

## **Bonus Interview Notes**

### **Connie Atkinson and Frank Collett**

by Bruce Spiegel

Sometimes people not connected to the process of making a film, ask me the same question...ahhh “why did you do this” meaning for me it’s the age-old question of what’s in it for me. They can’t comprehend all the effort. The film takes a long time, it costs you a lot of money to go talk and interview people where you have to pay to get them. A lot of time and energy spent and that’s before you have to go into becoming the ‘spokesman’ for the film a whole task unto itself. It gets harder and harder to get your finished show to the market; people don’t acknowledge you, in fact, for so much hard work you sometimes don’t get a response from distributors. You have to be tough and have enough fortitude to carry on. Many times, like today, I’m thinking why bother with this. Let the world move on without you. Who wants to know about this interview with not such famous people?

It’s because there is a magic and essence that happens when you arrive at someone’s house and are invited in to share their hopes, their aspirations, their dreams, and their accomplishments. You are invited in and you get to share with them their collective stories of people that have had a far different experience than yours and for that brief moment, you get to understand what they go thru and you have a real “moment” with them. And now looking back you realize how great those hours were and you were very lucky to have had them. So I feel very fortunate to have had these great moments with people and sharing their stories. You get the joy of listening to their collective experiences and hear first-hand, what their tale of their lives really was.

#### ***Bonus section interview with Connie Atkinson and Frank Collett.***

So with that I am publishing two extra “bonus” things, my shared experience with interviews from the late Connie Atkinson and Frank Collett. They are unique and special and they remain as two “classic” examples of what it is to make a film like ***Bill Evans: Time Remembered.***

Connie Atkinson was probably Bill Evan’s closest friend and spent 3 years in high school and 4 years in college together. They played together in dance bands all over New Jersey working in Connie’s fathers’ band, and then in college at South Eastern College in Hammond, playing in small groups and bigger bands in the State of Louisiana.

Connie remembers what Bill was like as he was honing his skill and becoming the player he was. I spent a whole day with him and his wife Fern. He showed me some great pictures of Bill growing up and becoming the talented piano player he became. I actually stayed with them in their home in an adjoining apartment when the interview was over. Connie passed away in 2009 from cancer.

Frank Colett was just so much fun and relaxed to be with. I felt immediately comfortable with him, like an old friend. I set up close to the piano, because he would play something that illustrates what he was talking about. It was all very spontaneous and natural.

Frank Collett was actually Frank Taglieri from Brooklyn New York. He was a child prodigy with perfect pitch and made it a life long study to transpose all of Bill Evans intricate voicings; such as "Spring is Here". Frank played with trios his whole life and was a devoted Bill Evans fan. He talks about having Bill at his house and going over some changes he was refining for inclusion on an album.

He was an accompanist for Sarah Vaughn and Carmen McRae. He was just so full of life, and so full of music, and you can hear in his playing his beautiful touch and soulful playing when he plays some renditions of "Turn Out the Stars", "Waltz for Debby" and my favorite 'Elsa'. Frank Collett didn't blow his own horn and didn't have a big ego, but he was a beautiful cat, who had such a high regard for the level of playing in Bill Evans music, that it was just great spending some time with him. I am so sorry he didn't get a chance to see my film because I know he would have liked it. Frank Collette passed away in 2016.