

## Al De Lory Bio

When someone creates a sound like Al De Lory did for Glen Campbell, that creation can often override anything else they do. Of course De Lory had no idea in the mid-60's when he went in the studio with his fellow musician-turned recording artist that he was creating a sound that would forever govern country artists who had a pop leaning to their music.

De Lory was born in Los Angeles into a family that was immersed in music. His grandmother played piano and his grandfather was a cellist. His father followed in his father's footsteps and his sister, De Lory's aunt, played violin. His father left home at 16 to join a vaudeville company that came through town. When he returned to Los Angeles in the early 1920's, he brought back a musical playing style that wasn't known in those music circles at that time – the slap-bass. The result of that introduction was that he began getting offers to play bass and also as a vocalist. Interestingly enough, the slap bass style replaced the tuba in the dance bands of the 1920's. At one time, De Lory says his father was making \$700 a week, a huge amount of money for the time.

De Lory began taking violin at the age of six, one of the few things about music that he hated. Shortly thereafter he took up piano and his dad immediately realized that he had a natural aptitude for the instrument. He began studying piano with his grandmother and loved playing. The problem was that De Lory was not a particularly dedicated student and didn't like his daily required hours of practicing. His hobbies -- horses, baseball and friends -- often took precedence over practice, and he had to face the consequences from his father, who was a rigid disciplinarian.

Music was not the only thing the family encouraged with their children. De Lory and his sister, Diane, were introduced to sports including tennis, golf and skiing as well as horseback riding.

As De Lory got a little older he realized the rewards that playing the piano could bring him. He found that he liked being in the spotlight, something he discovered when his parents would ask him to play for friends. He started writing songs when he was around 12 and won a songwriting competition when he was 15. He was trained to play the classics in his piano classes but De Lory soon learned to love pop, blues and jazz as well. When he was 12 or 13 he performed with the Jimmy Dorsey orchestra at the Hollywood Palladium. Around the same time he started playing dances with other musician friends.

When he was 18 De Lory started playing in a club in Los Angeles; he had to sit in the coffee shop during breaks because he was too young to legally be in the venue where they were performing. At 19 he was drafted so the enterprising De Lory went into the Air Force with the promise of a job at Nellis Air Force Base as a musician once he completed basic training. He did get assigned there, where he played in the Air Force

Band and formed a dance band on the side. He continued writing songs and started arranging songs for the band. After his discharge from the Air Force he remained in Las Vegas and worked as a musician in the numerous clubs in that city.

One night a man came up to De Lory and asked him if he knew any Latin music and could he play a song in his next set. De Lory said he thought he could, never knowing that request would change his life. It turned out that the man who made the request had a Latin band at another club and needed a new pianist. De Lory took the job and worked with the band for a couple years, declaring it one of the best times of his life. When the band broke up because the leader became ill, De Lory stayed with a Latin trio for a while, then moved back to Los Angeles, where he played in Latin bands for a few more years.

De Lory soon decided that he needed to move into a better paying job and found a gig in Beverly Hills. He also continued to write songs and was soon meeting other songwriters and pitching his songs to publishers in what was known as the music area of Los Angeles – Sunset and Vine and Gower Gulch. Times were different in the late 1950's and it was fairly easy for De Lory to walk into a publishing house and play a tune and, if the publisher liked it, get it signed on the spot. One of his first advances was from Criterion Music for \$250. He had a novelty hit with "Mr. Custer," which was recorded by Larry Verne and went to #1 on the "Billboard" Hot 100 charts, selling a million records.

Pop success was right around the corner for De Lory, who soon became a member of a group of musicians called "The Wrecking Crew." They were called the 'Wrecking Crew' because many of the older musicians in town believed the newcomers would wreck the industry and were reluctant to play the new music called rock 'n roll. Along came the men and women of the Wrecking Crew, who performed as the band on many of rock 'n roll's early hits.

The group of musicians were friends as well as professionals together. One young man that De Lory got to know was Glen Campbell. Both worked on recordings for the Beach Boys, including their "Pet Sounds" album. De Lory also worked with Brian Wilson, where his organ solo near the end of "California Girls" is most recognizable.

"I remember that I met Brian at Western Studios," De Lory recalled. "That was the first time I had any contact with him. He would come in with a fresh idea; it wasn't necessarily even a complete song. He would sit down and play a few things, and we would write down what he was playing, and begin recording it. A lot of times, it seemed to be segmented. In the case of 'Good Vibrations' we recorded part of it at Western and other pieces at Gold Star.

"Brian had real close contact with the musicians. He would interact with us ... communicating musically. His was a real 'hands on' thing, showing us what to do. As I recall, he would sit at the piano and he would bang it out, the idea he was working on. I had a sense he knew what he was doing and what he wanted ... He was telling us everything he had in his head, and we were quickly writing it down. Maybe what he was

singing to us might have been scratch vocals, scatting, maybe he didn't have all the lyrics. He had melodies and some words.”

De Lory also worked for Phil Spector, who he says was a very different person in the studio than Brian Wilson. Where Wilson was very hands-on, Spector was the opposite, according to De Lory. “Phil was a very inaccessible guy, and he would always be in the booth; we didn't see him...didn't hear much from him. I was always comfortable with Brian, whereas I was intimidated by Phil.”

One of the sessions De Lory did for Spector was “He’s a Rebel” with the all-girl group The Crystals. As the musicians and Spector were preparing to start the session, De Lory was playing around on the piano and had created a riff that caught Spector’s ear. When he asked De Lory what it was, the reply came that it was just something he’d been fooling around with. Spector immediately informed him that he wanted it for the intro of “He’s a Rebel,” and it went on to become one of the most recognized intros of the time.

“They (The Wrecking Crew) were the stone cold rock and roll professionals and there may never be a group of rock and roll musicians of that caliber again,” says songwriter Jimmy Webb, who wrote many of Campbell’s hits.

De Lory says that he learned a lot from both Wilson and Spector even though they worked in different ways. “Brian was turned on by what he was doing...making the best possible sounds. I got ideas of sound from him and Phil, boldness in a sense...creating that wonderful thing, chart and arrangement.

“What a good producer gets out of the players is just an unexplainable feeling, a labor of love of what you're working on, and when it's right, it's right. Brian picked the right guys to do the job, and they came through for him. The one thing that I liked about him was that he rubbed elbows with you. I never really got to know him personally beyond that.”

After Campbell was signed to Capitol and had a few minor hits, De Lory was asked to produce him by the head of the label, Ken Nelson. “It was Glen’s voice and the strength of those songs that inspired me to write arrangements that exceeded my expectations,” De Lory said.

“Al was a session piano player, (and then) he went to Capitol as a producer. I just said, ‘Hey all I want to do is cut a good track and get my vocal on it.’ He had a bed track to work with and he had to fill it in. I think he did a magnificent job,” Campbell said of working with De Lory.

The songs De Lory and Campbell recorded went on to become standards – John Hartford’s “Gentle on My Mind” and Jimmy Webb’s “Galveston,” “By The Time I Get to Phoenix” and “Wichita Lineman.” Together he and Campbell recorded a string of million selling singles. De Lory won two Grammy awards for his work as a producer on those

songs. Indeed, the songs were an inspiration to a whole group of pop-oriented country artists who came after them that continues through today.

Drummer Hal Blaine remembers the session for Campbell's "Burning Bridges. "Glen was recording for Capitol all the time now and we all had a ball," he says. "Al, pianist supreme for everybody, was producing Glen. Again, just great memories for the wrecking crew."

The list of artists that De Lory worked with includes Tina Turner, The Righteous Brothers, Anne Murray, Dobie Gray, The Four Preps, Melissa Manchester, Dean Martin, Gary Morris, Gladys Knight, Fernando Allende, Tammy Wynette, Shirley Caesar, The Turtles, Bob B. Soxx & the Blue Jeans, Wayne Newton, Jan & Dean, Johnny Rivers, Mamas and the Papas, The Hondells, Doris Day and The Letterman.

The Lettermen, who he produced, said De Lory was a great producer because he was such a great musician.

He was also a recording artist, releasing four albums for Capitol Records during the same period of time. As a recording artist he had a hit with the "Song from M\*A\*S\*H (Suicide is Painless)," which charted on "Billboard's" Hot 100 where it remained for 11 weeks. De Lory recorded three piano albums -- "Love Story," "Midnight Cowboy" and "M\*A\*S\*H" -- which were widely accepted by radio and built him a major fan base.

De Lory also did the film score for "Out of Sight" in 1966, working with Nick Venet and Fred Darian to do the background music for the movie. Among the artists involved in that release were The Turtles, Gary Lewis & the Playboys, Dobie Gray, the Knickerbockers, and the Astronauts. He also worked on the soundtracks for "Norwood" "Pioneer Woman," "The Mad Bull," "Rodeo Girl," "Out of Sight," "Nory," "Buster & Billie" and "The Devil's Rain."

In the television realm De Lory worked on a number of specials including "John Schneider: Back Home," "Paul Williams Show," "New Country," "Touch of Gold," "Here We Go Again," "Paul Music at the Music Center," "Paul Williams at the Amphitheatre" and "Conway Twitty on the Mississippi."

De Lory was honored with numerous awards throughout his career, among the Grammy Single of the Year for "Gentle on My Mind" with Glen Campbell and Album of the Year with Campbell for "By the Time I Get to Phoenix." He was also "Billboard" magazine's producer of the year for two consecutive years.

He had a long list of gold and platinum records for single and album, including Glen Campbell's "Wichita Lineman," "By the Time I get to Phoenix," "Gentle on My Mind" and "Honey Come Back;" The Lettermen's "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" and "Hurt So Bad;" and the Mama and the Papa's "Go Where You Want to Go."

De Lory continued to write, arrange and work as a musician in Los Angeles he moved to Nashville in 1981.

“When my Dad and I moved to Nashville he went there to arrange strings on many Country and Pop albums,” explains daughter Donna De Lory. “There was a big demand for him there because he was so well known for all of his hits with Glen. We were immediately accepted into the scene there because of this.”

Another benefit of moving to Nashville was one that De Lory couldn't have anticipated. Even though Nashville is known for other forms of music, there is a large Latin community there, which De Lory was delighted to discover. He formed a band and began playing Latin music in clubs around town to a ready-made audience for the music he loved. De Lory also recorded several albums which were highly regarded by the Latin community. As it turned out, the Latin jazz he thought he would play for the local Latin scene was soon being heard far beyond the city limits of Nashville.

De Lory went on to record two albums of Latin music, “Floreando/Salsa Jazz” and “Hot Gandinga/Hotter than hot Salsa Jazz!” Max Salazar of “Latin Beat Magazine” recalls that after speaking with De Lory over the phone, he asked him to send a Latin recording to him. “He replied by playing a cassette of one of his live sessions, which included the tunes ‘Classical Gas’ and ‘The Theme from MASH.’ Before ‘MASH’ ended, I realized where New York’s Tipica Novel charanga got the arrangement of its 1980 MASH hit. De Lory’s arrangement of ‘Classical Gas’ was overwhelming ...at times his montunos were pleasant reminders of legendary pianists Noro Morales and Joe Loco.”

For seven weeks, starting on March 16, 1996, Latin New Yorkers were the first (outside of Nashville) to hear the Latin Jazz and Salsa De Lory recordings over Vicki Sola’s popular Saturday afternoon show “Que Viva La Musica,” WFDU 89.1, originating from Farleigh-Dickinson University at Teaneck, N.J. Before this recording was planned, De Lory visited legendary trumpeter Paul Lopez in Los Angeles. Dr. Lopez, a soloist and arranger for the orchestras of Noro Morales, Muguelito Valdes, Machito, Rene Bloch, Jack Costanzo and many others, shared his arranging skills with the pianist and to the chart of “Floreando,” a Lopez original.

“This album is a quality jazz album, Latinized and performed in the Cuban clave rhythmic meter so one can dance,” Salazar said. “Its rhythms are jazz, lush ballads, cha cha chas, mambo’s with searing montunos ... a typical Cuban feel which is part of Al De Lory’s heritage.”

De Lory admitted that he never thought he would record his own Latin albums. “A few years ago I would have never dreamed that someday I would produce my own Latin album in Nashville,” De Lory said. “Friends have asked me if the album is country and I say, ‘Yea, it’s country, but a different country ... Cuba and Puerto Rico. It’s Salsa music. Salsa En Nashville!”

De Lory said that one of his mentors was fellow keyboardist Norro Orale a Puerto Rican composer who coached him. “He trained me at an early age to play and

appreciate this style of music. It's a hybrid, a mixture of jazz and Latin montunos. It has its own rules of rhythm one must follow."

De Lory also credited "the gifted" Dann Sherril and John DiModica, whose skills and thorough understanding of this style of music helped make his dream become reality. "I also worked very closely with Max Salazar of Latin Beat Magazine who provided me with some great vintage, as well as current material: "Pa Gozar", "Floreando" (a Paul Lopez composition), and "Pete Mambos on the Terrace" (a Joe Loco classic). The enthusiastic support of Max has given inspiration to this project and continues to enrich our repertoire, with his fabulous collection of Latin music."

Nashville reviewer Walt Trott said of De Lory's performance at a local club, "Despite a background in pop and country ... De Lory seems *born to the manor* when it comes to adapting Latin flavored tunes."

De Lory pointed out that the mix of jazz and Latin had been around for year and that he and his band played very authentic folk pieces in addition to the jazz music. "It never goes out of fashion," he noted. "We've got new material in the wings waiting to be applied." His album "Hot Gandinga," is available online at CD Baby or download at iTunes.

De Lory lived in Nashville until 2010, when he returned to his hometown to be near his daughter, Donna, and son, A.D., as well as other family. He passed away on February 2, 2012 at the age of 82. His daughter, Donna, has made her own niche in music and is well known as a singer, songwriter and producer. She performed for many years as a backing vocalist for Madonna and now has made her own niche in music, having released. A.D. is working on his first solo album, style is more pop/R&B. De Lory's children are definitely carrying on the De Lory tradition. "My brother and I were in the studio together recently and I know it would make my dad so happy to see us doing music together."