

FRED BOUCHARD: We've had people on this Berklee Oral History project over the years that have had pretty extensive tenure at Berklee, but I don't think anyone has matched Rich Appleman for sitting in the driver's seat of the bass department for thirty eight years. And a member of the staff for forty. Rich welcome to the cameras here at the Getz Library. It's so nice to have you on board.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, it's a pleasure. Thank you.

FRED BOUCHARD: This is sort of the exit interview. [Laughs]

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, it is. yeah

FRED BOUCHARD: You can let it all hang out. Everything you've always wanted to say about Berklee, now can be revealed.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Ok. Two weeks from today is my last day.

FRED BOUCHARD: Nothing's going to interfere with your permanent sabbatical.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: [Laughs] Right?

FRED BOUCHARD: And your Barge Cruise up to Rome in October.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah. Yup. So yeah, I'm looking forward to it, but I mean it's been a magical forty years I think.

FRED BOUCHARD: You've seen a lot fly by.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yup. I mean I was telling you earlier, I was here in the Navy in 1968. I went in the Navy in '64. I got out of high school and at the time I didn't know what I wanted to do. My band director said, "If you don't do something, you're going to be carrying a rifle in Vietnam." So he recommended that I audition for the Navy Music Program. I passed the audition and spent three years on aircraft carriers doing concerts close to Vietnam and Southeast Asia. But my last year I wound up here in Boston. I met my future wife in April of '68. She was going to Simmons College. Blind Date. I changed my mind about going back to Pennsylvania. Altoona, Pennsylvania where I grew up. I was thinking about going to Penn State and getting a music ed degree. I changed my mind and decided to come to Berklee. By December between my first and second semester we got married. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I think by having the four years in the Navy, I had gotten a lot of musical experience both on sousaphone, tuba and upright bass. I started playing electric bass near the end of the Navy. It was Jimi Hendrix, The Beatles, The Cream and all that kind of stuff.

FRED Sure, Steve Swallow?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And so, getting to Berklee at age twenty-two and getting married made me, I think, a more
APPLEMAN: serious student.

FRED You know, I wish the kids that came in had that extra year or two to kind of chill out, get a little bit of life feel, a
BOUCHARD: few experiences, negative or positive. Before they hit the decks here.

RICHARD Mmhm. It definitely helped me.
APPLEMAN:

FRED Most of the kids that are twenty-one and twenty-two have a really different attitude. They're much more focused.
BOUCHARD: They're more into their studies. It was good that you did it that way.

RICHARD Yeah, and like I said, either luck or, luck is when opportunity meets preparation. And so I was prepared and I got
APPLEMAN: the opportunity. And so, after four years here, and we can talk more about that, I was lucky to play in the Deus Band with Phil Wilson. I had Ray Santisi for small group, Charlie Mariano, and I also studied arranging with Herb Pomeroy and played in his what they called the "recording band" back then. They offered me a job because I was a good student. So they offered me a job. I graduated in May of '72 and I started teaching here in June of '72.

FRED Those were big ramp up years for the school. They were really starting to feel their muscle and starting to
BOUCHARD: expand way past the Big Band era. And new horizons here. And Bob Share was still, you know, in expansion mode. That wouldn't happen now, would it? You don't hire guys right out of the gate.

RICHARD Not as often. No. I mean, the only one we hired right out of the gate is Esperanza Spalding.
APPLEMAN:

FRED God bless. That she wanted to stay teaching.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD [Laughs] Yeah, exactly. And, we had her for I think three years, almost three years, and she just got too busy.
APPLEMAN: You know what I mean? But that was a real unusual one. But, like I said, yeah, myself, a couple years before, Larry Monroe went right from the [gestures movement] to teach here. Rob Rose was a student here, Larry Bethune. All those people pretty much graduated and moved from student to the faculty. And the thing that was good about that, it was good and bad I think. The good thing about it was the school was growing so fast. The higher, good students, we knew the curriculum. So, my first couple years I was teaching harmony, arranging, ensembles. We would all, most of us would teach a little bit of everything because we knew what, you know, week two in harmony, diatonic harmony, or secondary dom, whatever it was. We had already gone through that curriculum.

FRED And the structure was pretty well set in those days. And I guess it still is with the core classes.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah it is. But I think back then there were more people teaching what we call across the curriculum: teaching in a few different departments. It's not unusual now to hire a teacher, like for instance I, my first couple hires were Whit Browne and Bruce Gertz. Bruce was a student here, but Whit had gone to the conservatory. But they pretty much had taught their whole career in the bass department. Whereas, and I hired them in '76, whereas a lot of times now you get hired to teach in a particular department and you can branch out a little bit, but I think you tend to commit to that department and not teach quite as much, to cross over.

FRED BOUCHARD: I think that kind of cross fertilization is very very healthy. It's like, you know, not narrowing your gene pool too much with a species. A lot of us would love to be able to co-teach a class with people in art history and play them Coleman Hawkins' "Picasso." That kind of stuff. But the opportunities are few and far between now cause everything is so stratified. It's too bad. It must have been nice in those days.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yup. Yeah. The I forgot what I was going to say.

FRED BOUCHARD: Maybe you could back up and go back to your Navy years a little bit. It must have been a lot more comfortable carrying a sousaphone in one hand and a bass in the other, rather than lugging that ninety-pound rifle.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: You're right, well that was the encouragement. You had to do the audition to get into the music program, but you did have to go to a school of music that's still there. It's in Little Creek, Virginia which is near Norfolk. It's the Armed Forces School of Music. At that time I took a nine month course in harmony, knot tying... It was a combination of military things you had to learn and also ensembles I had to play both brass bass and wood bass, both upright and electric. We were talking earlier that musicians would be... They would get the most out of you. For instance I had to play both military music, concert band music, big band music, small group music. The piano players would have to play accordion in case you were on board ship and there wasn't a piano. And on the military gigs they had to play bass drum. So it was kind of fun and there was some really good jazz piano players that just hated playing bass drum. You know what I mean. But like you said it was way better than carrying a rifle.

FRED BOUCHARD: But that's an education that you really can't buy. To have that kind of breath of scope and being exposed to all kinds of different media. All else they needed was a little chamber orchestra. You know... It would have covered all the bases.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Sure, Yeah... I got very good at sight reading. I tell my students I may not play it perfectly the first time through, but I'm really good at not getting lost. Because what happened sometimes is that we'd pull into a port and they'd say, "Oh the secretary of the Navy is coming, so we are playing these songs. But someone from the government of Japan is gonna be there so we are playing these songs."

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh man, the Japanese national anthem.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, and you pass them out and you play them. And in some cases you don't even rehearse them. Like I said I got good at

FRED BOUCHARD: Some heavy sightreading

RICHARD Yeah sightreading. It showed up later when I did a lot of theater work here in Boston.

APPLEMAN:

FRED If you had any African dignitaries there would be a lot of bass drum players.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Right, I wish, yeah... although, back then all the action was over in the South Pacific you know, because of the Vietnam War. But I went to Hawaii; Bangkok; Sasebo, Japan; Icsuka, Japan. It was good. Philippines...

APPLEMAN:

FRED Is Little Creek where all those fabulous Navy bands emerge from? The ones that played Jen or IAG in the old days.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Well there's a couple different There are certain bands that you would audition. For instance the "Navy Band" that's stationed in Washington DC has some musicians from the music school but has other musicians that would just basically audition and go right there.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Was there, is there an Annapolis you know, big band.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah there's an Annapolis band, yep, and each band, it's not as big or involved now. Because I think back then it just seemed like the music program was way bigger. It's gotten cut down a little bit. There's still all the bands that play all the ceremonies in Washington. And there's a lot of bands who tour that are put together. For instance, there's a Navy rock band and a Navy country band and those kinds of things. And ah, I ran into a student who's in the Army Combo. He's an ex-Berklee, one of my ex-students. And their job is, it's sort of like an Art Blakey ensemble. An Art Blakey band. They wear army uniforms.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Wow. It's like a sextet or septet or something.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah exactly, and he basically tours around the United States. They play high schools, they play orphanages, they play ceremonies and that type of thing. It's not a bad way to make a living and he's paying off his college loans.

APPLEMAN:

FRED There must be some pretty hip dudes in the brass there.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD There are. Yeah.

APPLEMAN:

FRED So just a couple more things about the Navy. Beyond being exposed to a wide range of playing styles and having to be ready on the spot with sight reading and all that. Was there anything about the pedagogical aspects of the Navy discipline at Little Creek that put you in a good mind set for coming to Berklee?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Oh sure, yes.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Could you be specific?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah! For one my father was a military musician. So I would actually when I was in my last two years of high school, I would visit with him, go with him. He was in the National Guard Band. Every year they had to do a two week, pretend they were really in the army for two weeks kind of thing. And so for two years when I was in high school I went and did that. So, the discipline is interesting. The military discipline of looking good, showing up on time, being professional. That military carrying into being maybe a jazz musician doesn't always fit.

FRED No it certainly doesn't.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD But it does help. It really helped me. It helped me become much more organized. And again make sure you show up to the gig. I mean my kids would laugh at me because I would have two extra sets of strings and two extra cords in my gig bag for my upright and electric bass. I would say, "You never know what you're gonna break" But I think that was part of that military training.

FRED Semper paratus, dude!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, exactly right! So, that military I think it helped. Also, I remember one of the first times after I got out of school we went out to San Diego. With, it was called Unit Band 186. And we were getting on this aircraft carrier; the Yorktown. It was a WWII aircraft carrier. Pretty old. It actually had scars on the deck from kamikaze planes. It was an old aircraft carrier. We were with this admiral and we were going to Hawaii with him and play military ceremonies, cocktail parties, big band concerts and that kind of thing. So we left San Diego, we were out on the deck, we played all the stuff, we went to bed. All of a sudden It's dark out, 5am or I don't know what time it was. "Everybody up!" There's a refueling and we're going to play music. So here I'm going on this deck heading away from San Diego with my sousaphone and all of a sudden

FRED Battlestations!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, our battlestations were to be standing on the side of this. We were playing Herb Alpert: Tijuana Taxi, these kind of songs because we were the entertainment as this supply ship came alongside and gave us supplies.

FRED What a brilliant idea!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD I know! And, what was also kind of good about being a musician was some of the old salts, the guys who do a lot of the hard work on a ship are called boatswain mates, and a lot of times they would look at you and say, "You're a musician You call yourself a sailor?" You know, but what would happen is the chief petty officer was very smart, he would find out the favorite songs of the boatswain mates. Or he would make sure we played the kind of music they liked.

FRED Right, you know, the jigs or the hornpipes something like that.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly! So, by the time we were out for a couple weeks they would be like loading some food and all of a sudden
APPLEMAN: a little case of fruit would get dropped right next to the band. You know what I mean. Little things like that. So, fringe benefits!

FRED Yeah some of those salty sea shanties and stuff like that maybe.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah!
APPLEMAN:

FRED Very cool! And beyond that, the social aspect must have carried through into your future career--cool people that
BOUCHARD: you have met. Some interesting musicians whose careers you followed later on. You mentioned a couple at lunch.

RICHARD Well Gary Grant, I don't know if I knew any... well actually one, I will get back to that. This guy Gary Grant is a
APPLEMAN: great trumpet player he plays in the LA studio scene. I think he also toured with Woody Herman. Fred Weasley.

FRED Really? The trombonist?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, he was here visiting Berklee and I was carrying my tuba. I don't play a lot of tuba anymore but I do play in
APPLEMAN: the Graduation Commencement Brass Choir. So somehow I was talking to him about tuba and he goes, "Oh yeah man, when I was in the Army back in the sixties." I said, "Oh, you were in the Army? I was in the Navy in the sixties!" He goes, "I went to Little Creek School of Music in sixty" "I was there!" So you know, I didn't know him but here's Fred who played with James Brown. A great trombone player.

FRED Pass the Peas, all that stuff
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly.
APPLEMAN:

FRED Maceo Parker, ooh!
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah so It was a great time and again, I think music programs have gotten a little smaller, but I think at that
APPLEMAN: time it was just a great time for musicians to use the military to give their time to the country and serve in the military and at the same time not have to fight. We actually did have some pilots that we lost both on the Yorktown and then I eventually went on the USA Enterprise. Which was the first nuclear powered aircraft carrier. And we lost some pilots because they were flying over and bombing Vietnam. But we were playing music on the aircraft carrier three or more miles away. And we got our ribbons and hazardous duty pay and everything. But it was interesting.

FRED Yeah, not everybody's cut out for the action in life.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD At the beginning I thought I was going to make a career out of it. But actually that will lead us maybe back to
APPLEMAN: Boston because when I came to Boston I was in my fourth year of a four year enlistment. I was doing pretty well: I had made it to second class petty officer which was a pretty good thing to do in four years. And I was considering making a career out of it. And then, the whole anti war, the whole Berklee College of Music...

FRED Woodstock.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD The hippie vibe, yeah. I remember going over to the Cambridge Common and hearing great concerts over there
APPLEMAN: and that kind of thing. And by then I went in as a strong sousaphone, tuba player and just a beginning kind of upright bass player. But in those three years I had gotten way more into jazz so it just felt like the right thing to do: to get out of the Navy and come to Berklee.

FRED So the transition from brass to wood bass becoming your major gave you a real entrée into both working, or both
BOUCHARD: being a student here and also gigging on the scene because there aren't that many marching bands or street paraders here in town.

RICHARD And that led to electric bass too. Which is one of the things that, yeah I had, I mean I loved the tuba. I still enjoy
APPLEMAN: playing it and I'm still amazed that I can not play it for six or seven months and still pick it up. My low notes aren't quite as good as they used to be.

FRED You have to build your lip up again?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Not so much lip, wind. Wind and support. So like I said, those real big fat low notes aren't as good as they were
APPLEMAN: when I played a lot. But they're still there, it's just ingrained, you know.

FRED Did you get recruited by Tom Everett and Phil Wilson when they were doing those 76 Trombone things. The
BOUCHARD: brass.

RICHARD Yeah, I never did that. Actually I did play, Phil had a trombone ensemble at Berklee when I was a student here, I
APPLEMAN: would guess like sixty... let's see. Probably around '69 or '70. Hal Crook was in it, and this guy Jack Stock and Tony, I think Tony Lada was in it. And so I played a couple concerts with him playing tuba, I played the bass trombone part. But I never did any of those, I kept thinking I should, those.

FRED International

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Or Harvey Phillips was a tuba player. He used to do all the Christmas carols. Although, in the Bass Department
APPLEMAN: we've been doing. It's called "Seasonal Sounds: The Lowest in Holiday Music." We play Christmas songs with like thirteen or fourteen bass, both acoustic and electric bass players. Rudolph the Low Note Reindeer, stuff like that. It's a reggae tune.

FRED How low can you go?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD APPLEMAN: And I did want to mention the electric bass, talking about both Berklee how back in those days, the curriculum, we were moving and changing things. It's not as easy to do now. And there's good reasons for not doing it that way now because a lot of courses maybe that we came up with back in the early seventies and into the eighties--some of them were really really good and not all of them were really really good. But it was much easier, I mean starting the electric bass here at Berklee in, I think it was '74. Bill Curtis had been the chair when I was here and we were working on developing the bass lab program which were like group lessons. And Bill had a booking agency called the CIA. Curtis Internationals Associates. And he was really busy with that. And so Dr. Bobbitt who was one of the deans--Dr. Richard Bobbitt mentioned that he thought maybe a new chair, there should be a new chair of the Bass Department. Maybe someone that was around a little more and was maybe more into the contemporary music scene. And at that time, John Repucci was here, John Neves and Steve Swallow was here. And they all looked at me and said "Rich will do it." So that's how I became a chair. You know there was

FRED BOUCHARD: You were the guy with the Navy discipline.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Exactly. I had the Navy discipline. I had my father's military discipline. He was also superintendent of the Health Department in Pennsylvania. So I had gotten those skills from him. So it was, at that time, it was more like, "Rich will put the requirements together. Rich will put the test scheduling together", and that kind of thing. And so that's how I became chair. And then that led to going up again to Dr. Bobbitt and saying, "We should have a major here for electric bass." And he said, "Electric bass, well you know that's, you put a pickup on, you put a microphone." [Mimics playing an upright bass] I said, "No, no, no." At that time I used the Tonight Show, I said, "You watch Johnny Carson?" He said, "Yeah!" "Well check it out, he's had an electric bass." Joel DiBartolo was the electric bass player there for a long time. And even, I remember the Merv Griffin Show, Ray Brown. And he would play electric sometimes.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh he would?

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah. And so I said, "No, it's a bass guitar. And he plays the same part as the bass, dot dot dot." "Well you know, write me up some curriculum"

FRED BOUCHARD: And we'll start teaching it next week.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: And then boom, yeah. That was it. It just That was it! And then we started...

FRED BOUCHARD: Seat of the pants, turn on a dime, go with the flow. That was the days.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: And I think that's important for why Berklee is where it is now. Because we were able to keep that curriculum current. And the hard part about that is you don't want to get rid of swing bass lines or you know, we're talking about Count Basie. You know, that stuff.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah, Eddie Jones, don't lose it.

RICHARD Yeah, Eddie Jones, yeah. And in fact, do you know about, oh I could go round and round, but Eddie Jones.

APPLEMAN: Someone told me he was important in IBM computers. He taught himself somehow when he was on the road with Count Basie, he's got into the early part of the early beginnings of computers and ended up being an executive for IBM.

FRED I'll be damned.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD I know. But for those of you who are watching this, check out the $E=MC^2$ right? The Atomic Basie.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Explosive.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Explosive, yeah.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Kid From Red Bank. Flight of the Foo Birds. Lil' Darlin' with Thad Jones muted.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Was Corner Pocket on that, too? Yeah, there's some great ones. Lil' Darlin' you mentioned.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Neal Hefti was the cat right from Newton!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, right. So anyway, I'm getting ... The idea of ...

APPLEMAN:

FRED The bass lab.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD The labs and changing, you know, just Berklee being able to change and keep contemporary. But still we have to teach the old foundation stuff. And that's what is a challenge I think for contemporary Berklee is, you want to continue to stay current but you can't throw away what you've also been teaching about the past. So it does, it creates somewhat of a cluttered curriculum because you have all these courses we don't want to get rid of. Bass lines one, bass lines two. You know, playing blues bass lines, that kind of thing. At the same time we want hip hop, we want the slap labs. We need Latin bass, that kind of stuff. Five- and six-string electric bass, you know. So you have to keep the curriculum current but you don't want to get rid of the old stuff. There's a blend there.

FRED How do you manage all that, I mean something's gotta go right?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Well what we do is, we haven't deleted many courses, but we don't offer them every semester. That's one thing we do. So we offer one course in the fall but not in the spring. You know what I mean. We offer maybe fewer sections so that's the way we

FRED Are there ways of fusing the curriculum to compress it a little bit, so you get Country-Blues, Urban-Blues, R&B,
BOUCHARD: Funk, Hip-Hop, all kind of like a nice continuum?

RICHARD That's exactly the blues class we have right now, which actually Bruce Gertz is teaching. And he starts it's got all
APPLEMAN: the different kinds. Same with the Survey of Bass Styles course. We start with the early New Orleans, Pops Foster, eventually Jimmy Blanton and Walter Page, Count Basie. But we eventually bring it up to the current day.

FRED The important thing that eighteen-year-olds have to learn is that life didn't begin with their iPod, you know?
BOUCHARD: You've got to give them a sense of continuity and history. And if you can do it with examples and see the analogies between one style and another and how things flowed from one to the next, they get it. And they'll be the first ones to forge the next link in the chain.

RICHARD I totally agree. I think we do. We try. We do that. It's also interesting that a lot of students who come and play
APPLEMAN: started on electric bass. It's because most of the music they listen to has electric bass. Electric bass is easier, it's cheaper to buy. It's a little physically easier to play. But when they get here, they get interested in upright bass. A lot of students. So we also have labs catered to that, beginning upright labs, for that. We also have a lot of students going back. James Jamerson who was a great bass player for Motown, all the great Motown hits. People are going back to his sound, which is an older, instead of using the round-wound strings that Jaco Pastorius used, they use a flat-wound string and get a deeper darker sound.

FRED Yeah, I saw him in that Chess movie. That was a great sound.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah. Exactly. So things do travel in circles. That kind of thing. At the same time, in fact, you talked a little bit
APPLEMAN: about the history of bass, I mean, I think there are certain periods of music history where maybe the violin was one of the premier, that made advancements, or, obviously, the saxophone made incredible advancements in the thirties, forties, and fifties with those great players. Not to say it's not continuing, but I think the bass really I was lucky to be here in the seventies, eighties, nineties because the bass really came out, with the fusion music that started in the seventies, where almost everybody, Ron Carter, Richard Davis, they were playing both upright and electric. It was just part of what you did back then. And because of that, the bass, I think, really has come out from still good to be back there thumping, like Eddy Jones, but now there's a lot more I don't know if it's pressure, or a lot more responsibility put on bass players because of all the innovators that happened through the late sixties, seventies and eighties.

FRED Do you think that maybe there's some backlash against the advances of electric bass, like with Victor Wooten
BOUCHARD: being such a big wig into the current era of revival of country, country bass, Edgar Meyer. And then the classical bassist. The classical bass is relatively new to the Berklee experience, and then of course Esperanza, that phenomenon over the past four or five years.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Well, I think there is some backlash towards the electric bass in jazz. I might not make any friends, but since I've played both, I feel I can speak a little bit. But I know some really great electric bass players that feel like sometimes they don't get the call for a certain jazz record or jazz tour, because they only play electric. That's the way it is. So there is somewhat of that. At the same time, there are probably people who are known more as upright players that might not get a call for a gig that's more of a fusion or a rock style. It is a different animal. I feel, if I'm gonna play swing and do some improvisation, I just feel way more comfortable on the upright bass. I've done a lot of theater work: Cats, Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, those kinds of contemporary shows. I wouldn't want to play that on upright because the electric is just perfect. It was scored for that, and it's for that. So, when I talk to students about this, I call it "We're at the restaurant and there are all the different tastes in the restaurant." And some people like to get good, and like to taste a little bit of everything, but then there's other people who want the one, every morning they want that one thing for breakfast. And so, you hopefully develop a concept by tasting all those foods in the restaurant and then develop your concept from that. And, so someone like Anthony Jackson, who I think is a phenomenal he doesn't even like to call it the electric bass, "it's the contrabass guitar." And technically it is a guitar. It's six-strings and it sounds an octave lower than written.

FRED BOUCHARD: And when he's with Michel Camilo it's like a full orchestra anyways.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: I know. And he's a phenomenal and that's his voice. Jaco Pastorius. That's their voice, the way Coltrane had his sound. But then there's other people that can double: John Patitucci is a great example, Stanley Clarke is someone that can play both upright and electric with their voice, with authority and authenticity.

FRED BOUCHARD: Talk a little bit about John Neves. We didn't want to skip him.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Oh yeah. Thanks.

FRED BOUCHARD: We had a nice chat about him at lunch.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: If you're in Boston, and you're talking about bass, and you're talking history, John Neves, his name is gonna come up and if it doesn't there's something wrong with the conversation. It's also interesting Neves N-E-V-E-S, is 'seven' backwards and he was a sports star, evidently, in East Boston and they called him 'Johnny Seven'. Which was his name back then.

FRED BOUCHARD: All-star pitcher.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, played in, I think, the Negro, he used to call it 'The Colored Leagues' and was a semi-pro baseball player, but phenomenal. Came from a musical family.

FRED BOUCHARD: His brother played great piano, Horace Silver-ish, he had a great trio at the 47 on [Arborwin?] with Alan Dawson on drums.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: That was before me.

FRED I was in college then. I caught them live.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Was that sixties?

APPLEMAN:

FRED Yeah.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD I remember when I was here in the Navy, I remember seeing Paul. Jack's drum shop had a school of music, they were doing some classes or something. Paul Neves, they did a little--I saw a concert there or something. That was when it was down near the public garden, Jack's Drum Shop was down there. Saw Paul Neves playing piano. Never thought later, until I met John, and by then, Paul was living maybe in Puerto Rico, or somewhere else.

FRED That's right. He moved away.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Anyway. John, I was telling you, he was just a great jazz player and a very intuitive and an incredible ear player. I mentioned that there's a story. I don't know if it's true or not, it was a tune called 'Aluminum Baby' that was a famous Herb Pomeroy Big Band tune, Jackie Bayard did the arrangement and supposedly when they passed the parts out, the part they gave to John was just a blank piece of paper, no notes, because he was not a great reader, but he was just so good with his ears that Jackie felt he didn't need to tell him what to do.

FRED And then in the recording session they gave him two chorus of solo bass.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Just a little Ray Santisi in the background, Jimmy Zitano.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD APPLEMAN: But anyway, when I first met John, it was my last two years. It was early seventies, I was finishing at Berklee. And I would see John in the lobby, and we did this recording band with Herb. We did some recordings in Revere, I forget the name of the recording studio, but it was great. They used to also do drum and bugle corps Fleetwood! I think it was at Fleetwood. And John was there. And John did a couple tunes. And I then found out, I later came on the faculty and John was teaching sort of part-time bass lessons, but the reason he had come to Larry Berk, we all called Lawrence Berklee, the father of Lee Berk, everyone called him Larry. The story was that John came to Larry and said, "Can you give me a job at Berklee." And Larry, "Sure, we'll find something." John says, "Well, I want to paint." He was actually making a living, painting, walls, houses, that kind of a thing. And Larry Berk, "No, you're not going to paint. You're going to teach bass." That's a story. I don't know if it's true or not. Anyway he came on the faculty, myself in '72, John Rapucci came on. I started in June of '72, John came in the fall of '72. He'd gone to Lowell State and had also been in the army. And so we had John Neves, myself and John Rapucci. There was a guy named Frank Gallagher who taught here for a little bit--he did a lot of theater work in town. But then Steve Swallow came on because Gary Burton had come back and had started teaching here, Steve was in his group. And from then, that was sort of the beginning of the bass department, beginning of what it is now. But John at first kind of scared me. He was a little mysterious, sometimes he could be a little critical of certain players. He'd show up, he'd disappear, he'd show up at different places.

FRED BOUCHARD: Mischievous.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah.

FRED BOUCHARD: And joking. You never knew when he was serious.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Exactly. So he kind of scared me, but I realized after a year or so, we both had I had things that he thought he enjoyed in my playing, in certain styles that I did. And we respected each other. And all of a sudden you'd get a phone call. Phone would ring and it would be John and he'd say, "Channel two." And you'd turn on channel two and it would Leonard Bernstein and the New York I mean the Berlin Philharmonic. I remember that one, they all played with the German bow. That's my bow. That's how mystical he was. He would give you a hint like that. There's stories, his records were not in the jackets. He had a pile of records and would kind of shuffle through them. Nowadays, you don't want to touch it, or you have the sleeve. He would be shuffling through, he'd put the record, he'd bring the handle of the needle and drop it down right on the bass solo. It's unbelievable, man. And, he had his records stored in his oven. He lived on Charlesgate East, that little street, apartment. I was only in there a couple of times, but he never cooked. So you opened the oven and all these records were stored in there. Just a real character. And again the baseball, sporting aspect of it, that I still talk to my students about, there are a lot of parallels to playing sports and to playing music, I think.

FRED BOUCHARD: For sure.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: You have a bad day, you don't quit. You go back. You have a bad gig, you gotta keep going. You've got to prepare. The whole thing about practicing an hour today, it'll help you months or a year down the line. Delayed gratification.

FRED Basics, rudiments, drills. All that playing your scales, doing your running exercises.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly, and so, my two sons, who were born in '74 and '77, in the early eighties, John would take them out and
APPLEMAN: hit them ground balls and give 'em baseball pointers and everything like that. So it became a lot more than just working, playing music and teaching at Berklee. He's just a wonderful guy.

FRED Sitting through a baseball game with him, whether on television or at Fenway park. He would have a constant
BOUCHARD: batter, talking about the pointers and who's positioned where. A constant flow of information that was definitely insider stuff.

RICHARD Another thing which he would say, which sort of goes back to the Navy, he was in the army in a tank in Korea,
APPLEMAN: which he hated. He said it was the worst, being in a tank, hot. But he would always comment on certain players on how they wore the uniform. Like Bobby Door, famous second baseman for the Red Sox. He said, "Bobby always looked good in his uniform." And nowadays, it's true. Certain players just wear the uniform a certain way and some well, it's a part of their personality, you know?

FRED It's also part of that discipline of looking good. I mean, you talked about the Navy, but if you look at Wynton
BOUCHARD: Marsalis' ensemble, those cats are pukka. They're extreme, ratcheted into place.

RICHARD My father always said, it was interesting, he loved Count Basie, it was his favorite, he was a drummer so he loved
APPLEMAN: Buddy Rich, Dave Brubeck and the Maynard Ferguson Band, he loved. But he thought Basie's band always looked great. He said, Duke's band, they play great, sometimes they're not all there, sometimes they don't look that great. They're great musicians, but he said Count, they're there, they look good, they sound good. That was important to him.

FRED Duke, it was family, the discipline came in the music. Not the personal lifestyle. So, you know what, you got off on
BOUCHARD: talking about bowing for a minute there. What's become of bowing in the upright bass world? Who teaches the skills?

RICHARD Well, we all, jazz players primarily, are known for playing what we call pizzicato with your fingers because it has
APPLEMAN: that percussive sound when you're playing, especially a walking bassline. [Sings walking bassline] Fingers give that.

FRED You equate it with the swing era.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, the swing era. If you do go back to the New Orleans era, there's Pops Foster, there's a guy named Steve
APPLEMAN: Brown. They played. [mimics bowed bass note] In fact there's a great example in the Smithsonian recordings, it's Duke, it's called "East St. Louis Toodleoo"--that's the name of the tune. And there's a cut from 1927 and a cut from 1937, and the cut from 1927 has the bow.

FRED Is that Pops Foster?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD That's Wellman Broad. And then the cut for '37 there's a guy named Billy Taylor, that's not the piano player.
APPLEMAN:

FRED Pre Jimmy Blanton.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly. And he's playing fingers. [sings walking bassline] You know? The one with the bow is actually a little
APPLEMAN: faster, and the one with the fingers is a little slower, but it gives you a really good idea of the difference in timbre, sound quality, of the arco bow versus the pizzicato. By the time you get into the thirties, with the swing period with Benny Moten and Count Basie, that's Walter Page playing there, and Blanton with Ellington. The pizz, the fingers became just what people were used to hearing. Now, when you study the bass technique-wise, it is very important to play with the bow, even if you're going to be a jazz player. It develops your sound. By playing with the bow, your left hand, your intonation. You can really hear the notes. If the strings aren't put down correctly...

FRED 'Cause it's sustained and you can really hear the...

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly. And so, a lot of jazz players who were known as not being that good of bow players, or they didn't study
APPLEMAN: it, although people like Ray Brown always went. Supposedly he had a teacher in almost every major city, he'd take a lesson, just when he was there.

FRED With classical cats or whoever?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly, and Ron Carter was a cello player before he became an upright bass player. Richard Davis could play
APPLEMAN: very well with the bow, and nowadays you have people sort of like Edgar Meyer, who does the Nu-Grass, Bluegrass kind of a thing and Eddie Gomez can play very nicely with the bow. So, there's a great Ron Carter line actually. Ron Carter, he said something about the people that play in the symphonies should go to a jazz club every now and then and learn a little bit about playing with their fingers, you know what I mean? But then someone else shot one across to his bow, "Well maybe he should spend a little more time in the concert hall checking out the bow." So there is that kind of I think it's you become better at pizzicato if you listen to all the great jazz players because that's what they're playing and vice versa, if you're a classical player you're going to listen to Gary Carr, great soloist or people who are making a living playing in a great symphony, they play a lot more with the bow. And they do a different pizz too. Jazz pizz, if you're interested in this get on YouTube and watch some jazz players, their pizzicato versus the classical player. Classical player which I love, every now and then I go to The Met, my wife is into opera, and just that Met bass section at the end of the thing. Just that [vocalizes]. It's not a jazz pizz, but it's just what's needed.

FRED It doesn't snap.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Right, or sustain much.

APPLEMAN:

FRED I remember seeing string players, I have a real fondness for string players, I remember when I would go down
BOUCHARD: and see Joe Venuti at Scott & Sirline, Tiny Martin would show up, Emanuel Feldman, they'd all come down and see one of the masters of bowing.

RICHARD Tiny Martin, Boston Symphony, and he could play pretty good pizz and bow

APPLEMAN:

FRED Let's get back to what was going on at Berklee.

BOUCHARD:

FRED Briefly, recount your student years. Who you studied with, what your impressions were or how it set you up?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD '68 I got out of the Navy in August of '68 and started here in September. Tony Teixeira and Dean Earl auditioned
APPLEMAN: me.

FRED Oh boy!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD They had me play a blues and that was it! And I got into some really good bands. That's all, they asked me to
APPLEMAN: play a blues. And, I don't know, they might have asked me to read some or whatever and that was the beginning. I had Dean. In fact, Dean I loved him. I was a little more experienced than some of the players, but I would run into Dean and he'd say, "Oh, I got an ensemble at four o'clock and I don't have a bass player or I need a bass player." And one of the, and this is a message for young people is: I would go and play with players that probably where, we have this thing at Berklee called the ensemble ratings. You get a number when you...

FRED Oh yeah. I look at those very carefully.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, exactly. And so, my ensemble rating was pretty good, but I'd be playing with people that had a lower
APPLEMAN: ensemble rating. But that year, one year after my second year at Berklee, Dean Earl hired me to play down the Cape for New Year's Eve.

FRED Oh cool!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD And I didn't have a car and he picked me up and drove me down there.

APPLEMAN:

FRED So that was your first gig at Berklee?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Well, with a Berklee teacher, yeah.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Okay.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD APPLEMAN: I did some, there was a guy named Howard Garness that worked in the union, Musician's Union, so from my Navy days and playing cocktail, I could, I was okay faking some tunes and playing some commercial music. So I was doing some of that, not a lot. I got busy around my third year at Berklee. Around '70 I started playing some Top 40 bands and also getting ready to eventually meet Bob and George and get involved with Fringe stuff. There was a vibes player named Tom Vandergild who was really into free, actually my first free music I played with him. He came to Berklee through Gary Burton because there were more vibes players, there was also a guy named Ted Wolff here then and because Gary was here they were getting more vibes players coming here to study. And Gary couldn't teach them all. He was still doing some traveling. So, Vandergild was put on the faculty. He had a group called Children of Play. I remember going to his place, subbing for a bass player named Chris Amberger, and he put this thing in front of me that was just sort of a row of notes that we played. That was the head and then it was just play. And I said, "Well, what are the changes? What is it?" He said, "No. We're just going to play." I said, "What?!" "Just close your eyes and start playing." That was my first time of just trying to make something up.

FRED BOUCHARD: This wasn't serialism? It wasn't twelve tone?

RICHARD APPLEMAN: No. No, it wasn't twelve tone. It was just [sings melody] and then when just started playing. Yeah. And every now and then we'd go back to that theme. You know what I mean? And it was reminiscent, eventually I listened to Ornette.

FRED BOUCHARD: Free jazz.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Exactly, free jazz.

FRED BOUCHARD: Back to the head.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: This was the change of the century. Art of the Improvisers and that's exactly what they were doing so I just started stealing what Charlie Haden was doing. And also Albert Ayler was doing some stuff like that, Sun Ra, and Pharaoh Sanders, obviously some of the Coltrane stuff. So, that was the beginning of the free thing around the seventies and then eventually when I started jamming with Bob Gullotti and George Garzone we had a friend named Bob Marullo who would play piano. We'd play "Recorda Me" and "Blue Bossa." Those are the two I remember. We always would play those. Bob, every now and then, he eventually went out on the road with I think Tom Jones, but Bob wouldn't be there all the time, so we started playing more as a trio. We started just stretching.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yep. No chords to mess with.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: No chords. Yeah. We played for an hour or so, and back then we would drink Tavola. It was a jug of wine for about four dollars. [Laughs]

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah. Gallo or Colarossi or something like that?

RICHARD Yeah, but there was one called, I think Tavola, was one we happened to favor either because of taste or price.

APPLEMAN: But anyway, after a few wines and stretching out and then we started actually with Bob Gullotti's house. He was renting a house in Waltham. He had a nice little room there. The old man that lived there owned the house. I think he couldn't hear or was hard of hearing. So, it was the perfect place to play.

FRED Nice!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD And we just started stretching out. And, like I said, in between our playing we'd have Albert Ayler on or Coltrane.

APPLEMAN: Roland Kirk was another one we listened to. And so, we'd get those inspirations going from listening to them and playing without a piano player. It just started going. At that point Steve Elman had a show on BUR and we called him and said, "We'd love to come over and play. We have this group for jamming or whatever."

FRED Changes.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Ah, yeah. Exactly. Anyway, that led to some radio shows that got good experience and that led to the gig at Michael's in the seventies.

APPLEMAN:

FRED So, you and Bob Gullotti and George Garzone met at Berklee as students

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yep. Exactly. I think George might have been one year behind us.

APPLEMAN:

FRED And he was at Berklee, not at the conservatory?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah.

APPLEMAN:

FRED The conservatory came later?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yep, Berklee. Bob and I were Music Ed students and, as I said, we students taught together in Needham and graduated in '72. I think George, one or two semesters behind us, he was still a student. Studied with Joe Viola. At that point we were sessioning and playing together and eventually got this steady Monday night at Michael's, which is a great thing to play your music once a week. And at that point we'd normally rehearse at Bob's on Friday and play at Michael's on Monday and maybe something else in between too. There was the 1369 a little bit later we played at too. And Pooh's Pub.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Oh yeah. Sure.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD We played over there. So, there was, you know, we were definitely hitting two or three times a week. And we all had those little Sony cassette recorders. I've got thousands. We'd record everything. We'd get together and listen to it. We'd say, "Oh, I like that," or "What are you doing there?" It was really great.

APPLEMAN:

FRED So that was the rehearsal dynamic that a lot of your focus on certain kinds of improvisatory nodes so to speak?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah. We'd go to certain "areas" we'd call that.

APPLEMAN:

FRED It wasn't a vamp. It wasn't a line necessarily. It was some kind of a mood.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, exactly. Yeah. "That was a good area" or something we'd say sometime. We also came up with the idea
APPLEMAN: that there was four people in the band. There was drums, bass, saxophone and then there was the group sound.
It was the fourth player.

FRED Wow, psychologia.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly, and that made a lot of sense.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Wow yup, it was bigger than each of you.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah and if you listen to all the great groups, they had it. All the great groups had that fourth or fifth person that
APPLEMAN: was the sound of the group.

FRED Surely the dynamic that you guys forged over time was fraternal. It was social as well as musical. What kind of
BOUCHARD: bonds kept you together besides the music?

RICHARD Well, it was a family. We all had kids. My first son was Sam and there was a tune I wrote called "Ides of March"
APPLEMAN: on the first album and he was born on the Ides of March. Bob wrote a tune "For Alicia" which was for his daughter.
They were born right around the same time. George had a tune "Me and Lynea" for his wife. I can't remember all
of them but we had a christmas party every year, we'd exchange gifts. We had cookouts. I always had a fourth of
July party at my house. Bob, I remember he bought a house in Waltham, we had lots of cookouts. In fact, there
was a guy named Patrick who ran Pooh's Pub.

FRED I remember him, sure.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Patrick right. So one time we were doing a weekend, because we were known as playing at Michael's all the time.
APPLEMAN: I remember seeing Jaco and Pat Metheny. They had some nice things going over at Pooh's pub near Kenmore
Square.

FRED Stanton Davis, all those cats.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah Ghetto Mysticism, Stanton Davis yeah. So anyway, finally Patrick said "We'll give you a weekend over at
APPLEMAN: Pooh's Pub" which was a big deal.

FRED That is a big deal.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah it was a Friday and Saturday night, so invite the wives. That night Patrick gets on, "Tonight I'd like to
APPLEMAN: welcome The Fringe and The Fringe Benefits." The wives they were sitting there in the front table. It was nice, it was kind of nice. We each had two kids, we all bought houses.

FRED They were in Waltham and you were in JP?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah and then George bought a house in Bridgewater. But he grew up near Roslindale near Forest Hill's Station
APPLEMAN: and lived right around the corner from his wife Marilyn. But when they bought they decided to buy a brand new place in Bridgewater. In fact there's a great tune on the first album called "To the Bridge." That was George's every night after Michael's he'd be driving to the bridge and it was just incredible [mimics bass playing] as fast as we could play. And that's what we'd do, I mean, we'd just try By playing a lot together, we had these certain areas that we could go to. Sometimes we'd go to places we didn't really know where we were going, but we always could go back with either [mimics drumming] a little drum, or Bob had [mimics drumming]. That was just a drum lick that Bob sometimes would do. I'd immediately know where we were going.

FRED Sort of like an alert.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD An alert. Exactly.
APPLEMAN:

FRED Circle the wagons.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly. [mimics bass playing] I had a little bass thing that I would do. And so, if things got a little...
APPLEMAN:

FRED Too far out you'd bring it back.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Too far or it's about time for a break near the end of the night. We'd better wrap it up. You know what I mean? In
APPLEMAN: fact, I was at the doctor's the other day, my doctor plays saxophone, he went to Harvard with Tom Everett over at Harvard.

FRED Oh, who is he?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Jeffery Woo is his name. He sounds like he loves Stan Getz, Coleman Hawkins...
APPLEMAN:

FRED He was in one of the student bands for a few years.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, yeah.

APPLEMAN:

FRED It rings a bell.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Imagine having your doctor, I actually played with him at his Boy Scout meeting.

APPLEMAN:

FRED You could count the Asian kids on one hand.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah. Well, this guy's a doctor, but, so he says to me, "Man, when you're playing with The Fringe what are you doing?" And I just said, "I'm just trying to play something that sounds right with whatever George is playing." With Bob I can hook up rhythmically. I know whether we're gonna play no time or play swing or Latin. And with George, he's so strong that I just try to play something that just fits with whatever he's playing. If you do it long enough, well my wife also will say, "Sounds like you guys are having more fun than the audience." So, I know there's some of that in there too.

FRED [Laughs] And then you took it on the road. I mean, you had some successes with the recordings. Neanderthal went pretty big.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah. Actually Lockwood was on that one.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Oh, okay.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD But before I left in '85, before then we had done the Cool Jazz Festival in New York.

APPLEMAN:

FRED That's right.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD We got that in the Guggenheim Art Museum.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Oh, the Guggenheim.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD That was great.

APPLEMAN:

FRED And the Azores.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, we did the Azores.

APPLEMAN:

FRED And concerts with Rob Battles at BUR and ERS and the Jazz Workshop.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, yeah. We actually did the Jazz Workshop, which was incredible because growing up here as a student,
APPLEMAN: that's where I saw Miles and Keith Jarrett and who else? Mingus.

FRED Mingus! Yeah. Roland Kirk.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD All of them, Roland Kirk, would be on that stage. That was great.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Yeah.

BOUCHARD:

FRED So maybe we should get into the faculty, the evolution of Berklee's Bass department in your thirty-eight years
BOUCHARD: there. What you inherited from Bill Curtis, who was on board at the time you mentioned John Repucci, Whit
Browne,

RICHARD Bruce Gertz.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Bruce.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD So what happened when I got here is that Bill Curtis was the bass teacher. That was '68. A year or so after that,
APPLEMAN: Ron Mclure was here. I had him for ensembles and bands but I kept studying with Bill. Bill taught with the bow.

FRED I remember him playing with the bow.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD And that was really good for me because when I had first started taking the bass in Pennsylvania, they
APPLEMAN: mentioned the bow a bit but they knew that I was going to play jazz and swing. So they immediately, you know
my lessons were pretty much playing with my fingers. Bill was kind of busting me a little bit trying to get this
classical thing. Which really paid off when I started doing theater work.

FRED Oh yeah.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Because you have to have that. But Bill was the only guy then Ron Mclure came there was also this guy Frank
APPLEMAN: Galliker, would do a couple days or so. He actually helped me get into the theater business, theater work.
Because he was doing a show called Jack Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris. A show that...

FRED Went on forever

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Went on forever. And that was one of my first theater gigs in Boston subbing for him. And so by the time I had started teaching though Ron had left, Ron McClure had left. Bill was still here, Frank was too busy doing shows and stuff, and there was another guy called Al Landy that was here for a while who was an electric bass player who played the bass like an upright. He would keep it straight up and he was very disciplined and that kind of thing.

FRED Did he have a little stand for it?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD You know what he did, he had a rope with a weight!
APPLEMAN:

FRED And it just used to hang there?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD It would hang there and he would play going up and down like that.
APPLEMAN:

FRED I'll be damned.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD It didn't quite work out with him. You know what I mean? By the time I had started there teaching and John was teaching and then John Neves was there that was important. Then Steve Swallow came, so this is like '72, '73, '74, and in '76 I hired Whit Browne and Bruce Gertz. In '77 I hired Greg Mooter who was a student. And there was another guy who was a student of mine David Chamberland who taught for a little bit. But that didn't work out. So we hired Greg Mooter who was just graduating in '77. So that was really the beginning.

FRED Was Steve Swallow doing all the electric stuff?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, at that point also around '75, Steve decided that teaching was not for him. And he decided to leave and we hired a guy named Neil Stubenhaus who is actually a very well known session player in LA, still working now. And Neil was a student at the time but really taught no students. So when Steve left we put Neil in there because we needed someone to cover his hours. Also at that time Jeff Berlin was here who's a really famous he was a student but he was always around.

FRED So he came on faculty really quick?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD No Jeff never came onto faculty he was just I liked him a lot because he was pushing for the electric bass.
APPLEMAN: Because my roots John Repucci's, John Neve's were pretty much upright jazz, coming from that. Some of these newer guys were coming in after Jaco Pastorius came out in '76. Stanley Clarke and said, "Come on we need some electric players!" Electric, you know. So it was good for me to hear that from Jeff Berlin and some of these guys saying we need to develop in addition to the acoustic bass and jazz we needed to start developing the electric bass program.

FRED BOUCHARD: For the uninitiated, my self included, what was Steve Swallow doing on the electric bass that was innovative but still considered continuous with the upright tradition.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: That's a great question, Steve had a great upright bass sound. And also was great in that to me he's a true artist. Composer, lives the music. You know what I mean? And so at some point in the late sixties or early seventies he tells a story about back in the late eighties he's live at the Fillmore concerts, where there were a lot of concerts that might have... Well he played... I think he did a concert at the Fillmore in New York where Gary Burton opened for The Cream.

FRED BOUCHARD: Ooo.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Eric Clapton, and at that time he played Jack Bruce's electric bass and he says, "Yeah this sounds good, feels good why am i lugging this upright around?" And at that point whenever that was late sixties, early seventies

FRED BOUCHARD: Something clicked!

RICHARD APPLEMAN: He made an effort to say, "I am now going to be" He would not... In fact John Neves would bring an acoustic bass over to Steve and put it there and would say, "Play one note. Give me one note!" and he wouldn't do it. You know what I mean 'cause he's all, "Play that one note" 'cause he just had a lovely approach on upright. But he would say, "No no I have switched man"

FRED BOUCHARD: True believer. Convert.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: So but he did, combination of developing a concept on the acoustic bass and bringing that concept to the electric bass. He also played it with a pick. Which was totally unusual because all jazz players don't play with picks. Carol Kay, a great session player, she was on the Beach Boys albums and Ray Charles' America the Beautiful Bill Cokers' Feeling Alright, it's Carol Kay who was a guitar player. She was part of that Wrecking Crew out in LA who did all the studio stuff. She had a very distinct clicky kind of, some of the country bass playing has that. But what Swallow did was he decided to play with pick but he still had an upright sound with the pick and...

FRED BOUCHARD: Quite full

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, full and round, and also when he solos I remember a clinic I saw. He said he thinks of Marvin Gaye when he solos, because he feels like he wants to be able to go into the higher register more of a vocal kind of sound, you know what I mean...Which I thought was just a interesting concept. But that's what Steve, Steve brought The first time I had heard about playing Bach on the electric bass which was a great thing to do. Jaco played, many of the great electric players. It just sounds good and it lays really nice on the electric.

FRED BOUCHARD: And it's gotta be fabulous for your chops

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah exactly that something that Steve was having his students do and just be such a creative voice, all the tunes He had his tunes. We were all playing Falling Grace.

FRED Eiderdown

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah exactly eiderdown and he's still... I don't see him much but it's as if.. You know when I see him we're back
APPLEMAN: and we haven't stopped. You have friends like that. Abe Laboriel is another friend like that.

FRED Steve is totally amazing. And he's always totally into the music. I did a blindfold test with him in the early
BOUCHARD: eighties for Downbeat and he was unstoppable. Because he had heard every track I played him, he knew the bands he knew records. That's devotion.

RICHARD Yeah. You're right.
APPLEMAN:

FRED So, we have about five minutes that you can kind of string out a few lines into the eighties, nineties and about
BOUCHARD: the developments that came into the department.

RICHARD Well we were able to, as I mentioned a little bit, in addition to the faculty I mentioned, I hired Joe Santerre who's a
APPLEMAN: student here. He plays the six string bass. Those were innovations that took place that needed to take place that we needed to have in the curriculum that were important. Anthony Vitti, another student here, he's great for slap funk bass kind of things. Oscar Stagnaro, great latin player. I was lucky to get these people, they lived in Boston, they studied here. Part of me sometimes felt like, "Well, we should have more stars", or that kind of thing on the faculty. But it really did work well because they were already here, their families were here, and they were into teaching. Sometimes it just works that they had the commitment to be here. In addition, I was able to get them to write courses in the areas that they were really good at. Back then it was easy to get courses approved. Anthony wrote slap labs, hip hop labs. Oscar has a Brazilian Lab, Latin reading lab, an introduction, these kinds of labs. Joe has a five and six string chord lab.

FRED And these have all become cornerstones of the bass curriculum.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah, exactly.
APPLEMAN:

FRED And even if you don't take the class, you can buy the book.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah in most cases, yes. All of those guys have written books, so you can get a piece of them through a book.
APPLEMAN: But taking the class as Anthony was saying, the stuff he does in his labs with like Marcus Miller solos and some of the slap, Larry Graham who played with Sly Stone. He says, "There's no place I can teach this anywhere else in the world, having six or eight electric bass students that are totally into it sitting in the class doing this stuff." He doesn't even do that in his private lessons. It's specifically just for labs. Bruce Gertz has a John Coltrane bass lines class, and they have to read a book, more of a biography of Coltrane. But then he goes through a whole thing with his experience of playing with Jerry Bergonzi. All these reharmonizations of standard tunes using the Coltrane changes. Those are the things that I'm really proud of the department, of our curriculum.

FRED Were there some international influences, I mean like from Miroslav Vitous and Bruno Raberg that bring a little
BOUCHARD: different something else to the mix?

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, yeah. Bruno does a lot of the ethnic music and that kind of stuff, and he's a great private lesson teacher too. We got Paul Del Nero also who's really into Mingus. So we've got, it's a cliché, most of these bases covered. I know it's a cliché.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh yeah yeah.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: I know I'm leaving people out. We got a new, most recent, Matt Garrison and Esperanza who were on the faculty five or six years ago, then they just got too busy. Now we've hired Lincoln Goines and Ed Lucy who are great replacements.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yeah Lincoln has been all over the map. How about Danny Morris, how new is he to the mix? He's been here twenty years hasn't he?

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah and he's great. Danny Mo, Motown. His lab, I'm glad you mentioned him, he calls it Motown in Atlantic. They do all the early music of the sixties and early seventies. He also now is teaching Survey of Bass Styles, which I used to teach. When I took a sabbatical he took it over for a semester, and I thought he was doing such a good job I just let him, he's got it. He also teaches in the liberal arts department now. He's doing that Artist Creativity Inquiry course.

FRED BOUCHARD: Oh that's cool.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: And he's doing a lot of online teaching. He's a great person to have in the department. Students love them. He's listening to their music.

FRED BOUCHARD: That's cool.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: He knows all the bands. He has a lab called the pop repertoire, they just pick a tune "What's the tune of the week? What's a tune we're all listening to?"

FRED BOUCHARD: Pull it apart and analyze it.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah exactly, yup. That kind of thing, yup. Dave Clark is another guy.

FRED BOUCHARD: Dave! Yeah, been here a long time.

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah he's a great guy. He's a composer. He can play classical and jazz, composer.

FRED BOUCHARD: He was at the Pop's for years with Bob Winter?

RICHARD APPLEMAN: Yeah, yup. He also put together the Sun Ra ensemble for the governor, Deval Patricks, his father.

FRED Pat!

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Pat.[Laughs]

APPLEMAN:

FRED Yeah I played a track from my audio quiz of the music, "That's the governor's daddy playing big fat baritone!"

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD [Laughs] Yeah!

APPLEMAN:

FRED What's going to happen now that you're out the door, who's taking over?

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Steve Bailey, who's a very experienced player and teacher. He's most known as playing with Victor Wooten. He and Victor Wooten have a group called Basic Streams. He plays a six string electric. He has played with Dizzy Gillespie. He's done a lot of teaching, he did about ten years in LA teaching at the BIT [Bass Institute of Technology] out there. He's been teaching in State School in South Carolina for three years. John Patitucci will still be on for at least another year. I hope we're all in good shape, I mean one of the things I thought about before I decided to retire was that, two things. The sports analogy, you don't want to stay too long, you don't want to be playing in....

FRED Right, Tekken Wakefield left this year.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Exactly, exactly. And the department is in really good shape. I just felt like if things were not good and I left under that kind of scenario, it would have really bothered me. Now I feel that the department's very healthy and the colleges, it's just a good time. My wife retired last year, so it's time to do something else.

FRED What's your message to the eighteen-year-old incoming bass player who's looking at the smorgasbord in the cafeteria. What do you tell him to do while he's trying to decide what his tastes are?

RICHARD Hmm that's a good one.

APPLEMAN:

FRED I mean, important lessons.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Well the thing is I think, I teach a class I go into a time concept, a tonality concept, a timbre concept and there's
APPLEMAN: a taste concept. I call it the "T system." I'm sure Jaco Pastorius or some of the great players don't wake in the morning and say, "Well today i'm going to spend two hours on my concept." You don't think of it that way, but what you really need to do is develop a concept that is your idea or that's the way you approach things. Think of that very seriously because when you graduate you're out there with all the other bass players, so why is your phone going to ring opposed to someone else's phone going to ring? I also firmly believe that bass players have to lay down the bottom, they have to get along with drummers, they have to be part of the rhythm section. That's the way you're going to get performance opportunities. The soloing is the icing on the cake. That's my opinion.

FRED Cool.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD And that comes a little bit from playing tuba, sousaphone. You need that bottom, you know what I mean?
APPLEMAN:

FRED Did you ever sing along with your bass lines like Major Holley or Slam Stewart?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD No, but singing is great. In fact my son, who's a bass player in the ear training department, his singing chops
APPLEMAN: have gotten so good and I've seen his musicianship grow along with that singing, you know what I mean?

FRED Turn those solfege lessons into something concrete.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Right!
APPLEMAN:

FRED That's your son Tom?
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah Tom, yeah. Yeah, he does albums, he does those things "Dark side of the Moon" like that whole Pink Floyd.
APPLEMAN: He did "Abbey Road"

FRED Oh man!
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD This past year he did "Thriller" the Michael Jackson thing.
APPLEMAN:

FRED I think he's listening to you in terms of finding the concepts, you know? Working out your own thing. Cool, Rich
BOUCHARD: thanks this was a blast!

RICHARD Yeah, thank you!
APPLEMAN:

FRED Glad we got together, we talked about it for quite a while.
BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah I know, I really appreciate it so thank you.

APPLEMAN:

FRED Bon voyage to the south of France, man. We'll have to have that bottle next time.

BOUCHARD:

RICHARD Yeah. [Laughs]

APPLEMAN: