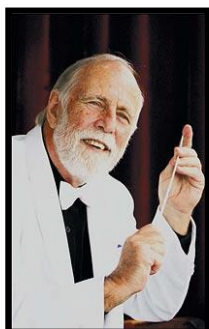


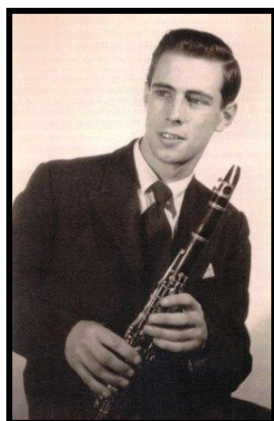
Gary Daverne ONZM

Interviewing Gary Daverne was not easy. The view from his second story apartment in Herne Bay (just down the road from *Stebbing Recording Studios*) is stunning, looking out over the Waitemata Harbour and the islands of the gulf. It should be impossible to get anything done, but he has, creating a huge body of work over the years. But my hardest job was condensing his achievements down to a few paragraphs. He certainly is a man of many talents. He attributes his success to three great men; Bernie Allen, Eldred Stebbing and Harley Jones.



Gary Michiel Daverne was born in Devonport on Auckland's North Shore on 26 January 1939 to Mollie (b. Bartley) and Ronald Daverne. His brother, Wayne, was 5½ years his junior. Ronald had been a Lt. Commander in the NZ *Navy* then was a master mariner on Auckland harbour ferry boats before retiring after the opening of the harbour bridge, to become a printer. Mollie's father was an Architect. Gary's middle name 'Michiel' is a spelling mistake made by his father.

Gary attended *Belmont Primary School* then *Takapuna Grammar* where he developed a great love for sport until at age 11 he developed polio which resulted in doctors banning any strenuous activities for 6 years. Gary learnt by correspondence for a year then on his return to school joined the school brass band and orchestra, which to his delight practised during class times. He learnt euphonium and percussion then clarinet, and also played in the *Auckland Junior Symphony Orchestra* for over 6 years. He performed solo at the age of 16 with the *Secondary Schools Orchestra* at the *Auckland Town Hall*, playing *Mozart's Clarinet Concerto*. His first seven-piece dance band, the *Taka Tones*, played instrumental Dixieland jazz and pop music of the day at school dances and socials with Gary writing all the arrangements. He was initially unsuccessful at his *School Certificate* exam but succeeded the next year. At 14 Gary took up archery and became a junior champion, later playing competitive rugby and hockey with no recurrence of his polio.

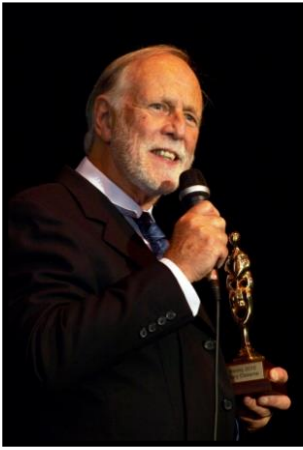


His father wanted him to become an accountant so Gary attended *Auckland University*, playing at night and labouring in the wool stores during the holidays. He studied piano with Mike Walker and later took a holiday job in a jazz combo on the Gold Coast of Australia. On his return to Auckland, he formed his own Jazz trio and during the day studied at the *Auckland Teachers Training College*, qualifying as a secondary school teacher in economics, accounting and music in 1959.

In 1958 Gary played saxophone and piano with *Red Hewitt and the Buccaneers*, one of Auckland's first rock & roll bands, with a residency at the *Jive Centre*. The group recorded with *Zodiac Records* in 1959 and went on to make hits like; *The Girl In The Teddy Bear Coat*, *Betty Lou's Got A New Pair Of Shoes*, *I Believe*, *Beatnik Fly* and *Robbin' the Cradle*. *The Buccaneers* disbanded in 1961 and Gary joined the *Embers* performing at the *Shiralee* nightclub.

They recorded *Rinky Dink* on Gary's newly founded *Viscount Record* label which worked out of *Zodiac Studios* in association with Eldred Stebbing, Gary's maternal cousin. *The Sierras* had a big hit with *The Crying Game*, Cathy Howe had success with *Then He Kissed Me* and *He Doesn't Love Me* and *The Gremlins* had a hit with *The Coming Generation*. Gary also signed up *The Fair Sect* and produced Mr. Lee Grant's monster flop, *Do-Doodle-Do-Do*. At the time, he was also teaching Music and Accounting at *Glendowie College*, where he put together a girl quintet, *The Glendelles*, to sing backing vocals for Cathy Howe. They did well with their own singles, *Sally Go Round the Roses* and *Popsicles and Isicles*.





In 1965 Gary and his brother Wayne moved to London where Gary studied composition at *Trinity College*, gaining his Fellowship in 1969. They played as a trio at the *Queen's Head Pub* in Finchley, North London for nearly two years and Gary produced a single for Wayne at the *Abbey Road Studios*.

Four years later Gary returned home and took up teaching at *Kelston Boys High School*. He became an arranger and music director for *Television New Zealand*, writing for many variety shows including; *Happen Inn*, *Sing, Smile*, *Once More With Feeling* and *Stars on Sunday*. In 1973 Gary became musical arranger and director for the rock musical, *Man of Sorrows*, based on the Life of Jesus. This show also included Benny recipients Max Cryer and Rob Guest. The following year Gary wrote his own successful rock operas *Hi Ya Messiah* and *Peter*, then became music director for many of the *North Shore Operatic Society's* productions. In 1974 he was invited to direct the pageant for the first *Waitangi Day Celebration* in front of Queen Elizabeth, which required him to travel the country rehearsing Maori groups. The *RNZ Navy Band* provided the music.

He became a partner of *Mandrill Recording Studios* in 1975 with Dave Hurley and Glyn Tucker (guitarist and vocalist from *The Embers* and *The Gremlins*). Glyn and Gary jointly produced many gold and platinum record albums released on *Viscount*, *RCA*, *CBS* and *K-Tel* labels and both became successful jingle writers; Gary wrote over 500! Their artists included Larry Killip, *The Hi-Marks* and Billy T. James. Gary moved briefly to *Harlequin Studio* before returning to *Stebbing's* in the new Jervois Road studio.

From 1978 to 1980 he was *Composer in Schools* for the *New Zealand Education Department*, writing and producing children's musicals including; *Cats of Ponsonby*, *The Rockin' Tale of Snow White*, *Peter*, *Peer Gynt* and *Robyn Hood: Outlaw Princess*. *Viscount* have released a number of his musical story albums including *Panapa*, *The Floating Island*, *The Brothers Three*, *Young Mozart* and *Gypsy Girl (Diddikai)*.

A reunion of the *Junior Symphony Orchestra* in 1975 was such a success that the local musicians asked Gary to found the *Music Players of Auckland*; two years later they renamed it the *Auckland Symphony Orchestra*. Gary held the position of Music Director/Conductor until he retired in 2011 and was appointed *Music Director Emeritus*. They were the first group to play at the new *Aotea Centre*, not for a concert but to test the acoustics. The *Auckland Symphony Orchestra* is a community orchestra, depending on funding; most of the musicians have day jobs. The Orchestra toured China in 2007 playing to large audiences in Shanghai, Shi Jia Zhuang and Beijing. Prime time television viewers were estimated at 140 million.

He was appointed MD for the *1990 Commonwealth Games* and conducted the first *Christmas in the Park* at the *Auckland Domain* to an audience of 40,000. In 2002 he was MD for the *New Plymouth Military Tattoo* with a total participating cast of over 1500. This involved the *New Zealand Army, Navy and Air Force Bands*, 160 pipes and drums, the *Scottish Band of the Black Watch*, local brass bands, orchestra and a 300-voice choir.



His work with *Television New Zealand* led to a meeting with Harley Jones, a director of the *New Zealand Accordion Orchestra*, who convinced Gary into composing for the accordion even though he had never played the instrument. He travelled with the Orchestra to Europe in 1986 and visited the *1988 World Expo* in Brisbane which led to frequent invitations as guest conductor with accordion orchestras in New Zealand, Germany, UK, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and the USA.

Gary has conducted many International orchestras including London's *Royal Philharmonic*, the *Shanghai Symphony*, the *Taiwan Symphony*, the *Moravian Philharmonic-Czech Republic* and the *National Symphony Orchestra of Malaysia*, featuring many of his own compositions. In 2003 he conducted the *Turkish State Symphony Orchestra of Bursa*, premiering his composition *Gallipoli - Rhapsody for Trumpet and Orchestra*.

He returned in 2005 to conduct the *Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra* as part of the 90-year Gallipoli commemorations and plans are afoot for his return for the centennial. Gary is often referred to as the 'Dancing Conductor', a habit he picked up from his years playing Jazz and Rock.

Some of his many awards include *Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit* (ONZM) in 1996, *Companion of North Shore City* (2010) and Life Membership of the *NZ Accordion Association* (1993). His link with the VAC has been lengthy including; playing in *Gray Bartlett's Combo* and recording the early albums of *Tom Sharplin and the Cadillacs*. He sat on our committee from 2011 to 2013. The VAC presented Gary with a *Scroll of Honour* in 2000 and the *2010 Benny*.

Gary published his biography, *From the Podium*, in 2015. I recommend you get hold of a copy, it's a great read.

Where are they now?

Wayne Daverne was a professional printer who also designed and printed the original *Viscount* labels. He was a very competent session drummer and vocalist, featuring extensively on the *Viscount* label playing for *The Sierras*, *The Silhouettes*, Cathy Howe and *The Glendelles*. He had a successful career as a solo singer and in musical theatre. Wayne recorded two singles at the *Abbey Road Studios* in 1967; *Taking' It Easy* and *She Came Out of the Cold*. He played the lead role in many musical theatre productions including the role of Tony in *West Side Story* and Jesus in a later production of *Man of Sorrows*. He performed in the *Ace of Clubs Theatre Restaurant* show *Hikarangi*, for several years and often sang with the *Auckland Symphony Orchestra*. Sadly he passed away in 2013 after a long illness. Wayne was also a VAC committee member from 1980 to 1984.

Alan 'Red' Hewitt: Alan's father drummed in a military band so Alan started young playing drums at kindergarten. His first love was country music so he quickly mastered the guitar and harmonica and learned to yodel. In 1956 he formed the *Buccaneers*, singing vocals and playing rhythm guitar. 14 year old Veronica Tierney played piano, wearing heavy makeup to look older. Alan often gave rock & roll dancing displays, throwing Veronica over his shoulders. They even had a skiffle group called the *Bopineers*. He won an Elvis look-alike contest in 1957. After entering many talent quests, usually coming second to *Benny Winner* Don Linden's mime act, they finally won a residency at the *Jive Centre* and six-months at the *El Rancho Nightclub* in Mission Bay. Hewitt moved to Australia in 1961 for a few years but returned home and performed solo until 1970 when he formed the *Red Hewitt Band*, playing rockabilly and country music. When not playing professionally he worked as a printer. Red passed away in 2006.