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## James "Rev Cool" Carter: Dayton Music History Project

James Carter

Matthew Mercer

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**WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Dayton Music History Project**  
**Interview with James “Rev Cool” Carter, March 14, 2019**

**Interview Information**

Interview date: March 14, 2019

MM: Matthew Mercer (MM)

Interviewee: James Carter (JC)

**Interview Transcript**

**Matthew Mercer:** All right. Um, I’m Matthew Mercer. I’m here with the Dayton Music History Project. I’m here with Rev Cool.

**James “Rev Cool” Carter:** Thank you.

**MM:** And, so we're just gonna sit down, have a conversation, and talk about the- the vibrant music history of Dayton and, uh, and your career.

JC: Okay.

**MM:** So, we’ll just start off with some questions, here. Uh, can you give us some, just like a brief, personal background? Were you born in Dayton?

JC: Well, I was born in Dayton. Grew up in the East Side, basically. Um, probably really didn't get heavily involved in music until after high school. So- But uh, there were some groups I remember being around. I especially remember the sort of soul group, London Fog and the Continentals, so I really enjoyed them a lot.

JC: They were what they called a salt and pepper group. There was, uh, a white backup band, the London Fog, and a black vocal group. And they were the Continentals.

MM: Mm hmm. [affirmative]

JC: A three-piece set. At one point, there was a woman in the Continentals, at one point there wasn't, so. And uh, I think growing up in Dayton, I think one point that is very, very important about Dayton is that, um, it's very similar to Detroit, I feel. Both were, uh, at one time, very, very industrial towns, auto-making plants. Lot of people came up from the south to be in Motown, or, "Funktown". And so, we share a lot of that type of background history, and both are very much musical cities. So, you have people coming from- black people coming from the black diaspora, from the southern states, and you have a lot of white people from Appalachia, and we talk about that. You're talking about rock and roll [laughs]. Anything else?

MM: Yeah. Um, just to move right along, what was your first exposure to local music here in Dayton?

JC: The local music here in Dayton? That's pretty ... Any particular local music? [laughs]

MM: Oh... no.

JC: Okay. Well, in my personal experience, um, of course we'd see a lot of um, sort of like garage bands. Um, there, there was a couple clubs, small little teen clubs near me, I can't really remember their names, in East Dayton. There was also um, over in Forest Park Plaza there was like, I think they called it The Hullabaloo Club, and The Caverns, a lot of groups came over there, actually. But my own personal involvement in music really didn't get started until probably around 1970, 1971. I was always a fan of music, you know, always had listened to cassette tapes, listened to vinyl, made tapes off the radio. We took a little cassette recorder, put next to the radio, you know, "Oh, I have to time this just right so I get my favorite song" [laughs] and then play and stop, you know? And

that was my mix tape. Very sophisticated. And I think at one point my friend Dale accidentally drove off at a drive-thru theater with a- with a speaker, off of the drive-thru thing.

MM: Mm hmm [affirmative].

JC: So, he just incorporated that into his sound system of his car. [laughs]

MM: [laughs] Nice.

JC: So, we used to ... we'd have a cassette tape actually running on batteries, I hooked them through the speakers.

MM: Very cool. Uh, did you gravitate to any certain genre of music?

JC: Um, at first I'd say more rock stuff, and that was probably incorporated with a lot of- because, you know, around 1970 and even before that, there was a lot of Vietnam War issues going on. The Vietnam War was going on, the draft was taking place, so, um, there was a lot of protests. So, of course a lot of music went along with that as well. And then also there was the whole movement with the counter-culture at that time. And, um, there was a lot of concerts in the park- in the parks, really, free concerts in the parks, and so I started to get more and more involved that way, and actually put on a couple of concerts. And for the life of me I can't remember the names of the bands, but a couple concerts at McKinley Park, which I'm not sure if it exists or not anymore, but it was right across from the Dayton Art Institute.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: And that's when the art institute was still actually a school, and so there were students that lived right in the apartments by the park, there, too. So, it was sort of a vibrant scene, and Dayton View at that time was sort of a counter-culture type area. And

it was pretty integrated, too. So, there was- it was kind of a fun place to be at that particular time. And then, um, as time progressed for me, um, I was traveling quite a bit to different parts of the country, just because I'd been wanting to see them. Uh, I traveled down to Miami for the protests at the Republican Convention at the time, to Detroit, places like that. But the key thing was, I kept checking out music the whole time. And we kept... started doing like a lot of benefit shows in Dayton to help with various causes. Whether it might be starting a food co-op or counter-culture causes. So, we'd do benefit shows. Well, as that went on, I was... one time I was up in New York and I had some friends that were Yippies at that time, that lived on Bleecker Street. And if you look where Bleecker Street is, it runs right at the Bowery, and Bleecker and Bowery is where CBGB's was.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, I was staying like doors from CBGB's. So, I'd go down there, you know, check stuff out. This was like, you know, like the mid-70's. So, you'd see these incredible acts, but I had no idea at that time that that was gonna be, you know, the beginning of an international sound in music.

