667 DM: And like to the Bebop. Even the Bebop era, they had a special dance that they did. I mean  
668 not just a special dance, but it was a concept, and they improvised out there.

669 SN: In the late '40's in Buffalo, there was a place on the east side called Amity Hall and there  
670 was a big poster out front, "Charlie Parker Quintet." And it was a dance hall. And it was  
671 Charlie Parker, Kenny Dorham, and it was a great band. And they were playing, and  
672 people were dancing, I mean it was a dance. We were standing in the corner listening,  
673 people were listening, people were dancing. And I thought that was pretty healthy, at the  
674 time, you know I'm not a dancer you know so I don't know exactly what people get out  
675 of dancing, they must get something out of it. But I thought it was healthy because no  
676 matter what tempo, they tried to dance. And Bird played some fast tempos you know, and  
677 Dorham blowing them away man, beautiful.

678 MR: Well it does seem kind of odd sometimes to be listening to say the Count Basie Orchestra  
679 in the concert hall, and they're just swinging and swinging. People almost should be  
680 dancing to this music.

681 DM: They did.

682 MR: Yeah, but now, it's not presented in that fashion. I don't know if it's right or wrong.

683 SN: I don't know either.

684 DM: In concert halls very often you get so far away from the music that you lose that  
685 communication, that line of communication.

686 SN: I think you also get the musician who is trying to be on his best behavior, I think he loses  
687 something in that performance because he wants to be perfect...

688 DM: He's under a microscope, under a magnifying glass.

689 SN: Everybody's relaxing you know, and this guy may step out and do something really good,  
690 above his head for a minute, and then you'll work off of that and learn something, see?  
691 But I think it gets more contrived as it's presented in a concert way. But classical music is  
692 all on the paper. You know, save maybe a violinist doing a thing, you know, like a  
693 cadenza or whatever. But it's there. You do that. And the beauty of that is to do that  
694 properly. But jazz is different. You do... when it comes naturally and spontaneously is the  
695 best part. But sometimes in a concert hall you may lose some of that.

696 DM: Interesting concept. There's a whole group of jazz players and a school of jazz players  
697 who believe: find a good solo and stay with it. And they play it the same way, they play  
698 the record version every night. Then there are the players who don't, who play and every  
699 time they play they go looking for new things. And everybody has their thumbprint, they  
700 repeat little nuances that they do. But I would tend to lean toward that. A variation on the  
701 same theme. And where does the creativity end? I mean when you play the one solo and  
702 then you do it every time that way, then it's not creative anymore.

703 MR: Well I got a kick out of last night when you guys were playing and you did “All the  
704 Things You Are,” which I’m almost always going to hear at a certain tempo, you know,  
705 most people are going to play it at a fairly uptempo, and you guys ...

706 DM: You never know what’s going to happen with he and I.

707 MR: ...were like way, way back with the tempo.

708 DM: You never know what we’re going to play.

709 MR: And it allows you to play, forces you to play a little different, and then you did the next  
710 tune, I can’t remember the tune, which is usually a ballad, and you did it up. I said what a  
711 great way to prod yourself into ...

712 SN: Well I think it’s interesting for the listener too, see now the reason you’re saying that, like  
713 it did, it rang something in your brain, right?

714 DM: Pushed a button. That’s what the music is supposed to do. It’s not supposed to be just one  
715 way all the time. That’s what he’s talking about that same solo thing. I mean I don’t  
716 know how anybody can do that. I don’t remember what I played the last time anyway.  
717 What’s the point. Even with great classical players. I’ve heard Pavarotti say, “I’m an  
718 interpretive artist.” He’s taken this and I think that’s what put him over the edge as far as  
719 popularity is that he just doesn’t go out there and sing it like all the other great tenors that  
720 have come before him. There’s something just a little bit different about him. James  
721 Galway is that way. He considers himself an interpretive artist. He plays the same old  
722 Mozart which I hold with a great deal of reverence, he plays the same Mozart concertos  
723 that everybody else plays, but here comes this man playing it and he made it come alive.  
724 Again there’s a vitality in it. There’s an urgency in the music that I’ve heard a million  
725 times. It’s very interesting to hear people do that, take that printed page and why does it  
726 sound so much better than the guy who played it last time, who played it perfect? It’s that  
727 little edge, that little bit of interpretation where you take things and here comes my  
728 personality.

729 MR: Well this has really been fascinating. You guys have given us some great stories. I didn’t  
730 get to ask you about your L.A. days too much, but you had...

731 DM: L.A. is what it is, la la.

732 MR: ...you had a lot of studio work.

733 DM: Oh, yeah. And I have to say one of the really great thrills of my life was working with  
734 Henry Mancini, and I sorely miss him. And he was exactly like his music. He made a big  
735 influence, a huge influence on me, like so far as my writing, arranging, seeing him in  
736 front of an orchestra. The great, great story from Mancini is when Pavarotti did his  
737 movie, I asked Hank, I said, and on his birth certificate it says Enrico, his real name was  
738 Enrico. I said “Hank,” I said “you going to do the movie?” He said “oh, no, they’re going  
739 to get a classical,” you know, well John Williams did it, he wrote the songs for the movie.

740 Three years later, we're celebrating, my wife and I are celebrating our twenty-fifth  
741 anniversary and we're in San Francisco. We check into the hotel and here's this little  
742 flowers and champagne and the whole thing. And Hank calls me and he said "you going  
743 to come with me to rehearsal?" I said "well Rose is with me." He says "I know, bring  
744 her." He said "I've got to talk to you." I said "you want to talk to me?" I wonder what  
745 for? He calls me when he wants to talk to me. We get in the limo and he pops a ... hands  
746 me a cigar, happy anniversary, we're drinking and Rose loved him, he was great. And he  
747 says "I just got a call from New York, they want me to write Pavarotti's next album." I  
748 said "I told you." Well I tried to find out where they were going to do it, and I wanted to  
749 go, I wanted to be there, I wanted to be part of it, to witness it. And they wound up doing  
750 it in Geneva, Switzerland because he was performing and he was singing Bolo Mosczera.  
751 [phone ringing] It's not for me is it?

752 MR: You're late for a gig. We hope not.

753 DM: Get me on it.

754 SN: We supposed to be somewhere?

755 DM: Anyway, the windup was he calls me as soon as he came back from the recording  
756 sessions and he says, or Rose says "Don, it's Hank." I said "Hank who?" She says "Hank  
757 who?" She says "the boss." And I got on the phone I says "hey, how you doing, man?"  
758 He says "thank God I grew up in an Italian house." I said "why?" He says "I did all the  
759 right things with the music." He said "it was like I knew all of this all my life was coming  
760 to this."

761 MR: His heritage came out.

762 DM: Oh, absolutely. And he understood it perfect. It was incredible.

763 SN: He must have listened to Guissippe Verdi now and then.

764 DM: He and Pete Ruggolo are great friends who wrote for, one of the arrangers who wrote for  
765 Stan Kenton in the early years, Pete Ruggolo, David Rose and there's somebody else and  
766 Mancini. They were all in Hawaii with their wives, like vacationing, in the early years.  
767 And Hank went into a fortune teller, I mean just off the street, the four of them.  
768 Everybody else went first and then Hank. And she says "I see a great deal of success in  
769 your life," she says, "and in your former life your name was Green."

770 SN: Which is Verdi, you know, which is Italian for Green. So we call him Joe Green.

771 DM: Two weeks later, Hank was, and Hank told me this story, two weeks later he was in Los  
772 Angeles at Universal City and he was a ghost writer, and he was getting like B movies  
773 like "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" and all of that. And Blake was walking by  
774 him and he says "Hank" he says, "I got a new series starting," he said "I'm going to call  
775 you next week." He called him next week — "Mr. Lucky." And the rest is history.

776 MR: Fascinating.

777 DM: He said “I don’t believe in any of that stuff.”  
778 SN: Well Monk, how are you putting up with us this long, man?  
779 MR: I’m just soaking it in. I love the stories.  
780 DM: And Hank, we’d get on an elevator and Hank was beautiful, we’d get on an elevator and  
781 you’d year [sings “Moon River”] and you know and I’d try not to say anything, and  
782 there’s a bunch of people around us and we’re all standing there and nobody knows who  
783 Mancini is, and you know we’re all standing there and I sort of like chuckle, and I look at  
784 him, and he’d look over at me out the top of his glasses and he’d say “another beach  
785 house.” He was precious man.  
786 MR: Well, on behalf of Hamilton College, I want to thank you gentlemen for sharing your  
787 exploits and your insight into the music, so I hope you have a good trip to Europe, and  
788 you’re back to Toronto sometime soon?  
789 SN: Yeah, I’ll be up there, well we’re playing there Thursday, but I’m going up in May again  
790 playing up there for four or five days, whatever.  
791 MR: Well thanks so much.  
792 DM: Thank you, my pleasure.  
793 SN: Thank you for having us.  
794 MR: Okay.