



Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

Penny Ballantyne

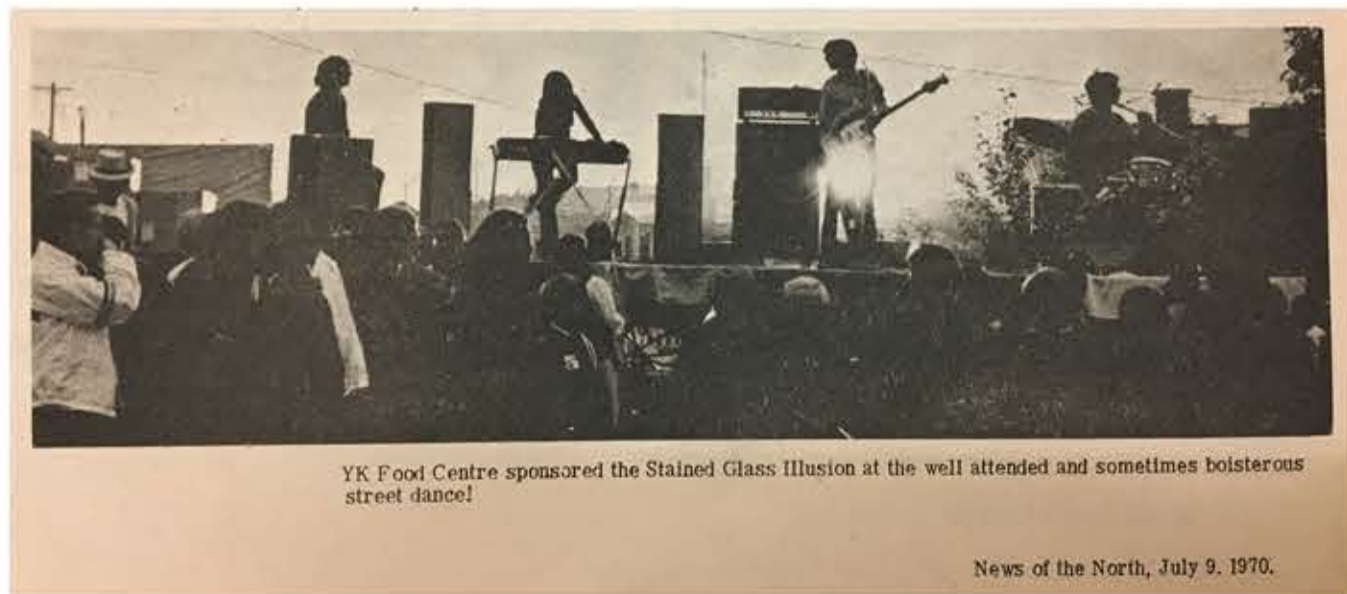
Penny was my first and only music teacher. My Mom hoped that another teacher might be able to get me interested in playing keyboards but I only wanted to play the drums.

It might have been shortly after that or during her time playing with a young rock band called “Stained Glass Illusion” or with the older musicians in “Easy Street” or “The Alley Cats”. Though she only played with these groups for about 2 years, her memories and insights provide yet another snapshot of the Yellowknife music scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Those snapshots taken through the eyes of a young woman parachuted into a party room inhabited by adults in the throes of their weekend revelry.



Penny Ballantyne, (nee Aumond), Yellowknife, NT Sept. 1971, (photo © NNSL.com)

Penny stepped out of this scene to focus on her education. Later on, in the mid 1970s, she spent time in the Yukon where she met other folk musicians, playing through and enjoying the folk music revival of that time. She attended the early “Farrago” and “Frostbite” music festivals in the Yukon and eventually returned to Yellowknife with a group to perform at the early “Folk on the Rocks” music festival.



YK Food Centre sponsored the Stained Glass Illusion at the well attended and sometimes boisterous street dance!

News of the North, July 9, 1970.

Penny Ballantyne (nee Aumond) with 'Stained Glass Illusion'. July, 1970, Yellowknife, NT. (photo © NNSL.com)

Penny and I had a great chat, reflecting on the music of Metis, mixed blood and indigenous cultures in the NWT through those years. Her career took her to many remote northern communities where the traditional music was vibrant and strong in day to day life. *Penny* has seen many changes in the cultures and the music of northern people. In this interview, she reflects, with gratitude, the opportunity to be a part of and to bear witness to those changes over the decades.