

FRED So, Andrew!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Here we are!

FRED Here we are, post our birdwatching Saturday up at Rockport; harlequin ducks, wild turkeys, kittiwake, wow. And

BOUCHARD: then pre-Christmas party.

ANDREW LIST: Purple sandpiper

FRED That's right, purple sandpipers.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Yep, the Christmas party. We're dressed up and we're gonna go to the

FRED We're ready to party with our colleagues. We thought we'd squeeze in this little chat and it's open camera, open

BOUCHARD: mic.

ANDREW LIST: I'm very happy that you invited me Fred, 'cause to be able to This is my fifteenth year at Berklee, and I think I'm a pretty strong representation for the Composition Department, which is a vital department in the school, and we have a lot of enthusiastic students and work with many clubs and many concerts and things. So it's good that I'm here representing my department, my division and students, basically.

FRED It's nice to see that classical music has had pretty long roots here at Berklee despite its reputation as a jazz

BOUCHARD: school. [John] Bavicchi and other people in the faculty have been around for a long while and have kind of greened out the territory for viable audiences for classical composition.

ANDREW LIST: What people don't realize is--I mean, you can separate classical and jazz and this and that, these are all manufactured things from record companies and from department stores. And our students really do love music, and well-rounded artists at least are aware of different styles, different genres, different eras, and you never know where your inspiration can come from. I mean, look at modern jazz--isn't it all about modern classical music? A lot of it now is a whole trend towards atonal and then free improvisation. At least that's what I'm pretty sure.

FRED It's definitely true. The orchestra has evolved. There's a lot more doubling and tripling in the wind section. A

BOUCHARD: richer bass for the brass instruments. Having just come back from the Berlin Jazz Festival, I can tell you that the European traditions there have been fused for quite a while, and a lot of the bands that took the stage in the so-called Jazz Festival were playing very complex charts that had a lot of classical trappings from the post World War Two era.

ANDREW LIST: Joe Lovano does that, doesn't he?

FRED Doesn't he! His nonet, there's some really rich writing in that band. And these bands were national orchestras

BOUCHARD: from Graz, Austria, France, Berlin, Scandinavia, all over the place. And Maria Schneider, she was just on campus last week, she is doing some amazing stuff with the big band.

ANDREW LIST: It's great that you were there and you know, your representation of Berklee too. You're a representative of the school, but also your great enthusiasm for jazz and all that kind of music making, so it's good that you were there. When you travel outside of the boundary you get to see what people are doing and you realize that the music community is actually less separate than certain people want to believe.

FRED BOUCHARD: You certainly have had plenty of opportunities to do that yourself. I was really floored by the list of grants, residencies, and your international travels to sort of inspire your creative process. We could talk about some of those.

ANDREW LIST: Just last summer I was in Paris for five weeks. I got a grant from the Cité des Artes, which is an international artist-in-residence program and I don't know--there is something about Paris, I think, that all artists since the turn of the last century, when you're there you feel like a free spirit. And I had a wonderful live-in studio right in the Marais, a five minute walk from Notre Dame. I was composing my head off, going to museums, and just the atmosphere and the food. Before that I had an eight-month residence in Amsterdam where I was an artist-in-residence invited by the city of Amsterdam with a concert series. When I was on my sabbatical, I went to Sweden for five weeks. I went to this composer center on an island which was really interesting and they turned the old custom's house into a composer center, and it's a school for young composers!

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, that's beautiful.

ANDREW LIST:

ANDREW LIST: I was really happy to be there.

FRED BOUCHARD: Paris, as you said, has been an inspiration to all the arts, not just music. Ravel and Satie and Debussy were all nurtured in that wonderful Left Bank cradle.

ANDREW LIST: Definitely, think of all the painters and the writers and Americans! There has always been a great history that Americans would come to Paris. Fontainebleau, for example, where Nadia Boulanger taught her class for many many years, it was Copland, Ned Rorem, and Bernstein--I mean, almost every American composer. Virgil Thomson, all these people. They all came over and got their inspiration in Paris, so I feel like I'm kind of in the lineage of the great masters.

FRED BOUCHARD: Sure enough! And it goes way beyond the music and the arts: great architecture, the food and the wine, the whole culture.

ANDREW LIST: And the people.

FRED BOUCHARD: The acceptance of artistry as something at a very high plateau rather than just a saleable commodity.

ANDREW LIST: When I travel, it's very interesting, 'cause people perceive you differently. Here, people of course perceive me as a composer but some perceive me as a teacher others a friend, people from the past remember certain things. But when you travel as an artist, people see you as an artist, as a composer, and as a serious person in that way and it actually is very empowering. I find it empowering.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yes, I can imagine. Yes it is. You're there for a different reason. You're not a tourist. You're an artist absorbing the culture and eventually giving something back.

ANDREW LIST: Definitely. It's very interesting 'cause the piece I'm working on now, I'm on the twelfth etude of my twelve etudes inspired by the Egyptian zodiac from the temple of Dendera.

FRED Where did that come from?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It's commissioned by Bowdoin College and for George Lopez, who's their artist-in-residence. And I was trying to do something with the Mayan zodiac because his family is from Belize. I couldn't work out Mayan, I don't know, it seemed it was all about death and this and that. On the internet, "Egyptian zodiac" came up and it turns out that the disc from the temple of Dendera which is from 50 B.C. is in the Louvre. So I visited it this summer, took pictures of it, and I got to see it firsthand, and each movement is a caricature and inspired by a different Egyptian god.

FRED Wow. That's a pretty rich and amazing tradition and one that we know little enough of.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Ancient music.

FRED Yeah, we don't have the music. You can go to the MFA and look at some great mummies and the British Museum
BOUCHARD: and see some more.

ANDREW LIST: Do you see musical instruments? 'Cause in the Louvre they have quite a few musical instruments. They have these beautiful lyres and harps and drums and whistles and flutes, but to really know how it sounded and how they did it. So I didn't try to be ancient. I just used the spirit of antiquity to help me be inspired.

FRED Do you wanna talk about that process? How it evolves?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: I don't know. Being a composer and being an artist is one of the most elusive and fascinating and special lifestyles that anyone could choose, and I feel very humble. When I think about how the music is written, of course I went to school and I have good training and we could talk about that if you want, but it's not really about the training that an interesting idea comes. You can use some of your training to help develop the ideas, but the best things that I think that I've ever written happened in a flash and were written very quickly, and I feel like in some way I tap into a kind of spiritual place. A kind of, I don't know, it's hard to explain. But you know artists, we say we're in the zone and there really is a zone. A zone is kind of an altered state of consciousness where ideas, thoughts, sounds, rhythms, feelings come to you in a very free way without digging too hard, and through that interaction with my own inspiration and the inspiration of the power of music and the universe and whatever else, these ideas come. And I said, this is a very interesting thing, for me, composition is turning energy into sound. I receive it energetically and I translate it through notes, pitches, rhythms, whatever. It's this feeling, that's the way I can kind of explain it. I don't know if you can relate to that.

FRED Inspiration means a breathing in, like from the dove or Isis or whoever. It's a very spiritual and mysterious
BOUCHARD: process.

ANDREW LIST: Very mysterious.

FRED And you're infused and hardly know what happens. And when you get into the zone, hours pass and it seems like
BOUCHARD: a moment. And all your training and all your education from St. Louis and the [New England] Conservatory; it's only a stepping stone. It's over-preparation and then you go with the flow.

ANDREW LIST: Exactly. Because I don't think anybody really ever taught me how to write music, although people did show me. Like they showed, "If you put these notes together you can create these chords," and in a minute I could kind of do it. And then it's taken thirty years to get any good, of course.

FRED You gotta pick the right one. And then knowing when to put a rest in.
BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Sometimes--it's very interesting that you say that because it's very easy in the arts to make run-on sentences in some way. There's something about space and sound that composers like John Cage understood about the breathing. The in and out and the pulse of music that kind of has taken me a while to learn.

FRED Yeah, and you don't really know how you learned it, really. Sometimes it's hard to capture it and then
BOUCHARD: communicate it. I have a hard time explaining how I write things to my classes. I just hold up a review and say: "I wrote this." I don't know how it got there, you have to kind of parse through it and say, "Well I did this, then I did this, then I did this," and maybe that's teaching. But you can't always give them a method or a formula, and everybody's got a different way of learning it.

ANDREW LIST: I totally agree with you, but there is one thing that I'm sure you would agree with that I think is key to making, writing a good article or a book. You have to have some kind of conception or idea. It doesn't have to be set in stone but even the great artists from the Renaissance would sketch in the head of the Madonna with some kind of charcoal or something, before Leonardo Da Vinci would make a painting. They drew a line and there's some kind of form. Even though it could change, a statue--you know how Leonardo's, I don't know the name of it, but his last sculpture. Have you seen that? It's in, oh my god, it's in Milan! His last sculpture, he was quite old and they kept chipping away an arm and chipping away things, and it was so modern in some way. I can't remember the name of it. But anyway, the idea is that I feel that before I can really make a piece of music or even teach a class or do anything that has to do with teaching, there has to be some kind of conception or impetus of what you want to do. And I try to tell my students this. This is something that I kind of learned late, but I wrote these, I am writing these piano etudes, but I did some research like we say at Berklee: "Preproduction is part of it." Not that that writes the piece. But to have some kind of idea, some kind of feeling, some kind of groove or mood and then the inspiration and things take off from that. Not to say that I don't change my mind and you can I tell students like: "You drive the bus, but don't hold the steering wheel too tightly." You're writing the piece, but don't hold the pencil too tightly, because sometimes the inspiration or your mind or your creativity takes you in a direction or gives you something that you never could have imagined you would be able to do.

FRED Yep, sometimes you hit a wrong note and then you say: "I like the way that's going." I sometimes will misspell a
BOUCHARD: word and then I'll try to make a pun on it. It may not always be artistically effective, but at least it's an alternative, and you try to play with that and let it play itself out.

ANDREW LIST: Yes, definitely.

FRED Well, should we back up a little bit and do a little bit of history?
BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: We said we were gonna do Larry King freestyle right, so I think this is good!

FRED
BOUCHARD: Yeah, yeah! What about, what's the first instrument that you laid your hands on, that you saw that you wanted to play?

ANDREW LIST: Well, my brother is a musician and he played the guitar--although I never really wanted to play the guitar, but because my brother played the piano, I wanted to be a musician, and I thank him for that from the bottom of my heart. Kind of the copycat of the younger brother, the older brother. Really, I didn't realize that kind of was the thread that got me into the life that I'm in now. And I used to watch Evening at Symphony and Pops. I lived in St. Louis but we had the Boston Pops and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and when I heard that I said, "This is what I want to do." I thought I was gonna be an orchestral musician. I was gonna be a flutist in the orchestra.

FRED
BOUCHARD: Was Slatkin running the Symphony?

ANDREW LIST: It was Slatkin. Slatkin did this thing, he came to my highschool and we had these concerts and he said, "This is what it would sound like if every instrument in the orchestra played something different," and they all went wild and did all these crazy things and that was to me like, oh my god, I couldn't believe that!

FRED
BOUCHARD: Chaos.

ANDREW LIST: And it's so interesting that the Boston Symphony Chamber Players was the first classical record that I had, and it was Elliott Carter's Woodwind Quintet and Charles Ives' Largo for Violin, Clarinet and Piano and this thing of Debussy's, and it's interesting how this was the music that made me, that called me.

FRED
BOUCHARD: Wow, Elliott Carter Wind Quintet, I love it!

