

**Mill Valley Oral History Program**  
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**BOB GREENWOOD**

**An Oral History Interview  
Conducted by Debra Schwartz in 2016**

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In this oral history, longtime director of the Tamalpais High School music program Bob Greenwood recounts a life devoted to music and music education within the context of some of the major historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and against the backdrop of a changing Mill Valley. Born in 1928 in Charles City, Iowa, Bob moved out to California in 1943 when his father got a job working in the Bechtel shipyards, settling originally in Marin City. Bob describes how he started playing music while a student at Tam — beginning with the double bass — and joined the local musicians union at the age of 16, gigging around the Bay Area with dance bands. After high school, he continued his musical education at San Francisco State University alongside GIs who had come home from WWII. Bob recounts getting his second teaching job after college back at Tam High, but then in his first year being drafted into the Army and spending 21 months in Korea. After completing his military service, he resumed his teaching position at Tam, where he would exercise a powerful influence on many young musicians, such as Bill Champlin and Rob Moitoza, who would go on to pursue successful musical careers. In this oral history, Bob speaks poignantly about his career teaching music at Tam High, his marriage to his wife Evelyn, and about what music means to him.

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## Oral History of Bob Greenwood

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**Oral History of Bob Greenwood**  
**January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Please note: This transcript has been reviewed by Bob Greenwood, who made minor corrections and clarifications.**

**0:00:02 Debra Schwartz:** Right. Today is January 28th, 2016. My name is Debra Schwartz and I am sitting here with Bob Greenwood. Mr. Greenwood, as many know you, is a musician and a music educator, a longtime educator, here in Mill Valley at Tam High and also, another school. Bob, first of all I want to say, thank you so much for sitting down with me today. And I sit here on behalf of the Mill Valley Historical Society Oral History Program and the Mill Valley Library. And we are so excited to finally speak — I know I am personally — to this man I've been hearing so many musicians talk about. You are rather famous in the world of music.

**0:00:58 Bob Greenwood:** Well, at least in Mill Valley.

**0:01:00 Debra Schwartz:** In Mill Valley. Okay, well, now you've been in the area for quite some time, haven't you?

**0:01:04 Bob Greenwood:** Yes.

**0:01:05 Debra Schwartz:** Yes. So, let's start first of all, with some basic information about you and your family. Tell me your name and when you were born and a little bit about you.

**0:01:16 Bob Greenwood:** Well, my name is Robert Joseph Greenwood. And I was born in August of 1928, which means I am 78 this moment. I'm 87, I've got it backwards.

**0:01:30 Debra Schwartz:** Yes.

**0:01:31 Bob Greenwood:** I was born in Charles City, Iowa, which is a small town between Mason City and Waterloo, but it's not that small, really. My parents were both from the area. My dad grew up and was born on a farm, a short distance from Charles City. And mother was born in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, which is still there, which is amazing. And she moved with her family to Charles City, I guess shortly after birth.

**0:02:14 Debra Schwartz:** And your parents' names were?

**0:02:16 Bob Greenwood:** Warren Greenwood and Ethel. Actually, her maiden name was Green and she was a county recorder, one of the very earliest, earliest women at that time in Iowa, Floyd County, elected to a public office and she was county recorder. I don't know if that is important. My dad had always been involved with cars and mechanics. He went through a garage and he got out of that business and then he ended up going into grocery business. And he had a grocery store up until the time we moved to

California. He was not doing too well. He ended up working for the National Labor Relations Act.

**0:03:08 Debra Schwartz:** The National Labor Relations Act?

**0:03:10 Bob Greenwood:** That thing where you worked for the government. So that was how we got through the Depression. No one had any money, of course, cash. Everybody bartered and so it wasn't a good time to be in business. My dad ended up going back to machinery. He started by working down in Southern Iowa at a bomb factory, of all things. And he discovered that he was allergic to gun powder. So he came back home and about that time — this is when we were getting over the fact that Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Bechtel came to Charles City and recruited people to go out and work in the shipyards. And my dad announced one day at lunch, "We're moving." And that's how I got to California.

**0:04:13 Debra Schwartz:** So, you were in Iowa with your family, comfortable as most people were about that time, and suddenly you're going to be going to California.

**0:04:23 Bob Greenwood:** So, dad went and everything was up to my mother to arrange the moving thing. Of course in those days, you had to ship things by train because there was no truck transport.

**0:04:37 Debra Schwartz:** You didn't have a car and it wouldn't have been enough?

**0:04:39 Bob Greenwood:** Well, we had a car but we couldn't ship everything in there. So, my grandfather boxed everything up and shipped it by train. Then we came out; and the day we left Charles City, I think it was January 28<sup>th</sup>.

**0:04:53 Debra Schwartz:** You remember the date? Is that today? Are we talking the anniversary of January 28th?

**0:05:00 Bob Greenwood:** No, we aren't, as a matter of fact, but it happened — that was the day we left Charles City, and it was the day it was snowing and it was 29 below zero.

**0:05:12 Debra Schwartz:** What year is this now we are talking? 1940 — ?

**0:05:16 Bob Greenwood:** '43.

**0:05:17 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**0:05:19 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, 1943.

**0:05:20 Debra Schwartz:** So, it's snowing. Doesn't it get a little cold in Iowa?

**0:05:24 Bob Greenwood:** Oh it was cold. I always tell people, in the old days there

was a weather map in the paper and a loop would come down to Charles City and then would go back up. Charles City was right at the bottom of that, every time.

**0:05:41 Debra Schwartz:** Because it's a plains area, right?

**0:05:43 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. Just very cold, and very hot and muggy. It was beautiful in spring and fall but awful otherwise, and I'm glad to be here.

**0:05:53 Debra Schwartz:** So, you left without too much resistance?

**0:05:57 Bob Greenwood:** None at all. No, I was ready to leave and so was my mother, I guess. But, anyhow we came out here —

**0:06:07 Debra Schwartz:** Did you have siblings as well?

**0:06:09 Bob Greenwood:** I have a sister and she's now in San Rafael at the Rafael Home. What is it? The senior home? No, it's just a rest home. She's five years older than I am.

**0:06:27 Debra Schwartz:** Holy cow!

**0:06:28 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. My mother died at 100 and four months.

**0:06:33 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, my goodness.

**0:06:34 Bob Greenwood:** My dad had a problem, he acquired flu while he was in the army, World War I.

**0:06:41 Debra Schwartz:** He died of Spanish Flu?

**0:06:42 Bob Greenwood:** No, he didn't die. But, he lost his sense of smell and his sense of taste in the process; and had a God-awful diet. He couldn't taste anything, so he put the salt on it and jam on pie, things like that so he could taste something. Anyhow he died of a heart thing. That was not a surprise. It was surprising that it didn't happen sooner.

**0:07:12 Debra Schwartz:** But, he did, he survived the flu. He was lucky to live.

**0:07:14 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, yes. Anyhow, my father went to work as a machinist in the Bechtel shipyard.

**0:07:23 Debra Schwartz:** In Sausalito?

**0:07:24 Bob Greenwood:** In Sausalito. And then, we came out and that was an experience, because going through the Altamont Pass and all that area, that was a two-lane road then and it was spooky for people from Iowa.

**0:07:40 Debra Schwartz:** Because you were used to the flat lands.

**0:07:42 Bob Greenwood:** You got that right. Anyhow, we came across through Marin County on the ferry, because the bridge of course wasn't there.

**0:07:52 Debra Schwartz:** The bridge was built in '37, '38.

**0:07:56 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, that's the Golden Gate. I'm talking about the Richmond Bridge.

**0:07:58 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, okay. Right, right.

**0:08:00 Bob Greenwood:** Richmond Ferry.

**0:08:01 Debra Schwartz:** Yes.

**0:08:01 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. That was, it must be over 25 or 30 years ago that the Richmond Bridge was born, built. Born, that's a good way to put it.

**0:08:16 Debra Schwartz:** So, you came across on the ferry.

**0:08:18 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, and we knew that we had a home in Marin City. You have to understand that you take about 7/8 — I mean there were so few houses in Marin County then because the population was small. And then suddenly [grunts] — the people who came — my father brought them with him in a car when they came out — was the Charles City Postmaster. They lived in a garage in San Rafael, in somebody's house because housing was so bad. So we were very lucky to get a house in Marin City.

**0:09:00 Debra Schwartz:** But most of Marin City was built in about three months in order to house the workers for the Liberty and Victory.

**0:09:06 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. There were still muddy roads and all that stuff.

**0:09:11 Debra Schwartz:** So, there were some houses there as well and you were in one of them?

**0:09:12 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, and that's where I spent my high school days; except as a senior, we moved to Sausalito. My dad and mother both sang in the church choir there and back in Charles City. My mother was quite a good singer. So they ran into somebody who had a house and rented it.

**0:09:40 Debra Schwartz:** In Sausalito?

**0:09:41 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:09:41 Debra Schwartz:** Did you rent in Marin City or buy?

**0:09:45 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, you can't buy.

**0:09:46 Debra Schwartz:** Oh right.

**0:09:46 Bob Greenwood:** It was all rental.<sup>1</sup>

**0:09:48 Debra Schwartz:** Where in Sausalito were you living then?

**0:09:51 Bob Greenwood:** On Johnson Street.

**0:09:52 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, yes.

**0:09:54 Bob Greenwood:** Just up from the fire station, as a matter of fact. In fact, [chuckles] the fire horn scared the heck out of us every afternoon because it was aimed right at our backyard.

**0:10:05 Debra Schwartz:** So can you move back up just a bit here?

**0:10:08 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:10:09 Debra Schwartz:** You're how old now when you're taking the ferry across into Marin County?

**0:10:12 Bob Greenwood:** 13.

**0:10:13 Debra Schwartz:** So what were your impressions at that time when you're looking around and all that water?

**0:10:17 Bob Greenwood:** Well, first of all we had gone through kind of another stormy thing on the Altamont Pass because it was also stormy. When we got to Marin County it was gorgeous. But it was not anything like we expected. Our vision of California was Southern California. This is quite different as you realize. But it was such a relief to be here. At first it was difficult because everything was rationed or you had to stand in line to get meat before rationing went into effect. So the whole family would go and stand to get a pound of hamburger and things like that. I discovered that I was dressed like an Iowa farm boy going to mass, and I didn't fit in at all with the clothes I had.

**0:11:21 Debra Schwartz:** What are the clothes that an Iowa farm boy going to mass wears?

**0:11:26 Bob Greenwood:** Dressy clothes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Project Rental Housing Authority.—Bob Greenwood.

<sup>2</sup> Pants, shirt, even a tie.—Bob Greenwood.



**0:11:27 Debra Schwartz:** So you were more formally attired?

**0:11:29 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:11:30 Debra Schwartz:** Did you wear a little jacket and — ?

**0:11:32 Bob Greenwood:** A shirt and a jacket, yeah, and trousers. But here everything was either Levi's or cords. And you couldn't get either because all this was war time so all the cotton was going into the uniform.

**0:11:53 Debra Schwartz:** So you were condemned to be a hayseed from Iowa.

**0:11:55 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, well, it took about six months for me to finally get assimilated, I guess you'd call it. And I was called an Okie for the first time, never — I didn't know what it was. Of course, I looked like somebody from —

**0:12:17 Debra Schwartz:** 'Cause you're very fair, people that are listening to this can't see what I'm looking at, which is very blue eyes —

**0:12:23 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, a little bloodshot on the sides.

**0:12:27 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, but obviously you're very fair.

**0:12:30 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. My background was theoretically French-Canadian and Irish and a little German and a little bit of English. We had all sorts of stuff going for us. My grandfather was a real mixture.

**0:12:48 Debra Schwartz:** So did you have an Iowan accent?

**0:12:51 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, I still do periodically. My wife tells me that all the time. Whenever I get angry or upset, I go right into it. I don't recognize it of course. Because I've been here so long, I feel like I'm a Californian.

**0:13:08 Debra Schwartz:** So you're 13 years old and you're looking at a lot of water though. There's no water really to speak of, there are no oceans in Iowa.

**0:13:15 Bob Greenwood:** That was scenic. Of course we came in to San Rafael and, it's kind of funny, the road that these people lived on was Scenic Avenue, so we figured it'd be out on the waterfront. But not in San Rafael, it's around the back. Anyhow we finally found the place and met up with our family.

**0:13:40 Debra Schwartz:** So you ended up eventually in Sausalito on Johnson, which is really close to town. It's a charming town.

**0:13:47 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. And that was one of the places, the last place — I

used to work at a grocery store in Marin City; I worked as a high school kid; I worked as a clerk in Gruber's Department Store and —

**0:14:03 Debra Schwartz:** Where is Gruber's?

**0:14:05 Bob Greenwood:** Well, it was also in Sausalito. That's where I got my Levi's. [laughs] I worked for the store and I could get them under the counter. The last store I had was at Perry's and that's still there.

**0:14:22 Debra Schwartz:** What is it?

**0:14:22 Bob Greenwood:** Perry's.

**0:14:23 Debra Schwartz:** Parodies? Where is Parodies?

**0:14:24 Bob Greenwood:** Perry's Market.

**0:14:25 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, Perry's Market, yes.

**0:14:27 Bob Greenwood:** And it was while I was there that I joined the musician's union and I started playing.

**0:14:34 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, so now how old are you?

**0:14:37 Bob Greenwood:** 16.

**0:14:37 Debra Schwartz:** So, where did you learn how to become a musician?

**0:14:42 Bob Greenwood:** I just did it. At Tam.

**0:14:45 Debra Schwartz:** 'Cause you went to Tam High?

**0:14:46 Bob Greenwood:** That's right, and there was a very wide music program at that time.

**0:14:52 Debra Schwartz:** And you're —

**0:14:52 Bob Greenwood:** I took dance band; I also took orchestra.

**0:14:56 Debra Schwartz:** So this is, you're the class of — ?

**0:15:00 Bob Greenwood:** '46.

**0:15:00 Debra Schwartz:** So you're the class of '46 at Tam High. I hear a lot about Tam's — the education, the classes offered. Many wonderful things, it's almost a trade school, I mean, it really — what was your experience?

**0:15:14 Bob Greenwood:** That was the Duke. He was the first principal, our first superintendent, and that was — he graduated from Cal with honors, but he believed that everybody should have a —

**0:15:28 Debra Schwartz:** A vocation.

**0:15:28 Bob Greenwood:** Vocation. And that's why the school was run the way it was. He got to the point where he was very dictatorial and he — well, anyhow, that's another trip.

**0:15:41 Debra Schwartz:** But you learned to play, and your instrument is?

**0:15:44 Bob Greenwood:** Double bass, string bass.

**0:15:46 Debra Schwartz:** String bass.

**0:15:48 Bob Greenwood:** I finally gave it to my son, Paul, when I —

**0:15:51 Debra Schwartz:** That's the standing bass, like the big cello, right?

**0:15:53 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, right.

**0:15:53 Debra Schwartz:** Yes.

**0:15:54 Bob Greenwood:** Also, before I retired I was playing electric bass but —

**0:16:00 Debra Schwartz:** But how do you play the string bass in a band, in the marching band? Did you say you were in the marching — ?

**0:16:06 Bob Greenwood:** No, no I didn't march. Not until [chuckles] I went to the National Guard. I was in the 49th Infantry Division Guard band. I joined that while I was a student at State because I was worried about the Berlin Blockade. I don't know if that —

**0:16:26 Debra Schwartz:** Let's go back though, before we get to your college, back to high school. So you're playing your instrument, you've got your bass, that was the one that you liked, the instrument you liked, and now you apparently have some ability, natural ability.

**0:16:45 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. I discovered the fact that I really could do it and do it well. And that was a real eye-opener for me because up to that point — my sister is the one who always got the As; I got the Bs. That's an oversimplification, of course, but the point is I was used to not being —

**0:17:12 Debra Schwartz:** Number one.

**0:17:13 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. I suddenly was number one. Well that kind of grabs you after a while.

**0:17:20 Debra Schwartz:** That what?

**0:17:21 Bob Greenwood:** It grabs me after a while.

**0:17:22 Debra Schwartz:** It grabbed you. Yeah. I'm sure.

**0:17:23 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. But at that time, all the good bass players, and experienced bass players were in the army. So people needed a bass, and —

**0:17:38 Debra Schwartz:** Hands up for Mr. Green.

**0:17:40 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, in fact I did very well. I played every probably summer resort in California. And the last year, the year I started teaching, I made more money playing than I did teaching.

**0:18:00 Debra Schwartz:** So we'll get to that because I know there's quite an interesting story about you as a musician and a teacher. Let's go to your college. So you said you went to San Francisco State?

**0:18:10 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:18:11 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**0:18:12 Bob Greenwood:** And that was a surprise because I don't think I could afford it. Back in the Middle West, state colleges were expensive, and of course they weren't in Charles City so I just figured, "Oh, well I'm not going to college." My counselor said, "Why aren't you going to college?" And I said, "I can't afford it." She said, "Yes, you can." Those were the days when Earl Brown had managed to get tuition down to \$10.50 a semester.

**0:18:42 Debra Schwartz:** What? Oh my gosh!

**0:18:47 Bob Greenwood:** Well, it worked then. So I did it. State was probably the best state college applied music program in the state. And in fact it really was very good because all the instrumental teachers were in the symphony. You know, people who did the master classes, like my teacher played in the symphony.

**0:19:25 Debra Schwartz:** The San Francisco Symphony?

**0:19:26 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, right. I took trombone lessons from Orlando Giosi who was also in the symphony, who's first trombone. I took my bassoon instruction from a guy who played in the symphony. Well, I can't remember all of them but they were there

and really created a tone. And of course the other thing that was different, my first year at State was the year that GIs came back home to [go to] school. And so, here I am I just graduated from high school; I did pretty well and of course I did play piano at the time, a little bit. And I was dumped into this sea of people who had all spent their life for the last five years professionally playing. It was a real push to survive, and it was good for me because I realized I could and I did and all that. But you know Dave McElhatton was next door in the radio department at State. Did you know Dave?

**0:20:45 Debra Schwartz:** No.

**0:20:46 Bob Greenwood:** He had a program for years on KNBR, I think it was. Anyhow, I played with some really fine people.

**0:21:04 Debra Schwartz:** So, you were kind of sort of forced into excellence?

**0:21:06 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, that's a very good way of putting it. And I had no choice [chuckles] in order to survive, and of course I did want to survive. And so, I graduated, and that was 1950, and then I got my first teaching job up in Corning.

**0:21:26 Debra Schwartz:** Corning?

**0:21:26 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, and I was there one year.

**0:21:28 Debra Schwartz:** By Chico?

**0:21:30 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, it used to be 99 north but now there's a freeway, 405 I think it is. And I used to come home on the weekends about every other weekend to do my laundry, and all those domestic things. But, it's about a 300-mile trip.

**0:21:54 Debra Schwartz:** Yes.

**0:21:55 Bob Greenwood:** It's really a ride, but I did it. One funny thing while I was up there another co-student from State, Dick Vartanian was his name.

**0:22:12 Debra Schwartz:** Dick what?

**0:22:13 Bob Greenwood:** Vartanian.

**0:22:14 Debra Schwartz:** Vartanian?

**0:22:15 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. And he ended up teaching in Arbuckle.

**0:22:20 Debra Schwartz:** In where?

**0:22:21 Bob Greenwood:** Arbuckle.

**0:22:22 Debra Schwartz:** Arbuckle, where's that?

**0:22:24 Bob Greenwood:** It's right near the 40, 99, yeah up — it's in that area.

**0:22:34 Debra Schwartz:** Uh-huh.

**0:22:35 Bob Greenwood:** It's a sheep town. And this guy is a very sophisticated guy, he played piano. Well, we ended up having a New Year's Eve gig in Arbuckle at a bar, and it's one of the funniest experiences that I've ever had because everybody in the bar was wearing Levi's, boots, and hats you know, the western hats.

**0:23:00 Debra Schwartz:** These are ranch cowboy types?

**0:23:00 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, so here we were in our tuxedos. [laughs] It was a funny night anyhow. But where did I go?

**0:23:05 Bob Greenwood:** And then the April of that year I was down talking to Van Dyke who was Tam's superintendent and who had been my principal at Tam and knew me so I went in and I said, "You know, someday I'd like to come back and teach here." And he says, "Well, it's funny you should mention that because we're going to have an opening at Tam because we're going to divide the schools." That was when Drake left Tam and in those days he decided, there was no committee and he hired me. Not right then, it was a little later, and I kept saying to myself, "You know if I have to go for a committee I don't think they would ever hire me."

**0:24:01 Debra Schwartz:** Connections.

**0:24:02 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. Well, if it works, it works. And that was the year my dad died and so I had a real good reason for coming home and I was there. I taught school for about six to eight months, and then they drafted me and I got taken to Korea and I was over there for 21 months. You'll laugh when I tell you this, I was with the field artillery battalion. And I can now conduct to the "1812 Overture" with great enthusiasm. I was with 155 Howitzers.

**0:24:50 Debra Schwartz:** You were what?

**0:24:51 Bob Greenwood:** 155 Howitzers. They're the ones with shells like this big [demonstrates], big and awful. Anyhow, I survived that and —

**0:25:02 Debra Schwartz:** Were you in combat?

**0:25:05 Bob Greenwood:** I was in what's called a two-point zone, which was — I was in I guess within 12 miles of the mainliner position.

**0:25:16 Debra Schwartz:** Enough for you to hear but not smell.

**0:25:21 Bob Greenwood:** And I did actually have a round in my battery where I was, which reminded me that this was really a war.

**0:25:29 Debra Schwartz:** And you are, how old now?

**0:25:32 Bob Greenwood:** 23.

**0:25:33 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, so 21 months?

**0:25:38 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. In fact I was really nervous because we ended up — I got tired of being a flunky, and I ended up being a battery clerk because I knew how to type.

**0:25:49 Debra Schwartz:** Battery clerk?

**0:25:51 Bob Greenwood:** Clerk.

**0:25:51 Debra Schwartz:** Clerk. Oh, a battery clerk.

**0:25:54 Bob Greenwood:** I should explain. I have trouble with diction because I had a cancer operation which affects my articulation.

**0:26:05 Debra Schwartz:** But also these words I'm not familiar with so it's very helpful. I figure if I'm not familiar with them, somebody else may not be as well. So you were a battery clerk?

**0:26:16 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. And I did that for about six months and then I was able to come home. I was nervous because I was due to leave at the time of the armistice and I thought I could get snared into going in to do typing for this time. Fortunately, that didn't happen and —

**0:26:38 Debra Schwartz:** You came home relieved.

**0:26:39 Bob Greenwood:** I was supposed to have been a best man at a dear friend's wedding and I missed it by two weeks. So I couldn't do that, but anyhow that's one of those funny things that happened.

**0:26:56 Debra Schwartz:** But you came home in one piece.

**0:26:58 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. Afterwards, occasionally I would feel guilty because you hear about all these terrible things. That's why I'm a sucker for all veterans' groups. Even if I know they don't do as well as they should, I'd still donate to them, but I guess we shouldn't put that in —

**0:27:23 Debra Schwartz:** But we can move it if you want to.

**0:27:25 Bob Greenwood:** Well, it's alright.

**0:27:26 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah. I mean this is the reality that you experienced and I think you aren't the only one.

**0:27:30 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, I'm sure, yeah. But anyhow, then I went back to Tam.

**0:27:36 Debra Schwartz:** As a teacher?

**0:27:37 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. Because I was taken away while I was employed therefore my job was guaranteed. It was tough for a while because my head wasn't quite there yet — and of course the schools had just divided, so that bands when they divide they don't always divide equally and that's what kind of happened, but we persevered.

**0:28:11 Debra Schwartz:** There's always that adjustment coming back from such a different place. [cell phone buzzes] We're going to ignore this. So it took a while and then you —

**0:28:23 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, and it began to grow and then after a few years I had a really good band. One of the problems we had then was that the feeder program — that's a term that music teachers use — the feeder program in Mill Valley and Sausalito was very poor, almost non-existent.

**0:28:47 Debra Schwartz:** What does that mean to have the feeder program? Do you go looking for particular students?

**0:28:51 Bob Greenwood:** No. They have a teacher down there who has put people together, so the kids don't have to start at the high school.

**0:29:00 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, I see.

**0:29:01 Bob Greenwood:** And I was stuck. There'd be five or six kids, but you can't put a band together with five or six kids.

**0:29:09 Debra Schwartz:** So these were kids that had already begun their musical training.

**0:29:12 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, right. So I had to begin my own players. Right from high school.

**0:29:18 Debra Schwartz:** Right from the ABCs.

**0:29:20 Bob Greenwood:** And we taught a beginning instrument class almost all the time I was there. It's only the last — well, since Joe Angiulo came to Mill Valley — that



had different people regularly and of good quality.<sup>3</sup> That sounds terrible, but you know what I'm trying to say.

**0:29:49 Debra Schwartz:** So they'd had the foundation so that they were good and stable when it came time for more intensive training; they could flourish from that point.

**0:29:57 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, I've often said that the reason I was able to take my orchestra to Vienna was because of Joe. He had done such a good job of preparing the kids before I got them.

**0:30:09 Debra Schwartz:** That he prepared them prior to entering Tam High or — ?

**0:30:13 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, yeah.

**0:30:14 Debra Schwartz:** And so that would have been in all the middle schools?

**0:30:16 Bob Greenwood:** Yes.

**0:30:17 Debra Schwartz:** Okay. And he had funding to do so.

**0:30:21 Bob Greenwood:** Pardon me?

**0:30:22 Debra Schwartz:** He had the funding to do so

**0:30:24 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, Mill Valley — what's it called? The fundraising thing they do is wonderful.

**0:30:31 Debra Schwartz:** Kiddo!?

**0:30:31 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. That's a wonderful thing. Anyhow, I'll have a little water.

**0:30:37 Debra Schwartz:** Yes. Please.

**0:30:40 Bob Greenwood:** Now then, where are we going?

**0:30:42 Debra Schwartz:** We're talking about the good bands. As you now have got your footing, you've come back from your military experience, you've adjusted to civilian life again, you've got your head back in the game, you've got the support of the school feeder program, and now you're starting to get some students, and you've got something to work with.

**0:31:04 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I didn't mention that before that, I was teaching choir. And the reason I was teaching choir is because Mabel Pittenger was still doing orchestra; and she was my high school orchestra teacher also.

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<sup>3</sup> And Tod Fleming.—Bob Greenwood.

**0:31:19 Debra Schwartz:** Mabel — what's her name?

**0:31:20 Bob Greenwood:** Pittenger.

**0:31:20 Debra Schwartz:** Pitchinger — Mabel Pittenger.

**0:31:23 Bob Greenwood:** P-I-T-T-E-N-G-E-R. Yeah, nice lady, very sweet, played viola in Marin Symphony. By the way, I played in Marin Symphony during those times for about 10 years actually. Oh, this is beginning to sound very fragmented. But anyhow, I had great success with my choir. I never liked madrigals. So I always felt a little defensive. So I always went for the big chorus sing. I had a chorus of around 60. We did the *Symphony of Psalms* by Stravinsky. Alright. We did a couple movements of the *Sacred Service* by Bloch and his granddaughter sang the soprano solo.

**0:32:23 Debra Schwartz:** Whoa!

**0:32:24 Bob Greenwood:** They lived in Mill Valley briefly.

**0:32:27 Debra Schwartz:** Box grand —

**0:32:27 Bob Greenwood:** Bloch.

**0:32:28 Debra Schwartz:** Bloch.

**0:32:28 Bob Greenwood:** B-L —

**0:32:29 Debra Schwartz:** Bloch.

**0:32:29 Bob Greenwood:** Bloch.

**0:32:30 Debra Schwartz:** His granddaughter lived in —

**0:32:31 Bob Greenwood:** Very famous composer, was in charge of the conservatory for a while, and his daughter was a Dimitroff.

**0:32:40 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, right. Okay.

**0:32:41 Bob Greenwood:** She was a Dimitroff.

**0:32:43 Debra Schwartz:** Yes. The framing [shop in Mill Valley]. Yes.

**0:32:45 Bob Greenwood:** Alright. And that is a chance for a little side trip because that was so much like Mill Valley people. They were so often professionals, college people with families, amazing entrepreneurs, nothing like we have now. But they were low key, they loved their kids, and they wanted everything for them. That's why it was so easy to

do things because they had private lessons, you know, all that stuff. And they'd figure out how to figure music in their program, even though they were going to Yale or Harvard. And that's really an accomplishment.

**0:33:35 Debra Schwartz:** They wanted to culture their children.

**0:33:37 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, yeah.

**0:33:37 Debra Schwartz:** Culturize their children.

**0:33:38 Bob Greenwood:** And that's one of the reasons I was successful! I had nothing but great kids.

**0:33:43 Debra Schwartz:** And parents supporting you.

**0:33:44 Bob Greenwood:** Parents to support them. And I didn't realize that until it began to change. Fortunately, by that time, I was ready to leave.

**0:33:58 Debra Schwartz:** You came back from the Korean War around 1950, right? Did you say?

**0:34:08 Bob Greenwood:** No, '53.

**0:34:10 Debra Schwartz:** '53. And now you've got your footing. So where are we, when you were doing your choir, when you're doing your classes, when things are coming together? Are we in the late '50s here or into the '60s?

**0:34:24 Bob Greenwood:** Late '50s.

**0:34:25 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**0:34:26 Bob Greenwood:** And early '60s.

**0:34:28 Debra Schwartz:** So things are also going on in San Francisco, you've got the Beat thing starting up in the '50s, there's some progressive thinking —

**0:34:35 Bob Greenwood:** We had some problems with drugs, not heavy drugs, but, you know, a lot of pot, and stuff like that. And I had kids who were kind of on the fringe who got involved with the Sausalito scene.

**0:34:52 Debra Schwartz:** Beatniks and —

**0:34:53 Bob Greenwood:** Well, yes, and that was interesting, but it never got too heavy. It was later that things got out of hand, and my kids were at Tam at that time, unfortunately. But they got over it. The day that Janis Joplin died was probably the day that the good students realized this was not the way to go.

**0:35:27 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, so much drugs and now we're talking into the late '60s. By now you've got some pretty dedicated students who are very much interested — in fact, in my other interview with Rob Moitoza and Bill Champlin, they've described in their interviews the profound influence that you had on them as —

**0:35:51 Bob Greenwood:** I hope so. You never really know; and of course, my wife will tell you I always make speeches. So sometimes it sound like I'm making a speech, but sometimes it really works. And then the other thing that I've discovered is that — well I had one kid, I never — he was a drummer. I had drum class and he was in the drum class, and I always insisted that drummers learn how to finger notes on the piano. And he came to me about five, 10 years or so after he graduated, "You know, Mr. Greenwood, I have loved piano. I've taken piano lessons." Blah-blah-blah-blah-blah, and I was saying — I didn't do anything really, I just —

**0:36:45 Debra Schwartz:** You fanned the flame.

**0:36:46 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, and anyhow —

**0:36:50 Debra Schwartz:** So did you have any of your own bands? You're a teacher, you're in choir — did you have your own band?

**0:36:56 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. When I was in college, I had made a deal with MCA, it's not a name you probably understand. Music Corporation of America was the title, and it was a booking agency. And they did all the bands across country; of course that disappeared, but that was later. I was sort of the Bay Area's college band. I did things at Cal and the Catholic schools in the San Francisco area. And they had other people to do the Bay Area, you know, East Bay and farther down.

**0:37:37 Debra Schwartz:** What kind of music were you playing?

**0:37:38 Bob Greenwood:** Dance music.

**0:37:39 Debra Schwartz:** Dance music. What's your favorite song of this?

**0:37:44 Bob Greenwood:** "It Had to Be You."

**0:37:45 Debra Schwartz:** [sings] It had to be you.

**0:37:48 Bob Greenwood:** That's our favorite song, too.

**0:37:49 Debra Schwartz:** That's what your wife said, that's your favorite song.

**0:37:51 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:37:52 Debra Schwartz:** Speaking of your wife, you must have found her somewhere

along the way.

**0:37:57 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, funny tale. Before I was drafted. Evelyn was teaching first grade or second grade in Fairfax, and she had a gal who taught kindergarten with her called B.J. Lavaroni and she's still living, not for long though, I'm afraid. And I had in my band, I then hired Chuck Lavaroni. Do you know Charles Lavaroni, the name?

**0:38:27 Debra Schwartz:** I don't think so.

**0:38:27 Bob Greenwood:** Okay, well he's entrepreneur among other things, and he ended up being principal of schools or districts, whatever. Anyhow, he played various sax in my band, and they were married and he said, "You know —" He said, "Bob would do very nicely with Evelyn."

**0:38:49 Debra Schwartz:** "They could make beautiful music together," did he say that?

**0:38:51 Bob Greenwood:** No, no, no. No, Evelyn wasn't really a musician at that time. And so we got together on a blind date, and two weeks later we were engaged.

**0:39:04 Debra Schwartz:** Wow! Wow, that's kind of romantic.

**0:39:08 Bob Greenwood:** And we've been married 63 years.

**0:39:10 Debra Schwartz:** Wow! Congratulations.

**0:39:16 Bob Greenwood:** We were both ready, and we clicked. So my feeling is, "Don't fuss around, do it." But I had to go to Korea first.

**0:39:28 Debra Schwartz:** So you had your own band, now you've got a wife, or a promise of a wife, and then you come back and now — we just had to kind of catch up a little there — and now we're back at Tam High and now we're in the '60s.

**0:39:42 Bob Greenwood:** Yes and I was working with other people then.

**0:39:45 Debra Schwartz:** You were working still as a musician.

**0:39:47 Bob Greenwood:** Yes, but I ended up really working with Walt Tolleson. I don't think you'd know that name now. He's dead. [chuckles] Everybody's dead. But Walter was sort of a — do you know Lester Lanin?

**0:40:04 Debra Schwartz:** The what?

**0:40:05 Bob Greenwood:** Lester Lanin.

**0:40:06 Debra Schwartz:** Lester Landon?

**0:40:07 Bob Greenwood:** Lanin.

**0:40:09 Debra Schwartz:** Lester Land?

**0:40:10 Bob Greenwood:** No. Lester Lanin is famous back east as being the guy who has bands out on weekends.

**0:40:16 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, Lester Lanin, no.

**0:40:19 Bob Greenwood:** Well, he did the same kind of thing here, and usually I worked with Walt and we played up and down the peninsula, wherever.

**0:40:30 Debra Schwartz:** So would you show up in your tux and play professionally, all of you?

**0:40:34 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, yeah.

**0:40:35 Debra Schwartz:** And they would just bring different musicians together to play and you were just — ?

**0:40:39 Bob Greenwood:** Well, it was pretty much the same group every time. I worked one job — I didn't know what I was getting into — and I was told where to show up in Oakland, and I was the only non-Spanish-speaking person in the room.

**0:40:55 Debra Schwartz:** And how about the musicians?

**0:40:56 Bob Greenwood:** They were all Spaniards. And there was somebody, he goes, [making hand signals] “Uh-huh-uh,” and that was enough —

**0:41:02 Debra Schwartz:** Just hand signals.

**0:41:03 Bob Greenwood:** I start playing, get into right key, and I'd be alright. But it was fun, three hours of —

**0:41:10 Debra Schwartz:** But now from what I understand you played with your students as well? You did gigs with Bill, he said, Bill Champlin. And he, for those that are listening to this —

**0:41:21 Bob Greenwood:** Not gigs, no.

**0:41:22 Debra Schwartz:** Not gigs? You did —

**0:41:23 Bob Greenwood:** I never really played his style.

**0:41:27 Bob Greenwood:** Or you played together as — Rob Moitoza, was it you and

Rob Moitoza?

**0:41:32 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, Moitoza played stand-up bass as well as electric and that's where I worked with him. Bill was in band and he was in choir with me; and it was when we were doing *Paint Your Wagon* that I discovered Jane Marsh. I don't know if you know Jane; she's an opera singer and was the first vocal, gold medal winner in Moscow. You didn't know about that? Well, she's left the area because her dad and her mother are both gone, and so she decided to move to New York, which is where she works. I've had a couple other singers, and I have three kids [i.e. students] still in the symphony.

**0:42:28 Debra Schwartz:** Really? So, you — tell, the names of your children are?

**0:42:35 Bob Greenwood:** Chandler, he's a bass player, and both Smileys were with me all four years, and who else? Somebody else, I just can't think about at this point.

**0:42:55 Debra Schwartz:** That's okay, you'll think of it later.

**0:42:57 Bob Greenwood:** I had, in fact, Bill's sister Sally, had a gorgeous voice; I'd hoped she'd study opera. We did *The Medium* by Menotti.

**0:43:18 Debra Schwartz:** How does that go?

**0:43:21 Bob Greenwood:** It's an opera.

**0:43:22 Debra Schwartz:** Any tune at all you can tell me?

**0:43:24 Bob Greenwood:** No, it's not that kind of an opera.

**0:43:25 Debra Schwartz:** No, you can't do that.

**0:43:27 Bob Greenwood:** Well, there are some, but my singing voice is not there anymore. But she was excellent as Baba, the witch. We toured with that over the East Bay, and I wanted her to study real voice. But she wanted to be another hot momma.

**0:43:52 Debra Schwartz:** A rock 'n' roller?

**0:43:54 Bob Greenwood:** No, she never was rock 'n' roll.

**0:43:57 Debra Schwartz:** What is a hot momma?

**0:44:02 Bob Greenwood:** A real growly kind of singing voice.

**0:44:05 Debra Schwartz:** Oh!

**0:44:06 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, you know, what's her name? The last of the hot mamas.

Well, you wouldn't know her anyhow, it was [chuckles] before your time. One of the things that I find very frustrating — I'll share this little detail with you. I decided it was time for me to retire. One day I was talking to a kid in the band and I said, "You know you play trombone like Caspar Milquetoast." And, the kid had that waxed-over look on his face like he didn't know who in the hell I was talking about. And, I thought, "Yeah, that's funny." *Caspar Milquetoast* was a very good comic strip in my day. And so then I was telling faculty members about it and they had that glazed over look and I said, "Okay, it's time to leave, you don't even know things that they are associated with."

**0:45:01 Debra Schwartz:** But this is why we do oral interviews. This information should be preserved. And the names that you say live on in the telling of your experiences. So this is important.

**0:45:12 Bob Greenwood:** Well, you know, I grew up with a whole set of "Maggie and Jiggs," and I can't even think of them — Dick Tracy, and all those crazy cartoon characters. Now of course, if they haven't been picked up as a TV program, they're gone. [sighs] That's pretty close to where I am. [chuckles]

**0:45:37 Debra Schwartz:** Well, tell me something — and I know you have to go to a meeting so let me just check. You wanted to finish this around 2:30, did you say?

**0:45:49 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:45:49 Debra Schwartz:** Okay. So we've got 10 more minutes and then we'll continue this interview a little later if you like, if we don't finish it.

**0:45:54 Bob Greenwood:** Okay.

**0:45:57 Debra Schwartz:** As a musician, and as somebody who's teaching music, suddenly you're in the Bay Area where there's a sudden surge of rock 'n' roll, and you are of another era. How was it for you? You could say, you grew up with dance music, you play in dance music, and all of a sudden, there's this rock 'n' roll, and your own students are playing rock 'n' roll now.

**0:46:19 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I always kidded Bill, as a matter of fact. I said, "Bill, for God's sake, when you sing something make sure you understand the words, don't mutter them." And, he always did. He remembered that when he worked with Chicago.

**0:46:40 Debra Schwartz:** And so for those who are listening who may not know, Bill Champlin had his own band here in —

**0:46:44 Bob Greenwood:** Oh yeah, Sons of Champlin, and in fact, he was part of the original group called The Opposite Six. Most of those guys have since moved on, but the Sons still exist periodically.

**0:47:00 Debra Schwartz:** And then, he went, for a while, on to play with Chicago?



**0:47:03 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, yeah. He was there for 24 years.

**0:47:05 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, for a very popular rock ‘n’ roll band.

**0:47:07 Bob Greenwood:** Organ and he sang a lot for them.

**0:47:09 Debra Schwartz:** So your students have now gone on — many of them have gone on — to careers of their own, and in his interview he says you were with him through all of his career and all the things that you told him and taught him he really kept it —

**0:47:28 Bob Greenwood:** I was a father figure for him also. That helped. It was shortly after Chicago that I lost my touch with his music. Up until that point I was able to handle it. But then when he got the “Oh my baby” stuff, and almost obscene lyrics; that’s not entertainment. So I blanked out. I did like The Beatles. In fact, Lennon I think was one of the great poets of our time. And there are other people that are, sort of, isolated.  
[chuckles]

**0:48:17 Debra Schwartz:** Like who? Who would be —

**0:48:18 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I’m saying, like right now, Mr. Bubl .

**0:48:21 Debra Schwartz:** Mr. — oh right.

**0:48:22 Bob Greenwood:** He’s wonderful, I think; and young enough that he’s going to be around for a while. I’m still an ardent admirer of — oh, what’s his name? This is one —

**0:48:39 Debra Schwartz:** It’ll come. It’ll come.

**0:48:40 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, you know, this guy who’s my age who’s still singing great songs and he sounds —

**0:48:44 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, Tony Bennett?

**0:48:45 Bob Greenwood:** Yes.

**0:48:45 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, yes, of course.

**0:48:47 Bob Greenwood:** I was trying to think of Benedetti.

**0:48:48 Debra Schwartz:** No, Tony Bennett.

**0:48:49 Bob Greenwood:** That’s his name, Benedetti.

**0:48:51 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, Benedetti. But isn't he a beautiful singer?

**0:48:54 Bob Greenwood:** You know, he's just unbelievable. And there are a couple of the young ladies — even though they wear funny clothes and do funny things with makeup, more showbiz really than music, which turns me off — but they also sing well.

**0:49:14 Debra Schwartz:** You mean Lady Gaga?

**0:49:15 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. Like that. She's one of them. When she takes her tin bra off. You know. All those funny things.

**0:49:21 Debra Schwartz:** [laughs] When she takes her tin bra off! And there's —

**0:49:24 Bob Greenwood:** Well, that thing just sticks way out.

**0:49:26 Debra Schwartz:** There's Madonna, too.

**0:49:27 Bob Greenwood:** You don't need that. In fact, that was one of the reasons I was glad I was getting out of the professional business, that we had begun playing with funny hats and costumes and —

**0:49:40 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, you had to start changing your, when you —

**0:49:42 Bob Greenwood:** I was still working, yeah. And Walter would show up with all these funny hats. I hated hats. Still do. It's one of those things where — it was showbiz. And I didn't take the music as being showbiz.

**0:50:00 Debra Schwartz:** What did you take the music as being?

**0:50:02 Bob Greenwood:** Music.

**0:50:03 Debra Schwartz:** And what is music to you?

**0:50:08 Bob Greenwood:** The unspoken. Connection with everything. You can't really put words, unless you have a song, and then that's different. But then, the combination of the sound plus the words make it more meaningful. I love opera. We go back tomorrow, we're going to — or Friday, Saturday — we're going to see one of the grand things of Puccini, which is Turandot. And I love that thing. [unintelligible] You know what I'm talking about? And we actually saw the great one do that once.

**0:51:02 Debra Schwartz:** When you think about yourself as a musician, could you imagine a life without music?

**0:51:10 Bob Greenwood:** No. I have reached a point where I'm not really a musician anymore. I don't produce. But I certainly listen. And I'm so grateful that my hearing is good enough that I can hear anybody perform. I have better music hearing than I have

speech hearing.

**0:51:40 Debra Schwartz:** So, you think when a person's a musician, even though they don't play music necessarily anymore, do you think the musician's soul is always alive?

**0:51:55 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. I shouldn't nod my head because it doesn't record. I think so. And I think sometimes that's an acquired thing, but sometimes it's in you.

**0:52:10 Debra Schwartz:** And for you?

**0:52:11 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**0:52:12 Debra Schwartz:** Was it acquired or was it in you?

**0:52:14 Bob Greenwood:** It was in me.

**0:52:15 Debra Schwartz:** Always.

**0:52:15 Bob Greenwood:** Always. I started the violin in the fifth grade. My hands were just too big, but —

**0:52:24 Debra Schwartz:** Well, I have to say, the people who are listening to this aren't gonna be able to see, but you have very long fingers, beautiful hands.

**0:52:32 Bob Greenwood:** Well, that's why the bass worked out so well. I went from violin to the string bass.

**0:52:39 Debra Schwartz:** I'm going to have to take a picture of you and these hands, I have to say.

**0:52:42 Bob Greenwood:** Oh. [laughs]

**0:52:43 Debra Schwartz:** They are amazing. Quite elegant.

**0:52:49 Bob Greenwood:** And then I started playing keyboard, and my lessons cost 25 cents. Those were Depression days. And this lady I studied with was the wife of the town band director, Charles City, Iowa.

**0:53:11 Debra Schwartz:** So you mentioned that things have changed around here and in living the area, you've lived here for all these years.

**0:53:17 Bob Greenwood:** There's been probably about six changes. My own reaction was that the group that was here when I first came here, were predominantly natives — this bunch of Okies, like me. That changed to economically secure people who were in trades. And with their children, again, they were very encouraging. And then we got into the period of what I call professional people — I forementioned those. I was teaching

then, and we had lots of married professors here with a couple of kids and they wanted to grow up some place besides Berkeley, and certainly not San Francisco.

**0:54:33:** But then we got into the first run-of-the-mill, post-hippie, druggy people, and they seemed to be different in their interests. They started the “me, me, me” culture, and that’s when you wouldn’t dare drive in Mill Valley because people [growls] — polite drivers disappeared about that time. And then we got into the period of techies, early techies, not like now. And then finally, we got into this group of people from New York, who escaped New York City, and they wanted another job or another something so they came out here, and so they settled here in Mill Valley. Well, that’s where it is kind of now; and as I say you just don’t want to cross walk or do anything strange because there’ll be a 45-year-old female — and females are mostly in a hurry to get where they’re going fast because they’ve got other things they’ve got to do. That’s Mill Valley. And my wife tells me this, too, it’s not just me. People come zooming by you and you say, “Oh,” and you look for a man or a kid, and it’s a 45-year-old mother.

**0:55:51 Debra Schwartz:** They haven’t been mowed down.

**0:55:51 Bob Greenwood:** A mother with a kid in the back seat. It’s very different.

**0:55:57 Debra Schwartz:** Let’s go back to the ’60s when you’ve got the rock and roll scene going along and you’ve got your students. Do the students themselves change in their interest in music with you?

**0:56:12 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I don’t think so. Kids are kids, and they don’t always agree with their parents, as you well, probably, have found out. So they do their own thing, and if they’ve got a director who seems to know what he’s doing — I hope I did — they’ll follow.

**0:56:35 Debra Schwartz:** I know we need to wind up here, but I do have a couple of questions for you.

**0:56:40 Bob Greenwood:** Okay.

**0:56:42 Debra Schwartz:** So what does it feel like to know that you’ve been an influence to someone who’s gone on to study music, to make music, to have a career in music, that you’ve been in some form important in the formation of — ?

**0:57:01 Bob Greenwood:** Well, it sounds phony, but it’s very humbling. I grew up in a little town, and I was a hick and didn’t do anything, then all over sudden I’m — and so it’s very humbling. And thank you, I enjoyed every bit of it. Every now and then, there are things happening to me that bring it back and that’s great.

**0:57:31 Debra Schwartz:** For those that are listening, and may not have attended when Bill Champlin came and spoke at the First Wednesday speaker series, you know, he insisted that there be a seat reserved for you.

**0:57:42 Bob Greenwood:** Oh, he told me I had to be there. Keep him honest.

**0:57:44 Debra Schwartz:** You had to be front row center next to him.

**0:57:45 Bob Greenwood:** Yes.

**0:57:46 Debra Schwartz:** As well as many of your other students showing up.

**0:57:49 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah. Well, it's hard to tell. My wife was a superb elementary teacher, but most second graders don't come back to tell her that. It's just something you know. But I have the advantage that some of these kids do come back and thank me.

**0:58:13 Debra Schwartz:** Now, I've asked you a lot of questions today. What haven't I asked you that you wish maybe I had? Is there anything that we've missed here in this interview?

**0:58:25 Bob Greenwood:** Right off hand, I don't know. I've been rambling on.

**0:58:30 Debra Schwartz:** No.

**0:58:32 Bob Greenwood:** And —

**0:58:35 Debra Schwartz:** Something important about your experience here. Anything at all about your experience in this community, in this area —

**0:58:44 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I did enjoy playing with the Marin Symphony. Salgo was the conductor, and I think I was there — they rehearsed in my room at Tam which is one of the reasons I was there. I suspect that's why he always let me get by with technical murder — because Salgo was a fine conductor. And the Symphony did interesting things, so that was nice. I don't know if I mentioned the fact that while I was working at the, what is now Sahara's Stateline [Nevada], one summer, Lena Horne was there.<sup>4</sup>

**0:59:32 Debra Schwartz:** Oh my!

**0:59:32 Bob Greenwood:** I worked for her, and so was the dancing guy. What's his name from the — ?

**0:59:37 Debra Schwartz:** Fred Astaire?

**0:59:38 Bob Greenwood:** No, no, no. He's still alive incidentally, which is a [chuckles] —

**0:59:48 Debra Schwartz:** What kind of dancing?

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<sup>4</sup> The Sahara was a Lake Tahoe hotel casino, which later became the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino.—Ed.

**0:59:50 Bob Greenwood:** Song and dance kind of thing. He was in *Mary Poppins*.

**0:59:55 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, Dick Van Dyke. Awesome!

**0:59:57 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah, he was there at the time.

**1:00:00 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, gosh! He's still dancing; I just saw him on a show, he's fantastic.

**1:00:01 Bob Greenwood:** Well, not much.

**1:00:02 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, but he's still trying.

**1:00:03 Bob Greenwood:** Well, he used to do the pratfall, and it obviously killed himself.

**1:00:08 Debra Schwartz:** Great, great entertainer.

**1:00:10 Bob Greenwood:** And he's a nice guy, really is. He deserves to live. So I was so impressed — Lena Horne was such a wonderful woman, and she broke the color line at Lake Tahoe.

**1:00:23 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, right, what a singer? So you got to play with some greats.

**1:00:33 Bob Greenwood:** I've had lots of wonderful opportunities, and this is going to sound terrible, thanks to the Japanese.

**1:00:45 Debra Schwartz:** Because they brought —

**1:00:51 Bob Greenwood:** They bombed Pearl Harbor.

**1:00:52 Debra Schwartz:** Just the unexpected consequences. If it hadn't been for that —

**1:00:53 Bob Greenwood:** I would never had met my wife.

**1:00:55 Debra Schwartz:** Would not have been living in the Bay Area.

**1:01:00 Bob Greenwood:** It's just amazing, and I say it very quietly, because it sounds terrible, but it's true.

**1:01:10 Debra Schwartz:** Life can flourish even in adversity.

**1:01:13 Bob Greenwood:** Yes. As an old British comic film used to say, "Carry on,

Nurse.” Did you ever see those? There were a whole series of them, medical comedies.

**1:01:24 Debra Schwartz:** No. That was the segue, always?

**1:01:29 Bob Greenwood:** That’s the title.

**1:01:30 Debra Schwartz:** *Carry on, Nurse.* [laughs]

**1:01:31 Bob Greenwood:** *Carry on, Nurse.* And that’s what you do. Listen, we’re going to have to stop.

**1:01:38 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, well I just want to say thank you so much for this wonderful interview, Mr. Greenwood. It’s a real pleasure to meet you and to talk with you and thanks for sharing your story.

**1:01:47 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I’m more than delighted.

**1:01:49 Debra Schwartz:** Thanks for all the years of beautiful music.

**1:01:52 Bob Greenwood:** Well, thank you. You didn’t ever hear any of it but —

**1:01:55 Debra Schwartz:** Well, I hear what the second generation — because I grew up listening to the bands that you —

**1:02:01 Bob Greenwood:** Well, I didn’t get a chance to show you my rogue’s gallery.

**1:02:04 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, so let’s turn this off now and I’ll take some photos, okay?

**1:02:07 Bob Greenwood:** Yeah.

**1:02:08 Debra Schwartz:** Alright, okay. We’re going to sign off now.