MM: Right.

JC: And then my friends, uh, some friends in New York started doing loft parties with bands. And so, I would see some of the New York bands up there, but also they had bands traveling through. So, I met the band- I met a band from Canada called DOA, from Vancouver, and they were what, like, some people consider a hardcore punk band. And I got to be friends with those guys, and friends with another band from Vancouver called the Subhumans. And, uh, they were a couple of the earliest bands I brought from out of town to Dayton, that were like touring acts. And I remember, uh, Ken Lester, who was sort of like the manager of DOA, he said, "Well, you know how to do a political rally", and I go, "Yeah" and he goes, "Well, you just do the same thing, except to promote a band." [Laughs] and I said, "Oh, good point." So, that's sort of how I got into doing, uh,

promoting bands. And also I did- I forgot about this- I did a couple of “smoke-in's”, because I was advocating legalization of marijuana. [Talking to camera] I don't smoke now. [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: [Talking to camera] I'm super clean. The most perfect person in the world. [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: Got that, Mr. Camera? [laughs] And then, um, so we did like a couple of big rallies, and we had music with those as well. And most of it were your local groups, but I brought in on one of them- I can't remember what year it was, late 70's- I brought in a group from the Akron-Cleveland scene, and they were called Human Switchboard. And their first record was produced by Pere Ubu's Dave Thomas, so they were deep into- sort of like the Dead Boys-Cleveland-bizarro scene. So, uh, they play at one of the smoke-in's and people didn't know quite what to take of those guys. But they were first, that was- they just had a one single out at that time- so, um, that sort of gave me a connection also with the whole Cleveland and Akron scene. So, at a certain point in the late 70's I said, "Well, there's nobody around here doing shows with this type of music, so I guess I should start doing that." So, me and a few friends started doing that and I started working with some local groups. Um, one was like, sort of- I guess you would call them new wave, a new wave group, at that time, they were called the Dates. And they had, uh several... they had a number of members over time, but the two main members was, uh, Jeff Keating, who was a drummer, and Jerry Smith was, uh, the guitarist. And then the bassist changed, and then the vocalist changed, too, a couple of times. And so, I worked with them because they had a strong... they developed a strong local following, worked with them and would tie in a national group with them. Or, a national tour, not a national group, but... and so a lot of times they would play together. And then we'd meet more and more like-minded music people. There were some down at, uh, some guys that ran-

which is still there- Second Time Records. Second Time Around Records. And they're still there, you know?

MM: Yeah.

JC: And so a lot of clerks worked there who were into music. So, we started doing some shows, and the first punk rock shows we did were actually out at a place called Brookwood Hall, if you've heard of that at all. I think it's been torn down. But it was- it was a total [laughs]- a total crap hole. [laughs] It was terrible.

MM: I've been to many places like that.

JC: Yeah, it was like a cinder block building, no working bathrooms, it was along the Miami river, got flooded all the time. It's like- but so, we brought a whole bunch of acts through there. Like, DOA played there, that was probably one of the first punk shows in Dayton. And then, uh, we had a whole slew of acts there, I can't even remember them all, you know?

MM: Yeah.

JC: And then, um, then also there was like- I feel sorry for this church, there was a local church in my neighborhood, in Dayton View, run by the Unitarian Universalists, and they were sort of, like, open to everything, right? So, we used the rec center and did a couple shows there as well, and some benefits there. We brought in, uh, one national group, we brought in the Longriders from- I think they were in L.A. at that time. And they were on their way to England and so they stopped, and they played at the church, with the Libertines from Cincinnati, and a Dayton band called the Rulers. Uh, and we brought in [laughs] brought in a stage, put it in this little church rec room, [laughs], and then, uh, I can't believe it, then the next day was Sunday, and I think the guy promised to clean up after the show, but must've forgot.

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, the church was [laughs] filled up with beer cans and stuff. They weren't too excited about that. But, um- and also at that point, because I had these sort of political inclinations, there was also something called rock against racism, going on in England, with the Clash, and then the reggae groups like Steel Pulse and Aswad, and they had massive concerts there. Massive, you know? But we never got the same thing going here. So we had- we started a coalition of various people, in cities around the whole... around the Midwest. So, we had- am I rambling on too much?

MM: Oh, no. This is, this is what I'm looking for.