ANDREW LIST: [Laughs] I was like crazy! I was into the whole John Cage thing when I was a teenager and Indeterminacy

FRED
BOUCHARD: Me too! Did you have those old blue LPs on Folkways with David Tudor banging away on the piano and Cage reading those crazy poems about mushrooms?

ANDREW LIST: [Laughs] It's so interesting. And years later I saw Cage do the Norton Lectures at Harvard. As far as I can remember he also had a Boston Symphony premiere--Renga or Apartment House 1776--I don't know where he got that title, but it was interesting because he used Indeterminacy and he completely mixed the orchestra up. A piccolo would be sitting next to a bass, next to a clarinet, next to a cello, next to the timpani, and he had completely shifted all of the instruments. And then in the Norton Lectures--I'm pretty sure this is how he did it--but he wrote these lectures and then he scrambled them in the computer and then, like chance, he just put all of these words together and he scrambled them and then he read it. I mean, it was six lectures. And it's so interesting how it made sense in its nonsensical way. It was genius in its kind of freeform way.

FRED
BOUCHARD: I love somebody's ability to do that.

ANDREW LIST: The courage to do it. 'Cause remember, the Norton Lectures were also Leonard Bernstein's. And Stravinsky!

FRED I went to Bernstein's ones. They were memorable.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: He's in a great tradition. And I mean, Stravinsky in 1940, Poetics of Music, '40 or '42. It was a short book with the six lectures of the Norton Lectures, and then Cage did this outrageous thing where he uses the computer to scramble the text and it shows you how things have progressed.

FRED Yeah. Bring us from St. Louis to Boston!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Interestingly enough my brother came we were living in--I had kind of a troubled childhood I guess. Just a little bit misunderstood. I quit highschool when I was sixteen and I lived in California with my brother and when he drove cross-country to come to Boston, I came with him and I've been in Boston ever since. And I took some lessons with Doriot Anthony Dwyer, that flutist from the Boston Symphony, and I worked with one of her students

FRED You played flute?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: I was gonna be a symphony musician! All from those days from TV. But it didn't work out. I took other lessons with different people and somebody showed me how to compose, and I was taking piano lessons and composition ended up being my thing. And I still played flute, I went to NEC [New England Conservatory].

FRED I remember Dwyer sitting in the first flute chair with Munch and Leinsdorf. She was fabulous! Wonderful tone, she was really transcendent.

ANDREW LIST: She was incredible. I don't know if you know this but she was the first woman to be a principal in any major orchestra. First woman. It was 1955 or '56 I think. Yeah, she was in Munch's orchestra.

FRED What was she like to study with and to be around?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Well I took some lessons with her. She wasn't my major teacher but she was actually a very nonsense kind of person. She was very nice to me. I didn't have the talent to be a great flutist, but she didn't discourage me from playing and I loved it. It was two years ago I wrote a special piece that kind of reconnected me with the flute, which is a piece for flute and string quartet which is called Halcyon Quintet. That was kind of my reconnection with the flute after all these years of not playing. I didn't play, of course. But I got to write the piece kind of saying how much I love the flute again, and it was written for an eighty-year-old friend who was in his halcyon days. But it was great. So understanding the flute kind of helped me because I can understand wind instruments, and if you play an instrument as a composer it gives you an edge and it gives you a window into how things work. Not to say that--I mean, I've never played the clarinet or I've never played the violin and I know how to write, but it's taken a while. People have to show you, and working with great musicians like I did.

FRED Yeah, did you have any contact with Fenwick Smith over at the conservatory?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: No, I never did with Fenwick. But anyway. I was at NEC for seven years, I got my master's and bachelor's there. Then I took a year off, I went to Vermont trying to figure out what I wanted to do. And called my old teacher, William Thomas McKinley, and said, "Where should I go to grad school?" and he said: "Go to BU [Boston University] and study with Bernard Rands." So I've had a number of Pulitzer Prize winning teachers. Bernard Rands is a fantastic composer. His opera Vincent is a Met commission.

FRED Is that Vincent van Gogh?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Yeah, Vincent van Gogh. And he really helped me, he was very patient with me. I also studied with Nicholas Maw who really changed my life in some ways. 'Cause I was kind of blocked compositionally, and Mr. Maw showed me Benjamin Britten. And the simplicity of line and And then we would go afterwards and have oysters and drink vodka at the Atlantic Fish Company. His daughter lived here. He lived in New York City or somewhere, and he would come up and in nineteenI don't remember when it was, but when my second string quartet was premiered in 1993 in Washington D. C. at the French Embassy, Mr. Maw came. It really meant a lot to me. I also studied with Sam Headrick who is a fantastic teacher and composer, he teaches at BU. He was also very patient with me and became a super mentor. So I had these three high-powered teachers all feeding me in different ways.

FRED I am sure it may be a little too ephemeral to discuss, but how did they feed your skillset?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: I know exactly, I can tell you exactly. Well, it was Nicholas Maw who really got me composing again. I'll just admit it on tape, but I was completely blocked and didn't write a note for two years. I was lost. Didn't know what to do. And sometimes these dark periods come out to be the brightest. I ended up at BU and it's interesting that I was able to get right back into the piece. It was the fifth or fourth piece of a six-movement, seven, eight-movement string quartet? I guess it was, I was in number five, and darn if I wasn't able to just his kind of getting me writing again and I finished the piece with him. And he was only there for one semester but he really When I look back now, I think he instilled in me this idea of love of line and not to be afraid to use tonal colors. And he introduced me to Benjamin Britten, which has been a really great, important composer for me. Sam Headrick gave me my work ethic in some way. He helped me to it was more like a family member although we had a professional situation, but Sam, I really modeled myself on Sam: his teaching, his dedication, his love of students, his love for music and passion for composition. This really kind of inspired me and I modeled on him and I model on him. He helped me just another step up to keep going. And Bernard Rand really was the first international figure that I'd worked with. I was so inspired to work with him and I didn't always do my best work sometimes, but he believed in me and gave me a second chance. Let's just say that. And he helped me change and slow down my harmonic rhythm, basically, and think of chord in a different way. I was changing chords and having things moving very quickly and I realized that that was really hard to hear and really isn't the way. Can't do that all the time if you want to have coherency in music.

