

Oral History Transcript: Hartnett
Originally Recorded April 8, 2022

Eleanor Schulz: Today is April 8 2022. My name is Eleanor Schulz and I'm interviewing Cassandra Hartnett. And we're both in our Zoom rooms today and we're going to talk about Cass' memories about Plattsburgh and the events she went to. So first question is, do you consent to this interview?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): I do.

Eleanor Schulz: I know that you mentioned the, that you remember is a Pat Benatar concert?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Yeah I have to say, when I think back on concerts in Plattsburgh, that one comes to my mind right away. I grew up in Plattsburgh and left there in 1982 and I went off to college. But this concert, I had to go and look it up. It was September 1980, so I would have just been starting 11th grade. And I also noticed it was on a Monday night, well it's really what was interesting. And it was interesting because I thought boy, I remember, one very salient thing I remember about the concert is it was very loud. And I had ringing in my ears for days afterwards, which I've never, you know I had not experienced that before, and so I remember. It makes sense that it was on a Monday, because I remember being at school and like not being able to hear the teachers because of having gone to the concert (laughs). So, those little details are fun to find out. The concert was up at Hawkins Hall, where as a kid I'd seen so many lectures and so on, and, and other concerts. But I think I was just old enough to go to this one, with just my brother Jonathan, who was a senior in high school. And we're just a year apart and we went together and it was just, it was just a fantastic experience.

Eleanor Schulz: That's fun.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Well, my little homework of trying to kind of remember. I mean, I feel like I remember many details of the concert but the main thing was that feeling of being on the cusp of something that was really exciting, that was happening because this was a performer who had a hit called "Heartbreaker." But then, at that point that was sort of like, that was her debut album had a hit called *Heartbreaker* on it and then. I swear, I feel like this concert came up quickly, too, because I noticed on the list of concerts there was also the Marshall Tucker band in that same month and, like, I remember there had been a lot of promotion for that and I didn't really want to go to that one, but then this came up and we went. And she had a brand new hit that was on the charts that week and then at this, at this particular tour she was debuting the song "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," so it was just such a, many of these songs are sort of pop. What would I say? The instant hit you can't fail, they're kind of maybe you'd call it anthem rock now, I don't know. A very memorable, very memorable chorus. And, yeah so. Eleanor, I don't know if you want me just to keep babbling on.

Eleanor Schulz: Was there any, not speeches, what you said, talks that you remember at all?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Oh gosh. You know I just got so fixated on this one concert that, well. The other concerts that I remember in Hawkins Hall were, what's the, Harry Chapin. You know, who is a very beloved folk music icon and as well as his brother Tom. And he came to Platts-, he came around various, various cities pretty regularly touring, but also as part of his advocacy for different causes. So I believe, when I saw him, he was, there was a candidate running for Congress who unfortunately didn't, didn't make it. A female candidate named a Norma Bartle and I was so enamored with Norma Bartle, like I went and heard her talk. But, this Harry Chapin concert was just wonderful and he did some of, some of his big hits which you know, hits in the folk music sense (laughs). "Taxi Driver," "All My Life's A Circle," "W.O.L.D.", things like this. And it was just a very warm. People, people sang along and, and afterwards, he raised additional money by having what would not be, what would not meet public health guidelines now, a kissing booth where, if you paid like five bucks or something, you could kiss him. I guess, now we call that like a premier experience or something, but I got to kiss him or I was kissed by him I can't remember, but. But that was, that was a really memorable night. We saw comedians. I believe I saw both George Carlin and Robert Klein. They would have classical music concerts and I remember going to a performance like *Peter and the Wolf* and things like that, but well. I know how I can find out, I can look on the Plattsburgh Rocks! grid.

Eleanor Schulz: I've seen the Pat Benatar concert before too on the sheet (laughs).

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Oh well, you know I gotta go back to Benatar for a minute, though, I really do, because you know there just weren't a ton of women rockers at that, at that time. I mean there were some I don't want to, you know. I was a huge Heart fan, also the Wilson sisters. Oh, you know of course Fleetwood Mac had already been really big if you consider them, well, consider them rock, but. I can't remember if by this moment in time Blondie had hit the scene. I mean, Linda Ronstadt was a big female rocker and balladeer, but. But, Pat Benatar was very small in stature. So I remember people saying, and she was wearing like tights and stuff like a leotard and tights and just a very commanding presence on the stage and I remember people afterwards writing or saying you know she, she looked like Peter Pan, you know. But she just had such a commanding voice and it, literally like song after song was very memorable and. You know, it just, for me, it was a feeling of "okay I'm old enough to kind of go to a concert without an adult chaperone just with my brother", and it was like about a seven block walk to the venue and back and I just remember being so happy walking home. And I knew that my ears were just blown out (laughs) and I didn't care. I just had a really warm and happy feeling. And you know, I was very straight arrow youth. No, no alcohol or drugs, so it was like, it was just like this kind of daring experience as well, it was sort of like really loud rock music that I really enjoyed, a, had a great time and I have to say too, just other like concert notes. That her, is that her, the guitarist Neil Giraldo was just fabulous I mean, you know. At that time, people were really into things like The Who and you know, like you know, Pete Townsend, and, and you know these great guitarists and, and here's this person I had never heard of and he was just jumping around the stage, but

also just really, really playing well. And I knew enough to know that this guy was really playing well and, and it's been so delightful to notice that, like these. Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo got married. I don't know if they were married at that time, and they have continued to perform together, and so I had this like full circle experience. We get to see them at Chateau Ste Michelle, an outdoor, beautiful outdoor venue here in Washington state, at a winery. And you know this was five years ago or so, it had been many, many years since the concert, but it was just great. That was the only, only other time I've seen her, seen them, and it was just really fun to see that energy again. They still had it, they still had it, but you know. But I think you know. The topic of concerts, I was telling my siblings that we were going to be talking about this on our family's Zoom call, and they started yelling out, you know all these concerts that they remembered, but, but Jonathan immediately piped up, I mean without prompting and oh yeah that Benatar concert, but he, he, his thing was just how loud. It was, I mean he- it was so loud that it scared him. So part of what I was excited, of how was- I was not scared, but my brother was. I was just like deeply involved in it, you know it's sort of like I do think, some of these you know, in particular rock concerts with music. The live performance in a lot of different ways is, people kind of get into this act of surrender. They just kind of give themselves over, so they start doing things like you know dancing around or you know, stuff that they wouldn't normally do. I mean, sometimes you see outrageous behavior (laughs) you know. And you might, you might write it off to the person being you know, high or drunk. But actually they might not be. They might just be kind of carried away, which I think is, is exciting so, so yeah, yeah. So anyway. You can tell I'm pretty, pretty pumped up still (laughs). But you know, I do think it's just part of that excitement was just that, like the next week, everybody was listening to that song, and not just in Plattsburgh. All over the country, it was a sort of instant hit "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," so. You know, this kind of funny, silly song when you think about it, you know. I just remember like she had, she had these gloves probably like Michael Jackson-type gloves and she was like you know punching in the air (laughs). Kind of funny, so.

Eleanor Schulz: Did she go to like Montreal or New York City after Plattsburgh?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): I am sure that that's, that that's why it was on a Monday night and I'm sure they were on their way somewhere. So, yeah. But, but even, even just like you know 15 minutes before this meetup with you, looking at one article about it. It, it brought me into how easy it would be for people to get kind of obsessive about like tours and who was there, and you know. I always love a tour T-shirt where you know, I saw this tour and then it's got the venue dates on the back of the T-shirt. I love those because it really is part of history, you know.

Eleanor Schulz: Someone, Greg Kie, he had a battle jacket he called it. Patches all over his jacket for all the concerts he'd went to.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Oh cool, very cool. When I was in high school, I had, and I'm sure I wore it to this event, a Levi's dark blue corduroy jacket that I was very proud of, for some reason. And I had a *Sergeant*

Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band patch that I sewed on the shoulder of it. And that was, I was just trying to be very cool with that (laughs).

Eleanor Schulz: Got to be properly clothed, I guess, for big concerts.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Yeah, absolutely you know. In fact, one of the hilarious things about my, my life, now my commuting life, I leave from a parking garage that's situated at the Tacoma Dome, which is a huge, you know, concert venue. Only for the largest acts and sometimes on the evening commute, we'll come back to the parking garage and they'll already be parking cars for the concert and you can see, you can try to guess who it is. Oh, this is the Britney Spears crowd, this is the Kenny Chesney group, you know. So that's always fun. Yeah, I mean you know. Now that we're sort of thinking back. Actually, like I said I just got, I was so focused on this concert and think of other ones that attended. But, but part of it is sort of the, it's the different venues in Plattsburgh, and I mean. My siblings were saying "yeah, you know after those concerts in Memorial Gym that a new athletic facility, called the Field House opened." And the Field House was completed, I believe, in in the mid-70s and was, one of the purposes that it served was as a training facility for the Montreal Olympics, of the Summer Olympics in 1976, so the US team had a, I want to say several day perhaps stay over, or weeklong stay over, in Plattsburgh. And people were training there, so I got to see, well, President Ford came to Plattsburgh and was, there was a parade through town through on the, the, the street, where the campus is and so I got to attend that parade and swore that President Ford waved directly at me, but there was also like Bruce Jenner, now Caitlyn Jenner, but Bruce Jenner the decathlete was there, you know riding in an open car and waving at everybody. So it was really, really exciting, but concerts moved, some, some of the bigger ones moved to the Field House and I never did go to any of those. I was also kind of a fearful teen, very anxious of like, people are going to hurt me or something. So I didn't want to get you know, there was big concerts, Beatlemania you know, Peter Frampton. You know, but I just, I just didn't feel comfortable I don't think, with that venue. I don't know why, you, like you sit on bleachers and stuff, you know Hawkins Hall is over, like a proper, you know concert hall, you know. And down in the basement was an area that was like a late night study, I mean it was, it was probably a dining area, but in the evenings it was like a late night study area for college students. And it had vending machines that had like, those kind of vending machines that have like hot chocolate, or you know you could get your hot drink prepared different ways. And they had chicken soup as well, that would come out of there, so it was like, and you know wrapped sandwiches in you know, in a refrigerated thing. There was nowhere else in, in, in Plattsburgh that had this kind of thing, so that was pretty exciting. So I do remember after, after I don't know if it was after Pat Benatar or after some other event, like going down and getting something out of the vending machine and like having brought you know special quarters, so that I could do that. You know, and again feel kind of adult or feel like a college student. So I like thinking about people who grew up in a college town, because when you're a child the college students are always older. You know and it's sort of like, it's hard for me to believe that I'm multiple times older the people who are college students and I could be great, I could be the grandparent of students who are at Plattsburgh

State now. But they're always the cool, you know, the people I wanted to emulate, the college students (laughs).

Eleanor Schulz: That's nice. My mom's always liked college towns too.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Well, does she talk about it in the same way, or what, what, what do you think draws her? Just to the culture and?

Eleanor Schulz: Like you know how, there's college kids, there's like cool like restaurants and stores, you know catering to them.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Yeah, although I'm not sure (laughs) I'm not sure that can be said of Plattsburgh. I'm sorry, my dear hometown but there are definitely places that cater to them, that is, that is definitely true. When I grew up, the legal drinking age was 18. And the driver's licenses were just paper, they were made out of paper. And they did not have a picture of you or anything on it, so driver's licenses, fake driver's licenses were rampant. So bars were frequented by people as young as you know 14, 15 years old pretty regularly. Yeah, yeah I mean it's you know, in fact. You know my brother my brother Tim, and my sister Seana played in a band at that point called Stir Crazy. And I, my parents would take me out to the bars to see them, you know. When I was 14 you know, and I would see other people from my class (laughs) my school there you know just, just kind of weird. So, those days are long gone. By the time I left for college, the state that I moved to you know, had, was raising its drinking age to 21. I mean, you know, none of this mattered to me because I wasn't a drinker. But, but still, its part of the culture of a community you know, sort of the bar scene too.

Eleanor Schulz: Yeah, I was going to ask, because someone mentioned this in their interview, I can't remember who it was. And then when I was when I was looking for the articles in *Cardinal Points*, have you ever heard of the Monopole?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Oh yes, that's a very long standing, and when you go to Plattsburgh, because I know that someday you will (laughs). There's that, that bar is located in in the downtown area that has pretty old buildings. And so there's Clinton Street and then there's an alley next to Clinton Street. Also, with very old buildings and it's a relatively narrow alley called Protection Alley and, and the Monopole is an upstairs bar there and it's such an old building. I was noticing I did go down there on one of my visits. Now, I want to say three or four years ago and I noticed there was actually like a wall plaque that had some notes about the historic. I can't remember, there was something about why it was called the Monopole. But yeah that's where many, many you know, that they had they had live music I think a few nights a week. And you know the kind of place, where you could go and sit and talk, but then there would be also be a band playing you know, but that was really popular with the College students. And sort of the locals who wanted to be connected to a music scene so.

Eleanor Schulz: I think the article I found was that was about like ladies night or something in the college paper.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Oh geez, oh yeah, I mean you know any of these, you know these places had ladies nights I mean, you know. Yes, it was the era of things like wet T-shirt concert, contest too. But the Monopole wasn't like that, there was another club that was a dance very specifically a dance venue where they actually you know, one of the, one of the selling points, was it was a discotheque. Because you know, this was just like kind of the beginnings of like, you know people going, and then a DJ would be there and that you know, instead of a live band at, at Mothers and yeah, I remember. You know, of course, I was a young feminist, very strident feminist. And pretty, pretty appalled at the, the, the sign about the wet, wet T-shirt concert, contest, but you know, there were things like that, but the ladies night, you know. I mean the Monopole is like a serious, long time gathering place and watering hole. Yeah I would, you know if towns have iconic bars, then this would be, this would be that, yeah.

Eleanor Schulz: I'm trying to think of any iconic bars from like Bremerton, where I'm from and I don't know. There's a lot of like I guess old navy bars. I think that's it.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): You know what connects those two experiences, though? Plattsburgh was an air force town and it, at this point, had bombardment wing air force base. Of course Bremerton, I mean you've got you've got hundreds of people coming in on those ships, so you know it's more of a transient thing, whereas in, in an air force town, I think. The you know, it's like you know. People go out on missions and so on, but, but there's more of a stable population but still, even within that, any military base has a lot of people coming, and coming and going, but yeah I would imagine there's some salty navy bars in Bremerton that I would be a little bit intimidated to go into, you know. Did you go out and hear live music Eleanor?

Eleanor Schulz: Not in those bars.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): (Laughs) Okay.

Eleanor Schulz: My sister used to work at a coffee shop and they would have live music there.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Yeah, yeah it's just so, so important to me. I don't know if it's just that, you know that from having a brother and sister who would perform out, or just knowing their friends or whatever, but you know. If anybody was playing, I generally would go and you know at least stop by for a few songs. You know, whether it was in the park, or at a bar, or yeah.

Eleanor Schulz: Do you have any stories or?

Cass Hartnett (she/her): Well, I think that kind of wraps up. I mean, I could go on and on, so there are things, there are many other things that I could talk about, but you've given me the space to focus on the great Pat Benatar concert. That launched her *Crimes of Passion* album and tour, I mean that that was part of history in Plattsburgh, New York attending

that, and I appreciate the chance to talk about it in this project, I appreciate your doing the project.

Eleanor Schulz: I've been learning a lot of things about Plattsburgh, it's been interesting. I'm fine with ending it here because I've realized I've been getting kind of lazier and lazier about editing the transcript. So it's been taking longer.

Cass Hartnett (she/her): So, you just hit that recording off. And then you and I can just talk about how things are going.