JC: Okay, so we had rambling conversations, all over the Midwest. But anyway [laughs]. We hooked up with similar thinking people around the Midwest and we each had- actually had a conference at that Unitarian church, until they kicked us out. So, [laughs] they let us have a conference there and then we had people from, um, well, they weren't from the Midwest, but Toronto- uh, Hamilton Ontario, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, uh, Lexington, Louisville, did I say Columbus? Columbus, um, Portsmouth, I think Portsmouth, Ohio, little tiny city on the river. And some other places as well. And so, we decided to put on like- have a coalition of anti-racist music groups, and work on helping each other, supporting each other on touring, but also help spread anti-racist things. Because at that time also, there was that whole skinhead movement starting up- oh, Chicago, we had people from Chicago- all over through various parts of the country, so we thought one way to- if we had a like sort of a united front against that, we would... it'd be more discouraged. And actually, the first many years of HONK[?] in Dayton, none of the skins every showed up. They did show up once, and Ed Pittman from the Toxic Reasons, and Louie Lerma who's now in Team Void- uh, he's "El Muerto"- beat the crap out them and they never came back [laughs]. So, and I think that was at the Unitarian- at poor little Universal Unitarian church. So anyway, we would exchange groups and that would have concerts all over the place. So, just in Dayton I would have let's say The Dancing Cigarettes, from Bloomington, would come in to play, and then Our Echoes of

Faith, from Chicago, or we'd have the various Cleveland groups, like The Waitresses, Chi-Pig, Human Switchboard, The Action. And the guy from The Action was actually a brother of Lux Interior, from the Cramps. We'd have people from Columbus come play, Lexington, Louisville, and we'd exchange and all us would go there and develop sort of a whole network of groups. And also, we'd have like the Vancouver groups come out, and we actually had, um... so, that was one way we developed the music. I think I'm rambling on that point. There's... any other questions?

MM: Uh, yeah. Um, so when you were, younger, did you strive to want to become a-like a producer?

JC: No, it just sort of happened.

MM: Just kind of-

JC: Yeah, just happened.

MM: Happened over time?

JC: Yeah, I sort of have a theory of- I remember Wright State English Department used to have a literary magazine called Praxis. Do they still have that?

MM: I don't know. I don't think so. They shut down our newspaper so-

JC: Right, but it's called Praxis. But I think "praxis" means, to put it in a sort of a nonintellectual means, it means you learn by doing. And so that was my sort of philosophy. "Well, okay, we need a fan-zine? Well, we'll just do it", you know? "We need to make a record? Well, we'll just do it." "We need to put on a show, we'll just do it". Well, why should we wait for somebody else to do it?

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, that was sort of my theory. And I actually thought there was enough going on in Dayton at the time that, you know? Why couldn't you, you know? If they could have a scene up in Akron or San Francisco, you know, why couldn't we have one? So that was basically my, uh, interpretation of it.

MM: We briefly touched on how, um, McKinley Park was kind of a very integrated kind of scene-

JC: Uh huh.

MM: -where a lot of people can really come together. And Dayton's really had kind of a, uh, a mixed history on segregation and integration issues.

JC: Uh huh, that's true.

MM: Um, did you see any real divide in Dayton, like as you were coming through your career?

JC: Uh, as far as race and class go, oh yeah, I would say totally. Because, uh, I mean, it's clearly defined between East Dayton and West Dayton. Maybe not as much today, but over the years there has been, you know? And as far as class, you know, I mean, everything changes, everything's in a flux, but obviously you have the very- some very wealthy suburbs-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -and then when things get gentrified in the city, and people who were living there before are no longer welcome, or could no longer afford to live there, so instead of figuring a way to incorporate both, usually people just... get the boot, so, um-

MM: Do you think that had, uh, had any kind of effect on like the music scene in Dayton at all?

JC: Um, hmm. You know, I think musicians tend to overcome that a little bit faster than the general population. Because, um, because even when we're doing rock shows, um, there was a real good guitarist, African-American guitarist named Sisco that would play with a lot of the bands. We had, uh, there was an all-black punk group called Blackmail. I think Tony Houston is still around and he's playing in like a blues band now. We brought in a band from Columbus called Screaming Urge, and- with Mike Rock was the leader of that group, which was another sort of mixed-race rock band. Um, we had- quite often I would put on bills I would have a reggae band and a rock band together. I always had the intention of, like, I think people should overcome separation. And one time we tried, we worked with Dennis Stewart at the Walnut Hills bar, and he had- this lasted a couple months- we had a... an occasion night, we called it "Funk Meets Punk", and we'd get a punk band and team them up with a funk group, and put them on the same bill. Which was sure to guarantee that audiences from both people's groups would come. [laughs]

MM: That's very cool.

JC: Not totally, but that's-

MM: Yeah. That's understandable.

JC: Sometimes when you market things, it's kind of hard to market inclusion.

MM: Yeah. So, at some of the other conversations and interviews we've sat down for, we kind of discussed how the music scene has really changed over the years, um-

JC: Uh huh.

MM: Would you say that the Dayton music scene of today is missing anything, in particular?

JC: You know, I'm kind of out of touch. I don't think I could really speak on that, that well. Uh, because when I go places, I still see a lot of bands out there, you know? And, like there was a group of a bunch of young guys from, I think Oakwood, called Manray, I thought they were fantastic. You know? They only- they put out two releases and then they just vanished. But yeah, they were fantastic for those- those two releases. So, and people who just keep coming and going. Uh, for me to- to criticize or say something's missing from anything going on, I don't know if I can.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: I think there maybe a little less intention of groups trying to make it on a regional scene or a national scene. A lot of people seem content just to play right here. Which to me, is neither bad nor good. But it'd be kind of nice for people to get out more.

MM: Yeah.

JC: Uh, I think that digital release stuff sort of has helped- but also hurt- groups getting their material out. Because if you just put something digitally out, and not have to worry about doing the production of something, I think it gets almost to be not as much of a push on the artists part. "Oh, we got it out. We'll wait for somebody to find it online." You know?

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, that's the only thing I would have, and I really can't be too critical.

MM: Yeah.

JC: I... there's too many, just great musicians.

MM: Yeah. It's like, uh, we typically talk about like the dinner club scene that used to be very prevalent in Dayton.

JC: Uh huh. I know nothing about that. [laughs]

MM: But yeah, I don't know anything about it. Sounds like it would be a great time, but from my experience with Dayton's music scene, I just, a lot of the music that's coming through wouldn't really fit that kind of-

JC: Uh huh.

MM: -that kind of environment and atmosphere. Um, but yeah, who do you think were like some of the best bands to come out of Dayton?

JC: To come out of Dayton in total?

MM: Yeah. If you had to pick like a top 10.

JC: I don't know.

MM: Or even top five.

JC: Um, I think as far as, uh, punk rock, Toxic Reasons. As far as maybe just a funk music, I mean there's just so much. I think there is a lot of undiscovered funk groups that aren't really well known that weren't signed nationally, I kind of like some of those a little bit better. I like uh, um, you know how The Players are great but also like, Robert Warren with the Untouchables, I thought were kind of cool.

JC: There was a really good group called The Sidewinders, that you don't hear too much about, that were like, not totally instrumental, but they did a lot of instrumentals, funk instrumentals. I like them. I'm sort of investigating a lot of older stuff recently, so, maybe when my head is going that direction. I really liked the London Fog and the Continentals when I was growing up, but they weren't made national, they made like a regional record, never made it nationally. Um, yeah, of course, Guided by Voices does a great job, you know. They're constantly touring, probably put out more records than anybody in the history of the world. Uh, you know, like the Deal sisters. Sure, they made it. I guess sort of made it outside of Dayton first, but, you know, still live here.

MM: Yeah.

JC: I've... that's hard for me to make a list of-

MM: Oh, yeah.

JC: Any, any group-

MM: Yeah, it's just-

JC: I like so much of it.

MM: Yeah.

JC: It's such... and actually, the more I investigate the older music, I find more and more stuff that's really, really cool, you know? You probably run into... like that guy, I forget, the guy that does Captain Crunch and the Crew. They had a nice 45. You know? Uh, I thought it was good, you know? There's a group called Pictorian Skiffuls, have you heard of them? They were kind of cool.

MM: Yeah.

JC: It was a good group, you know? And they have all put out little 45's, you know, that probably aren't that well known. I think they're great, you know? And some of the stuff is really good. I did, um, besides promoting shows, I- you know, I had a record label, too. I called that I Wanna Records. Did you want to talk about that at all?

MM: Yeah. For sure.

JC: Okay, well we had... I put out a bunch of different stuff.

JC: Well the- the first, the Obvious record came out is disputed between me and Bob how that came out, but that's okay. [laughs] Uh, and then, um, we put out, um, a group called the Highwaymen, and then we were too naïve and stupid to realize that Willie Nelson had a group called the Highwaymen and that was- Well we were. [laughs] There was also "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore" by the Highwaymen, so those guys changed their name to uh, Loose Diamonds. And then, uh, I think another group, another original group, um, Mark Patterson from the Highwaymen is now playing with, um, Son Volt. It's a- Son Volt. And he was also the original drummer with the Toxic Reasons, so he's played with a ton of people, I mean, Marsha Ball, just, just a whole bunch of people he's toured with. And then the lead singer from what was the Highwaymen, Troy Campbell, he's living in Austin, and he's, he did the Loose Diamonds, has had a solo career, he still does solo work, The most interesting thing is he started a House of Songs in Austin and in Arkansas. And he brings in artists from like other nations and other places and then they work together with local musicians and then they try to create something new. And that's going on in both Austin and in uh, Little Rock so I think that's, that's pretty cool. And then I did a group called The Obvious, they were like more of a young, snotty punk band, and they had a song called "Home", and because I'm so responsible, I made them record it twice, because one version said "Shitty Home."

MM: [laughs]

JC: [laughs] I said "Well, nobody's going to play that on the radio." [laughs] So they recorded both, both versions. But actually, that got a pretty good review, like in The Village Voice, and it mentioned that. "It must be a good song to record it twice without shit." [laughs] So, um, and all those records got a pretty good distribution and, uh, and write up's, and charting on the College Music Journal. Um, and I did a compilation called "Hard to be Cool in an Uncool World", which had a bunch of different groups on it. It had, uh, [sighs], True Believers, from Austin... I can't go through the whole list... Uh, Human Switchboard, we had- The Obvious did something for it, from Dayton. Um, lots of groups from just all over the country. Just um... Mecca Normal, from Vancouver, um, a bunch of different- it's a pretty all over the place type album. And I guess that my philosophy behind that was just to... create a record that would have just what I thought were cool bands from different places that you wouldn't normally hear, basically.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And then, um, that got a lot of... whole bunch of good reviews and charted really well on the college charts. And had, well, let's see, I know Tuba Blues, which were an interesting group, they had... they had a tuba- [laughs]

MM: Yeah.

JC: ...in the group. [laughs] I thought that was interesting, but I don't know how much everybody else did, but-

MM: [laughs]

JC: I thought it was good.

MM: I would go just for the pun.

JC: [laughs]

MM: Tuba Blues. Got a tuba? Alright.

JC: Okay. [laughs] Then, um, at a certain point I decided, well, I'm having kids. You know? I had to figure out what I'm going to do. So, um, I had- it's kind of hard to do tons and tons of live shows and have little kids, so I figured, well, I have to either be a father, or be a rock promoter. So, I just shot for the father side.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: And, um, I kept doing my radio show, on WYSO. And I still do that to this day. So, then, I just- and then actually the label continued. I basically said people could- if you want to put something out, you can just say I put it out. And you can put it out. So, we had like four or five groups that did that, but it was fine with me, because I had a little bit of distribution. You know? And then, I'm not saying we got paid well by the distribution, but we had a distribution. And uh-

MM: Is that still active today?

JC: The label?

MM: Yeah.

JC: Just in my mind. [laughs]

MM: Your mind? It's like if a band came through and offered something like that, saying that-

JC: Oh, they could use it. Sure. I mean, I'd just say talk and clear it with me.

MM: Yeah.

JC: Um, but the distribution is totally different, because everything's digital now.

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, uh, I don't know how to do that, really.

MM: Yeah.

JC: I could figure it out, I guess, but I just don't know how to do it. Because I never had to.

MM: Yeah.

JC: But I had to, like, actually take vinyl, put it into a cardboard box-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -put press in it, tape it up, bring it to the post office and mail it, immediate mail, or something.

MM: Yeah.

JC: Hundreds. You know? So, and then give the distributors, and find someone who's willing to sell it in Italy or wherever-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -and then figure out how I'm gonna get my money from the guy living in England, who it got distributed to, you know, which isn't always easy.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, people tell me they've seen records all over the place. Well, I didn't get paid for that. [laughs] But anyway, um, then I had a fanzine, too. And that was called "I Wanna", too. I Wanna magazine, I Wanna record, I Wanna everything. And it was actually a newsprint format, maybe up to 16, 20 pages, pretty... you know, sort of like probably a little bit bigger than The Guardian [*Wright State's student paper*]. I don't know how big the Guardian is, but you know, that type of thing.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And, we interviewed a whole bunch of people. We had, um, reggae groups like Steel Pulse, Dead Kennedy's... um, trying to think who else. The English Beat, The Slits, uh, Blondie, um, just a whole bunch of people, and local groups, like there's a group called Dementia Precox, we did a nice piece on them. Rank and File, they were a Cal punk group back in the- Oh, [*points to band t-shirt he's wearing*], there's Tony, from Rank and File [laughs], uh, from, they'd eventually end up in Austin. We had a lot of Austin groups come through, too. And then, besides that, I also did- what else? I have my own radio show, and so I've been doing that since 1982. And on the very first show I incorporated not only rock, I played a 45- R.E.M.- on the Hip Tone label. I forget which 45 it was. Radio Free Europe, I think. And then, um, I played Fela Kuti, from Nigeria, and at that time you could only find his stuff on vinyl from import places. And I played- this is all vinyl, cassette, at that point- and then, um, had a bunch of different local groups, and rock groups, and reggae- all, that was all one show. Format hasn't changed too much over all these years. So.

MM: So, with your- your radio show-

JC: Uh huh-

MM: -you get kind of... you really get a firsthand look of really, uh, the music scene, from a lot of different viewpoints. What would you say is like your favorite thing about doing the radio show, that's kept you, uh, doing it for- you said you started in 1982? So, the 80s.

JC: I started in 1982, and then most of the stuff we've been talking about in the past- like I said, I didn't give any dates- would be through from the mid 70's to mid-80's that I was covering in with the fanzines and all that. Um, I forget what your question was. [laughs]

MM: What's, uh, what's kept you inspired?

JC: Oh, inspired, okay. You know, I was a teacher in the Dayton public schools for several decades. It's kind of- make sure you have a nice... I actually got a pencil, you know, from teaching. So, um, but one thing I always thought was kind of interesting, when teaching kids, was something I would call education by surprise. This is my own theory in my own words, but in other words, you're gonna educate people, educate kids, without them realizing they're actually learning.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: By having fun, and by doing things, and by activities. So, with me, the one thing that's always kept me educated, and, excited about a radio show, is also the whole philosophy of education by surprise. Because I'm not presenting a traditional radio show. You're not gonna hear the top ten, whatever. The top 100 or whatever. You might not ever hear that.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: As a matter of fact on my show, uh, the guy that follows me, Basim, one day he comes up and he goes, "You know, I was trying to figure out how many songs you play in a year, and they're all different." You know, so I tend to do that. I'll play some, I do

play something on occasion, but for the most part, I'm playing almost a complete original show every week.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: Not totally 100 percent, but at least in the high nineties. Because I don't have a playlist, so I'm making this playlist in my mind as well. And so, what I'm doing then is, like, I'm exposing people to groups that when they hear it the first time, this could be their most favorite group they never heard before or didn't know existed. And in my mind, groups from all over the world can fall within that classification. So, for example, I feel like the blues guy, Hound Dog Taylor, rocked harder than most punk rock groups do. But he wouldn't be considered punk rock. But he rocked just as hard.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And, you may have a funk group out of, uh, Senegal, or you may have a reggae group out of Nigeria or South Africa, or you can have a salsa group out of, uh, a different part of Africa, or the opposite is true. You know, you can have all those things in North America. You know, in Mexico they have electronic music.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, what I'm saying is that I can expose this to people, they can hear it, they enjoy it, they can like it, and they're being educated without really realizing it-

MM: Mm hmm [affirmative]

JC: ... and so therefore, it's education by surprise. And I think that's what's kept me going.

MM: Nice. Is that really how, like, you go through your selection process of what songs to play? Or is there a difference?

JC: You want to hear the dirty truth?

MM: Yes.

JC: I listen- I listen three seconds, and I can tell if I want [laughs]-

MM: If you want to listen on?

JC: Yeah. [laughs]

MM: Awesome, nice.

JC: I've been doing it that long.

MM: Yeah.

JC: I can just hear, I guess-

MM: That's understandable.

JC: So, bam, then I go back. But, you know-

MM: Yeah.

JC: -when I make up my initial list, I go, I want this, want this, you know.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, and then I go from there.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And then when I do my show, I may have... I used to bring out, like, hundreds of hundreds of stuff. But now I've toned it down to I bring out a general playlist in my mind that may change as I'm progressing. Because a lot of my stuff well segue and I may have, like, an older rock song and a funk song and an Afro beat song, so I have to figure a way how I'm going to get from that point to that point, all within one show.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: And sometimes it's not always easy. But, there's ways to do that. It's magic.

MM: [laughs] yeah. You call it magic.

JC: Yeah.

MM: It's hard work. It's hard work, and understanding the process itself.

MM: Um, so like we said, Dayton's had a very vibrant music history- We good on time?

JC: Should leave in about fifteen minutes.

MM: Okay. We, we can start to wrap it up.

JC: Okay.

MM: Um, what would you say is Dayton's greatest music, like, legacy? A lot of people really- uh, when they think of Dayton and music, uh, it's kind of been forced to think about the funk music-

JC: Uh huh.

MM: ... coming from out of here, do you think that is really the only thing that Dayton's legacy is, or what would you say?

JC: Oh, Dayton has, I think, Dayton- and I said before, I mentioned before about the Detroit thing. I think that because- and of course that changes now-

MM: Yeah.

JC: You know, it's not really the same thing. Um, but I think that carries on, okay? Like, for example, Austin is so gentrified. Everything that made Austin a desirable place to live, now the people that made that desirable can't live there anymore.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: But still the music there has been entrenched, though. It's still there. So, I think that's true with Dayton, too. Um, I think being an industrial city back years ago gave a lot of people an economic base in order to make and afford to make music.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, if your dad- let's say- is working in the GM plant, he's making a pretty good living. I mean, in, you know, decades past. So, it wasn't too bad. You got insurance, you know, you got a pretty good paycheck. And you could afford to give your kid some music lessons or could afford to buy that guitar. You know? And some of them groups, like, uh, Slave, that's how they came in existence, you know. Or after work you would have time to work on your hobby of music. So, I think that's really helped Dayton, and as a result you had, um, you had a lot of bluegrass music move to Dayton because there was factories here to work in. And so, we had a pretty rich bluegrass tradition in Dayton, like Red Allen, for example. His sons, who were The Allen Brothers, um, Harley Allen, who came, moved down to Nashville. And then you have, um, I think the same thing's

especially true for the soul and funk sound. Again, you had an economic base where you could afford to buy some instruments and stuff.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: And you also had people moving here from other parts of the country and bringing that musical tradition here to work.

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, you had people from the south, from the hills, whatever, moving here to get that job and then bringing a lot of their traditions, musical traditions with them.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: So, I think that's sort of what created music and as a musical hub, and I think they carried- and then that carries on because people have that musical tradition in their soul, their experience.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: I don't know, does that make sense at all?

MM: Yeah, yeah. Ah, so, just kind of wrapping everything up, uh, kind of a big theoretical question for you.

JC: Uh huh. Theoretical retro band?

MM: If you could, if you could go to any concert, by any band-

JC: Uh huh.

MM: -when and where would you go?

JC: When and where? [laughs]

MM: When and where and who would you see?

JC: Uh, you asked me a question I can't answer. [laughs] Um, honestly, um, I don't know, it's too many places to me. I would say I would like to- I like... I'll tell you I wouldn't mind of seeing, I wouldn't mind seeing Hank Williams during the months before he was- before he died when he was still young. I saw Bob Marley in concert before he died and that was a very, almost spiritual-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -thing.

MM: Is that a- a big, bigger venue, or smaller-

JC: It was a bigger venue.

MM: Big venue.

JC: It wasn't a big, like, arena-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -it was like a theater.

MM: Yeah.

JC: Um, you know, what I think, I would go see Dayton's Luxury Pushers-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -at a crummy dive bar on Halloween.

MM: Halloween?

JC: Yep. [laughs] Just my ideal show.

MM: Just a random Halloween, is there-

JC: Yeah. [laughs]

MM: -any, any reason for the Halloween night?

JC: Uh, they used to do a Halloween concert every year. [laughs]

MM: Very cool. Very cool. Well, I won't keep you much longer. I know you have a busy day.

JC: Okay.

MM: I just want to thank you for coming in for this and-

JC: Okay. Did I ever tell you some of the shows I did, places we used to do them in? I should tell you that real fast.

MM: Let's hear it.

JC: Yeah, get that on, before we- What time is it? I'm- I got about ten minutes, then I have to leave.

MM: Alright.

JC: I was at, um, some of the shows we used to do them at- we did shows at a funk club, called Sam's-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: -that originally was like more of a bluegrass club, and Mick Montgomery started Canal Street Tavern, also did a musician's co-op there, so that's where the musician's co-op started, before he started Canal Street-

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: And Kim and Kelley played- Deal- played at that little musician's coop thing as acoustic, a two-piece acoustic group before, um, Kim moved to Boston. [laughs] Kim... what was here name? Was it Mrs. Brown or something she called herself? The first Pixies [*album*]? I forget-

MM: I'm not sure.

JC: ... I'm sorry, cut that out. [laughs] Um, then we did stuff at Sam's, we did stuff at the Brookwood Hall as I mentioned earlier. We did stuff at the Canal Street Tavern with Mick. I started my show the same year he started Canal Street.

MM: I miss the old Canal Street.

JC: Yeah. Uh, we did shows- I did a lot of shows at Gilly's.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: Just... and honest to God truth, why I would do a show at Gilly's as opposed to Canal Street, because Jerry would not charge me for the sound system. [laughs]

MM: Yeah.

JC: Because he knew I'd bring a lot of bar butt, and he also... bar. This is the sole reason, it's absolutely true.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And Jerry would also buy the bands cases of beer.

MM: Nice.

JC: So, I go-

MM: Gotta have the perks.

JC: [laughs]

MM: Gotta have the perks.

JC: That's absolutely honest truth, that's all it took.

MM: Yeah.

JC: So, uh, now, let's see, Gilly's, Canal Street, Sam's, the Walnut Hills. Um, the Walnut Hills bar, we did stuff at the Walnut Hills. The Toxic Reasons first live show was at the Walnut Hills, um, live outside of like a rec center or something. Um, we did shows at

Wright State, we did some at Wright State. Um, we did some at University of Dayton, um, Antioch. And then, a lot of these shows I did with the colleges, I would go approach, like, the students and say, "Hey listen, I can bring Camper Van Beethoven in, can you find a place for them?" You know, and then they would find a place, would work together, and that's how the Dead Kennedy's got out at, um, Antioch. And it's really funny, I read these autobiographies by the group, about the group that gets... they were like a punk group, moved out to Seattle, and I think the young lady in the group was an Antioch student. And she was... had a terrible tragedy, and she was murdered, so that's sort of the tragedy that it gets. But whenever they talk about the experience at Antioch, they always tell how they got the Dead Kennedy's to come to Antioch. And I go, "Wait a minute, you guys would have never had the Dead Kennedy's if I didn't know Ken Luster and those guys", but anyway, that doesn't matter. But, um, they had a good time. But we, I worked a lot of the time with the students. We had, um, I brought the Mekanik Kommandoh Destrukt? What do they call it, MDK, from Germany, played Wright State. That was a trip. Those guys were like [laughs], cross punks from Berlin, they were some- that was a real interesting night.

MM: I bet.

JC: And then, um, we had, let's see. UD actually had 10,000 Maniacs played UD, at the old Kennedy Gym, whatever it's called. Wasn't at the new arena, it was at their old- the old basketball gym. And then, um, let's see, one time at Gilly's- this is a funny story- I was minding my own business at home, [laughs], and The True Believers, from Austin, were gonna play. I had them scheduled to play at Gilly's, so they stayed at my place, which was like an old, big house in, uh, Dayton View area, and The True Believers were staying there and then out of the blue- I mean, no warning- a bus shows up with a group from Italy called- am I allowed to curse?

MM: Yeah.

JC: Okay. A group from Italy called the Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers. [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: And they were Cheetah Chrome, from *The Devil You Know*- there was a cartoon character from Italy, a cartoon comic guy, called Cheetah Chrome- so, they were the Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers, and the False Prophets from New York-

MM: Mm hmm

JC: -showed up at my house with my friend, Ken Luster, who was touring with them. And, "We don't have any place to play or stay. Can we stay here?" So, I had those guys plus True Believers all staying at the house. And the Cheetah Chrome guys all spoke Italian, they could barely speak English. And the one guy, they're from Milan, had been so notorious he was kicked out of Milan because he was such a... he was kind of a jerk, actually.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And he kind of, he sort of... he showed up, and the first thing he does, he finds out my wife was working at Miami Valley [Hospital], and he drops his pants and he goes, "What's going on here?" [Laughs], showing her his penis.

MM: [laughs]

JC: And she goes, looks at him and goes, "Well, first of all, you might want to start thinking about taking a bath." [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: "And you have scabies."

MM: You need a shot of penicillin.

JC: Right. And this is like, this band, you know... and anyway, so they didn't have a place. So, we ended up putting them all- I don't know how I talked Jerry Gillotti into it- we put them all in this very respectful jazz club. We had The True Believers, Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers, and the False Prophets playing at Gilly's.

JC: And then, the Cheetah Chrome boys were funny, because two of the guys were kind of cute, little, young pretty Italian boys, and they had all Italian leather. Leather pants, leather, leather everything, you know? So, they're in my house, and or staying at my place which was in Dayton View, off of Broadway- everybody calls it West Dayton now, but I called it Dayton View back then- and they decide they're gonna take a walk. So, they take a walk in the neighborhood. And, they come back, and at that time hip hop was taking off.

MM: Mm hmm.

JC: They, uh, came back in all, like, Nike's and Run DMC gear.

MM: Just straight track suits?

JC: Right, right, right. And what they had done, they met some kids in the park and traded their leather for- [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: -for the hip hop clothes.

MM: That's awesome.

JC: [laughs] I thought it was kind of funny.

MM: Yeah.

JC: And someone said, "They got taken, they got taken." I said, "No, they didn't get taken, they got what they wanted and the kids got what they wanted." So, to me it was like a, you know, it was a fair trade.

MM: Yeah, that's awesome.

JC: So, that was some of the-

MM: That's very cool.

JC: -many, many stories that went on beneath the scenes.

MM: Yeah. Um.

JC: I was, I was the first person- this one, a little brag- but I was the first person to play hip hop in Dayton on my radio show.

MM: Do you remember what the first album was?

JC: I couldn't tell you what the first one, it was probably Rapper's Delight.

MM: Was there any, uh, push back against that?

JC: There was, actually. Because people were expecting me to play a certain genre. I was playing hip hop and I was like, well, hip hop to me was, at that time- not so much now- but at that time I thought was as rebellious in it's own way as punk rock was, and that what my-

MM: Yeah.

JC: -particular logic was. I liked it all, you know, I liked it. I liked the graffiti scene along with it, and liked the dance subculture, hip hop dance, I thought, I liked the whole thing. It's like whole entire, um, mixture, all in one package. And actually one, uh, there was a Dayton guitarist- and I think I told Allie and her thing on Dayton Funk- there was a Dayton guitarist, um, named- they called him Little Axe. I can't remember his real name. I can't... Skip McDonald. Skip McDonald played guitar from this area and according to Skip, he taught Roger Troutman how to play guitar, uh- and there's no way for me to prove or disprove that, so I figure it's true. Anyway, Skip was, uh, in the original Sugarhill Gang, he did all that original music, the background music for all those original Sugarhill, with Keith LeBlanc. The music for- I forget the woman's name that did Sugarhill, but that whole- all that early stuff, all Sugarhill rap was, uh, Little Axe's guitar work, which I thought was kind of interesting. He now lives in London.

MM: Very cool.

JC: So, I should shut up I guess.

MM: Oh no. This is exactly what we're looking for.

JC: I have to get... okay, three minutes.

MM: Three minutes, alright, just one last little question. Do you still get out to any live shows, at all?

JC: Oh-

MM: -at all?

JC: -you know what, I'm a lot closer to death than I am to the twenties so- [laughs]

MM: Yeah.

JC: Um, I go out on occasion but not as much, you know. Basically. It's just, eh, you know, it's I get tired more easier.

MM: Oh, it's-

JC: Yeah.

MM: And I'm only twenty-six.

JC: [laughs]

MM: It's nine o'clock and I really want to be asleep.

JC: Right. But I do like going out on occasion. I mean, I go out on occasion but, you know, probably not as much as I used to. I mean, I used to be, like, Monday night, sure I'll go out and go work the next day, no problem.

MM: Yeah, that's- it gets harder and harder.

JC: Right. Oof, I remember, I was teaching one time and some kid goes up to me and goes, "Had a rough night, last night, huh, Mr. Carter?" [laughs]

MM: [laughs]

JC: I go, "More than you think."

MM: That's awesome. Well, Cool, thank you for, uh, coming out and sitting down with us.

JC: Thank you. I hope this turned out okay.

MM: Oh yeah. Absolutely.