FRED Yeah, might be more apropos for a jazz chart. Moving along at a brisk 4/4, lots of chords.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Bernard was a great friend still and inspiration. And then, years later, I studied with Richard Danielpour in New York City who also gave me another amazing window, expansion of my technique, to really get more into my music and more of my language; not to be afraid to be myself. I changed my tactic. I now make drafts. Before I would write a piece and I didn't really make drafts and didn't really get to refine ideas but from working with Richard Danielpour, I learned to make drafts and refine my music.

FRED So it's like an outline and then you flesh out the outline?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Flesh it out, add to it, make an outline, make a sketch, and then make a second draft, and really get to the essence of things.

FRED Like an architectural blueprint?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Definitely. But then eliminating filler and eliminating anything that isn't essence of really clear ideas. He never tried to change me, it was just getting more towards the music that was in me that wanted to come through. I've been lucky! I'm lucky.

FRED Yeah, having someone teach your compositional self to be original, to be yourself, and that means to know when
BOUCHARD: to break the rules and know when to follow a line in a given direction or hear the voices.

ANDREW LIST: And hear the inner voice in some way. And just to have the courage to really write the music that I need and want to write, and not worry about style or language or vocabulary or syntax, but the music that really wants to come forward. I always was kind of doing it but I never I needed more self-confidence, let's just say that. All artists need a shot of self-confidence occasionally and we find it in different ways. I mean, I get inspiration from art, art museums, museums around the world. I get a lot of inspiration from birdwatching and it kind of connects me, grounds me with my spiritual self. It makes me feel more free and when you're flying free the music can also fly free.

FRED I couldn't agree more. Let's pursue that a little bit if you don't mind. John Damien and I had talked about possibly
BOUCHARD: doing a BTOT [Berklee Teachers on Teaching] for the faculty as an inspirational thing. It got shut down twice when we proposed it, and I felt they're missing the boat here. I mean, Maria Schneider is a big birdwatcher.

ANDREW LIST: People don't realize birdwatching is the number one pastime in America. It's the number one hobby. Once you get out there with your binoculars, you're out in the field, you're out in nature, and you see this incredible--like a warbler comes through and their colors--and you realize that this bird has just flown up from Costa Rica or Central America or South America and will probably even go farther up to Maine and come back and maybe end up in your backyard next year. It becomes like such a Fred and I, we birdwatch. We just saw seventy, eighty, ninety harlequin ducks. These most unusual gorgeous ducks up in Rockport.

FRED And they came down from Newfoundland or some place in freezing weather. Then they are bobbing in the waves
BOUCHARD: and just looking as cute as can be. For artists who are always bucking the administration, or bucking the slings and arrows of a difficult public, these little critters have faced buffeting winds and storms, and they're just as bright as a penny, and they're right there for you to observe and be inspired by.

ANDREW LIST: There's a lot to learn from birds. What people don't realize is or we sometimes forget is, just being yourself is usually the best tactic for life. And most animals, unless they're corrupted, are absolutely being themselves doing exactly what they're here to do without question. Sometimes they have to adapt to the things that man puts on it. But these birds are doing what they've been doing for thousands and thousands of years. They fly, they live in the North and come down, and if someone wants to watch them bob around and eat and dive and come up, put a little scope on them, they're not gonna run away!

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah. I think most don't get beyond relating to their dog or maybe a little trip to the zoo once a year. But this is something that's a lot more vivid, active, interactive. I don't know, just immediate.

ANDREW LIST: There's another part of birdwatching that there's a huge community that you meet. Interesting people that you meet from all walks of life. Birders are pretty interesting and sometimes whacky people, but they like to help each other. People interact. You have a lot of friends that you have known for years that are birdwatchers. There's just something and you can anywhere in the world in any country in any state in America where there are birders and birdwatching and festivals and you're immediately friends or make contact with people. It doesn't matter where you come from or who you are, what color you are, or any of those things.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah. It's a reason to travel, it's a portable hobby. All you need is your binoculars and the book and a lot of study. Preparation really helps.

ANDREW LIST: I don't know if you know this, Fred, but my next project is to make a song cycle of original poetry by Mary Pinard, who's a poet who lives in Boston and teaches at Babson College. It's called *On the Wing: A Celebration of Birds*.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh yeah, tell us about that.

ANDREW LIST: I'm gonna make a group of twenty-one songs about birds for soprano and piano, which could possibly be orchestrated, some of them for orchestra. And it's about all different kinds of birds, including a whole section on vanishing species, and through the Audubon Society and Babson College and Berklee this project is gonna happen, actually. We're gonna give many performances in different Audubon sanctuaries, in schools, and make a recording, so I'm pretty excited about it.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, that is exciting.

ANDREW LIST: And birds as a metaphor for the human life and human existence, as well as connecting with nature and habitat and their characters. Light songs and heavy songs, funny songs and somewhat sad songs.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, brilliant. I can relate to that immediately. Do you want to maybe talk a little bit about your life in the Berklee culture?

ANDREW LIST: Sure, this is my fifteenth year. I didn't realize until I got an email saying, "You're invited to a little celebration. It's your anniversary." I started in January of 2006 [1996], I was actually hired in December, and I taught one class, one traditional harmony class, and I feel so sorry for those kids who were in my class at that time, 'cause I really didn't know what I was doing and everybody was kind of my guinea pig. And through the years I built my repertoire and have done many projects with students. I'm full-time faculty, tenured professor, you could say full-time professor, since '96 to 2002 I became full-time. I think it was in 2004 around eight-to-ten years [ago] I became full professor. And I'm here for the students. I'm here for the school, I represent the school and all my professional activities, but I'm really here to give students opportunities and inspiration. I want to help give people the things that I didn't get but also to really build a department, to build recognition for the school and for our students. And I'm gonna just brag--because I looked this up 'cause we just had a review--but in the last four years I presented forty student events. Forty student concerts at Berklee.

FRED I went to only one. That's a lot of student events.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Forty. I couldn't believe it when I counted them.

FRED So how does this come about? The kids you ask for compositions?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Well, we have all different things. Some of the things that I do that are outside of my teaching are Esterhazy String Quartet--they've been coming to Berklee for fourteen years. They play twelve--we have a call for scores where students submit scores and then faculty pick the "best ones," whatever. We often get thirty or thirty-five or forty scores. We pick twelve, so if you think about how many pieces we've realized that hundreds, over three hundred pieces have been written. Over two hundred have been played, recorded, it's a workshop. So there are three or four events with that. I'm [the] faculty advisor of our student composer's club, the Society for Composers for almost ten years now. We give two concerts a year, we just had our concert. We have professional concerts at Old South Church. Students raise some of the money and the rest is support through Student Activities. It's a really great time for the students. They meet every week, we have these great concerts, we bring the Kalistos Chamber Orchestra, a professional string orchestra. These events are sponsored by the Professional Writing Division, who believe in what I do and what we do. So we have professional string orchestras playing.

FRED Wow that's terrific.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Then there's more, but just some of the highlights.

FRED How do you organize all of this stuff, you get the kids involved?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It's basically student involvement--like this Composer's Club is all student-run. But I knew these groups and I wanted to bring them to the school and the dean, Kari Juusela, said yes, and these are the things that the students really look forward to. Many of my colleagues will tell you that the whole level of composition has gone up because students are now writing for professional ensembles and getting their chance to hear their music. I think as composers if you have a performance, then you raise that bar up to that level. If you don't have a performance, if you don't have something to look forward to, usually it's hard to make progress.

FRED Can the students sit in on a rehearsal and realize: "Oh jeez, I can really make this better?" Do they get the chance to improve the score once they've heard a rough of it?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Absolutely. One of the things that I really like about all these events are [that] these are all open to the Berklee community. Twelve kids get chosen but we have a hundred people at the session, and it's really a working session. Like Esterhazy Quartet, where they critique and they work on it and they illustrate all these different things. And students say that they learn more in those three days than they do in a whole semester of class.

FRED "You can't do this for cello, try this way," you know, "renotate it?"

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Everything is tried, tempos are changed, these are all the different sounds that you can do and many students come and they take notes and they're all adding that into the repertoire, into their sound repertoire.

FRED Nothing like hands-on.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It's amazing. And the string orchestra is the same thing. Beautiful pieces. You would be very surprised how wonderful the music is of our students.

FRED I've heard some great stuff.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Even Samuel Adler, who is a major composer, said that he travels all over the world going to different universities and colleges and conservatories, and he felt that the Berklee students asked the most interesting and best questions and he was very impressed with their music. He told me that personally.

FRED Can you single out one or two students that have done over the last decade, just as an example, someone who's gone on and done something successful.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: I probably can, I could come up with a couple of names, but I do want to say in the Composition Department, our students are now entering almost every major conservatory for graduate schools. We have Felipe Lara who's a fantastic student who got a full scholarship and Tufts and then went to NIU [Northern Illinois University] . Kevin Laba, who is now at Tufts. Many others I can't think of, I'm on the spot, but I do want to say there's students in every major university now coming from Berklee, and in some way because of the diversity of our program, because all the different streams that they get here. You can be in the gospel choir, you can be in a non-western ensemble, you can take a film scoring course, you get classical traditional music--which is not really traditional because, I mean, you can teach Beethoven, but basically the whole idea is to have skill, to have technique and skill so you can write and play in any genre or any way that you want. So our students are really excelling out in the world.

FRED How is the diversity of the Berklee experience showing up in the flavor of the compositions? I mean, these kids are coming from a lot of different countries, they're exposed to all kinds of unusual cultures and musics here. What are you hearing in terms of evolution?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: This is the thing that I think is so fascinating because most schools, many of the composers all sound the same. If they're doing it in the style of Elliot Carter, if they're doing minimalism, if they're doing all the latest trends or old trends, but at Berklee because of the different strains and streams, the diversity--some are rock musicians or they're drawing on their culture, Greek music or Arabic music. A lot of them know the film repertoire so they're very much entrenched in a film sound. So it really it's much fresher in some way, it's much more fresh to me. It's interesting, it's vital, there's a lot of diversity. No two really sound the same in a kind of "school" way, which I think is really fantastic because it shows that there is real creativity. And students have the ability to kind of be themselves more here and to follow the musical line that they want to follow.

FRED BOUCHARD: I noticed, for example out in the jazz world or even in the pop world, I noticed that strings are making a big comeback. I played two albums that I got this week for one class that featured cello. One was a rock band and the other one was a classical cellist who sort of got a lot of interest in improvising lately, and has commissioned pieces where the composer was giving her a lot of room to vamp or improvise over loud backgrounds or frame percussion. I am talking about Maya Beiser. She is really crossing the genres now. That means that string writing, people who are listening to this stuff are probably gonna start using strings in new and interesting ways, am I right?

ANDREW LIST: I think definitely so, and at Berklee they realize how important it is to have a solid string program. We just had our first string showcase. That was a really big thing and I'm impressed with the level of playing, that it's gotten a lot better over the years. But strings in rock band, strings in pop music, strings in film music, strings in mainstream jazz or arrangements. We want to offer the students the ability to, in whatever music that they are interested in, to be able to do it. I think that that's Never underestimate what a person can do or where you might want to be or where you might want to go. So it's important. One of the most important classes we teach here is the counterpoint class. Sometimes I think people don't realize or people think it's old fashioned. But what they don't understand is if you have one line and you want to have other lines, what are you going to do? And where are you going to get the notes? And how are you going to work those things?

FRED Go back to Bach or?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It was Weezer, I think it was the rock band Weezer, they said that the most important thing that they took--this is this huge rock band--was the counterpoint class. There's this whole fugue, imitation thing at the end.

FRED Oh yeah, Keith Emerson was doing that in London forty years ago.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: The Beatles too.

FRED BOUCHARD: The Beatles too, yeah. Coming at it from another angle, a lot of unusual instruments are showing up. Like you can get a Monk orchestra, the West Coast, but they've got a koto or an erhu playing with it. And you can also find an oud kind of slipping into a rhythm section where it was just a guitar, bass, and drums. There's like an oud or a balalaika or something else going on. Wow, it enriches the textures.

ANDREW LIST: This is also an important stream in classical music also--concert music, I hate to use the word classical--is to draw on ethnic instruments, ethnic music. Look at Tan Dun for example. People must take him pretty seriously. He did win the Oscar for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. I saw this most amazing piece of his with Yo-Yo Ma and the Boston Symphony and throat singers, these Tibetan throat singers, and this video thing that they had. It was just before the Silk Road. It's pretty fantastic, I mean, that's just one aspect of it. I use some klezmer in my music and early music and folk music. I was always interested in folk music. I think that early music has played an important part in my And I just wrote my cello concerto, which is called *Earth Song*, a piece dedicated to my parents and I put a whole klezmer section. It just happened naturally, I didn't try to superimpose something on there, but it just came out of the texture in the last movement. It kind of came out, it showed itself and went back in in a kind of interesting way. I encourage students to draw on their culture 'cause it's a rich language.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah and improvisatory forms are also working their way in. I mean, klezmer and dixieland: they're kind of close in some ways! It's exuberant dance music.

ANDREW LIST: Do it, but you have to do it in a creative.. And you have to find your own way to it. If you just are going to quote it exactly, then be a performer. Be an ethnomusicologist. You have to assimilate that into your language, make it yours. Not to say that you shouldn't do it exactly straight, but I personally think that there's enough people already doing that. As a composer you need to find a way to assimilate and blend.

FRED BOUCHARD: Why don't you talk about some of your favorite composers? I mean, Britten, Ravel?

ANDREW LIST: It's very interesting because in the twentieth century--I'm very interested in the first half of the twentieth century ,I guess. Stravinsky is an important influence, and Bartók and Ravel and Debussy, but I do go back. I mean, the great masters, maybe Beethoven is my favorite composer, I don't know. I think it's okay to relate to those and love the music. Some people think that you're going back too far and you should only be with current things. I mean, I am a current artist even if the language like a colleague Yakov Gubanov said, "It's not about the vocabulary that you use, it's about the way you think that makes you modern, current or old fashioned in some way." I think that was very fascinating because if you're writing tonal music--my music is somewhat tonal but not always--it doesn't necessarily mean that I'm not up with current things, because I'm living and thinking and conceiving of the music in a modern and current way. I don't know if you can understand that. I'm not trying to follow, I'm not doing it in an old-fashioned way, although the great masters were neo-classicists. Looking back even Schoenberg in the *Suite Opus 25* is completely twelve-tone--the most dissonant music you've ever heard, and he calls it *Suite Opus 25*, and it's gavotte and sarabande and gigue and all these forms from the baroque. Even Bach, when he did the suites, those are Renaissance dances. They're not--the gigue, the sarabande and the courante, they're Renaissance dances, they're not baroque dances. So looking back, we stand on the shoulders of giants. Why not appreciate and feel happy with that? So I go back to Machaut, I go back to Dufay, I go back to the ars subtilior of the fourteenth century. This beautiful Matheus de Perusio and these composers that were writing in all these different mixed meters and all these dissonant counterpoints that were so interesting.

FRED BOUCHARD: Some of that really early music sounds really modern.

ANDREW LIST: It's very modern. And I love Gregorian chant. As far back as ancient goes, as far back as my consciousness and memory goes, that's as far back as I go and as far forward as I can possibly go and understand. I use minimalism and ostinatos in my music. I just don't peg myself in a certain way but I'm inspired by things. I try to do it my way. I just taught this class, the first class that I designed at Berklee is "Maurice Ravel: The Man and his Music." Students loved it and I loved it. It was a lot of work. I learned so much about Having a whole semester just on one artist, and not only their music but the way they were, their perceptions, and what influences them, their time, and the art.

FRED Ravel doesn't have a huge corpus either.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: He wrote sixty pieces. So we got through quite a bit of the music. But it's very interesting, because no matter how much you talk, no matter how much influences you bring in and you talk about it--and I did this in a historical way--the music really stood on its own. The students and I were wowed every week with the complexity, just the beautiful amazing things that he would do. His whole thing was to strive for perfection. His modus operandi was to make the absolute most perfect piece and strive for perfection. And sometimes people didn't understand and they would say, "There is not emotion," or "It's not romantic," or this and that, but I think in some ways it's him. And what's important about a work of art is that the person brings it forward. It doesn't matter if it fits into some slot or if you like or don't like it. I even tell student, "It's not about what you like or don't like." That's called censorship. It's not about what you like or don't like. It's about allowing the piece to be the way it needs to be, and if you can relate to it, if you can draw something from it, fine. If you can't, you know, one person's used hat is somebody's new hat.

FRED Absolutely, yeah.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: So this is kind of the way I did it. But the Ravel class was really great and I hope that it will eventually get into the catalog. Students participated in a pretty intense way. They wrote papers, but they also gave presentations, which I thought was fascinating. They did what I do: they did research, they picked a piece, and they stood in front of their peers and gave these wonderful wonderful presentations. And afterwards they said that they just loved doing the research and the ability to dig into a piece and to make it their own. It's not enough to just listen to something in class, but you have to take personal responsibility to get to know a piece of music and to get to know an artist in a deep way. And then it enriches you, adds to your repertoire in some way. Plus they got teaching experience which is pretty nice.

FRED I think that there's lip service paid to digging in and wallowing in a single piece, but a lot of stuff comes down to flitting through a survey and only barely getting your feet wet--like a Wilson's storm petrel just floating across the ocean instead of diving like a gannet.

ANDREW LIST: Exactly. It's interesting because I think that our students at Berklee and most people in general don't really realize what they're getting and what's going on while you're in it. You're so busy taking all the million classes that they take, and all the different teachers and gigs and friends and this is and that. It's really when you get a little distance from something that you realize their true value. And as you know--and I think that students sometimes, I'll often say, "Don't tell me how you like the class now, email me in five years and let me know if it has influenced you." Or, "If this counterpoint class has helped you in the next five years, email me and let me know about it." And it's fascinating what sometimes happens in emails that I get or notes that I get or cards that I get or something on Facebook: "Remember me, I'm doing this and I loved that class, it was this or that." I just had a student say that their Counterpoint 2 class was their best class at Berklee. The class that they looked forward to out of their whole semester. I couldn't believe it. I was humbled by that. Because I think, maybe it's because we allow the kids to They feel like they learn something and then they get to create some music or they get to do something that comes from within.

FRED BOUCHARD: The gestation period of accepting, assimilating, and absorbing and benefiting from a class sometimes hits months or years after the class is over. I've noticed that too. I tell them, "It's your investment. You spend a semester here. You got your three credits, you got an A, B or a C. You put your money in. What did you come away with? Get back to me!" Like you do. You know: "Stay in touch! Let me know what you're doing!"

ANDREW LIST: And they do and it is meaningful because if we didn't believe in what we do here, we wouldn't be able to come to work everyday. I consider teaching an important extension and an important part of my creative life. I come here as a composer. I come here as a creative artist. It's creative teaching, creative living. It's the art of living in some way. If I cook something I try to make it in a pretty good way. Creative birdwatching in some ways. Sometimes it's also just about allowing and letting go and not trying too hard. I think a lot of times it is, and usually that's when a tree gets filled with prothonotary warblers at the top where you're standing there and there's no birds, or an interesting piece of music or wonderful students that come into your class that really enrich the whole class and make it worthwhile.

FRED BOUCHARD: How do you convey your appreciation of Britten to a class? Which pieces do you go to, what do you point out about his writing style or his?

ANDREW LIST: I think with Britten in some ways the music speaks for itself. I play The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, and I think that is one of the best pieces ever written. Berklee students love that piece. Why? Well, it's variations on a theme by Henry Purcell and a fugue, but it's not because of its variations, I think people understand that it's variations, but because there is a tremendous amount of skill. A tremendous amount of clarity of idea. It's very catchy-sounding, but it also shows in a very deep way and in a very diverse way skill in writing that is just fantastic. And the music, there's something about that music that just makes you feel good. It runs the gamut.

FRED BOUCHARD: I haven't listened to that one in a long while, I need to

ANDREW LIST: Check it out! And Britten is such a master. He does thing at the end that always gives me chills, and I point it out to the students so when they get to it, they understand that there are two themes. One is this main theme of Henry Purcell in all these variations, and he goes down the orchestra more or less, through down the score, showing the characters of all the instruments. And then there is a fugue at the end that's very very fast. Interestingly enough, the subject and the answer, the voices come in in the fugue--it's the same order that they were at the beginning. And then at the end he puts the fugue subject and the original theme together at the same time. Just the way that Berlioz did in the Symphonie Fantastique in the last movement where he puts the dires irae and the idée fixe. Just to show how much skill a composer could possibly do. All of that can happen and it's all mind blowing and you still feel something in an amazing way.

Me also, I love Peter Grimes. I love the music of Benjamin Britten. To me, Peter Grimes--and I talk about it some and I play some excerpts of that like in Music History. I should say that Music History I think is one the most underrated courses at Berklee. It's a sad state of affairs when our students don't get the opportunity to delve into a different style of music that may not be their main corpus. But if you don't have the opportunity to listen to certain pieces like all these great pieces I was talking about--I haven't badmouthed the school much at all but I just have to say that it seems like Berklee in some way doesn't understand. I think part of the reason is 'cause they didn't come to one of our classes. But they don't understand that our students need as professionals and creative artists a variety of inputs, and if it isn't in school when you get that, if you don't get to hear Machaut in school, if you don't get to hear the Beethoven symphony if you don't get to hear Benjamin Britten or Stravinsky in school, when are you going to hear it? Who's going to walk you through these things if you don't do it when you're in the classroom?

FRED You're not gonna stumble on stuff online very much.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: You're not gonna have time either. Once you get into your gig man, that's it.

FRED You're not gonna find Willie Byrd's five-part mass on YouTube. No, they've got to get some of it here.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It's interesting. Even if it isn't something that you think is your music; it's not about that. Because the message that great artists send crosses all boundaries and all borders, and it's up to us as educators to show that diversity. And the Western classical tradition is a really rich tradition. Very rich.

FRED And all the good composers are listening to this stuff. Maria Schneider is listening to what Gil Evans did with Miles Davis fifty years ago and putting her own spin on it. You mentioned Peter Grimes. You know that music where the waves are coming in? [Vocalizes] These really fast arpeggios? Didn't I just hear that in John Hollenbeck's new album called Eternal Interlude?

ANDREW LIST: Yeah, it's the first interlude from Peter Grimes. The Four Sea Interludes. The first one has this flourish, and if you look at it you'd be very amazed that it's harp and viola and clarinet, very interesting. And then he has this suspended cymbal which he does this tremolando, which adds this kind of roar of the sea. It's such a genius way of orchestrating.

FRED Hollenbeck, who's another conservatory graduate.

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Whit Hollenbeck?

FRED BOUCHARD: No, it's his kid brother John. He's a jazz drummer, he's got a big band, and he's using that stuff! He's getting it raised, he's taking Britten and flipping it on its head, doing something totally different. If we don't hear that and point it out to people Maybe they'll find out on their own, but not too likely. It's up to us, Andrew!

ANDREW LIST: Doing our best! I know we have to go in a minute, but I want to say that one of the things that I remind students is--and that I'm just gonna remind people--is that all the pop, rock, jazz, hip-hop, gospel, all of this music are all of our American "contemporary music" as we like to say at Berklee, it comes from mainly two main streams: Western classical music, where the harmony comes from, and music of Africa and Latin America basically. The rhythms come from African rhythms and African music and from island music or from some kind of Latin thing. Those are the two strains where all of this rock and pop and jazz and all of these things come from. So if you don't show students that, and if they don't have a thorough understanding, or at least--they're not going to get a thorough understanding but some understanding--you're cheating them from their heritage in some way. They don't really understand where things come from. It depletes. It diminishes in some way the inspiration

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah. I think we've come to a good place here.

ANDREW LIST: Should we end on that low note? Let's end on a high note! One more thing.

FRED BOUCHARD: Tell them how to deal with writer's block! How do you deal with writer's block?

ANDREW LIST: Well, it's very interesting because I don't get writer's block very often, and I write pretty quickly, but sometimes I do. And I think that sometimes the subconscious of the mind is trying to tell you something. It says, "Sometimes we just need to rest. Sometimes we need new inspiration." I go for walks. We just went birdwatching, and I came back and I finished a movement. That evening, I came back and I finished a movement of my piece. I think you have to tread very lightly, and you have to respect the whole process in a very light way. One thing is not worrying about it or fretting about it. Sometimes going to a concert, improvising, getting fresh air, going out for a good dinner, doing something, traveling, giving the piece a rest and coming back. This is so interesting because I didn't know what to do with my twelfth etude, I was having a little problem. I was at a pizza party for student composers, a collaborative pizza party for student composers and pianists who were doing this concert in February. And Stephanie Tiernan showed me a video of her four-month-old grandson improvising at the piano.

FRED BOUCHARD: What!?

ANDREW LIST: Her son had held the baby up, four months old, and I've seen a baby so intently touching notes and playing these chords and these things, really focused.

FRED BOUCHARD: Four months?

ANDREW LIST: Four months old and no banging.

FRED It's in the blood!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: It was amazing and very interesting, and I said to Stephanie, "I hope you don't mind that I might borrow a little something from this young man." Interestingly enough, just the way he moved his arms gave me the first chord of my piece. I already had kind of an idea, but I was inspired by this four-month-old baby who was improvising freely at the piano to have the courage to just be free. It helped me through the blocking and got me into the last movement of my piece. [Both laugh] Four-month-old baby! I couldn't believe it!

FRED He'll probably be a concert pianist in a few years!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Oh yeah. He's now three years old and he's making his own songs, she said. He has all of these songs. He'll probably come to Berklee.

FRED If this works--and I'm just gonna ask you one question a second time--can you succinctly say how traveling

BOUCHARD: affects your music or your musical persona?

ANDREW LIST: In travel, you discover things about yourself that you can't do in your own backyard. In traveling, your perception of the world and the world's perception of you changes. You have a sense of freedom. You get to see great sights and meet wonderful people. Tread on the lands where great artists have tread, visiting their homes or their places in museums. Eating great food and, you know, maybe you get a romance or two--occasionally things happen. And I just think that it's like enriching one's spirit. And that's why I go to residencies, and that's why I encourage my students to go to residencies.

FRED And the residencies, just to give them a quick rundown: Saratoga Springs with Yaddo, Visby Center for

BOUCHARD: Composers in Gotland, Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst in Amsterdam, Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough New Hampshire, the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Florida, Aspen in Colorado, and lots of others.

ANDREW LIST: Lots of others. I'm putting in my application for this DOT grant, and if I get it I'm going to have a really nice long residency in Berlin. So I hope I get it.

FRED Now, as a corollary, as a coda, I want you to tell everybody about your backyard. Your backyard. [List laughs] it's

BOUCHARD: a killer backyard! Just tell 'em briefly!

ANDREW LIST: Lots of flowers, let's just say that. I'm an avid gardener. Gardening is one of my ways to help inspiration, and I make a symphony every year in my backyard. I have like eighteen rose bushes, and I have wildflowers, and I have vegetables and fruits, and I have so many birds that come through: feeders and hummingbirds and birdbaths. It's a really peaceful place. It's a little haven in the middle of Jamaica Plain that I kind of created for myself. And I kind of think that it gives a lot of pleasure, but just because I have this wonderful garden, I still need to go see Monet's garden. I still need to go to the Kew Gardens in London. I still need to do these things because I get ideas!

FRED When I went to Giverny, it was the middle of the winter and I had to jump over the fence!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: I know, you said! Well, I was just there and it's pretty special, pretty special. The only season I would say don't go to Giverny is winter, 'cause it's closed. And there are no flowers.

FRED Did anybody write pieces, impressionist pieces from looking in his garden?

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Oh, I would think so. Reflections in the Water of Debussy. isn't that? Water has played a very important part in the inspiration of French composers especially, but in many composers, so definitely.

FRED God, Andrew, we could waffle on for another hour here! Let's go to the Christmas party and have a drink!

BOUCHARD:

ANDREW LIST: Sounds great! Thanks for inviting me, Fred!

FRED It was great. Thanks!

BOUCHARD: