

July 18, 1988 Wally Splettschesser, Madison

1. Born in Madison. Folks came over from Germany
2. Father was a musician in Germany, was in conservatory - saxophone & clarinet player continued music on a part time basis in Madison. Worked in brass foundry, played weekends. Got Wally interested - let him choose his instrument - accordion.
3. Father played w/ Bernie Henderson, Sonny Brown, Norm Kingsley to name a few. Had his own band called Otto's German band played over WIBA. At Noon for
4. Repertoire was old German music. Wally has cases of the sheet music and its getting old and brittle
5. Sister played piano, mother sang in German
6. Wally started playing. Father let him pick instrument - accordion, took lessons from Mrs. Marion W. Smith, she retired, then learned from Rudy Burkhalter. He had Swiss brogue was a fine teacher.
- Understands German but not Swiss
7. Rudy taught everything - American Polish Classical
8. Began playing in bands at 15. Went had to accompany him - Same band his dad played with. Then Roger Bright, Lawrence Duckow

9. Madison Music Scene. Every small town had a dance hall. Old Eagles Hall on Wilson Street - Turner Hall. They all played Old Time music and people danced.

10. Mainly Wisconsin bands played. Joey Tentillo, Bernie Henderson. There were quite a few - now it's hard to find a decent OT band ~~of the~~ in Madison.

11. Worked w/ Uncle Julius Orch 2 nights. Bobby Lorentz was his regular. He was a Postal Employee like Wally.

12. Wally was a letter carrier and clerk in Madison P.O. now retired. Worked 40-60 hours at PO + played 2 or 3 times on the weekend.

13. Madison OT sound is a combination of all the types - German, Scandinavian + Bohemian. There were Italian, Germans - styles seemed to blend cause everybody liked music + liked to dance.

14. Retired 5 years ago.

15. Played w/ Francis McMahon for quite a few years - played 3-4 nights/week, appeared on Francis' TV shows + In Ring's TV shows.

16. ~~Strong~~ Storms are an occupational hazard - Trees down over the road after tornadoes. Fog - took all night to drive from Monroe to Appleton and had morning radio broadcast.

17. Worked w/ Duchow 2 years. Lived in hotel in Appleton. Forgot accordions no time for broadcast.
18. Travel w/ Duchow - Corn Palace, Trianon Ballroom in Chicago.
19. Boogie liked to dance then NW it's coming back w/ student at the Essen Haus and after football games.
20. There isn't really a Wisconsin accordion sound. ~~The~~ ~~are~~ Styles are more individual - what you listened to.
21. Dick Metko has his own style
22. Bobby Lorentz + Wally grew up together - Wally stood up at his wedding - wife was strictly a Country Western fan. Said it'd never last - They're still together.
23. Son plays C.W. Wally doesn't like it much

Joe Germak interview

1. Family came from Poznan area village
2. Father worked on Ore docks in Duluth - later barber, shoemaker + musician - father played clarinet, violin - Polish music
3. Music in home. Dad would have practice sessions ^{at home}. Put clarinet in sink to soak it. Concertina, violin, clarinet were the instruments

- played polkas, obereks, etc.
4. Played more obereks than now. a toss up between Polkas + obereks + other variations in 3/4 time: Mazurka + several other 3/4
 5. ^{mod}Waltz is slowest, Ot waltz, Mar, obereks gradually faster
 6. Began to play age 8. Dad chose concertina for him. Dad's concertina player had a large family - ran up a bill at shoemaker shop - worked off bill w/ lessons for Joe. Dad killed in WW II so Joe never got to play w/ him.
 8. at age 12 began playing at a resort 12 mi N of Duluth every weekend - age 12-15. Started band in HS when 16. Played OT music + fox trots. All ages came to dances

9. In Jr. year of HS, 1939, started his band.
Had HS friend as banjo/guitar George Groll.
Sax/clarinet player. Later married his sister, Drums,
Wallace Cielik?
10. Played Pine Lake Pavillion - driving home in 1957 Plymouth.
Switches were in center. Passenger accidentally turned off
headlight - drove into water filled ditch -
had to scramble to save the instrument.
11. Played a variety of Bohemian, German + Polish
12. Originally learned tunes from concertina teacher ^{John Kosczelak}
and parent 78 rpm records.
13. at that time he had Vitak-Elsner music - ordered
tunes that he figured he liked
14. Polish element remained - but if he plays a German
tune he tries to play it their way.
15. Began teaching 35 years ago. He had been w/
same group 20 years - some of the fellows were talking
about leaving - began to teach older boy +
oldest daughter to play. Eventually taught
many. Now has over 30 student - maybe taught 1000.
16. Worked 18 years for a ^{Westinghouse} company - got laid off
wanted to go into music more seriously, to be less dependent
on a job
17. Stresses proper chord work + tempo in his
teaching. Proper melody. When it gets too
improvisational it isn't understood by the
average person
18. Little Wally - mainly drummer/singer - average concert
player

14. Don Gralat - style good for Slovenian music - hard to do the chords

20. Hank Thumander - good show, taking it far out

21. Role of Concy in Polish band - almost the main instrument. He sees it as the core of the band. Bands without Concy lose something

22. We used "bellowing" on accordion to follow some of the lead band - it got overused

23. 4 piece versus 6 piece group - instrumentation use of violin

24. Concy keyboard changed over the years. Not satisfied w/ left hand arrangement. Has developed a full scale on left hand + has published instructions. Enable player to be going in the direction and find the proper bass note

25. Tone of Concertina - Plate reeds and tapered reeds. - (3 medium + 1 low)

Change speed to $7\frac{1}{2}$

Play tune w/ plate reeds, then tapered reed concertina. Tapered reeds are cleaner sound

26. German style tune Schneider Polka

Polish style - Helen Polka

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Samburo or Automobile Polka

bat to $3\frac{3}{4}$

27. Son Bill plays out + travels more
Bill + Greg (drummer) played w/ him from age
10 or 11 through HS.

Greg has a Country + light rock band

28. If another

Polka band does a country tune and makes
it OK, they'll learn it.

29. Requests at OT dances. Play Country + slower
tunes at weddings. Some gigs are polka
Others need to play more Country + waltz

30. Play 2 plate reed concertinas - high octave

Explains wet vs. dry + musette tuning

Some players like to have switches to take musette in or out
Too much makes Joe tired - likes cleaner sound

Star - Semi dry tuned