

FRED BOUCHARD: Good afternoon, everyone out there in Berklee-land. This is Fred Bouchard with another Oral History Project interview. Today we have Mr. Stan Strickland, who like myself has been a member of the faculty for twelve or fourteen years?

STAN STRICKLAND: Correct.

FRED BOUCHARD: Stanley, nice to have you on board!

STAN STRICKLAND: Nice to be here!

FRED BOUCHARD: I remember being impressed with your performances way back when, in the Jazz Coalition days. Doing a multimedia, multi-costume event with dance and voice and flute, saxophone and lots of little beautiful dramatic touches.

STAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, it's been a long career for you in Boston.

STAN STRICKLAND: It has.

FRED BOUCHARD: But it started back in Ohio.

STAN STRICKLAND: That's correct.

FRED BOUCHARD: Tell us about your childhood there.

STAN STRICKLAND: Well, I grew up in a small town in Ohio: Springfield, which is seventy miles north of Cincinnati and about forty miles east of Dayton. And most of my early musical experiences were listening to the big radio that was in the kitchen, one of those old time big radios.

FRED BOUCHARD: A Zenith? A Motorola? Lots of buttons and made of wood?

STAN STRICKLAND: Yeah. [Laughs]

FRED BOUCHARD: We had one too!

STAN And singing in church. We didn't have a phonograph player or a television. And no one played, but my mother
STRICKLAND: told me that for some reason I thought that people came to our house because they heard about me singing and dancing. That's what she says, I don't really remember all of that. She says I started out playing rhythm with a washing machine that would make kind of a rhythm, and I would take clothespins and tap out the rhythms, you know. [vocalizes rhythm] So those early years I can remember really well in the kitchen, singing at the top of my lungs and just so into it. Listening to Ray Charles and I can remember the first song that I ever sang, which was "Lucky Old Sun."

From there in grade school third grade they gave a music test to see if you had a music talent. I told the teacher, "I want to play the saxophone." And he said, "Well, you have long arms and straight teeth so you should play the trombone." So they gave me the trombone. [Laughs]

FRED Did that fit?
BOUCHARD:

STAN It was kind of a bad fit, I wasn't really into the trombone. But I was into singing, so I sang in choirs. I was also into
STRICKLAND: sports so I had no music lessons, stopped playing the trombone and somehow picked up on the flute. And I don't know what it was. I know I wanted to play the organ before that. I would go around to the music stores in Springfield, Ohio, and say, "I wanna try this organ." So I would go in there and play a little stuff I would know and I'd say, "Well, let me think about it." And I would go to another store. There were only three stores and after that I had no more organs to play. So I asked my mother, "Can we get this little organ?" I thought it looked kind of cheap. She said, "No." And somehow I got the idea, "What about flute? That's little, maybe we can afford that!" And I got the flute and that was pretty much love at first sight.

FRED Could you get one at school or did you have to go buy your own?
BOUCHARD:

STAN I bought my own. And it's interesting. I had no relationship to any music at school. I don't know.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Really?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I mean it was you know, the school system in those days, there was singing but it seemed like none of the
STRICKLAND: African American kids were really studying instruments. We were singing and playing sports, and I was really into playing sports that was my dream, was to be a

FRED What sports were you interested in?
BOUCHARD:

STAN I had hoop dreams. I wanted to be a basketball player.
STRICKLAND:

FRED You were tall?
BOUCHARD:

STAN I thought I was tall. I mean, I was tall for my age, I thought I was gonna be six-foot-ten or something.

STRICKLAND:

FRED You are six-foot-four!

BOUCHARD:

STAN No, I am only six-foot-one-and-a-half.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Oh really? Well, it's partly your poise and carriage!

BOUCHARD:

STAN I try to stand straight!

STRICKLAND:

FRED You do, you do.

BOUCHARD:

STAN So, you know, I had two weeks of flute lessons and had to stop flute for football practice, cause you start football in the summer which always killed, you know, you get all that stuff on and it's ninety-five degrees. And then I didn't have any more lessons. Just kind of played on my own. Had a friend who had a saxophone and I brought his and played around with that.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Tenor?

BOUCHARD:

STAN He had one of his brothers had a tenor, one had the alto. Whoever would let me borrow it was the one that I would play. Ended up having a tenor. And somehow I got this gigoh, I got hurt playing football in my junior year, and that was the end of my athletic career.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Wow, sounds like Jack Kerouac, that's how he became a writer!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh really?

STRICKLAND:

FRED Yeah, he got beat up doing a big run back at Columbia University and his coach told him to walk it off and he didn't, and it just got worse. He never played football again; he just started writing.

BOUCHARD:

STAN And he ran track too!

STRICKLAND:

FRED Did he?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, cause I was in a play about him, I just remembered, yeah. So, you know, I got hurt playing football, I got
STRICKLAND: cut my senior year from the basketball team, and I thought my life was over. I could remember that moment as if it were now. They called the people and my legs was so weak and they called the names of the guys who were gonna be cut: "Joe, Smith, Brown," and then, "Strickland." And there was this kind of hush cause we had played all these years together, had a championship and I thought, "That's it. My life is over. I'm a senior in high school and that's it." And then I started to play in this blues band. Playing every song in the key of E, and I'm playing the tenor saxophone so like, every song's in F sharp. This twangy guitar, this guy from Texas. We were playing for some female impersonators. And that was my introduction to the music world.

FRED Wow, were you in nightclubs?

BOUCHARD:

STAN It was a nightclub. My grandmother was appalled. She was a good church clerk woman. But my mother knew that
STRICKLAND: I was just into the music so she trusted me.

FRED Every tune was in F sharp.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well for me, yeah.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Right. That's a challenge.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, and I couldn't really relate to all that twangy blues, but now I can appreciate it cause this guy, he was into
STRICKLAND: it!

FRED That was more country?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, he was from Texas and that was quite a scene.

STRICKLAND:

FRED So at this point was that tenor sax your own or were you still borrowing?

BOUCHARD:

STAN That was still my friend's, yeah. I played the tenor sax, I had a flute. This was a low down dirty joint where all the
STRICKLAND: pimps and prostitutes and right across the street from the police station!

FRED They probably didn't want to hear the flute much.

BOUCHARD:

STAN They didn't want to hear the flute much. But I remember I played the flute every now and then. I remember
STRICKLAND: having it on the band stand.

FRED You had to keep up your chops, right? You got to play a little bit every day?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Right, yeah. So, you know, then I went to college, studied chemistry.

STRICKLAND:

FRED This is at Central.what was it?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. Went to college, studied chemistry. In my mind I thought, "I don't want to major in music. I don't want to be a musician on the streets of New York with a horn under his arm and no money." I had that imagethere was a movie like that right? The Man With the Golden Horn [Young Man with a Horn], was that it?

FRED Oh, yeah, it was all caught up with the drug thing. You know, it was almost like signed, sealed, and delivered if you were a musicianespecially a jazz musician, you were definitely going to get hooked and drugs and get fucked up, you know. Sorry, edit that out.

STAN So somehow, I don't know, I had this image, so I decided, well, I'm gonna study chemistry and I love chemistry. **STRICKLAND:** But the third year the professor called me in and said, "Mr. Strickland, I don't think you have sufficient motivation to be a chemist." And I said, "Well, I'm not really into chemistry, I'm really into music. I'm just doing this to fall back on." And he said, "You shouldn't think about falling back, you should think about doing what you want to do!" And I never went to another chemistry class. I didn't tell my family anything, I just said, "Okay." I just started going to music classes.

FRED This is while you're at Wilberforce?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah.

STRICKLAND:

FRED So this is after two years of chemistry?

BOUCHARD:

STAN It was in my third year.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Wow, the guy told you to follow your heart.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I mean, it was a big shift, but I felt, you know, I said, "This ishe's right. I'm just gonna go for what I wanna do."

FRED Wow. That reminds me of Herb Pomeroy's story of going to Harvard but jamming all the time down across the river here in the clubs. And by his second or third year he didn't want to deal with the rest of the education, he just wanted to play and blow. That's what you did!

STAN That's what I did, I switched to music education. I'm so glad I studied chemistry though, it really helped formulate **STRICKLAND:** my world view.

FRED How so?

BOUCHARD:

STAN I mean, studying chemistry and physics, you appreciate that things are not how they appear, that essentially
STRICKLAND: we're energy and not solid mass. And that along with a course I took one semester of quantum mechanics, which is a little more of an almost metaphysical view of physics, and then studying yoga so that I could improve my breathing, that put me on a complete serious path of studying, you know, metaphysics and yoga spirituality. And so studying chemistry was definitely a part of that.

FRED That's fascinating. I mean, it's funny how we can toggle back and forth into different realms and one view will
BOUCHARD: reinforce the other one. And a lot of people who don't have that background don't get that double view of reality.

STAN I mean, I feel fortunate to havebut also to have your mind work in that way. To be able to be analytical, but also
STRICKLAND:

FRED Disciplined in certain ways?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes, and also to be contemplative, using the left and right side of your brains.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Absolutely. Great. So, you graduated from Wilberforce?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well, I was there for five years, I didn't graduate. I joined a band called Brute Force, which was really a special
STRICKLAND: group.

FRED The steel drum guys?

BOUCHARD:

STAN No,

STRICKLAND:

FRED It's a different one.

BOUCHARD:

STAN It's a different one. This was fellow students at Central State and we went to a couple guys were from New York.
STRICKLAND: They had a summer home on Martha's Vineyard so we went to Martha's Vineyard one summer, played around, played in the clubs, someone from Atlantic Records came in. Herbie Mann had his own label, NBO Records, a subsidiary of Atlantic Records. Signed us up, we made a record and then we did some touring with Herbie Mann, we would warm up for him.

FRED Herbie was huge in those days. He would pack big stadiums and big, big, big auditoriums.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, he made a nice kind of crossover with he had Roy Ayers on vibes and Sonny Sharrock, who played on our recording, played guitar. He was a very avant-garde, very out guitar player. So that record, Brute Force record, has kind of reemerged, probably because Sonny Sharrock has some fans. People know about him. So, yeah, the guys in the band said, "I want you to drive the car and the trailer with all the band equipment. And then you're going to get on a boat." And being from Ohio, I really hadn't seen the ocean so I couldn't imagine how you could get a car on a boat. I had always seen, like, rowboats and canoes. So I thought, "He's pulling my leg." "And then you're gonna go to Martha's Vineyard," and I'm thinking, "Well, that's someone's backyard," cause we used to go to people's backyards and, you know, steal their grapes and stuff.

FRED Yeah, they make a little homemade wine or something. Martha's husband.
BOUCHARD:

STAN "You're gonna go into Woods Hole." So I drove all the way from Ohio in this old Ford with a trailer full of band equipment, not knowing if there was really a place on Martha's Vineyard that you could get on with a car and a boat. But it was true and I said, "Wow, he's for real," and we had the time of our lives on the Vineyard.

FRED So you played at one of those roadhouses down there for a couple of weeks or?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh, we were there for the whole summer. We played on everywe were there, we played in Edgartown the night that Kennedy drove off the bridge in Chappaquiddick.

FRED Oh my god, 64, 65?
BOUCHARD:

STAN No, 69, I think. That was pretty wild.
STRICKLAND:

FRED So you were on the East Coast for the first time and you were with a band?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes, so
STRICKLAND:

FRED You finished your studies, you never told your grandmother that you were doing music?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Right. [Laughs] But they knew that I was all about music so, you know, they understood, they trusted me. So then we went from Martha's Vineyard back to Ohio, toured around with Herbie Mann, played in Cincinnati, opened up for Mountain you ever heard of that band?

FRED I don't
BOUCHARD:

STAN That was a big rock band with a guy named Leslie West. That was the loudest I had ever heard in my whole life. I

STRICKLAND: couldn't believe how loud music could be. So then we went to upstate New York, thinking maybe we could get some gigs in the Catskills, a little town called Accord which is near Ellenville with a lot of resorts. But this was kind of a hippieyou might call it acid jazz. We were a cross between Sly and the Family Stone and Pharoah Sanders. You know, this kind of groove with this outyou know, we were very much intoI was really into free jazz and Trane and all of that.

FRED Were you playing soprano yet?

BOUCHARD:

STAN No, just tenor and flute and voice. And so we were just screaming on topwe had two bass players, you know. And

STRICKLAND: so these resorts were like, "I don't think so." [Laughs]

FRED These are old folks mostly, right?

BOUCHARD:

STAN I mean, we were so far away from[Laughs] I don't know what we were thinking.

STRICKLAND:

FRED You would have done better in the Village!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah! We did play in the Village, at the Village Gate, that was cool. So after that we didn't have any money, we

STRICKLAND: were on this farm, a farm house upstate. So it was either go to New York or come to Boston. And I had some friends here so I came to Boston.

FRED All right. The band broke up?

BOUCHARD:

STAN The band broke up and I came to Boston and started working with dancers. Because on the Vineyard that

STRICKLAND: summer I had met someone who organized dance classes. And when I came to Boston she said, "Do you want to play for us in dance classes?"

FRED Who was that?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Her name was Donna Maynard. She wasn't a dancer, but she just was an organizer. So I said, "Yeah." So I started

STRICKLAND: learning how to accompany dance classes, and that was whole big change in my life, cause then I started learning about the whole world of dance and meeting choreographers, and eventually got tired of just sitting there watching everyone jumping around and started taking classes myselfwhich led to a whole other life.

FRED Yeah. Maybe you could talk about some of the ways you transitioned to that. I mean, playing music for dancers

BOUCHARD: and dancing yourself, what are some of the key components that relate music tothat help you transition from being a musician to being a dancer?

STAN Well clearly, having a sense of rhythm helps. But I think basketball and music are less like dance. Because there are a lot of musicians whose awareness doesn't extend to their lower body. So if you ask them to do a rhythmic pattern with their feet, they don't have that weight coordination. But being able to feel the phrase, and being able to put together rhythmic information like a trained musician can go [vocalizes rhythm] they can codify that information and take it in quickly, where some else is like, "...What was that second part?" And it's the same thing with movement. I think someone who's I mean, I would say basketball, football to some extent, where you have to move laterally so you develop that kind of movement. A dancer can see a combination and not have to focus on "this arm did that," and get lost in that, and not be able to see the sequence of

FRED Yeah they got more motor memory. It's certain kinds of gestures and expressiveness.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Right, they can see where the weight is and what is the essence of where the move is, so you know where to put the emphasis.
STRICKLAND:

FRED And they can link up that audio-kinetic synapse really rapidly.
BOUCHARD:

STAN So, you know, just being around it and watching it for a while. You learn a lot from watching.
STRICKLAND:

FRED You were playing your horn for dancers?
BOUCHARD:

STAN I was playing mostly the flute. And I had this great thing with the tambourine which I don't do anymore. I would play a headed tambourine with a stick so it was like a bata drum. Sort of like a Guinean drumming where they use a hand and stick combination. And I would get all these different rhythms. And then you could press the head of the tambourine and get different pitches. And then I would play a little bit of piano. I didn't know as much piano then as I do now but

FRED In your music studies at Wilberforce, did you study African music or jazz per se?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Well, most of my training was, you know, classical flute, cause flute was my main instrument in college. But I did eventually have some lessons with Ken McIntyre.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Oh, in Boston?
BOUCHARD:

STAN In Ohio, he came out he was the head of the Jazz department. So he was my private flute and saxophone teacher.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Did you participate in some of the McIntyre memorial events that John the pianist?
BOUCHARD:

STAN I haven't had the chance to be a part of that yet, but hopefully at some point.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Yeah, he does it once a year.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah, it's a big He was a real mentor to me.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Oh my god, that's wonderful.

BOUCHARD:

STAN He had this saying where you had to create a motif that was your signature motif. And I don't know where he got

STRICKLAND: this philosophy, but it's just something that's like an imprint. I mean, I still remember that motif; I have never played it, but it's just a part of me. And you learned to play that in all the different keys.

FRED I remember some of those albums he made on New Jazz back in 1960, 61. They had some wonderful hooks.

BOUCHARD: Great little melody lines. He was a master!

STAN And he was a multi-instrumentalist. I eventually played all the instruments that he played.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Flute and bass clarinet?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Bass clarinet, yeah saxophone, he played alto, and flute, he was a very serious flute player. He also played the

STRICKLAND: oboe. And so I started playing the oboe. In fact I had an oboe that he gave me that was, you know, an old oboe that

FRED Those double reeders are tough.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah, I love the sound but I eventually realized I have to give up something.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Very few people have even worked with it, nevermind mastered it. Yusef Latif I can think of.

BOUCHARD:

STAN And Paul McCandless.

STRICKLAND:

FRED McCandless.

BOUCHARD:

STAN He was a jazz player.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Sure. Wow, that's quite a variety. So you had a real panoply of reed instruments.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I didn't play the bassoon. I think as a music ed[ucation] major you had to study all the instruments. So I did
STRICKLAND: have a chance one semester to play some bassoon, but I never really had one to play. But I think Ken, he played bassoon too.

FRED That's a pretty amazing background. So here you are in Boston and you hooked up with the dancers. What's the
BOUCHARD: next step?

STAN Well, it's through the dance that actually I ended up at Berklee. Because I became friends with one of the
STRICKLAND: members who is now in Sweet Honey in the Rock, Aisha Kahlil. I had a band called Stan Strickland and Sundance, and Aisha was in that band. She was very much into African dance, and she had a workshop she was doing at Lesley College and asked me to come. So I met the people at Lesley College and started going there on my own to do workshops and basically dance. And I had moved to New York and was still coming back and they said: "Maybe you should consider coming and getting your master's. You know, you have like five years of college and a lot of teaching experience," cause I was really into teaching flute a lot. So I got my master's and became a teacher at Lesley University. And one of the classes that I taught I called The Body Sings. Involved a lot of movement and expression. And Bob from the Voice department

FRED Here at Berklee?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Bob
BOUCHARD:

STAN I'm sorry my [laughs]
STRICKLAND:

FRED Soloff?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, Bob Stoloff!
STRICKLAND:

FRED Stoloff, yeah!
BOUCHARD:

STAN He came to my class and was impressed with his experience in that class, he had a kind of moving experience.
STRICKLAND: And then they called me and asked if I wanted to join the faculty.

FRED And that was just twelve or fourteen years ago? But your performances with Aisha go back way before that.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah, yeah.
STRICKLAND:

FRED And she was a member of Sweet Honey?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes, she is a member of Sweet Honey in the Rock.

STRICKLAND:

FRED So she was a singer as well as a dancer?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, she was both singing and dancing. She was teaching dance classes and singing. And then she moved to DC

STRICKLAND: and got into that group, which is a great gig. That's one of the best gigs, because they're well renowned but they have a lot of independence, so she does her own thing and...

FRED Yeah, Bernice Johnson Reagon was here a couple of years ago and sharing with all the folks.

BOUCHARD:

STAN She's such a scholar.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Yeah. So I remember seeing you with Sundance playing around town. We're going back some time now, twenty or thirty years. And you made the rounds at the various clubs I saw you at Pooh's Pub

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah, we played there a lot.

STRICKLAND:

FRED What were some of the other clubs at that time?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh, Michael's, remember that place?

STRICKLAND:

FRED Michael's! Yeah, over on Gainsborough Street.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, and there was a place on Harvard Square. We played at the old Jazz Workshop. Oh, that reminds me, along

STRICKLAND: that same time I was with a group called the Boston Art Ensemble, which was a free jazz group that was before Sundance.

FRED Oh yeah, sure. Who were some of the guys in that band?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Syd Smart, my dear friend and percussionist, Art Brooks played the trumpet and Hayes Burnet, bassist, who is

STRICKLAND: not with us anymore.

FRED Oh Hayes! Man, he used to have that show on GBH radio. He was such a scene, listened to him late at night.

BOUCHARD:

STAN And he also played with Sun Ra for a while.

STRICKLAND:

FRED That's right, so he did.

BOUCHARD:

STAN And I used to be almost I remember hearing stories of Ornette Coleman, I think in Texas where someone grabbed
STRICKLAND: his horn and smashed it because they couldn't relate to how out he was playing. So I used to have that fear back then, cause we were strictly free jazz, that someone would come on stage and attack us or something. [Laughs.]

FRED You guys were playing free. Mark Harvey's Aardvark was emerging at about that same time, the band has been
BOUCHARD: around for forty years now. Did some of you guys trade off and play in Mark's ensemble, cause he was doing some fairly out stuff.

STAN Oh yeah, Mark you mentioned earlier those all night jazz concerts at the church?
STRICKLAND:

FRED Jazz at the Emmanuel Church.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, Emmanuel Church. And Mark was very involved in that.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Jazz Coalition.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes. So, Mark and I played a lot in those things, in fact we were in a band together. Baird Hersey and the Year of
STRICKLAND: the Ear.

FRED Oh that was a great band.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah. Mark and I were commuting to New York every week.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Baird had a lot of work down there.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah. Every Monday we would take the train to New York and play in Soho at Rashi's Alley. Which was a little..
STRICKLAND:

FRED Now we're talking like mid to late seventies.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Right.
STRICKLAND:

FRED And Baird originally started here, but when he went to New York he got his own ensemble going and invited a lot
BOUCHARD: of you guys down?

STAN Yeah, so we were still playing there and then I eventually just moved to New York. So that was in the early
STRICKLAND: eighties.

FRED You mentioned taking yoga. Maybe you can talk a little bit about your connection with the Eastern philosophy
BOUCHARD: and that kind of spiritually, movement?

STAN Yeah, well that's such an important part of my life and it's one of my favorite things to talk about. But it's one of
STRICKLAND: those things that's so difficult to put in clear, concise language. For me, it was definitely wanting to get control of breathing that led me to studying yoga. I was like, really into it, you know. Two hours every morning, doing every conceivable configuration that the body can do. But also along with that through studying pranayama which is, you know, organizing, moving your energy through with the breath. That brings you into asking questions about how does our being, the human being, how does it relate to the whole universe?

FRED The cosmos.
BOUCHARD:

STAN The cosmos, yeah. What is the relationship between our mind, our body and our spirit? Is there a life after death?
STRICKLAND: Is there reincarnation? I went to India and studied with a teacher there.

FRED Where?
BOUCHARD:

STAN In the North, in Punjab. So...
STRICKLAND:

FRED Who was the teacher?
BOUCHARD:

STAN His name was Taran Singh.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Were you in Ludhiana or north of Delhi?
BOUCHARD:

STAN It was north of Delhi in a little town called Beas. Not ayou know, a smaller town. So, you know, just thinking about
STRICKLAND: how human beings are like. And that really, I think, opened me up to accepting that there's so much inside of every person that you have to be a little clever about coming to a fast conclusion about who someone is or prejudging them. Because within one person there is such a range of sensibilities and intelligences, different kinds of intelligences. So some people can be very gifted in one thing and then on the other hand be borderline just barely making it. I mean, I've worked with emotionally disturbed kids and I've really developed an appreciation for the fragility of the human mind. I mean, a lot of people who are on the edge of insanity.
[Laughs.]

FRED Yeah, you push them in one direction they go crazy, and you push them the other way they blossom.
BOUCHARD:

STAN They blossom, yeah. So just because someone has a lot either in one way or the other doesn't mean they don't
STRICKLAND: have a lot in the other. And I think for me that's really sort of the goal of a spiritual pursuit is to try to broaden the perception of what the human being is and how these different energy forms interact with us and inform us about who we are.

FRED Absolutely, I agree. Having learned this or still learning it, still applying your yoga practices, how do you bring the
BOUCHARD: best out of your students, applying these kind of perceptions and these kind of deep appreciations of the nuances of personality?

STAN Well, I try to convey the idea that we're already music. That just walking in a room, you bring the music in. If you
STRICKLAND: just stand there there's music coming out of you and there are people who can hear that. Not everybody, but there are people who can actually hear your music, just by being, they don't even have to see you. You know, they could be on the phone and they can hear your music. Our essence is just energy, just vibration, which is music. So that's where you start. You start off as this incredible symphony. And then the next thing is, you already know so much about how music is organized and put together. If you've lived any time in America, you know a lot about music because America is just full of music. So then you're in music school, and you have to find your relationship between all that music that you know and all that music that you are and all the music that you don't know. And where you are in that spectrum is where the rubber hits the road. It has to be it has to come at you at a pace that you can digest, so you can develop it. It's kind of like going to the gym. So you might be a hundred pound weakling; you're not gonna be lifting five hundred pounds.

FRED Not today!

BOUCHARD:

STAN [Laughs] No, but maybe ten pounds is all you need and eventually you'll get stronger. But if you lift a hundred
STRICKLAND: pounds, you're gonna end up straining something. And that's the struggle for all students, particularly at a music school: how to keep that music alive that is in your inherent being and take it in at a pace where you are really taking it in and not just letting it pass by your head. And I've had both experiences. I've been in classes where something comes at me and I'm not really getting it all but I'm in a class so I gotta do the best thing I can; the next thing you know, you're in that next class and you didn't really get what was in the class before that, and you end up with your brain kind of seizing. So, I try to have the students kind of feel what does it... Can they really get with the idea that they are music? Can they get with the idea that they know some music? And then can they acknowledge that there is a lot that they don't know and try to see that, if they can find that middle ground. And they may need extra help. Maybe they're in a class that's going too fast. They have to maybe find some they should have a musical buddy. Someone that they can be with, and not just from the classroom but just someone that they can share music with on a personal level. Cause that's how people learned music back in the day, at least jazz. You learned it from your peers.

FRED Somebody showing you the chord progressions, explaining to you the relationships, walking through the charts
BOUCHARD: with you. We've got a writing center here to help the kids who've got the ideas and they can speechify them but they can't put them on paper. So you get them help with the syntax and the grammar to lay down what they're thinking about. Yeah, there's help out there if you seek it. Often.

STAN Yeah, right. Being able to relax yourself, calm yourself down. You can't do it all the time, but know that, push
STRICKLAND: come to shove, I can do some deep breathing, I can calm myself and just say: "Okay, for this moment I'm just going to chill and then I'll start up again and let it seep in a little bit". If you never can take a few minutes to chill that tension just builds up, the next thing you know it gets tighter and tighter.

FRED They do have one or two yoga classes on campus. I know I took them with Mia Olson for a while, and I think
BOUCHARD: someone else is doing it with students now. But, I don't know, maybe it's not enough? Do kids have enough exposure to the calming principles?

STAN I don't think so, I mean, it's growing. I have a class where we really emphasize that a lot.
STRICKLAND:

FRED One of your ensemble classes?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, it's actually a liberal arts class.
STRICKLAND:

FRED What do you call it?
BOUCHARD:

STAN It's called Sound, The Body, and Inspiration. And we do it's co-taught with Jeannie Gagné. We do a lot of
STRICKLAND: breathing it's for science credit, too, so we talk about the different systems of understanding the body as energy, as being. And then we do a lot of improvisation and we practice, I think it was, practicing being seen and being heard, and practicing seeing and hearing others. Cause there is so much performance anxiety, so if you can get used to the idea of letting yourself be seen on a deeper level and not hide behind your technique. But be more authentic, expose yourself. It's so important.

FRED Authenticity. Your real voice coming out, not... How do kids find their true voice and not their blabber-it-back,
BOUCHARD: what-you-read-in-the-books voice?

STAN Yeah. I think it's experience and hopefully, if you're in situations where you can be seen and heard as yourself.
STRICKLAND: You get the idea, "Well, it's okay for me to expose more of myself. Even the parts that are not perfect." Cause that's where the soul comes in. If everything is totally polished it can lack soul. And even if it is totally polished and you don't feel like you can bring yourself in, when you get off stage, then there is no connection between your stage life and your non-stage life. And so people end up dealing with substances to find a way to calm themselves down, cause you get so up. I mean, being on stage is the greatest thing in the world and then you're up like this, "Yeah yeah yeah!" And people are applauding and everything is great and then boom, you're left alone and your energy is still going. There has to be some way to have that energy flow through you, not be stuck in any particular area, chakra, but move through you and then have a place for it to calm down. Otherwise, you are susceptible to abusing yourself.

FRED Yeah, these are all techniques and information that you impart doing the course of the class. And it's salubrious
BOUCHARD: to show a little bit of your own vulnerability and fragility as well. I mean like Billie Holiday versus Aretha Franklin. You show that the wounds and the cracks in your voice it's places where people can creep in.

STAN Right. And I don't think the voice necessarily has to even crack for that to come through, there is just something
STRICKLAND: about it when someone is when that soul comes through as opposed to just being this technical facade. And it's for your own well-being, it's for your organs; it affects your glands, it affects your pituitary gland, cause we're all one system.

FRED Yeah. Over the years, not only have you played a lot of instruments but you've also played in several genres. I
BOUCHARD: mean, Sundance was one kind of band, Ascension was another. And you play jazz and you play free jazz. And you also have done work in the classical world because of your flute work. You also said that you've sung in choruses. Talk a little bit about the breadth of these experiences, how they may feed into each other or compliment each other.

STAN Sometimes it's a little overwhelming having so many instruments, and it's something that I've thought a lot
STRICKLAND: about and really wondered. Am I greedy? Why do I want all these different sounds? But as time has gone by I've just kind of accepted that it's who I am. At one point I was playing the oboe as well. I finally decided, I am okay without playing the oboe. [Laughs.]

FRED Let Barbara LaFitte do it.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Right! But I did go back to the bass clarinet and I'm so glad, cause I just love that.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Who are some of your inspirations besides Ken McIntyre, like Benny Maupin or?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes, well Eric Dolphy, obviously. But you know, a lot of saxophone players and horn players, I mean, Archie
STRICKLAND: Shepp, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Ben Webster, Stan Getz, Cannonball Adderly, you know. Hubert Laws for his sort of connecting classical and jazz. The way he could play and... Herbie Mann had an influence. He had a particular way that he would approach notes, that was a flute influence. James Gallaway was a big influence. And a lot of Indian music. A lot of Indian classical flute playing and shakuhachi playing. I was so into shakuhachi.

FRED That's from Japan?
BOUCHARD:

STAN The Japanese bamboo flute.
STRICKLAND:

FRED The bamboo flute. What do they call it in India? Ney?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Ah, no, they call it a bansuri flute. The ney is a Middle Eastern instrument. It doesn't have a mouthpiece, it's just
STRICKLAND: an open hole and strange embouchure, but it's the most transcendental sound of any instrument. It's one of my favorite sounds. I don't play that, but that's pretty cool. So, you know, and Ray Charles was a big influence, Ray Charles and Nat King Cole. I used to sing Nat King Cole and Johnny Mathis, those were probably my twogrowing up I would emulate them.

FRED What do they have in common?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh, I would say a mellifluous sound. They have a really round sound. I mean, they are really on the opposite ends
STRICKLAND: of the spectrum. Johnny Mathis had a lot of technique and he studied for years and years, you know, voice. He was also a high jump champ, a track star. And Nat King Cole I think was more self taught, I don't know about his singing, but clearly he was an incredible pianist who didn't really want to be a singer. He really wanted to be a pianist, but he liked to sing. And some promoter, producer, somewhere along the line said, "You know, this is where you're gonna make it." And so he shifted to that. But just the timbre of their voices, I really liked. And Ray Charles because of his complete soul. His ability to think it was like, he could just throw a note out there and not think about what it was, but know that it was gonna land in the right place. He would just let out, yeah[screams softly]and he would know that, whatever that note would be, it's gonna end up just right because he had that... Like Miles, he'd just play a note and it wouldn't matter what the note was because the note that came after it would make that note perfect.

FRED It would resolve one way or another in a nice direction. That's cool, yeah! Maybe you can talk a little bit about
BOUCHARD: your acting career and how that led you into your one-man show and your Express Yourself programs in the hospitals.

STAN Yeah, I'm trying to think how I got into it. I think it was probably through the dance community, from taking all
STRICKLAND: these classes and playing for there's still a very vibrant dance scene, but I played for a lot of the name choreographers. People from the José Limón company, from the Merce Cunningham company, from Alvin Ailey company, Louis Safée, I mean, some people may not know who they are.

FRED Those are some big names.
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah. So, a colleague of mine, Bart McCarthy, had a group which did improvisational theater and dance called
STRICKLAND: Synapse. And somehow he had this idea of inviting me to be a part of this production called The Harlem Renaissance. So, he put together this great three-person cast with a piano accompaniment, and we did songs and stories from the period of the Harlem renaissance. And so I had to act in little skits like that. So we traveled all over the country doing that.

FRED You would take the role of somebody who was involved in the Harlem renaissance moment? Like it could be
BOUCHARD: Langston Hughes or something?

STAN Yeah, we would take stories that Langston Hughes wrote and do little skits on it.
STRICKLAND:

FRED Nice! Improv or?
BOUCHARD:

STAN No, from the script, scripted. Or he would write something to tie on to make a teaching moment out of these
STRICKLAND: songs. We did I would do Sophisticated Lady and then we would say like something: "I wonder what she was like, you know, that sophisticated lady!" And then we would go into song, and then the female would sing a Billie Holiday song, and then we would do some Fats Waller. This was at colleges; we were on a college circuits, and we would be teaching about the period of the Harlem renaissance through these skits and songs. And then, after that, he came up with another production which was The Meeting. A play about a hypothetical conversation between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King which never really occurred. They met briefly, passing at an airport, but they never sat down and had this deep conversation about non-violence as opposed to any means necessary. And so I played Malcom's bodyguard, which was a stretch for me cause I can't really imagine myself being a bodyguard. [Laughs.] I remember walking down Mass Ave

FRED You're a soul guard!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah. [Laughs.] Walking down the street on Mass Ave, trying to be in character and say: "Okay, I'm gonna see
STRICKLAND: what it feels like to be a tough guy." And I walked down like [makes an angry expression]...put this thing on my face, and like, "Yeah I'm". And I was just thinking, I hope no one really calls me on this, cause I am really just acting. So that was kind of fun. We did that for a while, and then he wrote another show called Dead Eyes where I went to L.A. and worked with a couple really good young actors. So what I learned about acting was being directed by him, cause I had never done anything. So I learned about, you know, blocking and how to time your lines with the other person so there's flow. And that led to an association with a dear friend of mine, Jon Lipsky playwright, the late Jon Lipsky. And I did a few of his plays, one Maggie's Riff about Jon [Jack] Kerouac. I played Doctor Sax in that and we did it on the Martha's Vineyard, and then a couple of productions at Northeastern, and a few things like that until finally, I wanted to do a one-man show. I had done a one-man performance at Brown University and also the top of the World Trade Center in collaboration with an electronic composer at Brown. But this was...

FRED Brown?

BOUCHARD:

STAN At Brown University.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Oh, that Brown.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, Gerald Shapiro, a composer at Brown University. But this was all music and dance, so it had instruments
STRICKLAND: around the stage, had a sax hanging from the tree, had a flute over here, and I would do all this movement and end up in this sweat and totally out of breath, and get to where the sax was in the tree and pick it up, and try not to pass out from being out of breath and play a note. That was really cool.

FRED Did you take that on the road?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well we just did it at Brown University and then we did it in New York at the top of the World Trade Center. But I
STRICKLAND: wanted to do something that had a script, that would make sense of: "Why is he going from here to there?" So my friend and I, Jon Lipsky, we talked on the beach for three years, he interviewed me. I told him I had this vision of doing a show about an African shaman who would go into a trance playing some hard rockliterally with rocksand just playing this incantation and doing this chant and then go into this trance and foreseeing these lives as an African American slave, as a blues man, as a bebopper or a doo wopper, and then as a yogi flute player. And so I said, "Yeah, and I could go through all these different scenes." And he said, "Well, this sounds like you!" He wants you to tell your own story. So I said, "Okay." So I told him everything I knew about my whole life, everything I could remember about my whole life, for three years. And he took all that and came up with a script based on a near-death experience in Hawaii; we decided to take three days of that experience and then build the show around that, talking about transcendental concerns of yoga and romance and longing for romance with a woman and then artistic, looking for this music I call yes-no music. And so we put together this great show called Coming Up For Air.

FRED Is this in print?

BOUCHARD:

STAN There is a script and actually his son is now compiling all of his plays and putting together a body of work based
STRICKLAND: on his father's works.

FRED Wow, we shouldif he publishes it we should definitely get a copy for the library. That would be great!

BOUCHARD:

FRED What was Maggie's Riff like?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh, well the thing about that that was good, that was with serious actors from New York. The things that I've
STRICKLAND: done, except for playing the bodyguard, have been more or less things that were natural to me. So I haven't really studied acting, I've just learned from being on stage. The Maggie's Riff was a New York cast at the Vineyard Playhouse, which is an equity theater. So, I was impressed with just the skill of these other actors. And I got to learn about Jack Kerouac. So whenever I hear the word "Methuen" I always think about a line where Jackhe had a really good friend, his buddy, who I can't remember, but they

FRED Neil Cassady?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well, that was his girlfriend, I think?

STRICKLAND:

FRED No, Neil, that was his buddy.

BOUCHARD:

STAN His buddy, okay, yeah. And they would say, "Let's go to Methuen!" and then they would say, "There's nothing
STRICKLAND: happening in Methuen!" They'd say: "That's cause we're in Methuen!" So I always think of that.

FRED They were from Lowell!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Was it Lowell? He has a monument to him.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Yeah. They have an annual show there to celebrate hiswell, I mean, David Amram, another multi-instrumentalist,

BOUCHARD: he comes up and does a thing there once a year. They have a Kerouac Day in New York. But your role of Doctor Sax, you actually learned lines for that?

STAN Oh yeah, it was all scripted, yeah, and there were different characters. One character was this saloon guy who Jack would come or his friend would come in, and we would have a little banter, and then I would play the piano and they would do a little dance. And then I think, Jack ran track so there was a scene where we were competing and we would get down and, you know, like we were running a track. So I got to learn something about him, his life.

FRED Nice experiences, nice breadth of experiences. When you sang choral music, what kind of pieces did you sing?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well, mostly in church growing up, but then in choirs at college. What's that one Carbrina

STRICKLAND:

FRED Carmina Burana!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, and I don't know when that came out, but it was

STRICKLAND:

FRED Came out in the forties and it got really big in the fifties and sixties.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah. When we did it, it was just so fresh sounding. I think that might have been the piece that we did at the New

STRICKLAND: York World Trade Center. So that and

FRED That piece has gotten so big now that they have high school competitions singing that piece. It's become a real

BOUCHARD: war horse for school courses.

STAN Oh yeah, that was so much fun, and then Messiah and things like that. So just, you know, standard kinds of

STRICKLAND: choral work.

FRED Yeah, it's great to get eighty voices all moving in the same direction. The energy, the vibrations are

BOUCHARD: extraordinary.

STAN Yeah, I mean that was my life, singing in choir. I don't do it all now, but back then I was always in a chorus. And it

STRICKLAND: was some kind of feeling that I would get in my hands all that breathing. I would feel this tingling. Have you ever felt that?

FRED Yes, I would get it in my back too. Right up here, in my upper arms. It was partly physical, it was partly spiritual.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, it's the greatest thing.

STRICKLAND:

FRED You talked a little earlier about yes-no music. What is that?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh, that's in my play. I had an experience early morning, one evening while I was in conversation with a colleague of mine, a friend of mine at college, [inaudible] a young guy who wanted to be a writer. And we would just have these long philosophical conversations. So, he had brought me back home after a late night, and for some reason I was sitting in the car and I pictured the word "yes" going from one side of my brain, and the word "no" going from the other side. And then they kind of met and pah! there was this explosion, a kind of this third eye, which like in zen you would call a Satori where there is a kind of flash of realization that reality is a transcendence, a contradiction of yes and no. And it just kind of hit me that, wow, that's reality and it's a strange feeling. I wanted to run out and scream and tell everybody about it. And so, in the play we talk about all these experiences and all these different things have been leading me to try to find or to recapture that yes and no moment. And that's part of why there's so many instruments.

FRED The contradiction, the resolution?

BOUCHARD:

STAN The dichotomy of it's like yin and yang. You know, where they come together. You know, you can't have one without the other, so you can't say, "The world is good," "The world is bad." The world is that space between yes and no, you might say. And so that was my experience. And I think it seems like my whole life I have been searching for that. It doesn't matter if it's playing basketball I still have dreams, I've had so many dreams like I was playing against Shaquille O'Neal. It's amazing, like [Laughs]...how you can have dreams playing with all these guys. But it's like a Coltrane solo, like a beautiful move. It's the same as it has that energy moving through you. It's a similar kind of way. Or dancing or some deep meditation or some profound intimate connection. They all sort of come together in some place in the collision of yes and no.

FRED These precepts seem to forge a philosophy of music or philosophy of education, perhaps. Could you maybe develop that theme a little bit? Talk about what makes you teach or what makes you play?

BOUCHARD:

STAN One thing I learned in graduate school is that there is a relationship between teaching, performance, and therapy and that they all sort of come from the same place. And it's really about moving energy. It's about sharing and finding a way through human connection to have energy move. And I think that's a key way of saying it, when there's a flow. We talk about the groove or being in the pocket of flow. And what it breaks down to is like there is actually something that can almost be measured where there's a flow of energy, there's a vibration going on. And when that's happening in an almost systematic way, almost sort of like a spiral that's passing through the body then it reaches a kind of homeostasis point where there's a kind of harmony; there's a groove in that. And so teaching, performing, and therapy all share that. When you're on stage, there's a feeling like you wanna share something, you wanna tell someone, you're teaching something. I've heard this said George Russell told me this in one of his classes years ago

FRED George Russell at New England Conservatory?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yes, the late George Russell. He talked about a time when if people wanted to study astronomy, they would go
STRICKLAND: and watch a master dancer. Because the movement of the spheres and of the celestial bodies was so connected to the movements of someone who is at that level of attunement that they can do something, and you would understand that. And so, I've only heard it from him.

FRED George is a very good guy. I know Marc Rossi did this Lydian concept stuff.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Lydian chromatic concept, yeah.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Did you study that with him?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I did some classes with that, yeah. Some powerful stuff. So that idea and in fact I learned about an Indian
STRICKLAND: saint when I was in India. A woman named Mirabai who became a saint after, you know, going through her development. She was a dancer and a singer, and people would come to see her and to have her teaching or her darshan, to be in her presence. And they would become enlightened by watching her dance or hearing her sing because there was so much energy flowing that they would get, you know, they would say: "Wow, that's where yes and no come together." So that idea that performance has that potential of sharing and that so I related it to therapy in terms of a healing. And in education I think it has that same goal; it's to find a way to connect information so that the student and the teacher can find a way to have the energy flowing. I mean, the teacher learns as much as the student. So then the student becomes the teacher and then they can learn more when they become the teacher.

FRED Yeah, that's a beautiful ebb and flow of being in the classroom. The kids always come in with so much and they
BOUCHARD: always put your own thoughts and your own knowledge in a slightly different spin, yeah.

STAN Yeah, so I learn a lot from that. So that idea that, you know, creating a context. And it's really not about context.
STRICKLAND: So many great singers learned singing in church. So when you're singing, particularly in most African American churches, you're in an environment where people are gonna bring it out of you. They're gonna say, you know, "Come on!" They're gonna be talking to you, it's very vocal. "Yeah, I hear you!" "Amen!" "Come on, sister!"

FRED It's like the slam poetry experience, kind of egging you on, egging you on.
BOUCHARD:

STAN And so that makes your energy move, you get excited, you know. You feel like: "Oh yeah, I can do this!". The
STRICKLAND: next thing you know, your mouth starts opening wider, you're taking deeper breaths, and so that release informs your whole being. So that's an excellent way to find that connection between your breath and all your resonance. Because you're so open your heart and your mind and your soul are open.

FRED So these are things that you're bringing out in your classroom teaching, one way or another. Do you do anything
BOUCHARD: with the Music Therapy department here at Berklee?

STAN I haven't. I think that at some point, because I am working in some psychiatric units, I did have a student, a
STRICKLAND: music therapy student, who was my assistant. I work at a unit at the Cambridge Hospital, and these are six- to twelve-year-olds who are on an assessment unit where they come on to figure out what's wrong, you know, how to best serve them. Basically what kind of medication to give them. So I come in and we play music together. And if I can I get them up and dancing and moving.

FRED When you say play music, percussion or?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I show them my instruments. I always start with the flute. Just a little tapping thing, get them going. I show
STRICKLAND: them the saxophone and various percussion instruments. And then I'll pass out some little djembes and maracas and tambourines and And then we'll just get into a rhythm and do some singing. I mean, you can't always do that, but when the group is able we get up and do some movements, teach them an African song and do a little African movement, or we do a little, you know, awareness of space. So that's pretty cool. In the future I think I'll have more students coming.

FRED This is what you call the Express Yourself?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, that is Express Yourself.
STRICKLAND:

FRED And, did you mention something about an award for this?
BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah, we received an award called the Coming Up Taller Award. I think that was in old in 10, 2010. We went
STRICKLAND: to play at the Kennedy Center. We have an African drum ensemble. And we went to the Kennedy Center and played, and then we went to the White House to the East Wing where the First Lady does her business. And we were one of fifteen states and three countriesChina, Mexico and Egyptand then some other groups around the country to receive this award. That was really impressive. And she was great, Mrs. Obama, she was like, very personable. Everyone who came up, every kid who came up, she had a little something to say to them.

FRED You brought your whole group down from Cambridge?
BOUCHARD:

STAN We brought the whole This program was in Beverly, Mass. So we brought the group, the drum group. So we have
STRICKLAND: a lot of other kids that we work with. Most of whom wouldn't have been able to deal with this kind of trip. Some of them are in locked units. But this drum group was a little higher functioning and so we took them all down to D.C., they stayed in a big hotel. It was a trip of a lifetime.

FRED What a blast!
BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, it was great!
STRICKLAND:

FRED BOUCHARD: I'd like you to maybe, you know, just talk about things that you would like to discuss or things that you'd like to share with the Berklee audience. Any musical experiences you've had over the years that particularly stuck out, or maybe talk a little bit about the band you've had that involved friends and colleagues from Berklee?

STAN STRICKLAND: There are so many great experiences. As soon as you said that, this one experience just popped into my head. I think maybe through George Russell, there was an organist named Webster Lewis who lived here and taught at New England Conservatory.

FRED BOUCHARD:

STAN STRICKLAND: Well, one time he had some big band, but mostly he had small ensembles. And he worked at New England Conservatory, and I taught flute at the community service program at the Conservatory and I ended up in his band, Webster Lewis. It was a quintet. We went to Kongsberg, Norway, where there's a huge festival where all of the expatriates were there. And in the first gig we had I was on the stage playing, and on the stage in the wings is Sonny Rollins. He's just standing there, just hanging out, looking. And I'm thinking, "Well, that's the end of me!" [Laughs.] You know, Art Taylor, Kenny Drewall these guys were in the audience, I'm thinking, "Wow, so this is what it's like!" [Laughs.] So that was kind of a scary moment. And I got to go swimming with Dexter Gordon in this beautiful lake up in the mountains in Kongsberg. So that was a highlight.

But in this town which had a large area but a small population a beautiful town. So one eveningoh, another story: we were staying in this fancy hotel by mistake; we were supposed to be in a cheaper hotel but Dizzy Gillespie was in the fancy hotel too. He came down to the lobby in his underwear and put up a fuss, so next thing I know he's over in the other hotel with us! [Laughs] So that was kind of interesting. And in the basement of the hotel, we had this after hours joint. And so one night we were playing and this other saxophone player named Bobby Greene. And we had this song that we did, we had this version of "Amen." We were playing and we were getting so into it that our horns got stuck together, the keys got caught. I mean, I'm thinking, "This is like synchronicity," where the vibe is so intense

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh my god, you're fused!

STAN STRICKLAND: We're fused! So we took our horns off, and then someone said, "Let's take it outside!" So we kept the song going, we started towe got our horns unhooked, we started dancing around the club, got the whole audience going around the club. And then we went outside. And here we are in the town square, and a full moon in this beautiful little town in the mountains. And the whole nightclub is in this big circle, and we're doing this song acapella and everyone's singing and clapping.

FRED BOUCHARD: Amen!

STAN STRICKLAND: And then we go back inside and then pick the song back up and everyone's just going crazy, crying, and just like, "Wow, is that".

FRED BOUCHARD: It's like church! Under the stars.

STAN So that was a beautiful experience.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Lest we forget, you've already worked with Robert Pinsky, the ex-Poet Laureate of the United States. What kind of

BOUCHARD: an experience was it to play music for the guy who writes all this great poetry?

STAN I really feel lucky to have had that connection. Mostly through Bob Moses, the great master drummer.

STRICKLAND:

FRED He's the man!

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, who also has some incredible experiences touring and playing in Europe. He turned me on to Robert. We

STRICKLAND: had a gig just the three of us, and we just hit it off. And so, we started doing some otherwe had a nice gig at the Boston Public Library in the courtyard with Robert and John Lockwood and myself. And then, Robert Pinsky and I did this great gig on Martha's Vineyard. So this association just started growing the thing thathe plays a little saxophone so he's really into music. But what he likes is, which I really appreciate, is contrast between the words of his poems and the feeling of the music. So he doesn't want it necessarily that if the poem is about something a little serious or heavy, the music can be contrasting to that. So I'm excited to have this chance to do something here with him.

FRED And in the context of this, he would be reciting his poetry and you would be playing something?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Well ,this is gonna be mostly with students. I'm in the process of organizing a student group that's going to

STRICKLAND: perform. And then either he and I may do a duetbut I'm hoping that he will be doing something with the students.

FRED So he might play a little saxophone with you?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Not play but I mean, do some poetry.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Oh okay. And this is gonna happen at the Liberal Arts conference in April right here at campus?

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, I think it's the thirteenth correct? Cause you're involved with that?

STRICKLAND:

FRED Yeah, sweet. Well, it's nice to have a guy on board who's got such a breadth of experience and such a beautiful

BOUCHARD: outlook for all manner of artforms. I think that's to some extent what this school is aspiring to: to make musicians more well-rounded in the other liberal arts and feel comfortable as citizens of the world.

STAN Yeah, I mean, for me, collaboration has been a huge reward. To be able tocause I worked with Nancy Ostrovsky,

STRICKLAND: the painter.

FRED Of course!

BOUCHARD:

STAN We have a duo that we do.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Improvised paintings when you're playing. Yeah, and Nancy's a gas. She's been around for a long time, too.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Oh yeah. So, you know, I find that when you have that other element, it praise up what you can do. If there's

STRICKLAND: something visible or, you know, language. It expands your own view of what's possible.

FRED Yeah, and the artworld is infinite. And we're happy to be in it, in the middle of it.

BOUCHARD:

STAN That's for sure.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Stan, thanks so much for coming in and having a nice chat today.

BOUCHARD:

STAN I appreciate it, thanks for having me.

STRICKLAND:

FRED I look forward to seeing you with Mr. Pinsky in a month or two.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Yeah, April, it's gonna be nice.

STRICKLAND:

FRED Thanks.

BOUCHARD:

STAN Okay, thanks Fred.

STRICKLAND: