

Interview with Mr. Mr. Ciccimaro

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BD: This is Bill Donohoe in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania with Mr. Joe Ciccimaro. Mr. Ciccimaro, do I have your permission to record?

JC: Yes you do.

BD: Thank you. Mr. Ciccimaro, in what year and where were you born?

JC: I was born January 27th, 1940 in Philadelphia, hospital no longer exists, St. Mary's in Fishtown, I believe. I'm from Port Richmond.

BD: All right, what were your parents' names?

JC: Dominic, he was a tailor, also born in Port Richmond. My grandparents – his father and mother came here from Italy and he was one of five children. He was born here. He was a middle child. My grandfather came from Italy as a shepherd, basically. And then when he came here he worked for the railroad. And my mother was born a block away from him and her name was Catherine Cumisky. C-U-M-M-I-S-K-Y. Very Irish, and her father was captain of police in the district. So they were not allowed to date so much so to the point that my mother waited until she was 21, then ran away to get married – obviously in the Catholic church, and they had an interesting courtship and life.

My father opened a – apprenticed as a tailor when he was in sixth grade. My grandmother made all – showed all her sons a trade. So there was a butcher, a shoemaker, a barber, and a tailor, and then I had an aunt – there was one girl.

BD: Wow.

JC: So – and my father opened up a shop actually before they got married, and I was born in 1940 and lived in Port Richmond all my life. Went to Nativity BVM on Allegheny Avenue for eight grades and the good nuns there said I should go to La Salle. And I went to La Salle High School and I had been playing piano, taught by the nuns since third grade. Love music, and when I went to high school, they said, “What band instrument do you wanna learn?” and I said, “I don't know, saxophone or clarinet.” And they gave me a clarinet and that's how I started my musical career, and still do the same thing today.

BD: Great, well you covered a couple of my next couple questions. So as a child, what did you do for fun? What kind of games did you play in your neighborhood? Obviously you played the piano for one.

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JC: In our neighborhood, obviously, we had one playground which was about four blocks away from us and it was cinder. I loved baseball. I was a terrible athlete, but I loved the game because growing up, my father would always take us to the games at Shy Park to see the Phillies, the A's, etcetera. My favorite team I remember, to his dismay, was the St. Louis Blue Jays... Cardinals, and of course he didn't like that too much but it was okay.

Interesting thing, though – another form of activity – I remember I was born before TV became popular, although we did have the first TV in the neighborhood, except for the bar because my father and his brothers were all what you would call gamblers. And my father won the money in the crap game to get the first TV. So I was in third grade and we had a television, which was 1948. All my friends would come home with me to watch Hop Along Cassidy – it was a ten inch screen, but we were the big people in the neighborhood. I roller skated, but of course my mother said I'd get hit by a car. We played box ball on the corner, and that was the basic activity.

BD: Excellent, excellent. So you said you attended Nativity BVM. What were your experiences like there? You mentioned you played the piano there and they said you should go to La Salle. What was it like?

JC: Well it was – we had – in the whole – it was a big school in those days. To me it was a big school. It's a big parish, if you're not familiar with Port Richmond. There are three churches. That was the Irish church. Right up – two blocks away – was the Polish court church, St. Albert's, and then a block the other way was the German church, Our Lady Help of Christian's. I was born actually two blocks from the Italian church, but when I started school they hadn't had a school and my mother graduated from Hallahan, which was of course a big thing in those days and my father obviously finished the sixth grade and learned a trade.

So I liked school. The nuns – the St. Joe nuns were absolutely terrific. I loved school, I was obviously – they – I mean I was a good student and that's why they wanted me to go to La Salle. They said La Salle or St. Joe's and luckily I ended up at La Salle.

BD: (Laughter) Absolutely. What year did you start?

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JC: This is a funny story, now. In order to get to La Salle High School, I had to take a trolley car at the beginning of the line at 54, go to what we called – it was called North Broad station on the subway which Lehigh Avenue. And then from there you had to get the trolley car on Olney Avenue. So it took a good hour on public transportation. Now my father brought me up to register – it's the spring of my summer year and during that summer I got a letter saying, "Would you be interested in joining the band? You have to come in July." Which we still do today with the students. I was in the tailor shop and I said, "Boy, I don't know what I'm gonna do." My father says, "What you got to lose?" Which was a great attitude and from that day on, though, I didn't get dropped off at school. They didn't drive me up. I found my way to La Salle and found my way home. And I started in July of 1953.

BD: What was it like on your first day of school at La Salle?

JC: Well, you see, my first day was always – a very interesting story because I was in the band, I loved the clarinet. Man, I practiced immediately, more than most students get because I just loved it. And so we started in July and I was at school a couple days a week. Loved that, and before we even had our first class, we were invited to play – represent the University of Missouri or Mississippi playing against Villanova – so they didn't wanna travel their band, La Salle High School had a good marching band in those days. So my first musical experience in high school was playing before 100,000 people at the old stadium, which is Municipal Stadium. And I can still remember waiting there to go into this crowd to perform in front of this football game. So that was to me the beginning. From that point on, I went to classes and did band practice and did whatever the band did.

BD: So you said you began to play the piano first in grade school –

JC: In grade school.

BD: And my next question was, what instruments do you play and when did you begin to play them?

JC: Well obviously woodwind players like to play more than one instrument. I play clarinet, which is very useful in those days because the concert bands were big and marching bands were big in high school, college, etcetera. But I wanted to play in the dance

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JC: band, they called but now days they're called the jazz band, but it was the dance band. So I pestered my father to get a saxophone. I wanted to get a saxophone, and at Christmas time for that year, my father bought me a saxophone. And luckily there was a junior that left school to go into the priesthood, and there was an opening and I bulldozed my way into that band in my freshman year and started playing saxophone and clarinet. And of course through high school, I always did academically – I didn't have any problems. But I mainly wanted to learn the flute, so they all thought I was nuts in those days to play the flute, too, and I learned that and by the end of high school, I started the oboe and the bassoon, and that's what I wanted to do was be what they called a woodwind doubler. And that's what I do today. The oboe I teach here at school, but I don't perform professionally, but all the other woodwinds, I do.

BD: As I know, being a former student of yours. Absolutely. Well, how long – I mean, you said you started playing those in high school. How long did it take you to become great?

JC: Very interesting, in high school – like every other kid I didn't think about careers too much. I mean, of course I thought about being a priest and then I realized I really didn't wanna listen to people's confession, so that eliminated. I thought I wanted to be a dentist. Now don't ask me why, and then I realized I don't wanna look down people's mouths for the rest of my life. And engineering, which was the big thing in my day – everybody wanted to be an engineer and I thought, "Nah," because I wasn't crazy about science. I loved math, but I didn't like physics, etcetera. And then I decided by my junior year and senior year, I think I wanted to be a musician, but in the days then there were no programs for what I wanted to do.

BD: Like professional studies?

JC: What they call – there was no programs from woodwind doublers, they just sorta – and I was accepted to La Salle College in those days, and I thought, "Okay, I'll take it one semester at a time and take two private lessons a week doing each instrument every other

week.” And before I knew it, I graduated from college. I had a degree, luckily, in education. I was an English major, started out as a French major because I loved French. But in those days, you had to go to La Salle University during the summer and there was no way I could afford it ‘cause my father’s deal when I went to high school

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JC: he said, “I’ll pay your first year. After that, you have to earn your tuition.” And actually because I had typing as a freshman at La Salle High School, I got a job that summer working in a trucking company doing invoices eight hours a day for the whole summer. It was night work, and then I always worked from then on to pay my tuition. And I did the same in college, but by that time I had my own band, was playing the wedding circuit and I actually played the night clubs in Atlantic City my first year of college. It was the Miss America pageant, which meant all the places were busy in Atlantic City and I was commuting from Atlantic City, playing at a club called “Che Pari” ‘til 3:00 every morning and making my 8:30 a.m. class at La Salle University. So when people say you don’t know what work is, that was how I started college. How I ever made it through that first year was unbelievable. But then I figured out how to do it and what to do.

BD: Now were you just sitting in on different bands or did you have –

JC: Oh no, at that point I had my own –

BD: What was the name of your band?

JC: It was called Joey Maro and the Collegiates.

BD: Excellent, and what was the make up?

JC: It was five pieces, five pieces. It was – of course rock and roll was big and we had a guy who – four of the guys went to La Salle High School. Two of them were in my class, two of them were a year younger than me and one was a guitar player from another school. I believe Cardinal Dougherty had just opened. I think he was from Dougherty. So it was guitar, bass, drums, piano – and the piano player was the singer. He had a great voice and he did a great Elvis Presley – which he was the king of the mountain then. I did – I played the saxophone and the flute and the clarinet and we had an act. We played it. That summer after I graduated from high school, we played in Atlantic City seven nights a week.

BD: Money must have been pretty good to put you through college.

JC: It was relatively – comparatively then, absolutely. Oh yeah, because – well, but college – remember high school tuition was only \$300.00 and that didn't change. And my college tuition was

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JC: \$800.00 a semester. But don't forget, gas was \$0.16 a gallon, so it's all relative.

BD: Right, exactly. Wow, wow. Well kind of stepping back a little bit to your tenure at La Salle High School, what are some of the highlights of your high school years in the La Salle environment, in the school? Some highlights that you remember.

JC: Well first of all, I was the band guy. Band was very big and all my friends obviously were in the band and we had a lot of great experience. I mean, we were – as the La Salle High School is today still noted for music, we were noted for our bands. And I had great experience going to district band, district orchestra. I played – we used to have a contest, how many periods can you spend in the band room – all the guys who were in the music thing. And I think the one year when I was a junior, it was hard to beat. We got up to 28 periods in one week. We were able to go down to the band room and play – so the highlights like that. We won the bands at the Marr Contest, which was a very big – it was the only contest in that day. It was at the old Broadwood Hotel which is right across from Roman Catholic on Broad Street. And that was a big event because one of the judges was Maynard Ferguson, who was just the rising star.

BD: Sure, wow.

JC: So – but those things, and there were more but obviously I was not bored in high school. In fact, I don't know what the word "bored" means but I started there and met a lot of good buddies. Of course you know what happens when you're younger. You have a senior who's a friend and a couple of them were very good friends. And when they graduated, I know the feeling of what some of the students I have at La Salle High School today, when they're real friendly with a guy who's older than them then he graduates, you sort of feel, "Well what's gonna happen?" But from first hand experience, we had a great band and a great experience all through my life here. We had great teachers. I mean, in those days we had

– I had maybe one lay teacher a year. Brothers, and the brothers were very friendly. It was actually a brother who got me involved

BD: Yeah, and that leads to exactly my next question, which was who were some of the people at La Salle who had a major impact on your life?

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JC: There was a brother called Brother Michael, taught typing. And he was sort of one of those – it was like his job to be the freshman guy, although it wasn't official. And because I guess he saw I liked music, he came to me one day in the early spring. He said, "We're gonna take a trip with some of the older guys." And I had been friendly with these older guys 'cause one of them was from my neighborhood, and he said, "We're going up to New York. I think you might enjoy – we're gonna see a show." Now I'd never seen a Broadway musical, and of course my luck – he takes us to see *The King and I* with Yul Brenner and Catherine Gracin.

Now if you can imagine – I was then obviously 14, and we were in the back. We were about third row from the back in the orchestra, and I heard the overture. And in those days, especially for a *Roger and Hammerstein* show, they had 36 pieces in the pit and I said – and I can remember this, "I wanna do that." And that, without even knowing what it took to do that, but knowing it was because of that trip to New York and seeing that show with Yul Brenner. And the funny thing – as a revival in the '80s, Yul Brenner came with *The King and I* to the Academy of Music. I was hired to be the contractor – which means higher the orchestra. I played in the orchestra but I was also hired as assistant conductor. Yul Brenner was very friendly with the orchestra. He thought highly of it and he gave us a party one night, just us and him and a few of the other leads. And I had the opportunity to tell him about that story and the impression – I could still see him doing the part, which stuck in my mind.

So that was my freshman year in high school, and from that point on then I got really serious about what I wanted to do in music. It just so happened that I picked the – by the time I was a junior or senior, there was a teacher here, Joe Contonio who was the band director who just was one of those guys who would keep you busy all the time. And then my junior year, they hired a teacher to teach brass but he also taught us theory, Doc Reinhart, who later took over La Salle's program. And Doc Reinhart was a major influence on me and said to me, "You know something? I know a good

teacher for you.” And his name was Mike Wearer. And he introduced me to the man who I then stayed with until – he actually was the one who broke me into the theater because he was a famous player around Philadelphia. And when he recommended you – I mean, he recommended me my senior year in college. I mean I was four years studying with him.

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JC: So all these people came from La Salle High School. How I went from step to step – we had Brother Jeremy who was one of the greatest. He was my French teacher – that’s why I liked French. The principal name was Brother Francis – you just couldn’t forget him. Brother Joseph was the vice principal, I had him for religion for two years. He taught us – the band class in those days would have a separate band period when everybody was having religion so we would come in early to have religion. So I had him for religion, and it was funny. I actually – one of my math teachers, I actually still worked with up until a couple of years ago he was here. Edward Cannon.

BD: Brother Ed, sure.

JC: So, I mean I could go on and on about the – there was very – I just – I liked the brothers. What we did, playing Joe Contonio, the music program, I could – I never had a bad week or a bad day at La Salle High School when I was here. I enjoyed, wanted to go to school, stayed here the whole time as long as I could. They had to kick us out from school. And realize even when I did go home, it took me an hour to get home, but because of La Salle High School, then all of a sudden I started playing around in those days. There were a lot of concert bands, there were VFW bands and I actually played my first professional job when I was at the end of my freshman year in high school. I mean, I got paid a smart \$5.00 but it was a lot of money to me.

BD: *(Laughter)* Yeah well some of the questions I had listed you kinda answered, like where did you go to college was La Salle University, some of the highlights of your college years – obviously you were talking about going and playing in the band. Were there any other highlights of college years? Working with –

JC: Well of course I was in the ROTC band and you had to be in the ROTC in those days for the first two years. It just so happened that I loved the ROTC so I stayed in the ROTC and only by a fluke it wasn’t a war – I was able to almost be getting commission and

because I had been offered a job in the Forest theater, I knew if I went away for two years I was able to get out of that.

BD: When were you offered a job at the Forest Theater?

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JC: In my – well I can tell you – I was offered my job in my senior year at La Salle. But interesting, first of all, when I was in ROTC, John F. Kennedy came to La Salle College to give a speech and I was playing the end clarinet – what they call the concert master. And we had the big band sitting on the floor, he was on the stage. But right next to me was his wife.

BD: Wow.

JC: So I said – and I listened to him speak then, never knowing the history that would come from there, but in my career, starting with him and – who was president? Eisenhower. We had to play for something that Eisenhower did as a military band. I have played for every president since Eisenhower.

BD: Wow, every president.

JC: Every president since Eisenhower. I have been at something or other where they were honored or officiated or doing something.

BD: Like give us a couple of examples that – were you played.

JC: Well the last couple – they do a Christmas in Washington which is hosted by a president, whoever is in. And I've been doing that since the first Bush was in office. I mean, on and off and I did it for Clinton. I have done some events where there were more than one president. I was at an event for the guy who took Nixon's place right here at Valley Forge. He came to a rally –

BD: Ford.

JC: Ford.

BD: Gerald Ford.

JC: And he did – he was always – he always made fun. He had to get on the stage and we were in the pit, and he had to go up and do a

presentation or something and he tripped. I mean – which he always was noted for. So I did that. But in – and of course, I worked as much as I could because tuition was high and – but I would be working on the bands at the weekend. I worked at Hyers Root Beer. I delivered mail in the Christmas – I guess I just – it was just something that I did.

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BD: Sure. You mentioned the Forrest Theater, and seeing you down there playing, what do you – you were hired at the Forest Theater out of college?

JC: My senior year it was time, my teacher said – he was my – it had nothing to do with college, but I was a senior, but not only that but the Christmas week of the middle of my senior year, a show came to the Earliner Theater which no longer is in town. And Christmas is always a big time for musicians, and they needed players and it was my opportunity to get in. So my teacher recommended me and I went. And it was for a week, and the funny part about that week was in that show, it was a – they called it the Borsch Capades which was a Jewish vaudeville for want of better words. One of the leaders was Mickey Katz. Now Mickey Katz I loved ‘cause he was a great clarinet player and he was a comedian. Well Mickey Katz was Joel Grey’s father – and Joel Grey of course I’ve played many shows with him and just the last time a couple of years ago I said to myself, “I’m gonna go talk to him.” I’d say, “I played with your father,” because there are very few people who can say that. The father was at the end of the line and I was at the beginning of my career.

And don’t I go into his dressing room and he does it all the time – he has a picture of his father. And we had a great conversation. So here’s the star of Cabaret and Georgianne, etcetera that because of La Salle I could relate to and go back to. And the other thing is, it was a busy night – Saturday night is also a busy night, it was a very – during my senior year in the spring. And of course this was my big break in that show, I was in the theater. I actually worked in the theater. Well that winter – spring I’m sorry – Judy Garland was making her big comeback and they all thought she wouldn’t do anything. And this was – I wanna say April or May of 1961. Saturday night, all the top first call were busy. I get to play the Academy of Music behind Judy Garland. Now anybody who grew up remembering “Over the Rainbow,” that was one of the – I mean I couldn’t imagine that I was going to go any higher than that. And I played on the stage – actually had a featured solo behind her. And

I was scared to death, and that was the beginning of her comeback. Then she started her TV show, and it was something nobody could say.

Now because of that, there was a show coming in for the summer at the Forrest Theater and because I had work now and my name got

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JC: around, I got called for it because they needed my instruments. And I got called for a four week booking of a show called Flower Drum Song. Interesting thing about that is that Jack – the guy who then became a TV and the cop show and he was a comedian, singer – he was in that show and that show ran for nine weeks – summer. I never made that much money because the theater, what they call the doubles getting played for the instruments you're playing. That was the beginning of my career, which has been pretty interesting with the musical theater in Philadelphia. And I'm still at the Forrest Theater.

BD: Sure, when you were playing for there, when did you become the musical contractor down there? Are you still?

JC: I am still, yeah. In 1975, for Leonard Bernstein. And there was a new Leonard Bernstein show and we became close friends.

BD: Wow.

JC: And that really made my career because we spent – when you break in a brand new show, you spend 20 hours a day rehearsing new music and it was just – I was just lucky that's what happened. And from that and what he said – he was the guy who wrote a letter of recommendation which no one could ever – I have it framed at home from Leonard Bernstein. And that was it. It's the most glowing – I'm a little embarrassed by what he said in it, but that's when I started my contract. And now that's what I do in Philadelphia.

BD: So that's at the Forrest, or other places?

JC: At the Academy of Music also.

BD: That's where my sister said they saw you down there for Wicked last year. Wow, Leonard Bernstein, wow. So let's jump right to La Salle High School again –

JC: Well I can connect the Forrest and La Salle High School.

BD: That's what I was gonna say. How did you come back as a teacher to La Salle High School?

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JC: I – because I knew all the woodwinds, I had never thought about teaching per say in school.

BD: But that's what you got your degree in, right?

JC: In education, English ed, yeah. But I'd never intended to be a teacher. I was gonna be a musician.

BD: Right.

JC: But one of the music stores or companies needed a teacher. I believe it was St. Martin's in the circle in Juniata or – a nun wanted to start a band and they had a couple instruments already. They had four instrumentalists and because I knew these instruments, the company said, "Well why don't you start the band?" And I thought, "I don't know why I would wanna do that." And the next thing I know at the end of that year we had a 60 piece band and the word spread and the next thing, North Catholic needed a woodwind teacher. And then I went there and then I went to Bishop Kenrick Park – all of these were part time jobs. I taught at West Catholic. I taught at a place in New Jersey – St. Peter's in New Jersey and New Brunswick. I'd commute there for one day a week, and I started to do all this teaching and little by little, they'd say, "Well why don't you come here?"

Then I ended up with a full time job at Archbishop Wood High School. And when I was there, a brother came to La Salle High School to start the musical shows. And I had used a choreographer who he used. He started the musical comedies 40 years ago and we celebrated that just this past Sunday. And 40 years ago, he wasn't happy with whoever the musical director was for the first two years. 38 years ago, the choreographer that I had that he had said to him, "Come here, I want you to go see this guy." So he appears at a rehearsal for one of our big productions and he offered me the job here. Well – the job connected with the musical theater. And I said, "Sure! My alma mater, I came back and of course I came back and never left."

But with that, tying in with the Forrest Theater, when I was playing the Forrest Theater, many of the students that I had here at La Salle came through. Ron Jaworski came through with Chorus Line. Kate McCalley, who had been our lead in South Pacific. Ron was in Hello, Dolly! Kate came through with Les Mis and then later on,

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JC: Hugh Panaro came through with a couple shows that he was a lead, just starting as a second lead. And then it happened that it would be – I play in Philadelphia and there would be a student somewhere or other that had been. But so the La Salle – they were all people that I got to know from La Salle shows that here I am working as a professional musician in my nighttime job, and I'd be running into students, etcetera, etcetera.

BD: Wow, that's amazing. Phew. And I know a lot of your colleagues - - well you brought here to teach from there.

JC: Well yeah but – a staff of the best professional musicians from around. We've actually had former students who taught but they moved on to bigger and better things from La Salle High School, but then they went further.

BD: Wow. What was it like coming back to your alma mater to teach music and –

JC: To me it was – that was what I wanted and before you knew it I was offered a full time job. It was just like I'd never left. And of course I never looked at it as a job because I was just doing what I always did in high school. It was all about music and I got paid for it and then I had a good time and never looked at it – never worked a day in my life.

BD: That's a beautiful thing. What is – what do you think that some of the most important values that students learn here at La Salle? Like students in your tenure teaching here, what are some of the values that our students take?

JC: They learn the same thing that I learned and that you would learn now. I'm well aware of what a La Salle school is – a La Sallian approach. They learn to respect everyone. They learn there is a place for everyone and that you have to be understanding of your students or your fellow people. It goes without saying you got the best education you could ever get and we take that for granted

because it's always been that way. They're top students. I've worked with the best – my colleagues are the most serious. My students have been a pleasure. The parents that I've met, the people that I've met, the friends that I've made – we are friends. My whole life is surrounded by La Salle. One of my best friends is a Christian brother who I met at La Salle High School. My son – I

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JC: only have one son, he went to La Salle High School. I have two daughters that went to La Salle University. I have a nephew who went to La Salle High School, was in the music program and went to La Salle University. And I have a granddaughter graduating from La Salle University this year. And it's the whole thing is they're attracted by the La Sallian approach to life, which is a great approach.

BD: I agree.

JC: Education.

BD: Myself as well, graduated here, my second Master's degree from La Salle University and I absolutely agree.

JC: Yeah, and it is – it's really sometimes hard to explain. I used to say – they would say, "What is the difference between us and say one of the Jesuit schools?" When very easily I would answer that question by, "Well, always a good institution – both are good institutions or whatever, any good place you get an education is great." But La Salle approach was always – here let's look at all the options, all the great roads you could take, and then we were given the option to choose which one. Some of the other places say there's only one way to get to that point, and this is the way. So I would have never worked – that's not my style. I don't – I know why I work so well at La Salle High School. And as I've gotten older, I've then got a more personal answer, and my personal answer is, "What is it about La Salle High School?" And very honestly, after all these years connected with it and having so many family members here – my wife has been teaching here for 25 years.

BD: Right.

JC: Yeah. I find that La Salle taught me how to deal with all the mistakes I would make in my life.

BD: Wow. Very profound.

JC: Well I had to figure that out. It only took me 68 years to do that but I did figure it out.

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BD: So what might be one or two of your fondest memories as a teacher here at La Salle? I know that might be hard to do, but is there maybe one or two things here in your tenure as a teacher here that are just beyond anything else?

JC: I can get – real fast, I mean the first thing that comes to mind is this past Sunday, we celebrated 40 years of La Salle music theater. And I was here for 38 of those years. La Salle is celebrating 150 years and this occasion, the director who was in the shows I conducted when she was a student in the '70s has been our director. Working with her for the past 23 years, and she's leaving for health reasons, she is not gonna take on the burden of putting on a musical with teenagers. But I – we had a big celebration. And we thought the way to honor the 40 years – we invited alumni back from the past 40 years, and it was very interesting because the people came back for – every show but one was represented. And it goes to – Tony Janton was in the shows here. The parents – I don't know, but the Anne Hathaway, who's a big movie star now – her mother and father met on this stage. They came back. There are people from all walks of life. My granddaughter was in the show. Two of my daughters were in the show. Some of my kids played in the pit. So my granddaughter and daughters who were in the shows came back. And there is a picture – it's on the website – of the whole cast onstage, that is an unbelievable picture. I'm of course in the picture and my life is there. That's 38 years of people.

BD: I played in the pit band for a little bit my senior year.

JC: Yeah, everybody has done it. So it's been a kind of a – and I can't say that I haven't had a moment like that every month or so. I mean.

BD: Wow, that's amazing.

JC: Just been great occasions. Great things.

BD: I liked our trip in '92.

JC: Yeah! That's right.

BD: Went to Florida, to Disneyworld.

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JC: I took this band and played in Christian Brothers schools in Europe and Austria and Germany. I've been with bands that played in Toronto in the Christian brothers schools. I have been all over the world at Christian brother schools. Well, tomorrow – Wednesday we're taking a band to New York, to La Salle Academy in Manhattan.

BD: Wow, that's amazing. In your estimation, who are some people that you've worked with at La Salle that embody what La Salle is really like?

JC: Well, almost all the Christian brothers that were here. Dave Diehl, who I worked with – I mean I knew him when he was in high school, he was on the championship football team and I was in the band. We were a couple years apart. Marty Stanzack, who bleeds blue and gold. Joe Colistra, and then – I mean they are the people that I know and became lifelong friends. We still get together once a week at least. And then dealing with people like you, former students.

BD: That's great. Joe and Dave are two other guys I interviewed – yourself and Joe and – all excellent. You were inducted into La Salle Hall of Fame a few years ago –

JC: That was a big moment.

BD: And that's what I wanted to kinda – I asked Joe and Dave the same thing, being that all three of you guys are monumental figures in this history. What was that like, and how do you want to be seen? This is the last question. How do you wanna be seen in the eyes of future La Salle students and faculty?

JC: That's a hard question for me, 'cause –

BD: Or what do you think your legacy –

JC: Legacy is that I made sure that La Salle's music program was always the best that it could be and the best of anything, and the legacy lives on.

BD: Yes it does.

[0:39:49]

JC: Sometimes, a program – whatever it be – a team or a subject or an art thing – it's connected with one individual. I'd rather be thought of as – yes the music program that exists 30 years from now is still rated as good as the one that exists at this present time. That would be my legacy, that the music program and La Salle are always ranked No. 1. And if that happens, I'll be a happy guy.

BD: It's been that way for a long time and it's a lot because of you. Mr. Ciccimaro, thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me and talk about La Salle. I appreciate it and thank you very much.

JC: Bill, it's my pleasure. Thank you.

[End of Audio]
