

Joan Jeanrenaud

*Joan Jeanrenaud: Kronos Quartet Cellist, Composer, and Independent Spirit*

Interviews conducted by  
Caroline Crawford  
in 2005 and 2017

Since 1953 the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library, formerly the Regional Oral History Office, has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the nation. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The corrected manuscript is bound with photographs and illustrative materials and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and in other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

\*\*\*\*\*

All uses of this manuscript are covered by a legal agreement between The Regents of the University of California and Joan Jeanrenaud dated March 11, 2005. The manuscript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to The Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley.

For information regarding quoting, republishing, or otherwise using this transcript, please consult <http://ucblib.link/OHC-rights>.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Joan Jeanrenaud, "Joan Jeanrenaud: Kronos Quartet Cellist, Composer, and Independent Spirit" conducted by Caroline Crawford in 2005 and 2017, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2021.



Joan Jeanrenaud plays the ice cello, 2001  
Photo courtesy of Joan Jeanrenaud

**Abstract**

Joan Jeanrenaud was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1956 and raised on a farm there. She studied cello with Peter Sturbeck in high school and went to Indiana University in Bloomington, where she studied with Fritz Magg. After graduation, she went to Geneva and worked with cellist Pierre Fournier before joining the Kronos Quartet in 1978. About that time Kronos made the decision to perform only contemporary music, took on the management of the ensemble and went on the road for several years, traveling with their instruments in a small Toyota. Important early influences were Charlotte Moorman and the Fluxus movement. In 1998 she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and because of the changing nature of Kronos, she decided to leave the ensemble and compose her own music. She has since had a long working relationship with composer Terry Riley, who has composed music for her, and she has been a successful and prolific composer in diverse styles in her own right. She has had commissions from The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Asian Art Museum, among others, for new work, and in 2008 she earned a Grammy nomination for *Strange Toys*.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Composers Series Preface   | vii |
| Interview 1: March 11, 2005  |     |
| Audio File 1   | 1   |
| Early years and music background; studies at Indiana University and in Geneva, Switzerland, with Pierre Fournier — Remembering Margaret Lyon — Kronos' repertoire — Terry Riley and <i>Bruce's Travel Machine</i> and <i>Olde English; In C</i> and <i>G Song</i> — Joining the Kronos Quartet, 1978, Walter and Ella Gray — Kronos staffing and Janet Cowperthwaite — A Mills College residency — The Kronos look — On the road with Kronos   |     |
| Audio File 2   | 21  |
| Remembering Jacqueline du Pre — Dealing with multiple sclerosis — Democracy and the quartet: four-way decision-making — Packing a Toyota with instruments and four: the good old days, 1977-1992 — A changing quartet — On composing: Yerba Buena Center residency and the MAP Fund, 2000-2001 — <i>Metamorphosis</i> and <i>Ice Cello</i> — Visual elements and found sound — Charlotte Moorman and Fluxus — The Giggliani Quartet and sexism — Playing with friends and collaborations |     |
| Interview 2: February 17, 2017   |     |
| Audio File 3   | 38  |
| More about Fluxus and Charlotte Moorman and <i>Ice Cello</i> — Terry Riley and <i>Knock</i> for Kronos — Teaching at Mills College — David Harrington and the music of protest — Hamza El Din — Writing about Larry Neff for Kronos — <i>Altar Piece</i> — <i>Aria</i> and the making of an installation   |     |
| Interview 3: March 3, 2017   |     |
| Audio File 4   | 53  |
| On listening to music — Talking House and Different Fur studios — Changing fortunes for the recording companies — Deconet Records and Deconet cello — More on Charlotte Moorman — Kronos revolution in quartet music — <i>Strange Toys</i> and more about looping — Grammy nomination  |     |

Interview 4: March 23, 2017

Audio File 5

72

Commissions — Rova Saxophone Quartet — Influence of Memphis and the blues — Commission from the Metropolitan Museum of Art: music for sculptures — *Second Time Around*; an oral history-music collaboration for theater with Charlie Varon — Writing music for documentary film — *Trust* for the Asian Art Museum — Visual music — Working with William Winant — Stockhausen, Berio, Ligeti and jazz — On improvisation and composing — Grammy nomination — Evaluating the life of contemporary music works

## American Composers: Series Preface

The American Composers Series of oral histories, a project of the Regional Oral History Office, was initiated in 1998 to document the lives and careers of a number of contemporary composers with California connections, the composers chosen to represent a cross section of musical philosophies, cultural backgrounds and styles.

The twentieth century in this country produced an extraordinary diversity of music as composers sought to find a path between contemporary and traditional musical languages: serialism, minimalism, neoclassicism, and back, to some extent, to neoromanticism in the last decades. The battle of styles, and the reverse pendulum swing that followed, were perhaps inevitable, but as the *New York Times* stated in a recent article, "the polemics on both sides were dismaying."

The composers in the series, a diverse group selected with the help of University of California faculty and musicians from the greater community, come from universities (Andrew Imbrie, Joaquin Nin-Culmell and Olly Wilson) orchestras (David Sheinfeld), and fields as different as jazz (Dave Brubeck and John Handy), electronic music (Pauline Oliveros), spatial music (Henry Brant), Indian classical music (Ali Akbar Khan), and the blues (Jimmy McCracklin). David Harrington, founder of Kronos Quartet, was interviewed about the quartet's commissioning program, which, in recognition of the fact that classical music is no longer an exclusively European-American enterprise, has engaged composers from Argentina to Zimbabwe, producing more than five hundred new pieces in three decades. Also in the series is the following oral history on the subject of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*, commissioned by San Francisco Opera for the 2005 season. Various library collections served as research resources for the project, among them those of the UC Berkeley and UCLA Music Libraries, The Bancroft Library, and the Yale School of Music Library.

Oral history techniques have only recently been applied in the field of music, the study of music having focused until now largely on structural and historical developments in the field. It is hoped that these oral histories, besides being vivid cultural portraits, will promote understanding of the composer's work, the musical climate in the times we live in, the range of choices the composer has, and the avenues for writing and performance.

Funding for the American Composer Series came in the form of a large grant from art patroness Phyllis Wattis, who supported the oral histories of Kurt Herbert Adler and the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and subsequently from the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Interview 1: March 11, 2005

Audio File 1

01-00:00:02

Crawford: This is March 11<sup>th</sup>, and I'm sitting with Joan Jeanrenaud in her beautiful backyard in Bernal Heights. I wanted to start by asking you about influences on your work. Was there a grandparent? Was there a parent, an aunt, an uncle?

01-00:00:29

Jeanrenaud: Well, that's really interesting, because no, there was not another musician in my family. My grandfather did play the flute, and my father did play the clarinet. So those instruments were around. I tried those instruments when I was growing up. I went to an all-girls school, because my mom taught there, and they had a music department.

The teacher in the music department let me try a lot of instruments. She, I think, thought I was musically talented. And so she wanted me to find an instrument that I would enjoy playing. I had tried the piano when I was younger, but then that was because of my mom encouraging me to do that. She thought that was a good thing for me to learn. And I didn't really take to the piano very well. But I studied maybe four or five years or so.

And then our music teacher, Ethel Scrivner, gave us all recorders. But it was interesting, because then I started playing the tenor recorder, which of course, is the lower one. And then we played in an ensemble. And I clearly always enjoyed that, playing in a group, a small group.

01-00:01:56

But I did try the French horn, the flute, clarinet — all these things that were just available and there. It was Ms. Scrivner, who was also a Suzuki violin teacher, that then started me on the cello. I was eleven. She wanted me to play the violin, but I heard all these other kids playing the violin, [laughter] and I said, "You've gotta be kidding." It was just too high. She wasn't a cellist, and sent me on to Memphis State University.

Crawford:

You were born in 1956 and grew up in a small town outside of Memphis, Tennessee — I can hear just a trace! [laughter]

So you never liked high lines. And your voice is really a baritone, a low alto voice.

01-00:02:23

Jeanrenaud:

Well, and it's interesting. I always did gravitate towards lower instruments, and I still do to this day, that's the sound that I like. And so it makes sense that I ended up with the cello, somehow. After a year of playing the cello I ended up studying with a fine teacher. Peter Sturbeck was his name. He was really my main guy and I took from him for five years, until I graduated. Then I went to Indiana University in Bloomington, and I studied with Fritz Magg.



That was a great experience because IU was a wonderful place full of musicians. I was always open to different things, even when I lived in Tennessee and went to the university for my lessons. I met a lot of other people and ended up joining the union when I was young.

Crawford: I'd read you joined when you were sixteen.

Jeanrenaud: There was a bassoon player at IU, he was older and an arranger, and he arranged a lot of string parts for a lot of things going on in Memphis, a lot of pop stuff. So he said, "You should join the union; I'll give you jobs." So I thought, why not?

But it was a great experience to be in the studio at an early age and see how things worked, and Memphis was small enough that I knew everybody, so I felt embraced by the whole music community and that encouraged me to keep playing. I did some pieces by young composers who were at Memphis State, and then at IU I did the same and composers realized that I was open to playing their music. A lot of people at IU weren't, because it was such a classical training. So there were a lot of things I could take advantage of — an electronic music department that Xenakis had been involved with, and I took a couple of courses from David Baker, head of the jazz department. I was in a different ensemble every semester that I was at IU, so as I look back I realize that I was always interested in small ensemble work.

Crawford: Backtracking just a bit, you've said no one in your family was musical?

Jeanrenaud: There was really nobody in my family that was a musician. No one in my family really even listened to that much music. It's really interesting.

Crawford: What music was playing in your house?

01-00:02:50

Jeanrenaud: Well, I remember when my dad got a record player for the first time. And he went out and bought Wilson Pickett. [laughter] He had a ton of Wilson Pickett CDs. And then Herb Alpert. That's right, he had Herb Alpert CDs. And... My mom had some very old LPs — what were they, the old ones, the really thick ones?

Crawford: '78s?

01-00:03:16

Jeanrenaud: '78s. And she had some classic repertoire. She still has them at home. Symphonies and things like Ravel's *Bolero* — these records, which were great. But it wasn't even like we listened to that very much, you know? So I think my mom was very aware of classical music and I think she maybe had wanted to be a pianist, so she definitely encouraged me to be a musician.

Crawford: Well, that was a big push.

01-00:03:49

Jeanrenaud: It was great. They were so supportive, where they could've been not at all, you know. Especially considering that they didn't really have a background, a professional musical background.

01-00:04:04

Crawford: Let's move on to 1978, when you joined Kronos.

Jeanrenaud: Okay.

Crawford: What was going on in your life then?

01-00:04:18

Jeanrenaud: I was in Geneva, Switzerland. And I was studying cello with Pierre Fournier. And I had just — the year before going to Switzerland — been at Indiana University, where I got my bachelor of music degree. And that's where I met Hank Dutt, the violist in Kronos. And we became very good friends. Then he contacted me when there was an opening for Kronos. We both left IU at the same time. I went to Geneva, Switzerland, and Hank joined Kronos. That's right when Kronos was moving from upstate New York out to San Francisco. So it was in '77.

And so Hank and I kept in touch a little bit. I knew he had joined Kronos, and I knew he'd moved out here. And after I spent my year in Geneva, I then thought, okay, well, it's time for me to get a job. And Hank happened to call me right at that same time, and said that there was an opening in the quartet that he was in, Kronos, and would I like to come and audition? And so I did. So I left Geneva, flew home to Memphis, Tennessee, where I'm from, and was there for maybe a week; and then flew out to California and auditioned. And I got the job. So then I stayed here.

Crawford: The quartet was in some trouble then.

01-00:05:55

Jeanrenaud: They were.

Crawford: They had just lost the Grays.

01-00:06:00

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. And Walter was a very seminal, important person in Kronos, you know? If it hadn't been for Walter, I don't think Kronos would have lasted those five years before I joined. I don't know if anybody's talked to you much about Walter, but Walter was a great guy. And he's an extraordinary cellist. But then beyond that, what was so necessary to keep Kronos going in those early days, is that he did all the financial stuff. I know he incorporated Kronos in Washington State, where they're from, for example.

01-00:06:46

After a year of being in San Francisco, Kronos had just gotten a residency at Mills College, but that's when Walter and Ella decided that they had to leave.

Which made it easier for Kronos to get other people, really, because of the fact they at least had this residency to offer us, you know, when we were coming in. Kronos hadn't had anything like that when they moved to San Francisco that year before, you know. It was really tough as they were playing at Ghirardelli Square on the street, and all these other places.

Crawford: Were they really?

01-00:07:18

Jeanrenaud: Yes, and they — they were hardly making any money. You know, Hank found a place to live that was in [William] Orrick's home. Now, I can't remember their — their first names, but he was a lawyer.

Crawford: The judge?

Jeanrenaud: I think he was, yes. And so Hank lived in the very upstairs part of their house, in just a couple of rooms up there. And then he would do things around the house for them, you know? Like [laughter] turn on and off lights...

Crawford: As rent?

01-00:07:51

Jeanrenaud: Yes, as rent. Because basically, they weren't making hardly any money at all. And that's why Walter and Ella couldn't afford to stay in the group, because they had two young kids. And so, you know, if the two of them were rehearsing — Kronos rehearsed all the time, even then. So if you're in rehearsal and you're paying a babysitter... I'm sure they were paying more than they were making. [laughter]

So it all made sense to me that this happened, especially in retrospect. But Walter — so Walter — they had to leave. And it was rather abrupt, and shocking, especially to David and Hank. And Hank had been in the group only a year. You're probably going to hear a lot of the same stuff from people, maybe not. But Margaret Lyon was the head of the music department at Mills.

01-00:08:46

Crawford: Oh, yes, I wanted to ask you about Margaret Lyon.

01-00:08:47

Jeanrenaud: Margaret was very important in her role, because the quartet had gotten this residency at Mills College that was supported by Chamber Music America. I don't know if the California Arts Council was supporting it quite yet. They did, but I can't remember if it was then.

Crawford: She was important to the music scene, wasn't she? What was she like?

01-00:09:12

Jeanrenaud: Oh, Margaret was just the sweetest woman, but she was very smart. And she really cared about music, really. And you know, she knew enough to — to go

to David and Hank and say, "Look, you guys, don't worry about it. This happens all the time in quartets. Just find two other people, and your residency will be intact." Because of course, they were afraid that they were going to lose it. But Margaret was great. She was just like, "Well, no, just find other people and you'll still have your residency." And so that, of course, was really important for Kronos, too, because if it hadn't been for that, it might've been hard to keep it going at that point.

Crawford: There is a lot of traffic noise; I think I'm going to move this inside.

01-00:10:04

Jeanrenaud: Better to do that now. I just did a [laughter] recording with that same problem.

Crawford: Her memory bothered her, because she wanted to talk so much about all of you.

Jeanrenaud: Right.

Crawford: This is Margaret Lyon, who was at Mills for so many years, and when you were there in residency. She said, "Joan just overshadowed everybody else. Joan was so strong, and such a vivid presence and the right player.

Jeanrenaud: Oh.

Crawford: That's what she had to say about you.

01-00:10:34

Jeanrenaud: Well, that's really wonderful. Well, Margaret was, you know, very supportive of women, which was a wonderful asset, in my opinion.

Crawford: Were there women, other women composers in that program?

01-00:10:49

Jeanrenaud: I'm trying to think who else was there. Of course Terry Riley was there when we were there, and Allaudin Mathieu was there, Lou Harrison was there. There *must've* been some women that were there. It's so funny now, I can't remember. I know Maggie Payne, who's still at Mills, I believe she was there too, but I don't know in what capacity. Maybe she had been a student. That's like William Winant, who's the percussionist.

Crawford: I know Willie.

01-00:11:26

Jeanrenaud: That was when I met Willie, he was at Mills the same time Kronos had first come to Mills. He was a student there.

Crawford: Who's Maggie Payne?

01-00:11:34

Jeanrenaud: Maggie Payne is — I really got to know her when she produced and engineered the recording of Lou Harrison's for New Albion called *Rhymes with Silver*. But she's still in the music department, and she teaches composition, I believe, but she's also really involved in the electronic music department. So she's really good with electronics and all that sort of thing.

Crawford: So she would've been there — well, Pauline Oliveros is still there, I guess...

Jeanrenaud: And Pauline. Pauline was there.

Crawford: You got the idea that Margaret really championed women. That's great.

01-00:12:26

Jeanrenaud: Very much so. She was very supportive of women musicians, and very supportive of me being in the group.

Crawford: When you joined Kronos, were you practicing, rehearsing hours and hours a day?

Jeanrenaud: Kronos rehearses so much.

Crawford: Yes?

01-00:12:45

Jeanrenaud: But that was very key to our success, I think. Because I never felt that any of us in Kronos were these hotshot players. I mean, I went to Indiana University School of Music, and there were some incredible players there. And so it wasn't that — that Kronos had star players or anything. I think it was the fact that we were so dedicated to playing in a quartet together. And so we had to work really hard to be as good as we were. But as a result, things like ensemble or pitch — we talked a lot about pitch and ways of tuning, even at the very beginning of being in the group. And of course later on, you know, after working with people like Terry Riley, who were using different kinds of tuning, and with all sorts of composers — Ben Johnston in *Amazing Grace*, all his quartets, he uses very unusual tuning.

Crawford: Let me ask you about the Kronos repertoire here. All those commissions, four hundred string quartets! Were you all involved in choosing composers?

Jeanrenaud: At the beginning more so. We weren't in the position we were later. In the first ten years we played all the standard twentieth century works: all the Bartóks, the late Shostakovich, the two Berg quartets, all the Schoenberg quartets, Webern, we played all the classics. That was great, but you know those pieces, so it's easier to have everybody involved in deciding that was what we were going to do.

Then as far as commissioning and working with composers, that had been David's interest, and when that became the mainstay, David was very good at working with composers and suggesting a direction for them. As Kronos became more known, that became basically what Kronos played.

So everybody's role in determining the repertoire became less and less, and we finally decided that David should have the title of artistic director. We would always program what we'd play together. Sit down and talk about the pieces and then make up the programs, but as far as deciding the repertoire, that was David's responsibility. I kind of wish I could have been more involved, because I can decide exactly what I want to do now!

Crawford: The inspiration for Kronos was David Harrington's hearing George Crumb's *Black Angels* in the early 1970s, which was interpreted as being a protest against the Vietnam war. Were there often political considerations with Kronos commissions?

Jeanrenaud: I think so, definitely, not that we consciously talked about it. But it was very important to David and the rest of the group too that we played music that was being written at the time. By the time I had been in the group two years, I had done a lot of the bookings, and I felt the sponsors were confident that they could get us an audience and that the music we played was not going to chase them off. I think the first two years they were worried. Kronos hadn't been that well known.

But political message or content — it was always important that we reflect what was going on around us. You can't ignore that and neither can a composer. We talked about that from the beginning, that we really believed in what we were doing and that this was music that deserved to be heard. Artists were represented at that time by big managements, who decided what the sponsors would want their artists to play, and they would basically control the artists as far as their repertoire was concerned. Since we played contemporary music no management wanted to touch us and that led us to develop our own organization and freed us up to make our own decisions. So we just had to convince the sponsors that was the case.

After we would play in a place one time, and play a Brahms piece or something familiar along with contemporary works, the sponsors would become more comfortable, then they would hire us again. But I think it was important that we had this belief. We were young and we pursued it, and it was important that we did it through our own organization.

Crawford: A couple of quotes for you to respond to. Hank said of the quartet: "We have wonderful respect for each other and are seemingly without ego. Can that be true?"

Jeanrenaud: No. [laughter] I have to disagree with my dear friend, but I think one of the reasons I left the group was my ego. I know what he means, because when you play with a group like that you do become egoless in a sense. You are playing all four together and that creates an entity. Instead of four entities it becomes one. That's how it should be — that is the beauty of playing chamber music. You get strength from the others, but I do feel, and I love Kronos, that I wanted to start making decisions about what I was playing and what composers I would work with. I was interested in improvisation and electronics and multimedia and performance art, and I don't think anybody else was particularly interested in those things.

Crawford: Another quote. David Harrington said of the quartet, "I have wanted the quartet to be absolutely beautiful, and ugly if it has to be."

Jeanrenaud: I think David wants people to be able to go to a Kronos concert and hear music that will make them have emotions and think about things. He doesn't want to make the experience only beautiful, but he wants a wide range of emotions, to have someone feel sad or feel elated — -he wants a huge range of expression. If that happens, it isn't just a complacent experience. He wants it to change people's lives and that's an admirable thing for him to strive for.

Crawford: When you look at a list of composers played, from John Adams to Howlin' Wolf to Frank Zappa, are there any that you would have questioned, not been comfortable with?

Jeanrenaud: No, and especially those three you picked — good ones. No, over the years there were maybe a handful of pieces I didn't particularly see much merit in, but if you are in a quartet you are overruled, and even in those pieces I could always find something that made playing them worthwhile.

Crawford: What were your impressions of David and John?

01-00:16:45

Jeanrenaud: John, of course, joined at the same time that I did. Now, I know John auditioned maybe a week or so before I had, and they had decided on John. So it was great, because the minute that I came to audition, I think I was the last cellist to audition; they had auditioned several before that. When I came in to sit down and play with them, it was David, John, and Hank, which was great, because that's all I ever knew. I was so excited to have the possibility of playing in a string quartet. That, to me, was just the best thing.

Crawford: That's what you'd hoped for.

01-00:17:25

Jeanrenaud: Well, when I was leaving, towards the end of my year in Geneva, I thought to myself, Okay, you know, I've got to get a job now, and what was I going to do? And I was thinking of applying for several chamber orchestras. But still, it was an orchestra, but it was a chamber orchestra. Because I figured, well, that

would afford me the kind of opportunity that I would like to have. But I didn't really even consider that I would be able to join a quartet, really, you know. So I was just very lucky that it all worked out the way it did.

Crawford: Good timing.

01-00:18:00

Jeanrenaud: It was *great* timing. [laughter]

Crawford: You're still working with Terry Riley, and that is a decades-long relationship. What are your impressions of Terry Riley?

01-00:18:11

Jeanrenaud: Well, Terry — I'm going to premiere a piece of his in ten days or something.

Crawford: That's what I understand.

Jeanrenaud: I was just working on it this morning. You know, of course, Kronos worked so much with Terry, and he had a huge influence on the group, in things, even tuning. That was such an issue with him. Even things like phrasing and notation and articulation. Because Terry hadn't written any music for about ten years. Or written it down on paper.

Crawford: Notated it.

01-00:18:51

Jeanrenaud: Yes. Thanks to David, he encouraged Terry to write something down. And when Terry first wrote the first piece, *G Song*, it was all these little — what was that in — eight bar, seven bar phrases? I can't even remember, these modules. And then we sort of worked it out as a group, with Terry, how we would structure this piece out of these modules. And in a way, when you think about *In C*, I guess it kind of makes sense, because *In C* is just a series of modules, too. But it was great, because we went up to Terry's ranch and we worked with him. We stayed up there, and we worked every day with him, and then when I left Kronos, of course, I was good friends with Terry by that time, as all of us are. And I wanted to do some more work with him. And so I essentially started doing the same thing.

Bruce Conner, a good friend, for some reason, decided to commission Terry to write a piece for me. And so what ended up happening is that then I would go up to Terry's ranch, and I would stay there for several days at a time. His property borders the Tahoe National Forest, very close to Grass Valley, up around there. He's right on the Yuba River, too. A beautiful place. Now, actually, he's in Richmond, because his daughter, his oldest child, has a place there, and they have a big house, and then there's a little house down below, where Terry and Ann now live and can stay. And now I think Terry's son, who's become this great guitar player, he actually is staying up at the ranch more often.



So they still have the ranch, but he's down here more often now, which I think works really well for him. But anyhow, the most recent time I saw him was there, in Richmond. But so back in 2000 I just started working with Terry. And Terry's just *prolific*. You know, I would go up there, and we'd each sort of do our thing in the morning, warm up, then we'd get together and Terry might have some sketches, you know, and then... I was tuning differently. I was really into different tunings at that time. And this piece is in a different tuning. Instead of G — sorry. Instead of C, G, D, A — my A string on the top stays the same, but everything else is a half-step down. And it's really a beautiful tuning.

Terry wrote it in exact pitch. But you notate it as if it was on the strings of your conventional tuning. So — and so then it is confusing. I don't have perfect pitch. But if I was to, it would probably be much more confusing. Because you'd be seeing a A-natural, but you'd be playing a G-sharp. But for me, that's easiest, because I think of my — my fingerboard that way and fingerings that way, so...

Crawford: Is that an Eastern tuning?

01-00:22:52

Jeanrenaud: He was really influenced, I think, by choosing his tuning by the harmonics, by the natural harmonics you can get on the string. He is very influenced by Eastern tunings, certainly. But he really likes the — for instance, he really likes the seventh partial harmonic on any of the strings, actually. So if it was on my C string, it would be a B-flat at the very end of the fingerboard. And it's really low. Because your harmonics are in perfect intonation, just intonation. So he really likes that seventh partial on the open string, because it's perfectly in tune. But of course, to our Western ear, it sounds really flat, it's really low.

So anyhow, that tuning really is more of a result, I think, of the natural harmonics that I can get on my open strings this way.

01-00:24:08

Crawford: How have you worked in the process of going through this piece?

Jeanrenaud: What we did is that I would stay at the house, we'd do this back-and-forth thing, where he would write something, and I'd go practice it, and then I'd bring it back, and we'd work some more on it. So it was a really nice process, because things evolved in a really nice way. You know, we would even improvise a little bit together. But at that time, it was at the very beginning of when I was starting to really enjoy improvising. I'd always been interested in it, even back at IU, taking courses there from David Baker. And I even took some lessons from Joe Henderson when I moved here to San Francisco.

But it was something that I never really had time to devote enough energy to. And when I left Kronos, in my mind that was the one thing I really knew that I

wanted to explore more. I didn't think I would start composing, which is what's happened. Even though after that, all my composer friends said, "Oh, if you start improvising, you're going to start composing." And in fact, they were right. But with Terry, it was great. Terry really helped me in that process, to really become more comfortable improvising and just trying out different things. So it was a really nice collaboration. And it was much different than the relationship I had had with him when I was in Kronos. Because of course, it was much more one-on-one, whereas with Kronos, it was very much, you know, the group. I think he has a very good one-on-one relationship with David. And I mean, with everyone in the group, but particularly David.

01-00:25:51      You know, David will talk to him about more what he wants from him, as far as a piece goes. But I never really had that with him. But now it's great, because I do. And I really appreciate that and value it.

Crawford:      That you can tell him what you want, what you're thinking.

01-00:26:07  
Jeanrenaud:    Yes. And we can have that kind of exchange. I'm much more involved with him now, as a musician and as a performer of his music. I mean, Kronos always worked so closely with Terry in rehearsals that I would experience that, in the rehearsal process. But this is even beyond that, really.

Crawford:      What is this piece?

01-00:26:34  
Jeanrenaud:    As a result, there is a large body of work. So instead of just writing one piece, Terry wrote a bunch of little — well, not so little, this one's fifteen minutes or something — But a bunch of pieces, that he calls *Bruce's Traveling Machine*, because Bruce [Conner] commissioned it.

This particular one is called *Olde English*. And I can't even remember how we came up with that name. But it could be because it is much more in the style of the Bach cello suites, for instance. It's very beautiful.

Crawford:      How so?

01-00:27:18  
Jeanrenaud:    Well, it has a lot of chords. And very lyrical lines. It has sort of an introduction, where I use open strings with these harmonics, and it sort of introduces the tuning, actually, by this slow, meditative section of minimal drone-like [tones]. I was just commenting to Alessandro Moruzzi that I was practicing that this morning for a couple hours, and it was so relaxing. You know, it's just a very beautiful piece. But then, from that introduction of the tuning, then it goes into more chordal passages that, to me, remind me very much of the Bach suites, actually. It is a beautiful piece.

Crawford: When I talked to Margaret Lyon, she said Terry Riley was very shy. And that surprised me.

01-00:28:28

Jeanrenaud: That's interesting, that she thought of him as shy. I mean, I can see what she means. He's very — yes, he is...but I don't know that I'd call him shy. He's very thoughtful, and I suppose that could be a trait that's also considered shy. He's not — he's not in your face. Terry is not — definitely not in your face.

Crawford: Why is so much made of *In C* ?

01-00:29:00

Jeanrenaud: I think because it became such an important statement, an indication of the times. This idea that you could have different modules of music that then the performers could choose to play for as long as they wanted to; that everybody had a certain kind of independence. But it certainly was minimal material, because it was all in the key of C, which made it possible for you to move, no matter how many people were playing the piece, for everybody to move their module to the next module whenever they wanted, and everything could overlap, and it would make sense as a whole piece. And I think also, the rhythmic quality, because there's someone who keeps a rhythm all the way through the piece. So I think rhythmically, harmonically, and the fact that it was minimal in the amount of material written down, it was an important influence in music history.

And that it was very subject to the performers' desire of how they would move. So a certain amount of improvisation, then, in the piece. I think all those things combined made it a very important work, and that no one had ever really quite done that before. And so I think it just opened up a whole world of different possibilities for people.

Crawford: What do you consider the most stellar piece that he wrote for Kronos?

Jeanrenaud: That's a hard question. I mean, *G Song*, I love *G Song*, because that's the first one that he wrote for Kronos, and in a sense, it's much like the idea of — more complicated in a way, though — than *In C*. Then we kind of all structured it and figured it out, because Kronos figured out a way of doing it. Like, Oh, we'll repeat this bar, you know, five times; or repeat this section twice. So whereas *In C*, it was much more of the moment, so each performer could decide. But Kronos played *G Song* the same way every time.

We could decide, and I'm sure we did, while we were working on it, we tried many different ways. And we finally came up with one way, you know. And even after we'd performed it three or four times, we were like, is this right, or should we change this? But basically, we came up with a score. And that's how we did it. But that's how Kronos does things. I mean, there is no improvisation in Kronos. [laughter]

Crawford: David [Harrington] told me that when something is recorded and done well, he doesn't want to touch it again. That kind of surprised me. It's set, and we are going to stop now.

01-00:32:12

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. And I'm very, very different from that now, so it's interesting...

Crawford: Weren't you always?

Jeanrenaud: Maybe I was.

Crawford: You had that interest in improvisation.

01-00:32:22

Jeanrenaud: I was always interested in that aspect of playing.

Crawford: Well, you were the managers of Kronos until Janet Cowperthwaite came, I think?

01-00:32:35

Jeanrenaud: Janet came — let's think about this. Oh, gosh. It's all so long ago. I joined in fall of '78. Janet must've been around 1980, '81, something like that, I think.

Crawford: That's right. She had been Kronos' secretary, isn't that right?

01-00:32:52

Jeanrenaud: You know what happened. I have to go back a little bit here. Kronos was at Mills — when I joined Kronos, we had the residency at Mills. And it was a two-year-residency and then at the end of that time, they didn't renew the residency. And in typical fashion — I hear this about a lot of institutions, educational institutions — they didn't really give us that much warning. In fact, I think it was a day before the grant was due to extend it to another year or two years, they told us they weren't interested in [our] applying for it. And that's when I realized that Kronos, in fact, was a nonprofit, and so that we didn't need Mills. We had needed Mills before, because they would apply for grants for us, but if you're a nonprofit organization yourself, of course, you can do that yourself. I hadn't really known that.

Walter was the one who incorporated Kronos in the state of Washington, and we had to have it transferred to the state of California. But we were already incorporated, and had been for some time, which was a huge asset, actually, because then the direction Kronos started going in was that we just did everything ourselves. So we could apply for this grant on our own, we did not need a fiscal sponsor or the institution of Mills to do that for us.

01-00:34:42

And so in a way, it was very shocking that this happened. But because it happened, it was the instigating fact that got Kronos to be the kind of organization that it is today. Because then we decided, Okay, we're just going

to apply for this grant ourselves. We did have a couple of people who worked for us in this period of time, before Janet. But then we started doing everything ourselves, essentially, we did a concert series at Mills; but then we didn't have the Mills Concert Hall or support to do that anymore. But we could apply for our own grants and receive them, and produce our own concert series, which is then what we started to do. And we did it at the — in the beautiful little hall at the Legion of Honor.

Crawford: Was that in Florence Gould Theater?

Jeanrenaud: That beautiful little theater. So we did a three-concert series there, and we raised money for it and produced it ourselves. So then we had to have a board of directors as a nonprofit, and you need a board of directors. And on our board of directors there were several people in the community who enjoyed our concerts and were businesspeople, essentially. Carol Spencer was one. She has a bookstore — or did have a bookstore — called Sunset Books, and it was very close to where David lived. We used to rehearse at David's house, in the print shop underneath David's house, which was on 20<sup>th</sup> avenue.

: It's really close to 19<sup>th</sup>. So it must've been 20<sup>th</sup>. You're right. It was 20<sup>th</sup>. And then her bookstore was also on Irving, down a lit bit father, on Irving..

Crawford: So you didn't have a grandiose rehearsal studio or anything like that.

01-00:37:23

Jeanrenaud: Oh, no. [laughter] We rehearsed at David's little, tiny apartment. And by that time he had two kids. I joined right after Adam had been born, his son who's died since then. So he had a two — was it even — I think it might've even been a one-bedroom apartment, actually. And we rehearsed in there. And he had all of Kronos' music in there and everything.

Crawford: He said he had books stacked around everywhere.

Jeanrenaud: Yes. He made friends with the guy underneath his apartment building, who had this print shop. Fred. And so we used to rehearse in the back of the print shop at night sometimes too. But anyhow, Carol was on the board. We had been thinking we needed somebody to help us, but at this point, we were doing a lot of stuff ourselves. We'd had a couple other people do things for us, and it didn't really work out, and one of the reasons is because we weren't telling them what it was that we wanted them to do, because I think we weren't really quite sure ourselves, you know, because none of us had really done that so much. So Carol was trying to find someone to work in her bookstore. And Janet came and applied for the job.

01-00:38:50

When she interviewed Janet, she said — to herself — This girl would be perfect for Kronos as a part-time secretary. And so basically, that's how we got Janet. It was really because of Carol.

Crawford: Isn't that nice the way things came together?

01-00:39:06

Jeanrenaud: It was great. And of course, Janet is irreplaceable...

Crawford: The two of you are very close, I think.

Jeanrenaud: Yes. We've been really close. And we still are close. But I don't see her that much anymore.

Crawford: Is she totally involved, still, with Kronos?

01-00:39:23

Jeanrenaud: Oh, yes. They could not do without Janet. Absolutely. When I first left Kronos, Janet was doing a little work for me, too, but she just had had her child, and first of all, Kronos is more than a full-time job. And then she was a mom. So then it was like I was at the bottom of the list. And rightly so. But as a result, you know, she just didn't have time.

Crawford: Do you have management now?

01-00:39:51

Jeanrenaud: No. I'm my own manager. I do everything. [laughter] Some ways, it's good, though. You know?

Crawford: Well, you certainly know it's going to be what you want.

01-00:40:00

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. And I learned that in Kronos, because that's what happened when we did so much stuff ourselves for a while. I used to write grants for Kronos, and the reason I can do what I do now is because I did it all before in Kronos. And then of course, Janet came along, and now Kronos has a huge office. And people do a beautiful job, a much better job than any of us could ever do. But still, I learned a lot from that process.

Crawford: Wasn't that difficult, with playing and rehearsing and everything else?

01-00:40:34

Jeanrenaud: Well, it was, but you know, it worked out really well. I loved that period, I realized. After I left Kronos I realized I really liked that. I liked that challenge and trying to figure it out, and what's the best way of doing something. You know, Hank did all the books. And Hank was perfect for that. He loved doing that. And David did a lot of — all the interviews and — and a lot of gathering materials and music, which is what he still does. And then John would make all the tapes and things that we had to have for our grant proposals and all that sort of thing and I even did some bookings, or sending out mailings.

Crawford: A quartet with a staff of four. [laughter]

01-00:41:17

Jeanrenaud: It was a good way of doing it, you know, because then we split up the duties, and then it also became really clear how it was that we wanted things to work. And so then when we hired Janet, we were telling her, "We have this mailing list and we're doing this concert, so we have to produce this flier and send it out to our mailing list. Well, this sounds really silly, but we would type it out every time. And she was like, Oh, you could just Xerox this on labels, which is what you did then. And we were like, Oh, wow. [laughter] She's brilliant! But then at least she knew what it was that we wanted to have done, and she would make it happen and do it the best way possible.

Crawford: Yes, and by then you were already getting a lot of attention?

01-00:42:08

Jeanrenaud: Yes. You know, it was very slow. It was a very slow process, I think.

Crawford: Was it?

Jeanrenaud: In my mind it was. Because I was, you know, always very involved in the financial picture of it, too, and figuring that out and we had to keep track of how much money we were making and how much we were spending.

01-00:42:34

I was always very aware of how much time we were all spending, and how much we were all doing. But it all made sense; it all worked. And it grew. But financially, if you look over those periods of years, especially those first — I would say even ten years. If you looked at the first ten years, and you looked at the budgets for those years, you would see that it would go up every year, and I think now, it's pretty much plateaued. I think quartets can really only make so much money, unfortunately. I mean I guess Kronos' [members make] what a principal player in a good orchestra would make. But it's not exorbitant, by any means. And considering the amount of work that they do, they really don't make that much money at all.

01-00:43:40

Crawford: And do they make more on the recordings than from performances?

01-00:43:45

Jeanrenaud: No, really, they have to be on the road to make the money that they make every year. Recordings are *some* income. But it's not that great, no. It might be equivalent to...it's hard for me to know how much they make from performances now, but I would say it might be the equivalent of, like, six performances in a year, is what they make off recordings, for instance.

Crawford: I see.

01-00:44:21

Jeanrenaud: And that's accrued over all the ones that are out there. So it's not like it's a huge amount. And every time they make a recording, it's a very involved process. And they always want to do more than they did the last time, so you

end up spending more. And so the record company gives you a budget. But it's easy just to spend that whole budget on the process of recording.

Crawford: Yes.

01-00:44:50

Jeanrenaud: And then it's going to take you a while till you see any royalties, you know, and it's not the pop world.

Crawford: You hear Kronos recordings a lot on the radio.

01-00:45:01

Jeanrenaud: Yes, but see, now, Kronos — and now I know this, because I'm a composer, and I belong to BMI, and I have my own publishing company. And that's where a lot of composers make their money. But Kronos, they're not composers, so a performer doesn't get that.

Crawford: That's right, they commission but they don't write.

01-00:45:20

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. So they don't make anything off of recordings. It's what they get paid. And then, you know, they have a standard royalty agreement from their records, which is close to ten percent or something, essentially. Which is a very standard thing. So even though you hear them a lot, they're not making any money off that. The composer is.

Crawford: They have become a larger group now when they tour?

01-00:45:50

Jeanrenaud: Well, they always take a sound person and Larry Neff, who does lights and stage management. Larry will do everything that needs to be done. But he is also the lighting designer and tour manager, and he always goes with the quartet now. And then they have a sound engineer, and they use a few different sound engineers, so they take turns. But Larry's always there, and Larry's great.

Crawford: I want to ask you about the Kronos' look.

Jeanrenaud: Oh, yes. [laughter]

Crawford: I saw pictures of you way back in the Mills days, the early Mills days. Very conservative looking. How did that develop? And was the new look your idea?

01-00:46:34

Jeanrenaud: Well, you know, it's hard to say whose idea anything was in those early days, because I like to think of it as a real cooperative. Somebody would have an idea, and then we'd talk about it. So everybody talked about it, it was everybody's idea, and then we'd decide, Okay, this is what we're going to do.



But certainly, when I joined the quartet, the three guys were wearing tails, and I was wearing a long gown, which is very typical for classical quartet players.

I did think it was a bit odd, especially when I joined the group, too, for the first two years, when we also played classical — or earlier classical repertoire, like Beethoven or Brahms or Mozart, Haydn. And after two years, that was another group decision, where — I remember very well, because we played a Brahms quartet at Mills College, on the program. We were playing 80% of contemporary music, but we would always play sort of a standard repertoire piece on the program. And we played this Brahms quartet, and it has a really big viola part. And both Hank and I thought we butchered it, essentially. And we thought to ourselves, you know, we just don't play this repertoire the same way as we play the contemporary repertoire. Everybody feels much more comfortable playing the contemporary repertoire. That's what the group, already you could tell, wanted to do.

01-00:48:19

And so it was sort of like, why are we playing this other stuff that everybody else plays, but we're not playing it as well? Why don't we just go ahead and say, okay, this is what we're going to do, we're just going to play twentieth century music. And so in fact, that's what we did. We made that decision. And so the third year I was in the group, that's what we did. But then we went through a period where we played all the standard twentieth-century repertoire. We even played Ravel and Debussy. I think Debussy was 1898, so it was kind of borderline. I think Ravel was 1902, but then we played all the Bartók quartets. We played all the late Shostakovich quartets, Schoenberg, Weber, Berg. So then that really became our focus.

So instead of playing a classical piece with the other contemporary works, we would play a standard contemporary classical piece, like a Bartók, with all the other new material. Right away when I joined the group, we were playing people like Peter Sculthorpe, who by that time, had not written anything for us. David had found a quartet and we played an awful lot the eighth quartet. And so we were clearly very interested in this music, and that was the focus.

01-00:49:51

But then we really made the decision, Okay, this is what we are going to do, which is probably the best decision that group ever made. And then the whole thing about the look came about. Because then it was like, Well, if we're not playing the typical standard repertoire that a quartet plays, then why do we have to look like everybody else, you know? And it didn't make any sense to me, because I knew these guys, and knew that none of them would ever wear a suit and a tie, much less a tuxedo, unless they had to. I thought, "Why can I wear whatever I want to wear, but you guys have to wear this sort of uniform thing?" I thought that was odd. And so I thought, Well, you know, why don't we just wear something different, and also be more comfortable. I think for those guys, it was always really constricting, too. These suits.

01-00:51:00

Especially when you don't normally wear them, and then all of a sudden for a concert you're almost putting on a straitjacket or something. So then, and I'm sure because I was the woman in the group, and more interested in clothes and appearance in that way, I had a lot of fun going and working with designers, local designers. Eventually even that went from having people design clothes for us that were sort of still a uniform, but different than a tux, to just getting clothes that were individual for each person, but that went together as a group. So when you looked at us on the stage, it all looked coordinated, but it wasn't obviously a uniform. We did have a few designers. Now, who were they? I can't even remember their names.

01-00:52:10

Well, Sandra Woodall, of course, she was great. She's a great designer. And she was towards the end of that phase. She did, for instance, make these black pants and a black jacket for each of us. But each of them were different, so depending on what looked good for someone's body type over someone else, then she would cut the design that way. And then we had different tops that we could wear with them and things like this.

Crawford:

So everybody looked good.

01-00:52:42

Jeanrenaud:

Yes, so everybody looked good, and we all looked kind of uniform. And there were two other designers in the Bay Area that we worked with. I can't think of their names now, which is terrible. But the same thing, they would have jackets. I remember one, made from incredible, this beautiful red [faillie]. You know that material?

Crawford:

I haven't heard about that for a long time.

01-00:53:06

Jeanrenaud:

I know. And I had this great red skirt. And you could actually lift it up like this, and it would be a, you know, big circle. It was beautiful. I still have it. And we each had these red cummerbunds and black jackets, so again, they were variations, but they were still sort of that idea. After working with Sandra, then we decided to be more different from each other. So we didn't all have on a jacket or we would have different fabrics; they would just all go together, and things like that.

So that was a lot of fun, and it got to the point where I would go out and shop for everybody. And Hank often went with me, because Hank and I are super close friends. And Hank is very interested in clothing and — and so the two of us — and we love to shop, so the two of us would go shopping.

Crawford:

Where did you shop?

01-00:54:007

Jeanrenaud: Oh, we would shop when we were on the road. But even places like Wilkes Bashford in San Francisco, or there were some places in New York where we used to like to go. Even some place like Barneys or really high-end stuff — when we had a budget. We never really spent that much on clothes each year, but we had a budget, and we would buy clothes for that year and so it was a lot of fun. [laughter] Not just all work, work, work. That was the good thing about it, too, that I realized after I left the group. I really appreciated that — that period where we were all so involved in the process.

Crawford: Kind of a garage-level operation where everybody does everything.

Jeanrenaud: Definitely.

Crawford: It's always more fun.

01-00:54:57

Jeanrenaud: And it was. I got interested in the group less when things became sort of set. It was like, okay, well we have a new set of clothes every year. But by that time, they were using somebody who was like a stylist or consultant. For instance, I didn't get to do it, but okay — they probably did a better job, I don't know. But I wasn't enjoying that I didn't get to do that [anymore].

Crawford: You were dressed.

01-00:55:26

Jeanrenaud: Right, exactly. By that time, as I told you, we had decided on the repertoire long ago, but it had evolved even then to — we were basically only playing music written for us. And then it was slightly changing again. They were starting to do a lot of arrangements and things like that, which they do now. Which personally, I'm less interested in. So then the number of days we were on the road had become a formula — which was a good formula, but I realized, Oh, everything now is sort of like clockwork. I really liked it when we used to be able to discuss all this stuff and try things. We didn't use sound or lights, of course, when I first joined the group, and so that was an evolution after about, oh, five or six years.

01-00:56:19

Crawford: Did you find that you talked more after performances then? Did you hash it over and try to figure out what you liked?

01-00:56:25

Jeanrenaud: We always did that. That was something that was very consistent, because we really rehearsed all the time. And you know, we were on the road half the year, and so you spend a lot of time with each other.

Crawford: What was a day like on the road?

01-00:56:42

Jeanrenaud:

Oh, gosh, a day on the road. [laughter] Well, probably, you'd have to get up really early, say anywhere between four and six o'clock in the morning. And then you'd have to get to the airport. And if you were some place in Finland that was out in the countryside, it would take you longer to get to the airport. And thus, you'd have to get up at four or earlier. So then you get to the airport, then you take your flight to wherever you were going. Then you would check into the hotel. Then, usually, towards the end, what would happen is that the sound and light guy would generally have to go directly to the theater. And then we would be able to have some lunch and sleep for an hour or two. And then we'd go to the hall and have a sound check from four up until the concert. Then you'd play the concert. Then you might go out afterwards or something. And then you'd get to the hotel around twelve or one — one o'clock, and then you just do the whole thing over again.

01-00:57:51

But in the old days, actually, we would never get the nap or possibly even lunch. We would just rehearse. We rehearsed all the time.

Crawford:

Was it possible to turn things down and say it was just too much?

01-00:58:08

Jeanrenaud:

Well, when I first was in the group, we took everything that was offered us. Or at least that's my impression of it. Until one year, when we were on the road for seven months. And then we had a meeting. It was like, this is too much, you know? And so then we cut it back to six. And it stayed six months per year for a really long time. I think until right around when I left, or maybe it was the year I left, or maybe a year or two before I left. But then it became five-and-a-half months.

Crawford:

Vacations?

01-00:58:50

Jeanrenaud:

Five-and-a-half months of on the road. Oh, vacations. Vacations? No, we did. We always took two. And I'm out of date, because it's been six years now. But we always took two weeks at Christmastime, and generally two weeks in the summer sometime. It would vary. Now they might take another two weeks, too, I think. But still, not that much time.

Crawford:

Not that much, when you're working so hard.

Jeanrenaud:

Yes.

Audio File 2

Crawford:

We were talking about the biography of Jacqueline du Pre.

02-00:00:17

Jeanrenaud: Oh, the one that they made a movie out of, too. But that was — wasn't that her sister's book. The movie was *Jackie and Hilary*. And I think it might've been based on her sister's book.

Crawford: Did you like the book, the film?

02-00:00:53

Jeanrenaud: I enjoyed seeing it. But I was also influenced by a couple people who knew her, and they sort of discounted it a little bit. I think there was controversy over the relationship she and her sister had. And you know, there was that whole thing in the movie about the sister's husband and how Jackie had an affair with him. I think some people were a bit dubious about certain things that were in there. But I never met her.

Crawford: Did you love her playing?

02-00:01:34

Jeanrenaud: I *loved* her playing. She was so much of an influence for me, because I was enough younger that she was definitely on my radar screen when I had started playing the cello. I started when I was eleven. Let's see, how much older was she than me? She was probably in her early twenties then. It was before she had MS.

02-00:02:02

Crawford: You were born in the late fifties.

02-00:02:09

Jeanrenaud: I was born in '56.

Crawford: She was married to Daniel Barenboim, wasn't she?

Jeanrenaud: She was, so she's probably around his age, yes. They were both, like, these sort of child prodigies, and then that's how they met each other, because they were both playing around the same time. It was the beginning of their careers, yes.

02-00:02:35

Crawford: And you said you share the same birthday?

Jeanrenaud: Yes, January 25<sup>th</sup>. I was so surprised when I saw that. I didn't know that until after she'd died, I was looking at some book, and noticed that was her birthday, and I thought, Wow!

Crawford: Did she write about her illness?

02-00:02:54

Jeanrenaud: Not that I know of, but I do know a really excellent young cellist, Matt Haimovitz. We became really good friends. Now, Matt studied with

Jacqueline. And he must've been really young, because Matt's in his thirties now. But he is a good fifteen or so years younger than me. So he was really young when he studied with her, because she was very ill at the time, and she didn't really play. I've seen a documentary where she would even say the fingering — "One-two, one-two, one-two-three." But she couldn't play, even at that time. I saw Matt — now, almost a year ago, because we played with the Berkeley Symphony, it was a cello program. There were three cello concertos. Matt played the Tchaikovsky *Rococo Variations*. Judiyaba played the [Elliott] Carter cello concerto, the very recent one, and I had played a piece written for me by Karen Tanaka. I hadn't seen Matt in a while, but we had played together on some projects, and I had to tell him that I have MS now. And I just felt so bad telling him, because you could tell the effect on him was tremendous, because he had known Jacqueline and studied with her when she was really in bad shape.

Crawford: It does not affect your playing?

02-00:04:36

Jeanrenaud: Doesn't affect my playing. At this point. And you know, hopefully — I sort of have the feeling that playing actually helps me. It helps me keep this part of my body active. And so, you know, hopefully —

Crawford: Where does it come from?

02-00:04:54

Jeanrenaud: Who knows? One of these things that affects everybody differently. Some people think it's genetic. There's a large feeling that it's a genetic based, that you have a genetic predisposition towards it. But then, often, a virus triggers it. And in fact, it did for mine.

Crawford: You know that?

Jeanrenaud: Yes. I do. I was really sick, and I was playing, and it was January of '96, because I was going to turn forty. Kronos had a concert at Stanford, and a recording session right after that. And with David Krakauer, who's a great clarinet player. We were doing Osvaldo Golijov's piece, *Prayers of Isaac the Blind*, and I was just — I was so sick, and I remember playing the concert. I was backstage at Hertz Hall, over in Berkeley, and I was in a blanket before I went on the stage.

02-00:06:09

But you know, I always did that. Everybody still does that in Kronos. I mean, you're sick, you play anyhow. It's not like a singer, or even a wind player, where you just can't play when you're sick. But obviously, I shouldn't have. But then I did the recording session and everything, so I just pushed myself, I think, too far. But who would know? And maybe it was something that obviously was there and was going to be triggered at some point or another. But that is what triggered it.

02-00:06:35

Crawford: You found out that you had MS just after that?

02-00:06:39

Jeanrenaud: Right. And I didn't know what it was at first. My doctor that I was seeing at the time, who practiced homeopathy, but he's an M.D., we thought it was Guillain-Barré, which is a related syndrome, but different. And usually, that's a two-year illness that goes away, and you don't have it again, and you recover. You can actually die from Guillain-Barré, but it's rare. Lamont Young's wife had it, which is so bizarre, after that, and then, of course, I knew what it was. But then mine, it did sort of recede after about a year. I was having trouble walking, and I had numbness. I had a lot of numbness, which is typical of Guillain-Barré. And it did start sort of start to go away, but then after two years, I had trouble walking again. So then I had an MRI, and they can tell from an MRI if you have it. You basically have these little multiple scars in your brain, because it's the myelin sheath that's affected, and so they can determine that from an MRI.

02-00:08:00

Crawford: But it's not a very aggravated case, is it?

02-00:08:02

Jeanrenaud: No, I would say mine's pretty mild. Even though it used to be that nobody could tell. But now you can obviously tell. I mean, my walking has deteriorated, but now it's been almost — it's been nine years.

02-00:08:20

Crawford: And that's the only overt sign that you have.

Jeanrenaud: That's right, and it's the only thing I suffer from at this point, which is great. I don't have any numbness anymore, I just sort of have a gimpy leg. Certainly, as you get older and you see all your friends dying, you think, Well, maybe it's not so bad, you know? I'm healthy and I'm not in any pain. I can play. [laughter]

Crawford: I know what you're saying — you know what the condition is. You can identify that.

02-00:08:56

Jeanrenaud: Right. And I can adapt to it. And I can play, still, so...

Crawford: You have the blessing of your talent.

Jeanrenaud: Exactly.

02-00:09:01

Crawford: Well, back to the quartet for a moment, and issues.

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: I'm very interested in what you think the issues were, the frictions.

02-00:09:12

Jeanrenaud: Ah, boy.

Crawford: Is the string quartet a democracy? Was Kronos?

02-00:09:16

Jeanrenaud: I think it used to be a democracy. Yes, I think it changed, which I think is perfectly normal, and probably should've changed over the years. I mean, it did change over the years. You know, it started out as one thing; it ended up as something else. I think that's a natural process and I think after leaving the group, there were certain things I was not satisfied with, certainly. I had my MS, but it wasn't so bad at that point. I didn't even necessarily foresee that I'd have the mobility problems that I have now.

02-00:10:03

But it was an indication that there was something that was not right with me about it. There was just something wrong about my situation. I was — tormenting myself is not quite the right way to put it, but it was like I was unsatisfied. I was definitely unsatisfied.

Crawford: Did you not have the input you wished?

02-00:10:31

Jeanrenaud: I think that's true, yes. But that's what had changed, because when I left the group and then looked back, I realized, Oh, I really loved that period, you know, where we *all* of us had a tremendous amount of input. And we *all* had influence on each other, and I felt it was the strongest period, because we made the best decisions then, because then we would all come to a conclusion together. It wouldn't be one person who'd decide anything, you know? And maybe one person would have more of an influence in a certain area or topic or something, but basically, I really felt like everything was a joint decision. And I *really* appreciated that. I really — I really liked that.

02-00:11:15

And I think it became less that way, but again, I don't mean to be critical of that. I just think that's what happened, you know? People change, people's lives change. Kronos went through a lot of really difficult times towards the end, too. I know it all started [when] my dad died in '92. Hank's partner, Kevin Freeman, died of AIDS in '93. I had a stillborn child, in '94. And David's son died in '95. David's son...

Crawford: That was too much tragedy.

Jeanrenaud: Oh, yes. And Larry Neff's brother also died in '95. Larry Neff, who worked for Kronos and was a very big part of the group. And so of course, that's going to have a lot to do with it, too. And over twenty years, that's a lot of time. Things are going to change, and things did change. So I think I was dissatisfied with some of the way things had evolved.



Crawford: That succession of tragedies, how did you work through that?

02-00:12:38

Jeanrenaud: Well, everybody was great, you know. Kronos became like a support group, for each of us. And that's a really wonderful thing. So in that way, I think the group, in my mind, became a little bit closer and stronger. But also I tend to think, looking back, that we had so much fun early on, you know? I even have some photos of some tours that would be just the four of us. Like, even in California, we used to drive Hank's little Toyota Corolla, and you know, we put all the instruments [laughter] and our music in that car.

Crawford: Oh, I hope you have a picture of that.

02-00:13:19

Jeanrenaud: We always thought we should do an advertisement, commercial for [laughter] for Toyota. Because it was amazing. We could all fit in there with everything. And we toured a lot in California, because we had a California Arts Council touring grant. So we just had a — a really fun time. And that does change. We didn't have that same innocence or frivolity later.

Crawford: You really couldn't, could you?

02-00:13:53

Jeanrenaud: No, you can't. Things change, and they are going to change. But actually, interestingly enough, I thought one of the problems for me was that the group, in a sense, stopped changing, too. It was like, Oh, okay, we do five-and-a-half months of touring, we record two weeks out of each year, you know, the office is structured this way, we travel with a sound guy and light guy and this is the way we look. I realized my problem probably was that I wanted more change than anyone else, finally.

I had a very good friend who talked to me when I was making this decision, and he said, "You know, it could be as simple as that some people like change and some people don't." And suggesting that I really wanted change to be happening, and it wasn't, so then I became less interested in it. And I think that's true. When the group was forming, when we had to make these decisions about what repertoire to play, how we were going to look, if we needed sound or if we needed lights, or how we would get from one place to the next, how we would raise money — I think I really enjoyed that whole process.

02-00:14:53

And then when it finally got to be much more of a formula, it became less interesting for me. And I think also I had less input into the repertoire by the end. Which, again, might be a fine evolution, to have that happen, but for me, I was happier when I felt more involved.

Crawford: That tour of seven months and how many — 150 concerts, something like that. How can anybody survive that, really?

02-00:16:06

Jeanrenaud: Right, but we could step back and say, "Now, wait a minute, this was just way too much. Now, what should we do about this? And how long do we think we really can be out there on the road and tolerate it? Because that is where we make our money." And they still do, I'm sure. But that's what I liked, yes. You could say, "Oh, no, wait." You could adjust things.

02-00:16:27

Crawford: That was early on, so you did decide, No, we're not going to do quite that much. What was it like on tour? Can you read? Can you do other things? You said you were rehearsing all the time —

02-00:16:45

Jeanrenaud: Yes, but no, it was really fun. In the early days, we used to all travel together, like in the same vehicle, and unlike some other quartets, you know, we would always stay in the same hotel. We'd basically do everything together. A lot of people say, "Oh, being in a quartet is like being married," and that's kind of true. A marriage is where you spend most of your time with that person, which is probably why I'm not married. I don't spend my time with any one person either.

02-00:17:29

Crawford: You couldn't have, could you?

Jeanrenaud: Well, everybody else in the group does. David's been married now a very long time. John, also. And Hank, I think, would like to have a partner like that. But he doesn't at this point.

Crawford: You said the best time for you was in the beginning. And David said he thought 1988 was a time when everything came together. But he talked mostly in terms of composers, Piazzolla and Reich and others.

Crawford: Is that the way you think about it, too?

02-00:18:16

Jeanrenaud: I would say that was a great point in Kronos — which was about ten years after we were all together. Yes. I think that, to me, was the strongest period of Kronos. Probably, say '88 to early nineties — to, like, '92 or something.

02-00:18:35

Crawford: Were there places that you especially loved to go?

02-00:18:40

Jeanrenaud: Yes. [laughter] You know, I had my favorite places. I loved London, always really liked London. I tended to like major cities — New York, Paris, Rome. Partly because we would return to those places. And so over a twenty-year period, I felt like I kind of got to know those places a little bit more. Of course, there were a lot of smaller towns, where I've only been once or twice or three times or something. But places like New York or London, Paris,

Rome, we would tend to go back every year. I really enjoyed that, you know. And I do miss, now, even going to Europe more often, because it's very important to get a different perspective than the one you get in this country about everything. Politics, life, you know?

Crawford: But you live in the most liberal city in the country!

02-00:19:50

Jeanrenaud: I know, San Francisco. Yes, it's a good place.

Crawford: When you went to Paris, did you have the same audiences waiting for you? Did you have friends there?

02-00:20:03

Jeanrenaud: I did have friends there. I still have some friends there. You know, my married name is Jeanrenaud. My maiden name is Dutcher.

Crawford: German?

Jeanrenaud: No, actually Welsh. I think that's the root of it.

Crawford: And you're so blonde. I think of Welsh people as darker.

Jeanrenaud: Yes, well, I *was* blonde. [laughter] I'm not so blonde — it looks like I'm blonde.

Crawford: But the Welsh are so musical, aren't they?

Jeanrenaud: It goes way back. Yes.

Crawford: So Jeanrenaud.

02-00:20:35

Jeanrenaud: So Jeanrenaud — I went to Geneva for that year and met Daniel Jeanrenaud, and then I got the job in Kronos, and then he came over on a fiancé visa and then we got married. We were only married for two years. But everybody in Kronos said, "Oh, yes, take that name, that's a really good [laughter] name.

02-00:20:57

Crawford: Well, it *is* a good name.

Jeanrenaud: Yes, so I ended up with that name. He was living in Paris for a while, with his third wife, I think, who's a real sweetheart, and I always have stayed in touch with him. So it was a good experience. The whole reason I even went to Geneva to study with Pierre Fournier was because I had studied with Fritz Magg at Indiana. Fritz was Austrian, and he felt it was really an important thing to have in your life, to get a different perspective like that, to go and live in a different country. Which is why I went to study with Fournier in Geneva. And so I think he was absolutely right. It was an invaluable experience, and

then I think being in Kronos and being able to tour so much was also that way. It was a great opportunity.

02-00:21:58

Crawford: We talked before about Fournier, but what did you learn from living in Europe, from that different ambiance?

02-00:22:05

Jeanrenaud: Well, Americans, they're so self-centered, you know? [laughter] And they just think that the world revolves around them. And it's just so untrue, you know? You go to a place anywhere in Europe and the history is much stronger and greater. And of course, classical Western string instruments are much more appreciated in Europe, because that's essentially where they're from.

Whereas I'm sure instruments like electric guitar and bass are, in a way, more appreciated here. If I had a kid, I'd probably encourage him to play electric guitar or bass or [laughter] drums or something. Because I think it's sort of our vernacular music and that's what's available. And then you can play with your friends, you know, in a garage band and I think that's what people did with our instruments in Europe. I mean, the cello, I was always told, was the instrument for the third child, because your first child would probably play piano, second child would play violin, and then of course, the third child would play cello, so they can play music together. That makes a lot of sense. And so now I've gotten way off the point. [laughter] I can't even remember what we were.

Crawford: We were talking about the European ambiance. They appreciate music.

Jeanrenaud: Yes, and just the fact that different languages are spoken over there. It's a completely different environment, and especially nowadays, too, I feel this country has a lot of problems and I'm not particularly proud to be an American right now. [laughter]

02-00:24:01

Crawford: One of my heroes is I.F. Stone. I was touched when I heard the piece that you put together about I.F. Stone. To bring forward I.F. Stone, who's now gone, and who knows who I.F. Stone was? You've recreated him.

02-00:24:21

Jeanrenaud: That might've been in the late eighties, too, actually, come to think of it.

Crawford: What a contribution you make through your music. Will there be other pieces like that? And do you still do that kind of thing now in your work?

02-00:24:40

Jeanrenaud: Yes, I'm interested in that, definitely. I actually just wrote a grant for a piece. I'm very interested in multimedia and performance art and that sort of thing, and also composing and I want to do an evening length piece. Its topic is air. And essentially, you know, how we're destroying our environment. But we all

breathe air, around the whole planet. And so we're all connected in this way, and it's something that's essential for all of us. So I look at this piece, and hopefully, it'll happen. I think it will, we've been talking about it for such a long time. Eventually, it'll happen. But definitely, that has some political meaning.

Crawford: Who do you approach to fund something like that?

02-00:25:32

Jeanrenaud: Well, I wrote a grant to the Creative Capital and will apply to the MAP fund. They were generous enough to support me in my residency at Yerba Buena, at the Yerba Buena Center.

Crawford: Talk about that.

Jeanrenaud: Oh, okay. It was in 2000, 2001. I did a piece that started my interest in the multimedia thing. I was always interested, but that was the first time I really started working on my own. Kronos did some, too, which influenced me. But anyhow, the MAP Fund supported that project. But that was not all of my own music. I had one piece that I wrote, but it was other composers' pieces, many who had written their pieces for me. And then it had visual [images] and lighting and I did several videos with Alessandro, actually. And so we're the ones that are going to work on this next project, too. And I think we'll do it at New Langton Arts. They have a great history of performance artwork. So I'm actually very happy.

Crawford: There's a New York composer who was there — Eve Beglerian — I wonder if you saw this same program. It was last month. A friend of mine wrote the text for her piece.

Well, let's talk about your residency. That was something you were looking forward to when I saw you last.

02-00:27:25

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right. Well, that ended up being a great thing for me. You know, John Killacky was there, and he had been at the Walker Art Center when Kronos had played there, and then he ended up out here. Now he's with the San Francisco Foundation, but at that time, he was at Yerba Buena and they had this artist-in-residence program. He invited me to be the musician for that year. And it was great, because they gave me the facility at the Forum, and I could basically do whatever I wanted to do. And because of that, it made me think, Oh yes, well, what is that?

02-00:28:10

And so I put together two programs that eventually became one, that became *Metamorphosis*, which then I also recorded as a CD. But it had a lot of visual elements. Alessandro and I did several videos for it. I had several other video artists do work for different pieces, and they were projected. I always thought of the projections more as like the moving lights, in a way; so it was like I was

trying to create an atmosphere or a space by using lights and visual elements and sound, essentially — which is what I'm still really interested in. So I don't mean it to take anything away from the music; I'm really hoping that it just makes it a stronger statement, makes the music a stronger statement.

I also did *Ice Cello* there, and that was tons of fun. And also, I got to research Charlotte Moorman and found out a lot about her and I was very influenced by all that I did there. I think this piece now that I'm working on is very much influenced by that whole experience, because the more I came to know about the Fluxus movement, the more I became interested in just the different ways that you can do things; that you don't have to just be on a proscenium stage and, you know, just play music, but that you can create a much larger experience, hopefully, that incorporates a lot of other elements. I'm influenced, of course, by our culture. You can't live now, especially in this country, without having all sorts of sound sources, visual elements. You're bombarded with all of that.

But as a result, I feel that it makes sense to incorporate all of it into a presentation that, for the audience member or the viewer. This piece also, I hope will be an installation, that basically exists on its own; but then I can come in and perform in the installation it's in. So it can even be an installation that the audience member can participate in. Then when I do my performance within it, I'll do probably a lot of the similar things that the audience members can do, to trigger certain things. Well, *Flying Cello* is one influence, which is coming from Charlotte. And Steve Reich's *Pendulum Music*. I don't know if you know that piece, but there's four microphones that people set in motion to create feedback.

02-00:31:11

So I'm very interested in all that kind of thing. It's the spatialization of music and I'm using not only the cello, obviously, which I use to compose and write my music, but using other found sounds. In this case, a lot of it will have to do with air, the properties of air.

Crawford:

Where does an idea generate, generally, for you?

Jeanrenaud:

That is a good question! I think it comes from tragedy sometimes. [laughter] But then it doesn't necessarily come from a tragic place within myself; it's just a tragic event will somehow trigger in me a certain feeling that I have. So usually if someone dies — I wrote a piece about a dog who died. But it resonated a certain feeling in me about, like, this dog's life, for instance, and what that meant to his owner. He was a companion dog, and sort of a theme and variations on this dog's life. But it's usually an event that triggers a feeling, that then triggers a piece, I think is what happens with me.

Crawford:

And you sit down at the cello and work it out, or is it in your head?

02-00:33:00

Jeanrenaud:

No. I wish it could be in my head, but I haven't gotten there yet. I'm — I feel I'm still a novice composer, and I really have to have hands-on approach. Usually through improvisation, when I'm improvising I come up with certain ideas that I like, and I notate them. And generally, then, a lot of them probably get discarded. But then I start concentrating on certain ones, and then it ends up — it fits into a form, somehow, that's much more crafted. But initially, it starts from something that — I don't know where it comes from, really.

Crawford:

What about, for instance, *Ice Cello*?

02-00:33:50

Jeanrenaud:

*Ice Cello* was just a recreation of Charlotte Moorman's piece. I became interested in her life. All these things have connections. Because Bruce Conner was having a show that was at the Walker Art Center. I went to the opening, and this painting was in it—the painting is on my wall. I knew a bunch of people at the Walker, so you know, I was wandering around, and they had a piece of Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman. They worked a lot together. And they had the *TV-Bra for Living Sculpture*. I became fascinated by this piece, and I had seen other things of hers before. I saw her when she was on the Johnny Carson show, in '67. I had just started playing the cello. And my dad had said, "Oh, Joan, you must come see this." And so all these years later, there were enough connections where she kept coming up. And then — and then I was there. I had just left Kronos; I saw this piece at the Walker. And then Joan Rothfuss, who's one of the curators at Walker, said to me, "Wow, if you're interested in Charlotte," says, "I can tell you all the people to talk to."

02-00:35:22

And so that's what she did. She gave me all her contacts in New York. Barbara Moore was the executor of her estate. Barbara Moore's husband had taken a bunch of photographs of Charlotte throughout her years, in the sixties and seventies. And I went to Barbara's bookstore — she had a bookstore called Bound/Unbound and she had all of Charlotte's stuff in these boxes, and she just let me look at all this stuff.

It was great. I think it's now all at Northwestern, and they have it all catalogued and everything. It's great. But I became really fascinated with Charlotte and the things that she did and everybody that I talk to — Terry Riley, Lamont Young — everybody had a story about Charlotte. And so she was a very important figure, I think, in that whole time, and just that whole experimental period, the whole Fluxus period. I got very interested in Fluxus, because of her.

Crawford:

Describe what you know of Fluxus. What appealed to you.

02-00:36:38

Jeanrenaud:

What appealed to me is the fact that they sort of discarded a lot of convention. Their concepts were their main thing, obviously, but before there was an audience, and there was a performer. That was one of the things that they tried

to really break down, that there was no difference. You could be somebody who was not a dancer and be a dancer onstage. There wasn't that barrier between those two things. I thought that was a really important aspect to the Fluxus movement. The challenging idea that you had to be a certain way. That you had to be so trained to be a performer — it was all open. Everything became open that was considered art.

Yoko Ono's book *Grapefruit* — you know, all these pieces were conceptual pieces. And then somebody else could take that piece and interpret it the way they wanted to, and that was okay; that was still art. So that I think it really broke down the barrier of this categorization of what something is and what it's not. And basically, it was just all open. I think that's a good way of looking at things. Why have these preconceptions or notions that one way is right and another way is wrong? When you think about Kronos, when we first started, that's a lot of what was going on. We were doing stuff that I guess string quartets were not supposed to do, you know?

02-00:38:57      But then it was like, well, why? [laughter] This is what we do well and why shouldn't we wear this if we're more comfortable wearing this? And it just doesn't make any sense to us anymore, wearing suits or tuxedos — it seems like an antiquated way of dressing, it doesn't have anything to do with our lives

Crawford:      You were challenged with subverting the string quartet; you were changing the art form!

02-00:39:34  
Jeanrenaud:      Well, it was funny because everybody says things about the look. That it was a marketing idea or something. That wasn't it *at all*. It was just being comfortable, and we wanted to wear something that looked nice on stage, but why should it be the same thing that people have worn for the last hundred years. That didn't make any sense, you know? And it certainly didn't make any sense with the music that we were playing that was brand new.

So instead of just looking at things like, Oh, this is the way you're supposed to look, if you disregard that, you think, What's most important to us? And what makes sense to us? I think that's all we acted upon was our feelings about these things and what made the most sense to us. And when we stopped playing any repertoire before 1900, really, it was such an important decision, and it was very freeing, because all of a sudden, we didn't have to follow any other conventions.

Crawford:      You could break loose.

02-00:40:49  
Jeanrenaud:      Yes.



Crawford: I had to laugh when I read somewhere that the Harry Partch Society criticized Kronos because a string quartet was doing Harry Partch? Isn't that the whole idea?

Jeanrenaud: Right. Instead of that, oh, Harry Partch has to be done on his instruments and everything else.

Crawford: As you look at Kronos today, what do you see? Are they having fun? Are they overambitious, trying to do too much?

02-00:41:26

Jeanrenaud: Oh, no! I think it's great that they're still doing their thing, and I really respect what they're doing. At the same time, I'm really happy I'm not doing what they're doing. You know, sometimes now I think, Oh, the best decision that I ever made was to join Kronos, and the second-best decision was that I left Kronos. [laughter] For me, it was. And — but obviously for them as a group, they're going strong. And I'm really happy to see that, because I would hate it if I had had any kind of adverse effect on their success and their career and everything else. And Janet just orchestrated the whole thing beautifully, so that I think everybody is doing what they want to be doing right now.

Crawford: I asked David if he would to find a woman cellist to replace you and asked if that was better chemistry. He said, "Oh, definitely." He said, "We auditioned men, and there was so much testosterone [Jeanrenaud laughter] in the room. What would you say about that?"

02-00:42:45

Jeanrenaud: Well, I was really happy that they got a woman, first of all. Because I really felt like, It's about time for role reversal! Sexism. I'm sure so many women have been neglected over the years because they're women. So I was very happy to think, Oh, if they feel that they have to get a woman, that's the best thing that could've ever happened. But you know, as a woman in the group, I never really felt like I was a woman. I just felt like being a woman is part of my personality, obviously. But also, growing up in Tennessee is, too, you know? And I felt everybody had their very distinct personality.

02-00:43:35

I mean, Hank is gay. So what's the difference between, there's somebody who's gay in the group, there's somebody who's a female heterosexual or — you know what I mean? It all becomes inconsequential to me, except for the fact that it is part of your personality, your makeup, part of your individuality, That's the way I chose to look at it.

Crawford: Have you ever played in a female ensemble?

02-00:44:09

Jeanrenaud: I'm sure I have. Well, in college, I played in a quartet with Hank, and he was the only male. There were three women and Hank. We were called the Gigliani Quartet, because we used to crack up laughing so hard, that became

our name. But I never put too much weight into the idea that men play a certain way and women play a certain way; I don't really look at it that way.

Crawford: Working alone, which you obviously like — are there times when you miss that collaboration?

02-00:45:05

Jeanrenaud: Well, I do work with a lot of other people. For instance, somebody like Terry Riley is a huge influence on me. Hamza El Din, I've worked a lot with, and we've played a lot together. And of course, both of them I met because of working with Kronos. Larry Ochs has been another one. I play in a trio with Larry Ochs and Miya Miasaoka, who's become a really good friend of mine. And so I do still play with people — not every day, like I did in Kronos, but I've played with them now over six years. I play several weeks or a month or two, if you had to break it up that way, with different people every year.

I like that continuation of working with someone a lot. One thing that's really nice for me now is that when I work, even with composers, my relationship with them will be much more extended, really, than Kronos is able to do at this point in their career, because Kronos plays so much new music that they'll learn a piece and they'll perform it, and that could be it, you know. Whereas for me, my process tends to be much longer, over a much longer period of time. It may not be necessarily as intense as a two-week period of Kronos working with someone. But mine will be, like, over three or four years. So it's a different thing, but I like that a lot. I like that kind of working dynamic.

One thing I miss with Kronos, I have to say, is that you're playing with three other people who are constantly commenting on your playing, and that was very valuable. Now it's a little harder, you know. If I practice by myself, I have to be much more aware and attentive to what it is that I'm doing, really, because I don't have that objective person saying to me, "Oh, you're really out of tune there."

Crawford: And you would be very open with each other and you wouldn't have hurt feelings.

02-00:47:52

Jeanrenaud: You can't. You have to get past that right away, because you have to realize that any time someone makes a comment about your playing, it's to improve it. And so it doesn't matter if you like it or not; ultimately, it will make you play better. It happens all the time, and even to me now, it helps. Kronos was probably a lot more critical, because we worked together so much that you really could say that to each other. You didn't beat around the bush; it was just like, you know, "*Gosh*, that's out of tune. [laughter] What do you have there?" Things like that. And it became a very quick way of rehearsing, too, because you know, you could just cut right to the point.

Crawford: Yes. Well, what collaborations are you looking forward to doing that you haven't done?

02-00:48:56

Jeanrenaud: Oh, let's see — I'm working with some dance companies now, composing music for them. And that's been a really fun thing. I just did a piece for Axis, for the Axis Dance Company, the dancers and the choreographer Sonya Delayed, and also Judy Smith, the head of the company. And because I do all my own stuff now, I really interact with all these people. So I don't just go in and play the music. I write the music, I talk to the choreographer about it, I go to the rehearsals, I see the dancers, I play the music for them, I talk to the manager of the company. There's a lot of stuff that goes into it. I'm doing a project with Emily Klion, who works at the Marsh Theater. And she has a youth program, and that's really going to be fun. It's a play on a novel called *Jip*, that's just the best little novel. A really moving story. She has this cast now of these kids, and so she's producing this play, and I will write and perform some music [for it]. It is coming up.

Crawford: It sounds like you're very busy.

02-00:50:40

Jeanrenaud: Well, it's great, though. There are all these diverse projects, you know? I'm going to New York to play some of my own music, which will be really fun. And it's only part of a program. But so that's nice, just my own material. And I think that's the first time I've played some of my own stuff in New York, outside of my appearance with Hawiza. We put a program together, and we each played our own material. But this is really the first time I've been invited just to do my own thing. That will be for a festival Look and Listen. I can't remember the name of the gallery. But it's in New York, in Manhattan.

Crawford: So you don't look for things in New York and so on, but if you're invited, you'll go.

02-00:51:31

Jeanrenaud: That's basically it, yeah. I don't really look for anything too much anymore. I just do things that happen to come — or *not* do things that come across my path, you know? But definitely, I decide everything. Everything that I do is my decision. I can't ever blame anything on anybody else. [laughter]

Crawford: Are you teaching at all?

02-00:51:59

Jeanrenaud: I'm teaching *more* now. I have adult students now. For a while, I had this gal, Meta Weiss, who was just a terrific cellist. I taught her from thirteen to fifteen, and now she's going to Andover. She studies with the cellist of the Muir Quartet. She was great, but it was hard work teaching her, because I had to keep up with her. And she was playing all this difficult repertoire, [laughter] and it made me realize, Wow, this is — this is hard work. And since

I'm not someone who's taught my whole life — I never taught when I was in Kronos, really. Maybe a master class or an odd lesson here and there. But you can't devote enough time to your students if you can't teach them every week. And really, that's what most students need.

But now I have my adult students, Doug Hall, who's a really great artist — he's exhibited everywhere. His brother-in-law is Larry Ochs. Doug decided he wanted to play the cello, and then Larry said, "Oh, why don't you ask Joan?" So I started teaching Doug. And it was an interesting problem, because he never had played music in his life, he didn't know how to read music; he didn't know how to count; he just had no clue about anything, much less the cello. So I really enjoyed it. And he's really getting good. His whole goal, of course — he's sixty now and started maybe three or four years ago — and basically, his goal was to play music with friends and have a really good time. And now he's playing in a little orchestra, and we're going to be doing some chamber music stuff this summer that's really fun.

Crawford: You have a motivated student there.

02-00:54:00

Jeanrenaud: Yes, well, it's one of these things where you realize how hard it is at first. And then once you start, then it gets faster and faster.

Crawford: Once you have a little reward. And I'm sure you're wonderfully rewarding.

Jeanrenaud: Oh, well, I have a great time. And now I have two — no, I have, really, three other adult students, so now I'm into teaching these older people. [laughter]

Crawford: I remember Felix Khuner told me the same thing. He got a lot of pleasure when he was already in his seventies and eighties. He had a string quartet that was made up of his students and himself. What a great contribution to make to a life.

02-00:54:50

Jeanrenaud: Well, and it's really wonderful to see someone who tackles something really so daunting at that age in their life. That they can get so much enjoyment out of it, it's really inspiring.

Crawford: We are almost out of time, so I am going to say thank you so much. What a wonderful story.

Jeanrenaud: Thank you.

Interview 2: February 17, 2017

Audio File 3

Crawford: I'm interviewing Joan Jeanrenaud for the Oral History Office. These interviews will be added to earlier transcripts of interviews we had in 2005.

03-00:01:14

Jeanrenaud: Oh, great. [It'll] be interesting.

Crawford: I hope it'll be interesting for you. We touched on Fluxus before, a community of poets, composers, artists engaged in experimental art in the 60s and 70s.. That was something that you got involved in.

03-00:01:23

Jeanrenaud: Oh, yes.

Crawford: Talk more about your work that was influenced by Fluxus.

03-00:01:28

Jeanrenaud: That was the period where I was really into Fluxus. Charlotte Moorman had a lot to do with it, because I did recreate her piece, which was originally *Ice Music*, for London; but then I just called it *Ice Cello*. So that was a really fun project, and then it got me really interested in the whole Fluxus movement. Now, it's interesting I've sort of left that behind now, I have to say. Well, after that, I did the piece *Aria*, that was with Alessandro Moruzzi, who's somebody I've worked with many times.

Crawford: At the Yerba Buena Center?

03-00:02:17

Jeanrenaud: Yerba Buena, that's where we presented it. They had something to do with it, and there were a few other people who gave money for it: the Peter S. Reed Foundation — I can't even remember anymore. I have to go back and look. But there were a few little resources, and Yerba Buena was the big supporter, really, and that's where we presented it.

Crawford: Lots going on in that piece.

03-00:02:44

Jeanrenaud: There was a lot going on in that piece. But then I think after being involved in Fluxus I got into this whole thing — and that piece, I think, is a good example of it, where the audience and the performer — you're not just playing on a proscenium stage to an audience; the audience is more involved. Certainly, in *Aria*, because they could walk around and you could hear different things, depending on where you were in the space. You can hear it all, but certain things will be more to the foreground, depending on where you're standing.

Crawford: And you were positioned in the center, with projections around you.

03-00:03:30

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. There were really four directions — north, south, east, west — and then each direction had a signifying theme, more or less. The West was very meditative and more what you'd think of the East; and the North was much more industrial; and the South was more of a nature theme.

So each of the videos actually reflected that in the material that was used to be projected. I really got into this overlapping thing, too.. The music and the films each were on a loop. The whole thing was an hour long, so there was a ten-minute loop — Twelve — Is that right? Twelve times — Yes. Five, twelve times five, and twenty, and thirty, I guess. So there were four loops, and they all would play simultaneously. So they would always overlap slightly differently within that hour. But then the hour itself would repeat.

Crawford: Is that a way of expanding on the cello, on the music?

03-00:05:09

Jeanrenaud: So the video and the soundtrack associated with the video, which were each these little — depending on which direction it was — ten minutes or twelve minutes — they were all prerecorded stuff. But what I played live, that was always different. That was live. It was more improvisation, in a sense. Certain things, like any improvisation, you kind of know what it is that you're focusing on and improvising on; but it changes. It's not going to be exactly the same every time. It's not written out.

Crawford: It's not written out. In other words, you don't have a phrase that you amplify, like you would in an organ exam in Germany, for instance. They just give you a seven-note phrase, and you expand upon it for forty-five minutes, say.

03-00:06:07

Jeanrenaud: That's really a great idea. I wish somebody had taught me that one. That's good. Well, so it's not too far from that, in a way, because you have your themes, which were part of the recorded material already. So there were certain things that I knew that worked really well with those themes. So in a way, it's kind of like that, actually. But it would be different every time, because yes, that part was never written out.

Crawford: Okay. So as I'm watching this, I'm seeing you in the middle, and you're improvising according to what you're hearing.

03-00:06:57

Jeanrenaud: Exactly.

Crawford: Impressive!

03-00:06:59

Jeanrenaud: Yes. All that material, so much of it was me to begin with. So I had worked out certain things that I knew worked together.

Crawford: Would you talk about producing the loop?

03-00:07:16

Jeanrenaud: That took a lot of time. I had two residencies during that time. One was at the Djerassi Foundation, and then the other one was at Montalvo. And both of those gave me the opportunity to really work on those sections of the piece. Because I did it on my computer. So I produced all the recorded material, and then Alessandro, he did all the video material. Then we took those two and put them together. We were in communication all the time.

Crawford: He wasn't at Djerassi with you.

03-00:08:00

Jeanrenaud: No. He came down a couple of times, but he wasn't there at the same time. Nor at Montalvo, either. So then I was just really taking all these samples.. Because I used a lot of materials. I used samples from sound files, more like what you'd maybe consider sound effects, like say birds or water sounds or —

Crawford: Volcanoes, right?

03-00:08:28

Jeanrenaud: Yes, volcanoes. [laughter] I had done this project with Helen Chellin, who was an artist, and she did all this volcano stuff. She was the one who turned me on to all these volcano sounds, which were pretty amazing. So yes, some of those ended up in the piece. From those themes, you can imagine the nature — water or birds. I think that was South. And more the mediation, you'd have things like maybe, say, a bell sound. I actually had a woman recite a poem, in Japanese. She had been at Djerassi when I was there. So that ended up in the piece. So it was a lot of different sources of material that the, and of course, me, too, playing the cello.

Crawford: How much fun to put together. You had a big crew. You had a lot of people involved in that?

03-00:09:32

Jeanrenaud: I did have a pretty big crew.

Crawford: Has that been done again?

03-00:09:37

Jeanrenaud: No. Which is really a shame.

Crawford: How could it be brought back?

03-00:09:43

Jeanrenaud: Oh, I don't know, it's so complicated. Then it becomes expensive. We kept all the stuff for a while, and now I'm not sure; we had the scrim. There were the projections. Well, we had projectors, too. I think we still have a couple of them around, but I think we had a total of four. Yerba Buena might've had

two of them. And then Meyer Sound donated us speakers for the project, which worked great because we had a speaker for each direction, and then we had speakers underneath the rotating platform where I was sitting.

So yes, there was a lot of stuff. The main people were Alessandro Moruzzi, who did the set and the video; and then there was Greg Kuhn, who really helped with the sound; and also Alex Stahl. It was difficult to take all those loops and synchronize them, so that they would all end up being an hour long; hooking up for that hour, so that it ended up being an hour, and then the hour would repeat.

Alex Stahl had to do with that. Greg Kuhn was sound. He's great. I've always loved using him. Dan Collard, who did a lot of the lighting. Worked with him for a long time, too. Alessandro. And then Mark Ribaud, because there was also an installation component. So when we weren't performing, you could go to Yerba Buena and the piece would be there, and there was a cello that was suspended, right where I was sitting. But then it had all these things that Mark had devised. You would play the cello, essentially. You had to blow into it, into these little devices, and then they would hit the cello.

Crawford: They would hit the cello, and the cello would produce a tone? [laughter]

03-00:12:07

Jeanrenaud: Yes, and then it would trigger a sample from the cello. So it was very involved.

Crawford: I could see a dance company taking that piece and doing interesting things with it. Well, so that's *Aria*. Why *Aria*?

03-00:12:31

Jeanrenaud: Why *Aria*? Well, we had done the *Ice Cello* piece, and that was with Alessandro. A lot of these same people — Alessandro, Greg Kuhn, Dan Collard. At one point, we were thinking of sort of a quartet of pieces, which would be *Air*, *Water*, *Earth*, and — What am I forgetting?

Crawford: Fire.

03-00:12:56

Jeanrenaud: Fire, thank you. But really, we only got to the *Air* and the *Water*, if you count *Ice Cello* as water.

Crawford: The cello was actually made of ice.

03-00:13:07

Jeanrenaud: Yes, absolutely.

Crawford: What sound did you get out of the cello? I forget what your bow — Was it barbed wire?



03-00:13:12

Jeanrenaud: I had several bows. I had a barbed wire bow; I had a bow that was like kind of a ratchet thing.

Crawford: What was the sound?

03-00:13:25

Jeanrenaud: The sound is directly from Charlotte Moorman, because I also worked with Charlotte's collaborator, who was the guy responsible, really, for that piece. Why can't I think of his name right now? I'll think of it in a second. Really great guy. He had done other things with her, like *Sky Cello*, where she was suspended on balloons. I know the guy. Jim McWilliams. Yes, that's who it was.

So Jim was around then, and he came out and he helped with the piece. It wasn't supposed to be like Charlotte's, because like Jim said, "Well, there's so much more you can do now." Charlotte essentially took her cello case — They were doing it at the Roundhouse in London. Across the street, there was an ice cream place. So they had them fill the cello case with ice cubes, and then I think they put some water in it, too, and they basically froze it in their freezer. So then that was her ice cello.

Now mine — Julian Bailey worked for Ice Works in Canada. Toronto, I do believe. But anyhow, these guys had these cellos. So they took the measurement of my cello, and then they created this mould. Or no. Actually, it was more sophisticated than that. They had things that would cut out blocks of ice, because that's how they do a lot of these ice sculptures now.

Apparently, they have a standard block of ice, and then they carve things out of it. So they just took the measurements of my cello, and so they just carved out this block of ice to the size of my cello. Then the neck was a separate block of ice, because they're standard; they're only so big. Then we had to always attach the neck to the body, which was easy enough. There was like a little slot, and then you just poured a little water on it and you'd stick it in there. That's what Dan always did. I have pictures of him doing that.

Crawford: How long does it take to melt?

03-00:16:04

Jeanrenaud: It melts, but it takes a long time.

Crawford: She did hers without any clothes on, I understand, in London.

03-00:16:12

Jeanrenaud: Exactly, because she got frostbite! She went to the doctor and they said, "Well, how did you get this frostbite?" She said, "Oh, I was making love with my husband in the Alps," which is completely — [laughter]

Crawford: She was really fresh! But that kind of thing was going on at the time, wasn't it?

03-00:16:34

Jeanrenaud: She spearheaded a lot of that avant-garde music movement, actually. She produced that Avant-Garde Festival in New York for — Gosh, it was about six or seven years that she did it. It was pretty interesting, all the people that she had do things. And then she would always do something, too. So yes.

Crawford: Who was the French cellist who composed for his cello case — Gerard Grisey.

03-00:17:06

Jeanrenaud: Oh, I don't know. Not [Paul] Tortelier.

Crawford: It was kind of a replay of the sixties, wasn't it?

03-00:17:24

Jeanrenaud: That definitely was. That's very Fluxus, all that stuff. Through Charlotte and actually, Stephen Vitiello, I met Nam June. Then he had a little thing at the Guggenheim Museum back in the early 2000s. He has a piece where you take a violin and you smash it. That's the piece. There's a section of it hanging on my wall in there. His wife was the one who performed the piece, Stephen's wife. But at the end, he'd collected the pieces, and he said, "Oh, here, you should have one." Nam June signed it.

Crawford: I mentioned to you the other day Henry Brant. I noticed in my notes on the interviews we did before, I asked, "I wonder if Joan would like to write something for barges in Amsterdam, too." Not so much the music as the concepts.

03-00:18:49

Jeanrenaud: Right. But my concepts are all from the idea of Fluxus, so I can't say that I am responsible for — All that stuff, it just influenced me. It's like people say, there's nothing new. You take things from other composers, even musically. If there's something that I hear when somebody's performing and it's like, oh, that's a great idea; I really like that. So then I'll take it and try and use it somehow.

03-00:19:25

Crawford: I wanted to go back, too, and talk about the composers who you've been so involved with. Of course, Terry Riley. Do you still have that relationship?

03-00:19:44

Jeanrenaud: Yes, we just saw Terry, because I wrote this piece for Kronos. They're doing a really interesting thing now that's called Fifty for the Future. So they're commissioning ten people each year: five men, five women. So ten people for five years, so a total of fifty composers. Then it's what they call their learning repertoire. So the music is available. You can download it. Now, they also

record it. They haven't recorded my piece yet, because they just played it maybe a month ago.

Crawford: Was that *Knock*?

03-00:20:25

Jeanrenaud: That was *Knock*, exactly.

Crawford: That was fun.

03-00:20:29

Jeanrenaud: So in that piece, I was really thinking, okay — I was not supposed to have my piece written till next year, but then I think somebody fell through, and David said, "I know you've been thinking about your piece. Can you do it?" I said, "I think so." I'd thought about it a lot and I thought, okay, well, what did I learn from Kronos? I learned all these cool effects you can play on the cello, and sounds and things you can do with your instrument, that they don't really teach you in music school. The thing is, they're just as valid sounds as using your bow on the string.

For instance, when you pluck the string, a pizzicato, that's a pretty standard thing, but it's not like I ever worked on that in college. Then you get in Kronos and you realize, wow, this piece really needs this kind of sound. You can play the pizzicato really close to the bridge, so it sounds really tight and tinny kind of; or you can play it further back down and use your thumb, and really get a big resonant sound.

So I think there's so many things like that, that kids need to realize that, okay, we can take all that stuff that we learned in music school, but we can apply it to all this other incredible music that's out there that's not Haydn or Beethoven. Bartók, he used that a lot, and he certainly used some sound effects. Or like sul ponticello, which is a really standard sound; but again, Kronos would just spend hours really experimenting and finding, now what's the best sounding ponticello? Or what's the best sound behind your bridge for a passage that calls for that?

So that whole information of, use your ears just like you do in Haydn and Mozart and everything, but this is a different kind of music. So it's important to consider the sound, just like you do when you play Mozart or Haydn. So I just made a list of all these effects that would be kind of cool to have people work on, and then wrote the piece thinking of those. But of course, then you realize, well — It was only supposed to be seven minutes long, and so there's, well, you can't do much in seven minutes. So I really didn't get that many in there. But there are several.

Crawford: Yes. Is that notated?

03-00:23:16

Jeanrenaud: That's all notated, the whole thing, yes.

Crawford: You said you missed that very, very close dialogue.

03-00:23:28

Jeanrenaud: I do. That was the best fun, rehearsing and figuring all this stuff out and trying things. Definitely, yes.

Crawford: Would you like to say something more about the piece that Terry Riley wrote for you?

03-00:23:47

Jeanrenaud: *Olde English*? That's a funny little thing. I told you that at that period, too, I was going up to Terry's ranch a lot and staying there. So I would be practicing and he'd be writing, and then we'd come together and do some stuff and then go back. So it was a lot of back and forth. So Terry, for *Olde English*, it really starts out with this beautiful series of harmonics that are natural harmonics, on the C string, mostly. So they're just intonation, of course, which Terry is a fan of. I really like the whole idea of just intonation, because we worked with Terry so much on all that stuff. Terry was at the concert, the Kronos concert. Also Katrina Krivisky, a pianist that was at Mills. She was Barbara Higbie's teacher. I've done some stuff with Barbara. She is a really a fine artist, great pianist. She did a lot of stuff with Windham Hill. She is still around and playing quite a bit. I did some playing with her, but my days of lugging the cello to a performance space were like oh, I'm just not interested.

Crawford: We didn't talk very much about your teaching at Mills.

03-00:25:50

Jeanrenaud: Well, at Mills, all four of us taught. We never had that many students. There's a few students I — Do I still see anybody? Every once in a while, I'll run into one of my former students back then, but I've probably only had four or five. Now, after I left Kronos, I went back and I taught there again. I was doing that for a while, and then I was also doing their Performance Collective. Basically, it's an ensemble coaching.

So they work on a piece, and then you would be their coach. Several people would be their coach. So I did that, too. Then after a while, I started realizing, well, it's so long to go over there and — It just didn't seem that cost-effective, really. So then I started having private students at Mills come here. So I had several students that came here and studied.

Crawford: You said you had young ones and old ones, and that you quite liked that.

03-00:27:15

Jeanrenaud: Well, definitely. The youngest student is really this one that I have now. But I guess at Mills, they're young. They would be in their, I guess, late teens, early twenties, something.

Crawford: Mills was kind of an intense place, wasn't it?

03-00:27:34

Jeanrenaud: Well, Mills was always very focused on composition and contemporary music and the electronic music studio there. There's a name for it. But all those guys, like Steve Reich; Terry, too, I think was involved in it.

Crawford: You don't mean the Tape Center from the 60s?

03-00:28:05

Jeanrenaud: Yeah, the Tape Center.

Crawford: Pauline Oliveros was there.

03-00:28:10

Jeanrenaud: Pauline, exactly. So that's always been a really big deal.

Crawford: I was listening to an interview, a pretty recent interview with Terry Riley, and he just radiates, doesn't he?

03-00:29:04

Jeanrenaud: Yes. [laughter]

Crawford: He was lamenting the sixties. You weren't involved in the sixties, but I think you were influenced by the sixties.

03-00:00:20

Jeanrenaud: Definitely.

Crawford: He was saying that LSD really opened his ears in a new way. But he said they have to regulate drugs, in some way. Then in the eighties, he said, "I started to notice that money was coming back in again." I guess that's true.

03-00:29:36

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: Do you ever feel like writing protest music? Or will you now?

03-00:29:43

Jeanrenaud: The situation now is just so discouraging.

Crawford: But so it doesn't prompt you to write?

03-00:29:51

Jeanrenaud: I think Kronos, I have to hand it to David. He's always been really very aware of what's happening politically in the world around him, and trying to find ways of presenting that through the music that they play. He's always done that. I'm really impressed with that, how David has developed as sort of a presenter of music. The kind of music, the kind of words, everything that he makes available for people to hear, I think is really astonishing. And after

knowing him for so long, forty years or something, I can really see what a great gift that is.

Crawford: We've said it was the George Crumb piece that inspired him to start the quartet, wasn't it?

03-00:30:56

Jeanrenaud: There you go. Absolutely. So I guess in a way, it kind of started from there, didn't it?

Crawford: If everybody with a voice, like you have, would try to make that heard. That's one way to get something done.

03-00:31:30

Jeanrenaud: It is. Definitely. Well, and to make your voice heard, which I think is really important. I have to say, lately, I've been just so turned off by it — I just try and avoid it, but I know that's not a good thing, so maybe I'll come to a point where I'll have something to say about it. Yes.

Crawford: Well, a couple of other names have come up again, so I'll ask you. Fred Frith.

03-00:32:05

Jeanrenaud: Oh, Fred, yes. Fred wrote this beautiful piece called *Save As*.

Crawford: For you and Willie Winant.

03-00:32:14

Jeanrenaud: For me and Willie — I love playing with Willie.

Crawford: I'll bet you do. He's so much fun.

03-00:32:19

Jeanrenaud: Oh, he's great. I really love playing with rhythmic instruments.

Crawford: You were always the beat for Kronos, weren't you?

03-00:32:27

Jeanrenaud: Yes, a lot of it, it's true. The cello becomes the bass and drums, the rhythm section of the band, in a certain sense, it's true.

Crawford: How does he shape what you're playing?

03-00:32:42

I think he just is such a great foundation. I never have to worry about where the beat is. It's very clear. Somehow, we communicate really well. There's some people you just do that with naturally. So I've always had a really easy time playing with Willie.

03-00:33:38

Crawford: You have said, "I don't listen to criticize players for their chops."

03-00:33:48

Jeanrenaud: Not anymore. So true. I used to.

Crawford:

Did you used to?

03-00:33:54

Jeanrenaud: Well, just without meaning to, because that's just how I would hear. I'll never forget hearing the LaSalle Quartet. They played a concert, and the second half, they played the Schoenberg Second Quartet, I think it was. But I hadn't been that impressed with their playing in the first half. Especially the cellist. Then in the second half, they came out and I was like, *wow*. These guys are really great. So you could tell they were really into it and that was really their thing. That's really what they did well. But the cellist did this amazing thing. On his C string, he would use this vibrato that was super wide and super fast. Ever since I've heard that, I've always tried to do it, and I tell other people to do it.

Crawford:

What effect does it have?

03-00:34:54

Jeanrenaud: Oh, it just sounds great, because it really opens up your instrument. If you use a wide vibrato it's a thick string. Of course, if it's too narrow, you're not going to really hear any vibrato, essentially. But this whole thing with this really wide vibrato, and really quite fast. Because if you're narrow and fast, that's easy; but wide and fast is kind of hard.

Crawford:

Another name that comes up a lot is Hamza El Din. Want to say something more about him?

03-00:35:44

Jeanrenaud: Oh, Hamza, yes. Well, I worked with Hamza a bunch, after I left Kronos. And then I arranged his piece *Escalay*, that Kronos did a bunch. Everybody loves that piece. It's just a really great piece.

Crawford:

A lot of his music is contemplative.

03-00:36:19

Jeanrenaud: Definitely. I think that's a good description of his music.

Crawford:

That was on *Pieces of Africa*?

03-00:36:28

Jeanrenaud: Mm-hm. Originally; that's when we first started working with him. We met him for the first time in Japan. We were in Japan, and he lived in Japan at that point. Then we played this piece, and he had a student who actually arranged it, working with him. Kronos still plays that piece. I think they played it, actually, that series of concerts a couple of weeks ago.

Crawford: You were close to Larry Neff. How did it happen that you wrote something for him?

03-00:37:20

Jeanrenaud: This was really interesting because I worked with Kronos for so long, but never as a composer. The first thing I wrote for them was really for this memorial service for Larry Neff. It was really very specific. David had just told me he was really interested in having me interview all these people that Larry worked with, all around the world, and somehow incorporating that material. So that's what I did. It was actually so therapeutic to call these people and to talk about Larry, because it was very upsetting, Larry's death.

Everybody loved Larry. Hearing stories about him and everything was really great. So I recorded all these conversations. I called them up and I recorded them. Then of course, I'd go through them and hear them a million times, and pick out little bits that I wanted to use. Which is not too dissimilar from when I worked on *Aria*. There were all these kind of sounds that I wanted to use.

So you start collecting all that stuff, and then you start incorporating it into a piece. So that's what I did with that piece. So I felt much more that I had direction from David on that piece than *Knock*. In *Knock*, it was really interesting. I think he just sort of was like, it shouldn't be too long. The one thing he said to me — and it really influenced me — was, "Well, if anybody knows about quartets, you do." So that's why, I think, I thought about all these sounds and everything I had learned from Kronos and tried to incorporate all that stuff. It was directly from that conversation. But he didn't really say anything else. And I was surprised.

Crawford: I'm sure that he must set parameters with other composers. But he knows you so well, and your work.

03-00:39:38

Jeanrenaud: Right. He meets with composers all the time, and they become really close, and you know they have these really long conversations, philosophical and everything else. So I was kind of surprised. His direction was brief. It was like, oh, gosh. Okay, yes, I'll be happy to write a piece.

Crawford: That's great. Well, I wanted to talk about *Altar Piece*, because that was an early piece, as well. I think that was your first solo album, wasn't it? Could you talk about how you chose what you chose, which you called rock and roll?

03-00:40:42

Jeanrenaud: I called it rock and roll because I used the electric cello. Kind of loud and raucous.

Crawford: Yes, raucous! [laughter]



03-00:40:53

Jeanrenaud: I used a guitar processor on my cello, because the electric cello does not really sound that good on its own; but it sounds much better if you stick it through a processor.

Crawford: What does it do?

03-00:41:16

Jeanrenaud: It changes the sound, just like it does on electric guitars. All electric guitars, like in rock and roll, you can program all these sounds. Even some of them have descriptive things. They'll describe a rock and roll piece like Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" or something. So it'll be a sound that some people are actually familiar with, who will know who the guitar player was because of my processor. Like Jimi Hendrix or something. There're so many guitar players out there. But they have sounds that already have programmed in the amount of reverb or the amount of the attack on the note. So that's why. A certain sound will actually remind people of a certain guitar player.

Crawford: Oh, that's interesting.

03-00:42:20

Jeanrenaud: In my guitar processor, there's like 200 different programs.

Crawford: When you say program the attack, what do you mean, exactly?

03-00:42:34

Jeanrenaud: Oh, so you can make an attack sound really sharp on the attack, or it can be a bit more flat.

Crawford: I like that sharp attack. That's interesting. Well, last thing, to talk about the notational software that you've used. Most people, including me, don't really understand that.

03-00:43:03

Jeanrenaud: Oh, well, everybody uses it now. In the old days, Kronos, when we would get a new score, it was always handwritten. Very rarely would you have any kind of computer-generated score. Now, they're all computer-generated. Which is an advantage, in some places, in certain ways, and kind of a disadvantage in other ways. We always felt that you could really tell a lot about the music by the way the composer actually physically wrote it. Somebody who has, for instance, a dark way of writing the pitches on the page or just, say, more of an assertive kind of look to it, or somebody's who's much more delicate. Or like Morton Feldman. Now he would be a good example. His scores are very beautiful and they're very minimal. Of course, Morton used a lot of repeats. Also his eyesight was really, really bad. He had these really thick glasses.

So when Morton would look at something, he'd have to hold it up this close, to really look at it. So his music is kind of like that. It was like this very

delicate — whereas somebody, say, like Xenakis, his score would look much more like his music sounds.

Crawford: You think that his eyesight affected the way that he composed?

03-00:45:08

Jeanrenaud: I absolutely do. Morton, I absolutely think so.

Crawford: I know that he's important to you, because you've mentioned him quite a lot.

03-00:45:15

Jeanrenaud: Yes. I really liked his music. He was a great guy, too. I was still in Kronos when he died.

Crawford: One more thing: I wanted to know something about the software you use.

03-00:46:33

Jeanrenaud: I use Sibelius software. I actually use it as a notational software. The thing is, it does play it back to you so you can hear it, in a really funky, synthesized fashion, but it's pretty good. You can definitely tell if there's a mistake that you've made or something you didn't intend, when you hear it back. Sometimes that's easier for me than looking at it. But I think I rely a lot on Pro Tools, when I can record things into Pro Tools.

Then a lot of times, I'll go back and I'll notate it. I do a lot of different things. So sometimes I notate things directly onto a written score. I write it down right away. Then other times, I'll write it into my software. Actually, with this project *Cars* that I was doing, I wrote it into my Sibelius, and then I made a part, and then I played it into my Pro Tools. Then a lot of times, I'll go back and forth. So then I'll hear that and then I'll make changes to my score. Or then play something on top of what I recorded, and then notate it. So I go back and forth a lot now.

Crawford: Well, that is a great tool., to be able to hear your music as you are working.

03-00:48:15

Jeanrenaud: Yes. So it's just a really nice tool.

Crawford: To be able to hear your music as you're working. When you start a project, when somebody comes to you and they want a thirty-minute work, how do you begin to work on that? And where?

03-00:48:31

Jeanrenaud: That's a really good question. For me, it always starts with basically one idea, which can be a feeling or it can be a really more specific thing. Like even this piece with *Cars*. I thought about it and I thought, you think of cars as being in motion. I wanted to have some music that reflected that there's motion, there's a movement forward. So for me, to think about something that's, in a way, a concept or an idea like that; then it's from that point, then, I start writing the

music. In this case, I think I did a bass line at the very beginning. Then from that bass line, then I added stuff to it.

I did a piece one time for Bruce Conner, the artist. Actually, there's an inkblot right here, of his. He asked me to do something for one of his works called *Inkblot*. He's done a lot of inkblots. So I thought, okay, well, *Inkblot* is just folded paper. It's really beautiful. He was so meticulous, it's amazing.. He has ones that are way more meticulous than that. He put a drop of ink and then folded the paper. I'm sure he did each one separately. So I just thought the same thing. Okay, you take this drop and you fold it over. How can you do that on a cello? So basically, I think I ended up starting with a fifth across. Cello, of course, is tuned in fifths. But then I just barred across, and then I just kept sort of spreading the notes out from there, essentially. If you heard it, you might not even think that. That's on *Strange Toys*, I think. So it was all from that initial idea of just thinking of an ink blot. A lot of times, that's how I come up with stuff.

Crawford: In the *Cars* project, what did he tell you?

03-00:51:22

Jeanrenaud: Actually, I don't think he really told me anything.

Oh, no, that's not true. No. He told me he really liked this theme that was part of a TV series. I can't remember the name of this show now. But I remember listening to it and I really liked it, and so I did something that was similar. Then it was interesting. He played it; he liked it. But he played it for a bunch of people, and a lot of people thought it was too dark. So it was like, oh, okay. That's easy enough; I can —

Crawford: Lighten it up.

03-00:52:08

Jeanrenaud: Yes. So I took some of those initial ideas from that, but then they changed completely. I should go back and listen to the first thing, because it probably has nothing to do with it. But maybe that's how I came up with the movement of the bass line or something, which is maybe why he initially liked it.

Certain times, you can adjust things. It's not so difficult. This *Cars* thing, now he wanted it more extended. So that's the most recent thing. So I've taken things and then I'll repeat them somewhere else. So I'm using a lot of the same material; I'm just kind of rearranging it.

Interview 3: March 03, 2017

Audio File 4

Crawford: It's March 3, 2017. Interview with Joan Jeanrenaud, for the Oral History Office. Let's start with a kind of a generic question, which is, as you compose and you become a composer, is that something that makes you discover things about yourself?

04-00:00:28

Jeanrenaud: Hmm. Interesting question. I suppose that's true, even though I'd say mostly, it made me discover things about music. Which surprised me, because as a performer — Well, it changed my attitude towards music, because being a performer for so long, if I heard another performance, I was really listening to how the performer executed the piece, both technically and musically. As I've said, now as a composer, I listen more to the piece and to the composition, and I can overlook these things about performance that sometimes used to drive me crazy, if certain people played a certain way. Or I was very critical.

I think I was very used to being pretty judgmental about performing techniques and that whole scene of performing. I think then listening more as a composer, that sort of became backseat, totally. You're really listening to the composition. If the performer messes something up, you understand that and it doesn't affect the way I necessarily hear the composition, because you can sort of hear through that and you can really hear the composition. So that really changed, I think, from being a performer to a composer.

Crawford: Mm-hm. What are the musical surprises then?

04-00:02:12

Jeanrenaud: Well, so that is the musical surprise to me, the fact that I would look at a composition in a different way. As a performer, I always was really so focused on the performing of the piece that —

Crawford: How good is that cellist, right?

04-00:02:28

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. Oh, they should've had more articulation there, or they should've been more expressive in this area, that sort of thing. Instead of now, that doesn't even — It's sort of like easier to hear a composition, and even if it's not executed perfectly, I'm listening to the composition and not the execution so much.

Crawford: Well, that's probably a good thing.

04-00:03:00

Jeanrenaud: Yes. I think it's a really good thing. I was really surprised by that. But I think being a performer for so long and always — that was my focus. That's what I would be listening to, I've noticed, in the past. Now that's not as significant to

me. It's really nice when somebody can play well enough to execute what the composer is trying to express, but I don't pay that much attention to it, like I did before.

Crawford: I thought we would focus on *Strange Toys* today, fourteen pieces.

04-00:05:32

Jeanrenaud: Yes, yes. They were not written for the CD, specifically for the CD, no. They were written separately as pieces over a period of about five years, actually. Originally, it was called Talking House X. Talking House was this really beautiful studio, the studio where I recorded, that then turned into Studio Trilogy, because three of those people ended up buying out the studio. It's a complicated story. Now it doesn't exist at all, which is really a shame, because it was one of the most beautiful studios. It was great.

Talking House, it was the brainchild of this guy Steve Luzco. He was a computer hardware guy. Oh, what was the name of his company? Seagate. He had all this money. So he ended up, he invested it in all these different sort of projects that interested him, and one of them was this studio, Talking House. So they built the studio. I don't know if you know where Trader Joe's and Bed Bath & Beyond are. They're on Bryant. If you come a little bit more this way, which would be south — but really close — was where they built this studio. And it just was a gorgeous-sounding room.

They had one really big studio, and then they had two little annex studios off to the side, which you could also do mixing and different things there, too. But the studio was designed by John Storyk, who designed, also, many other studios around, Different Fur being one of them. Which is a very small studio, still exists. It's changed owners many times. But the guy always made studios sound great. He was a great studio designer. So this guy designed the studio and Steve Luzco knew all these guys who were into music. John Paulson was one of them. He became part of the group. So there PC Muñoz, who I've done a bunch of stuff with, PC was one of the producers at this Talking House. I knew an engineer, Justin Lieberman, who I always work with now. I've known him since he was eighteen or something. He used to work at Different Fur. I have a longstanding association with Different Fur, because it used to be owned by Pat Gleeson, and I was married to Pat Gleeson at one point.

04-00:09:08

Jeanrenaud: But then he sold the studio to two of his employees, Howard Johnson and Susan Skaggs. Then Justin started working there under Howard, as his second engineer. But then they finally sold the studio. Then Justin went a couple different places, but then he ended up at this Talking House Studio. So Steve Luzco's thing was, we're going to invite people to record that series, and not charge them anything. Then the product that they end up with from their time there will then be something that we split the revenues fifty-fifty. I was like, sure, no problem. That sounds great. I said, "I don't think you guys are going

to make any money off of me." But I think they really thought they would have a hit at some point. They did a lot of pop people, did all kinds of music — rap, pop, some country, too. Here I am, classical. Now, I'm the closest, actually, they got to that, because *Strange Toys* was nominated for a Grammy.

Crawford: I know. Well, that must've helped the sales a lot.

04-00:10:30

Jeanrenaud: Yes, but it never really sold all that much.

Crawford: Why is that, Joan? People are tuned into the Grammys in a big way.

04-00:10:40

Jeanrenaud: Right. Well, it didn't win.

Crawford: No, I know, but it was on a short list, for sure.

04-00:10:44

Jeanrenaud: Right, it was one of the five that was finally nominated. Well, yes, but I found out that's all really political too, in the end. But anyhow, it was great it was nominated.

Crawford: Who won that year, by the way? Who won the category?

04-00:10:57

Jeanrenaud: It was a woman who was a pianist. I can't remember her name now. But a very good pianist. [Gloria Cheng, 2008 Grammy]

Crawford: What kind of music?

04-00:11:11

Jeanrenaud: I think she was originally Chinese. It was contemporary music, actually. So it was a really nice CD. I'm sure I could look it up. So she won that year. But anyhow, I think that was the closest Talking House got to having any kind of association with a Grammy or anything.

So after a certain period of time, this guy's accountant basically said, "Well, this is really not working out as we had hoped." So then that's when he sold it. He didn't really sell it, he — well, I guess he sold the business; he didn't sell the building. He still owned the building, but he sold the Talking House business to these three people. That's why they then called it Studio Trilogy. So it was Justin Lieberman, who was an engineer; it was Cindy McSherry, who was the studio manager; and then Paul — it was a different Paul than the one I mentioned before — Ruxton, who was also another engineer. So it was basically two engineers and this office management.

Crawford: McSherry?

04-00:12:34

Jeanrenaud: McSherry, yes. They were doing really well. They had had it for about three years, just the three of them, and they were really starting to do pretty well. Because it's a difficult business. But Kronos was recording there, a bunch of people, and a lot of gaming people were coming and recording stuff there, which really helped. So they did a wide range of stuff there, too.

Crawford: Well, Kronos sold quite a bit of recordings, didn't they? I have the big fiftieth anniversary book collection.

04-00:13:58

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right.

Crawford: It seems to me that everybody was buying *Pieces of Africa*.

Jeanrenaud: Right. I know. But it's funny, it's really so miniscule.

Crawford: The whole enterprise is dwindling because it's not the technology that has lasted.

04-00:14:22

Jeanrenaud: Now everybody just does downloads. So it's completely changed, yes.

Crawford: But if you download from CD Baby, your site —

04-00:14:33

Jeanrenaud: You do pay. But it's really easy for people to just borrow somebody else's CD and download or —

Crawford: Copy it.

04-00:14:49

Jeanrenaud: Yes.. So it's really changed. I know that when I first left Kronos, my deal was that I would get the royalties, my portion of the royalties, from those CDs that I had done with them, which were quite a few. But then over time, it really just dwindled, the amount that we were receiving from that, that Kronos was receiving. It was just because of the change in the whole industry. So no, it's not a big market, really.

Crawford: You have your own label.

04-00:16:15

Jeanrenaud: I have my own label, right. I used to always record at Studio Trilogy — that's where *Visual Music* was done, *Strange Toys*, *Pop-Pop*. All those were recorded there. Now I did a movie score thing, for somebody else and went to Different Fur, which is this studio that's been around a long time. So if I ever go back in to record somewhere, I think I would probably think about going back to Different Fur. There's a bunch of other studios around. There's some

over in Sausalito and Marin. Justin Lieberman, he's now working in a bunch of different places. More than likely, I just would go where he wanted to go.

Crawford: Please talk about your label and that process.

04-00:17:23

Jeanrenaud: Well, when I released *Pop-Pop*, I had done that, also, at Studio Trilogy. PC knew that the studio was going to close. This is before it was Studio Trilogy. At the end of Talking House, he knew that the studio was pretty soon going to be closing. So that he said, "Well, why don't we get you in here and we can still do something and get better rates, really?"

So then when I finished recording it, I was thinking of who could release it. There was another person who was interested, but then I realized, well, they had a different concept of the cover and all this other stuff. So then I realized, well, it's not going to make that much money, so why have somebody else do it and not just? I can go ahead and do this and I can do it the way I want to do it. So it was a control issue, in the end. I wanted control of how would it look like and what it was.

So then that's when I started my label. I had already started my publishing company, Deconet Music. I had started that a long time ago, when I first started writing music. So really, back probably in 2000 is when that started. It was called Deconet Music. So I went in City Hall and got my own business license.

Crawford: Named after your instrument.

04-00:19:20

Jeanrenaud: Right.

Crawford: We haven't really talked about that.

04-00:19:21

Jeanrenaud: Right. So now instead of Deconet Music, it's called Deconet Music and Records. Deconet is the maker of my cello. My cello was made in 1750 in Venice, and Michele Deconet, who obviously, originally must've been French, but he was considered an Italian maker. I know my cello was made in Venice.

Crawford: How do you know that?

04-00:19:46

Jeanrenaud: It's on the label. It's a hand-written label. It says "Michele Deconet, 1750." I think it must say "Venice" then, too. But he's a pretty known maker. He's not considered like Stradivarius or Guarneri or anything like that. But there's enough of his instruments around that people know who he is, especially an instrument maker and repairer-builder person. So I've always gone to Roland



Feller, in San Francisco. Roland, who, for instance, has seen several Deconet instruments.

Crawford: Was he excited to know that you had one?

04-00:20:38

Jeanrenaud: Yes. Actually, my instrument, towards the very end of when I was in Kronos — we were in South Korea — I should remember this. I'm blanking out on it. It doesn't really matter. What matters is that I had my heavy practice mute on my cello, and I was practicing in my hotel room, and my cello fell. I had the drawer of the desk out, to put my music on. So my cello went forward and hit the thing, and it snapped the bridge. I had to get someone to repair it. So that was a very terrible thing.

Crawford: Did it not affect the sound?

04-00:21:42

Jeanrenaud: Well, I went to a guy, he repaired the bridge, it was really great. We didn't have a concert that next day; it was one or two days after that, which is very unusual. So anyhow, the guy got me a new bridge, put it on, everything was great. Then later on, when I got back to San Francisco, I started noticing there was sometimes a little kind of a buzzing sound, and so I took it to Roland.

There was a crack in the back that's always been there, since I've had it, and it had started to open up. It took it a while, but then it started opening up. So then Roland had to take off the back of my instrument, which they really hate to do. It's a big deal. But it all worked out. He took off the back — and it took several months — and then he repaired the crack; and apparently, there was all this worm damage in there, which is also typical. But he filled all that in.

Crawford: Did you say worms?

04-00:23:01

Jeanrenaud: Worms, yes.

04-00:23:03

Jeanrenaud: I'm not sure when it had actually happened. I don't know. But what they do is they'll go through the wood, but then they get to the varnish and they won't go any further. So there was some worm damage in there, and he repaired all that, too. In the long run, after it was all done and after about a year of having it all done and playing on it, it really got back to the way it had always sounded to me; and if anything, maybe a little bit better.

Crawford: Isn't that something?

04-00:23:45

Jeanrenaud: So that was nice.

Crawford: How did you come by that cello?

04-00:23:49

Jeanrenaud:

I came by that because in 1973, when I graduated from high school and was going to go to Indiana University music school and study with Fritz Magg, my teacher in Memphis, Peter Spurbeck, he had a really beautiful instrument, a Ceruti. He had gotten it at William Moennig and Sons, which is an instrument dealer in Philadelphia. So he had gone to have his instrument worked on, because you have to have them worked on every once in a while, readjusted and things. Little nicks filled in or bridges moved or sound post moved, stuff like that.

So he had taken his instrument in and he looked for other instruments for me, because he knew my parents were interested in getting an instrument for me, because I had really a pretty bad instrument. It was fine and it served its purpose, but — people used to tease me about it — it was kind of like a plywood cello. So anyhow, so he looked for an instrument and he saw this instrument, and so my parents bought it for me.

No, but I know someone owned it before who was in the Philadelphia Orchestra. So it kind of makes sense; well, okay, that's why it ended up in Moennig and Sons. But yes, it's been around, it's true.

Crawford:

Well, let's see. Let's go to *Strange Toys*, a beautiful work. When I listen to it, I think it had to have been through composed.

04-00:25:48

Jeanrenaud:

Oh, interesting.

Crawford:

So that's my question. How did you put it together?

04-00:25:53

Jeanrenaud:

Ah, well, that's really nice that you think that.

Crawford:

There is a lot of diversity.

04-00:26:00

Jeanrenaud:

There is. And also PC actually really helped a lot with the order on that CD. He had been there for all the sessions. PC was really amazing to me because I didn't really know him before, and he's much more of a spoken word artist and more like hip-hop or — He also spreads his wings in a lot of different areas. But I certainly wouldn't have thought of him as classical at all, but the guy had great ears and he was amazing. So he could really hear stuff. He even said, "Oh, I'm really good at putting the order of CDs together." So he had a lot to do with the order of that.

Crawford:

Did you have any strong feelings about the order of it?

04-00:27:04

Jeanrenaud:

I like the fact that it opened up with something that was a little unconventional and kind of got your attention. And it's short, and so it got your ears sort of

into it. The whole thing, *Strange Toys* was really six short pieces. *Strange Toys* was really six short pieces. And then when I recorded them, then we decided to put them all not together, but spread throughout the CD.

Crawford: Is there a musical commonality that you would choose to say between all the pieces?

04-00:27:55

Jeanrenaud: Well, it's pretty much cello and more cello. But that was the period, too, though, when I first started composing. I was using loopers a lot. So I think all those pieces have a lot to do with looping.

Crawford: And then intertwining melody or putting melody above? Is that the way you would think of it, many of the pieces, that way?

04-00:28:25

Jeanrenaud: Yes, you could think of it that way. For instance, even the six short *Strange Toys* pieces, all those I could play live with a looper. So really, what that meant was I put down certain layers. They were always there, once I put them down. Then I might play something live on top of it.

Crawford: Yeah. I guess that's about what I had thought of.

04-00:28:56

Jeanrenaud: Right.

Crawford: And which are those pieces, if you'd just identify them?

04-00:29:00

Jeanrenaud: Maybe I should go get my CD.

Crawford: I have a list here.

04-00:29:15

Jeanrenaud: Oh, okay. So yes, "Sling Shot" is the first one. "Sling Shot," "Kaleidoscope," "Tug of War," "Blue Kite," "Rainkids" was one of them, too. "Trottola." So "Sling Shot" was not the first of the six, you know what I mean? "Trottola" was always at the end of those six, and it happens to be at the end on the CD. But the first one was — Oh, I have to look at the titles again now; I can't remember. Oh, "Kaleidoscope" was the first one. All those pieces that were part of *Strange Toys*, they were written as a piece, all together. It went with a dance piece. I did it with Cid Pearlman, who's a dancer. She had asked me to do something. So at that time, I was performing, too, so I performed the piece with her. She was the choreographer. It was her husband and another dancer that performed the piece. So I performed live with them at that time.

Crawford: I see.

04-00:32:03

Jeanrenaud: And I used a looper.

Crawford: Okay, so that explains that strain of that. And the notes are interesting to me, because when people, critics write notes, they always have to say, Joan Jeanrenaud's music is derivative of, or influenced by —

04-00:32:20

Jeanrenaud: Oh, oh, oh, yes.

Crawford: What do you think of that?

04-00:32:23

Jeanrenaud: Well, it gives people a reference, I suppose. They even do that when you sign up for your CDs on CD Baby. They say, "Three things that this sounds like." Basically, it's for their audience, so people will go, oh, I really like Philip Glass. So this sounds kind of similar to Philip Glass, so I'll try to listen to that, you know what I mean? So that's why they do it. People have always done it.

Crawford: You do hear Philip Glass. I wanted to ask you about that, because somewhere you made a comment that when you did *Metamorphosis*, you asked him, I guess, for his permission.

04-00:33:11

Jeanrenaud: Right.

Crawford: What was your communication like with Philip Glass?

04-00:33:15

Jeanrenaud: It was just *Metamorphosis 4*. *Metamorphosis* was originally for piano. Philip wrote it for piano, for himself. He performed the piece with Molissa Fenley, who's a dancer. They're really good friends. So Molissa was at Mills, and we started doing stuff together. That's why I did an arrangement of the piece. And there's five movements of *Metamorphosis*. The only one that's on the CD is obviously the fourth one. But so Molissa really wanted to do it. So I said, "Well, let's ask Philip. I think I can arrange this." But you can't play it with a looper or anything like that. It wouldn't work. There's too many changes. You can't loop it.

So anyhow, I said, "Oh, I can record this." Every movement was in four parts. So then I could play all the parts that the piano played. So we just did it. I talked to Philip, and Philip was really very encouraging about it. He liked the idea and he liked how the piece ended up. But basically, I just took his piano score and arranged it for cello. And I arranged it for four cellos.

So then I would play one part live, over the recording. It's the only way you could do it, really. Or for me to perform it solo. I recorded the whole thing, me playing all the parts, the whole piece. But then to do it live, I had to leave out one of those recorded parts, and play it live.

Crawford: Okay.

04-00:35:31

Jeanrenaud: That make sense? I didn't explain that very well.

Crawford: It does make sense, but it sounds very difficult.

04-00:35:36

Jeanrenaud: No, no.

Crawford: Did you have to have many trials?

04-00:35:41

Jeanrenaud: Certain things are very tricky, because I did not use a click track. Now, if you use a click track, it makes it really easy to synchronize everything. So those four parts, it would be super easy to synchronize. But I didn't want that strictness in the piece. It wouldn't be appropriate. Philip always played it live, and of course, you don't play things like you're playing them to a metronome.

It was tricky. You'd record the very bottom part, usually, the bass part, in my mind. But you'd have to be thinking of all the other parts while you're playing it, because you're going to put all those other parts on top of it eventually. So the second take, then you're playing to the first take you did. But that first take, you want to make sure that you're taking time where it makes sense to take time, or you're speeding up where it makes sense to speed up. And that part is very tricky. But I had had a lot of experience with recording, even by that point. So that helped tremendously. If you didn't know about all that stuff, it would've been really hard.

Crawford: Complicated! That brings up a general question about music and how contemporary music has changed the scene. What would you say are the important ways string quartets changed in the past fifty years?

04-00:42:49

Jeanrenaud: When I first started out playing with Kronos, it was very different. It's like the whole thing about contemporary music. You realize, okay, forty years have gone by. It's changed tremendously. Because when I was first with Kronos, no management company would touch us with a ten-foot pole. Which is one of the reasons we started our own management.

Crawford: Because you were so unorthodox?

04-00:43:21

Jeanrenaud: Oh, people were like, you have to play Beethoven, you have to play Mozart, you have to play these things, or we can't get you any concerts. Well, that's not really what we do. So it's like, well, never mind, you guys, we'll just do it ourselves.

Crawford: And you did.

04-00:43:39

Jeanrenaud: And that's what we did. Now it's a lot different. I think contemporary music is much more accepted at this point, that it's a viable form of music. But I think a lot of people at that point just thought it was a bunch of random noise.

Crawford: Oh, definitely.

04-00:44:01

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: Coming out of the sixties, nothing important.

04-00:44:05

Jeanrenaud: Right. But which is really crazy, too, when you think about it, because all these composers — like Beethoven, like Mozart, Haydn — they were writing music, obviously, right at the time, for the people who were there. You know what I mean? Composers now who write for Kronos, they're writing for audiences now. So it's weird to me that there was this big, huge, kind of disconnect there for a while. Because it seems like, to me, contemporary composers should be just part of the whole musical fabric.

Crawford: But the Viennese almost drove Beethoven out of town, didn't they, over the late string quartets.

04-00:44:51

Jeanrenaud: Oh, okay. It probably was one or 135. I guess that's true. Or when you think about [Igor] Stravinsky, when he did *The Rite of Spring*.

Crawford: Almost caused a revolution.

04-00:45:06

Jeanrenaud: Right, exactly.

Crawford: Well, people are conservative. It just goes with the DNA, doesn't it?

04-00:45:11

Jeanrenaud: I guess so. But I know that when I first joined Kronos, that we had to make a huge commitment, in a way. But it was natural for us; that's what we wanted to do. So it was easy to do.

Crawford: There was nothing like that at the time, was there?

04-00:45:33

Jeanrenaud: Well, there were other string quartets. There was the LaSalle Quartet, which was really great. They did all the Viennese School, Schoenberg, which is pretty out-there stuff. Of course, Schoenberg was no longer alive, but it wasn't like that music was being played by any other quartet, really. There was the really great quartet — why am I having a hard time remembering these things today?

Crawford: You're much too young to have a loss of memory.

04-00:46:11

Jeanrenaud: Not really. But they were a really great string quartet that did contemporary music. The Concord String Quartet.

04-00:46:23

Jeanrenaud: The cellist then — Norman Fisher, who now teaches at Rice University, one of my best students I've ever had, she went and she studied with him. They ended up disbanding because one of the members ended up getting — I think it was the violinist — some difficulties in being able to play. And so instead of just getting another violinist, they just disbanded. Which I thought was really kind of a class act, in a sense. So they weren't in existence for a huge, long time. A good ten, maybe twenty years. But they were really excellent. And they did contemporary music. But it wasn't very normal, at the time.

Norman Fischer was the [Concord] cellist. It was from '71 to '87.

Crawford: Joan, could you move just a little bit closer?

04-00:48:05

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: This is reading, it's fine, but I'll just get a little bit more sound. Sorry about that.

04-00:48:10

Jeanrenaud: No, no. No problem. But those guys, they were a great player of contemporary music. And there have been other string quartets. But I think when I first joined Kronos, let's see, there was the Tokyo, there was Cleveland, there was Juilliard. But I would say none of those guys were playing that much contemporary repertoire..

Crawford: So Kronos was a revolution in itself, in a way.

04-00:48:45

Jeanrenaud: Well, I think they sort of opened that up at that time, because then, just like I said, none of these people would manage us. Which was fine. It worked out better that we did it ourselves. But now it's not the case. I think there's a lot of quartets that do include contemporary repertoire. It's not unusual at all. Concord was known for doing contemporary. LaSalle did this Viennese School, which is considered contemporary. Not the most recent-recent, but recent

Crawford: Back to *Strange Toys* for a moment. I did some notes about these, but I wanted to ask you to go through the list and talk about each small piece, and some of the longer ones, too?

04-00:49:57

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right.

Crawford: Because of the diversity of the music, I'm curious. Let's start with "Sling Shot."

04-00:50:13

Jeanrenaud: "Sling Shot." Okay. So all these pieces that were the six pieces of the piece *Strange Toys*, I was trying to use the looper, but in a slightly less predictable way. Because most of the time, when you use a looper, you're putting down this one line, and it repeats. And so it's pretty predictable, right? In "Sling Shot," I do certain techniques like Bartók pizzicato, which you pluck the string, but you pick it up really high, so that it slaps on the fingerboard. So it's like a — a pretty big hit. But it's done with just plucking the string.

So I did these certain kinds of sounds, even though I knew my loop was, say the equivalent of eight beats at sixty. Things were pretty free within this eight-beat pattern. It was a pattern, but it'd be really hard for people to really identify the pattern. If we listened to it, I could point it out to you. But so there'd be this snap sound, and then I did different other kind of techniques. it's not rhythmic, basically.

Crawford: When you did the phrase that then is looped, do you write that down so you know what it is, or you just know it and play into it?

04-00:52:03

Jeanrenaud: How did I write all that stuff down? Usually I would just write that there was a snap. I can get my original score.

Crawford: Oh, that's okay. You don't have to go into it that much unless you want to.

04-00:52:33

Jeanrenaud: Well, it'd be interesting to see, but yes.

Crawford: Would it? Can I get it for you?

04-00:52:37

Jeanrenaud: You'd never find it.

Crawford: Maybe when we go through this, we can look at the music; that would be fun. So now, in "Kaleidoscope," you had pizzicato playing, and you also had some animal sounds.

04-00:52:59

Jeanrenaud: Well, that's true. Now, see, PC Munoz ended up adding some stuff onto "Kaleidoscope." Just like in "Rainkids," too, there's some kids going, "Yay." That's PC. So that was the beginning of when PC started kind of interacting with my music. And then there's several pieces later that he ended up on, as well. I guess we could go and listen. It might be easier if we're in there. Well, of course, you'd have to move all your stuff.

Crawford: Oh, that's not a problem.



04-00:53:39

Jeanrenaud: Because it'd be easier if you — I could play it.

Crawford: It would be easier for you, wouldn't it?

04-00:53:45

Jeanrenaud: And then you can tell what I'm talking about.

Crawford: Please repeat what you said about this piece and the gambas..

04-00:54:06

Jeanrenaud: Well, so since I had that opportunity — Oh, maybe it's because Jack walked over it. There he goes. Is it still working? It's still working. Okay, good. Good job, Jack. So basically, since I had this opportunity to write for two gambas and two cellos, then that had all to do with this piece. And the reason it's called "Transition," in a way, if you figure, okay, the cello has transitioned from a gamba to a cello, and the music has transitioned from this early music kind of sound to a more contemporary sound.

There are two movements, and the second movement is introducing more contemporary things. I'd give Alex Kelly a series of notes that he can improvise on for a certain section at a time. Then the two gamba players, they each have figures that they just physically loop themselves. One person will have something in 3/8, and the other one will have 4/4. So it's interesting to me how they overlap. But each one is just playing the same thing over and over, and it kind of changes, depending on how it works together. And then I'd basically just hold long notes.

Crawford: The sound of the open fourths and fifths was what gave it a sort of early music sound. Is that right?

04-00:55:56

Jeanrenaud: Absolutely. Yes, absolutely. Yes, the fifths and fourths are a very typical kind of early music sound. We call it open fourths, open fifths. Then the next movement, I think having these repeated figures that interlock in always changing ways. And then for Alex, I have a line that is improvised over it, using a certain series of pitches, but he can do whatever he wants with it, is also, to me, a much more contemporary idea, in a sense. So that's how that piece kind of came about.

Crawford: Okay, well, then "Dervish." It seems to have an Eastern flavor.

04-00:56:51

Jeanrenaud: "Dervish" is really nice. Now, I did "Dervish" and "Livre — ". Both are with Willie Winant.

04-00:57:03

Jeanrenaud: Both of those pieces are actually from another piece that was a multimedia piece that was called *In Between*, that I did with the artist Tom Bonnarro, who

did film, so there was a film projection. Willie and I were onstage. We had a machine that dropped snow down. I used a lot of different kinds of sounds in that piece. But that's a whole other thing.

Crawford: Oh, because it was kind of a multimedia installation.

04-00:57:35

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. Right. Willie and I performed, but it was an installation piece, also, in a sense. So those two pieces, "Livre" and "Dervish," came out of that piece. A lot of it is Willie, too. I give Willie certain loops that then I play over.

Crawford: When you're approaching a piece like that, do you talk about the central idea?

04-00:58:13

Jeanrenaud: Well, a lot of this, like a lot of these compositions, the "Dervish" and the "Livre," had to do a lot with the visual images that I had. I composed a lot to these images. And a lot of them were static images, in a sense. So it'd be like a face — you might see somebody blink or something.

And then he had another image that I really liked, that was sort of like these polka dot things. And they would sort of float around. So I was definitely influenced by that sort of thing. You mentioned "Dervish." [music] So that's just me basically playing a loop on the bottom. Just the *boom, boom, boom, boom*. And then Willie plays the melodic line on top. That's this period where I was really into loops. Then I changed. But this is all written out. But definitely the loop thing is there. See, now it switches, so he takes over my loop, and then I just put this thing on top of it. [music stops] But that's how I composed it. A lot of it I played it with the loops, and then wrote it out for Willie, kind of thing. Same thing with the other one, too, because they were both written for this one piece. So they're kind of similar in the way they were written. "Livre." [music] So the same thing. This is Willie playing a loop, and then me just playing melody on top of it.

Crawford: What does the name refer to?

04-01:00:41

Jeanrenaud: The word dervish, like Whirling Dervishes.

Crawford: Oh, that's true. That one. But "Livre."

04-01:00:46

Jeanrenaud: Oh, "Livre." The reason that was called that was because the image on the screen at the time was this book, which is a very cool book. It changed pages on the book. But it was really old. It was an old book. I can't even tell you what book it is. I don't even know. But it was really beautiful and had some illustrations. So basically, that's why it's called "Livre."

Crawford: How much did you use Eastern music? Did you like composers like Ali Akbar Khan?

04-01:01:24

Jeanrenaud: Oh, sure. I really like that kind of music. But also, I have to say that on the cello, it works really well to do those kind of scales. So if you do Middle Eastern scales, they sound really good on the cello.

Crawford: That phrasing would be a Middle Eastern scale?

04-01:01:53

Jeanrenaud: In the "Livre?"

Crawford: I was thinking of "Dervish" more.

04-01:01:56

Jeanrenaud: Oh, "Dervish." Yes, that's probably true, yes. Also I can tell you that when I wrote *Vermont Rules*, this all, to me, seems much more kind of Middle Eastern.

Crawford: I wrote "non-descriptive," because I couldn't think of a narrative in there. But I don't think that's right.

04-01:02:35

Jeanrenaud: That little pattern there, I would say it's a scale that I would consider more Middle Eastern. It might be hard to tell, though, you're right, when I start doing more with it; it's true.

Crawford: And then "Waiting." Tell me about "Waiting."

04-01:03:01

Jeanrenaud: "Waiting" is really a nice piece. "Waiting" was one of my very first pieces. So it was really very loop based. That's probably the most loop-based of all of them. [music] So that's one loop. *Dung-dung-dung*. This is the same loop. It just keeps going back to those two notes. Three. Four. It's the second bar. So it's a two-bar loop. And then I add another loop. This low note on the C string, and that's the second bar. And that's going to repeat.

So these bars, I just play them, and they just repeat. So this is early on. This is probably the simplest kind of looping you could do. So that's another loop. This is loop three. That always repeat. Okay, now that's the fourth loop, that just added on there. That's a fifth loop now, starting. See, it's just two notes. Now that's the same, all of them, one more time. Now I add a pizzicato thing here one time. Okay, that's a loop; that's my sixth loop. See, that loop is going to repeat now, because it's just a two-bar loop. So everything is two bars.

Crawford: What are you waiting for?

04-01:04:50

Jeanrenaud: Interesting.

Crawford: You're not waiting for a doctor?

04-01:04:53

Jeanrenaud: No, I was actually waiting for my boyfriend.

Crawford: I know. I can tell.

04-01:04:56

Jeanrenaud: Oh, can you? Okay. Now this loop.

Crawford: This is not waiting for a doctor. [laughter]

04-01:05:03

Jeanrenaud: So this is a loop, also. We're getting to the end of the loops. But everything is just two bars. It's just two bars of loops. Here's the melody on top, this part. [she hums it] So this is not a loop. This is all live. You get the idea. So that is how I started. I just put down these loops, and then eventually put a melody on top of it. It's all that is. When I wrote that piece, I was here and I was waiting for my friend Dan to come. It was like I had some time, so I just started fooling around, and that's when that piece happened.

Crawford: I like this. Well, the last one I want to talk about is "Rainkids," because that's so much fun.

04-01:06:04

Jeanrenaud: Okay, now it's the same thing. This is one with PC. This is part of the *Strange Toys* piece. [music] I really like this one. This one, I'm using harmonics way high on my G string. It's actually 11/8. Then this other stuff is then looped over the top of it. That was PC who added the kids, because originally, that wasn't in there.

Crawford: What is the sound?

04-01:06:56

Jeanrenaud: Oh, it's just a sample he found that has these kids going, "Yay."

Crawford: Now to the last piece.

04-01:07:14

Jeanrenaud: Oh, "Trottola." Okay, this is loop one. Now here's loop two, but I start not on the downbeat of the other loop. So this is actually a function that's called overdub. I did how many of these? Four or five. It's the same loop, but they're displaced.

Crawford: What does the name refer to? I don't know the word.

04-01:08:00

Jeanrenaud: Oh, it's a spinning top.

04-01:08:02

Jeanrenaud: Now, PC adds some sounds on this, too, that *chhh* kind of sound. But then this pizzicato stuff, that's a separate loop. It does get a little complicated.

Crawford: It does, doesn't it?

04-01:08:29

Jeanrenaud: And it's hard to explain. But if you look over here, you can see this looper over here. It has record, overdub, multiply, insert. So basically, I hit the record button when I create my first loop. But then with this, I could do the overdub section button, which could enable me then to displace those loops. Because it's a very tricky thing. You can use it much more advanced than I've even used it. But again, for this piece, for the *Strange Toys* piece, I was trying to make the loops not sound predictable. So that's how I ended up with taking this loop and stacking it. It is hard to explain. But one-two-three-four-five-six, [vocalizes]. Then if you think of one-two-three-four-five-six, [vocalizes] and it repeats, [vocalizes]. But on this one, the one comes back in, as well as the two existing. So that's what I mean, they overlap.

When you try and explain them, then I realize, oh, well, this is kind of hard to explain. I had the same trouble when I was talking to some reviewer about it. To me, it's really simple, in the end. But it's good that it doesn't sound simple, because especially in this, I was trying to make it sound more complicated. "Waiting" is a prime example. You just have a two-bar loop, and you just keep adding loop on top of loop, on top of loop.

Crawford: It's like architecture. See it visually.

04-01:10:48

Jeanrenaud: Mm. And they all go together. All those loops make sense together. Whereas other times, I was trying to get away from that. So you couldn't tell that this is a two-bar loop or — That's why even with "Trottola," just displacing them off one beat, they all still go together, so they sound fine when they're together.

Crawford: Musically, to me, that sounds very complicated to do.

04-01:11:31

Jeanrenaud: Right. It is tricky. That's the thing, because other people, I know I've tried to teach other people looping techniques, and you realize, well, it's hard. You have to hit the button at the right time or your loop is going to be all messed up. Won't work.

Crawford: Did the Grammys come to you and say you were a nominee?

04-01:11:57

Jeanrenaud: Oh, it's really simple, if you are a member of NARAS, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. Anybody can nominate a CD. So you just send [a CD] in to NARAS, or to a certain organization where you want to nominate this CD. Every nominated CD goes out to all the members of NARAS nationwide, and then people vote on those, pop as well as classical. So then the top five nominated ones get into the Grammys, they go back to everybody and they vote on one of those. Does that make sense?

Crawford: It does. How do you personally weigh *Strange Toys* with *Visual Music* and the other ones?

04-01:13:20

Jeanrenaud: Well, I don't know. It's really hard for me to say. It's so individual. They all represent different times in my life and different things that I was doing, and different people I was working with. I kind of like *Visual Music*. A lot of people have told me they like *Visual Music* more than *Strange Toys*, but I think it's more typical that people like *Strange Toys* the best, of all the stuff I've released. I don't know why. I do similar stuff, like all the pieces that are on *Visual Music*.

Crawford: *Pop-Pop?*

04-01:14:24

Jeanrenaud: On *Pop-Pop*, too; but on *Visual Music*, I got to a point where I couldn't really loop this stuff anymore. There was stuff I wanted to do that it would just not have been possible to do, looping it. So now, even though that note repeats, there's really no loops. It's like there's different things happening, even those sounds above it aren't coordinated with the low pizzicato sound. So I can't lay down something and just lay on top.

Crawford: So in a way, that became too formulaic.

04-01:15:28

Jeanrenaud: Absolutely. That's exactly what happened. It was like, oh, I really don't want to be locked into this loop anymore. So even though that's a super short piece, you couldn't use a looper because it just got to be too constricting for me. But then I still was into the layering. It was great when I did "Transitions," because you've got four different players, so you can do it and it's totally fine. But then for me to do stuff live, then I got into this kind of thing. I did do some stuff live, but I would always do it with a recording. Like I said, even with the Philip Glass *Metamorphosis*. If you have four cellos, you can play that material, too. But for me to do it all myself live, I would have to play against something that's already been recorded.

Crawford: I think that's a good place to stop, because we're almost to four o'clock.

Interview 4: March 23, 2017

Audio File 5

Crawford: This is March 23, 2017, and I'm interviewing Joan Jeanrenaud for the Oral History Office. Let's start talking about commissions, because we really haven't talked much about your commissions. I'd like to zero in on dance commissions, where you're doing contemporary and classical. How do you approach that?

05-00:00:23

Jeanrenaud: Actually, I approach each dance company differently. It really doesn't make any difference to me how you define their dance — contemporary or classical. Obviously, that plays a part in it, but usually it really has to do with the specific dancers in the dance company, and most of all, the choreographer of the company. So when I worked with ODC, and I worked with KT Nelson, it was specifically with her. There were a bunch of dancers. I think there were at least ten of them. It's hard for me sometimes to define. Because even contemporary dance varies greatly from one dancer to the next. You would definitely say KT's choreography is contemporary. I also have worked a lot with Molissa Fenley, who graduated from Mills College, which is how we kind of made the connection because when I first was in Kronos, we were at Mills College. So there's a long-term Mills thing with me, too.

Crawford: Anything more you would like to say about Mills?

05-00:01:44

Jeanrenaud: I still am on the faculty there, even though I don't have any students right now, because they don't have a lot of cello students, typically. But anyhow, I worked with Molissa quite a bit. Molissa is completely different than KT, for instance. Then I also worked with the AXIS Dance Company; they have able-bodied dancers and disabled dancers. Usually they have two dancers that are in a wheelchair, and sometimes they have other dancers who might have some physical disability.

But then they have able-bodied dancers. It's true; I've not really worked with a lot of classical ballet companies. I suppose when I was in Kronos, we did some work with the Oakland Ballet. I guess you could say that they're more classical. The piece I did for Molissa Fenley most recently was actually for the Oakland Ballet, and it was very contemporary. So dancers have a wide range of what they do.

Crawford: What is the jazziest piece, commission, that you have?

05-00:04:54

Jeanrenaud: Oh, jazziest piece. Well, this wasn't really a commission. I did something with Rova Saxophone Quartet. But I have not had a commission from Rova, so that was not a commission. I actually just worked with them on a piece, one of their pieces. Larry Ochs writes a lot of their music, who's a saxophone player.

For a while, I was in a group that was with Larry playing saxophone. Miya Masaoka on Koto, and then I played cello. We had a trio for a while, and we did some recording together.

Crawford: And that was jazzy?

05-00:05:39

Jeanrenaud: Now, that's pretty contemporary jazz.

Crawford: You come from blues central, right?

05-00:05:47

Jeanrenaud: Exactly. Well, Memphis.

Crawford: Does that play a part in your music?

05-00:05:54

Jeanrenaud: I'm sure. Well, I'm sure it influenced me growing up. You would hear Elvis all the time. And then it's a great blues town and there's some really good blues players. In those days, there was a place you could go downtown and you could have barbeque and hear the blues, and these guys were really great. A lot of them, I think, lived over in Mississippi, but Memphis is right there on the Mississippi.

Crawford: So you were drawn to the blues when you were young.

05-00:06:25

Jeanrenaud: I have always liked the blues.

Crawford: Would you talk about the MoMA commission?

05-00:06:37

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right, right, right, right. Actually it was a commission for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Jason Reinier was the connection between us, because he was the one who the Met hired to put together this exhibit, which was a bunch of sculptures from their collection. They assembled them and they were getting different artists' reactions to some of these sculptures. They had a podcast that was not only audio, it was also visual. So for instance, they had Bill T. Jones. There was an interview with him for one of these sculptures. So that obviously was video. None of mine were; mine were all audio. I was the only musician, which I found kind of interesting.

Crawford: How did they make the selections?

05-00:08:01

Jeanrenaud: I don't know. I guess it was just Jason who had to make those decisions. Maybe the Met had some input; that could be.

Crawford: So you were assigned this particular sculpture?



05-00:08:15

Jeanrenaud:

Jason approached me and said, "Would you be interested?" He knew Charlie Varon. So when Charlie went to the exhibit in New York, he heard my music. Jason lives in the neighborhood, too, so it was really easy. Jason actually sent me a bunch of different sculptures, and he said, "Oh, try some of these. See if there's anything that resonates with you." I think I did maybe ten pieces, but we didn't use them all in the end; we used about six or so.

"St. Paul" was one of them, "Pilasters" was another, "Virgin and Child" was another. I'm trying to think what else. But there were a bunch of them. There were a bunch of pieces. The thing was, they all had to be pretty short; that was the one limitation, but in a way, those things end up being really creative, when you have something that you have to work within.

So basically, they all had to be short. Some of them are less than a minute, even. Fifty-seven seconds in the shortest one. I think the longest is maybe two and a half or something. But then in addition to that, they did also an interview with me about how I composed the pieces. A lot of it was simply looking at the sculpture, because I had all these slides of all the sculptures. It would just provoke a reaction. They're all pretty logical, I think.

For instance, there's one called *Winter*. It's a woman who is nude, except she has a blanket around her. But you can tell that's all she has around her body. And it's black alabaster, so it looks really cold. It was really easy. I did a lot of sounds that were like [music]; that are *sul ponticello*, which is playing really close to your bridge. A lot of things that to me suggested coldness. So that's why I used those sounds.

Crawford:

You didn't take St. Paul and read about his life. It wasn't so much that kind of research.

05-00:11:14

Jeanrenaud:

No, it was more a direct response to the sculpture itself. St. Paul, you could tell it was a religious figure. His position, he looked very — what's the word? — welcoming, protective. Since it was medieval, I did a lot in fourths and fifths, because that's very typical in medieval music. So that's how a lot of the pieces were written. It was really from looking at the sculpture, but also realizing what time they were fabricated, when they were made, and what they were made for. That had something to do with it.

Crawford:

Charlie Varon heard that and contacted you, and he already had this story from *The Second Time Around*, right? He didn't know what he wanted to do, but when he heard your music, he said, "Yes, that's what I want to do."

05-00:12:35

Jeanrenaud:

He just happened to hear several of the pieces I did, and he had this idea that it would be great to have the cello behind the story. He had already started

*Second Time Around. Second Time Around* is part of a sequence of stories that Charlie's written that have to do with older folks.

Crawford: Oh, that's right. I heard an earlier piece at the Marsh that he did. What was it called?

05-00:13:18

Jeanrenaud: There's a story about Selma. There's a story, I think, about Adele now, who was in the story, in *Second Time Around*. I'm trying to think what his first one was. This one's about Ben Rosenau. He had a specific person that the story was inspired by, actually.

Crawford: I wondered if it was autobiographical.

05-00:13:43

Jeanrenaud: I think parts of it are about this guy that he knew, who was a bomber pilot in World War II. So in the story *Second Time Around*, Ben Rosenau had been a bomber pilot in World War II, and some of the story deals with that. But then there's the kid who's interviewing him. He's [of a] much younger generation.

Crawford: That's Seth.

05-00:14:23

Jeanrenaud: That's Seth. He is a young kid who's trying to find his way. I think he's kind of a normal kid, who's just trying to find his way. And he starts to open up more. He's very shy in the beginning, and towards the end, it seems like he's opening up a little bit more to Ben. So you can see that the kid is actually very serious about his opinions of things. But you don't get that at the beginning of the piece at all. He's fumbling with his camera when he's trying to film Ben.

Crawford: This Coombs character is really pretty vulgar.

05-00:15:20

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: I read that you would listen the to the [words] and then you would play. So it was really improvisational, wasn't it, pretty much?

05-00:15:37

Jeanrenaud: It was, but also, it was a long process, just because, of course, before I started writing any of the music, I read Ben's story *Second Time Around*, which was not called *Second Time Around*; it was called something else. It took us a while to get to *Second Time Around*. But then I also went to see Charlie do another story, even before *Second Time Around* was really finished. But then once we started working together, I can't stress enough that not only Charlie, but David Ford had everything to do with it. David Ford is his dramaturg, so he came to every rehearsal, and he had just as much to do with the process. We couldn't have done it without him; I'll just put it that way.

Crawford: So in other words, he knew when the music should come in? Or did you and Charlie work that out?

05-00:16:37

Jeanrenaud: No, that was all three of us.

Crawford: That was all three of you.

05-00:16:40

Jeanrenaud: The whole piece was really all three of us. The thing about David, he had a lot of insight. One of the first things we did, which makes total sense, and which is a very typical thing to do, especially for movies where you make a theme for the characters. Ben Rosenau ended up having a theme; Selma was the love interest, so that was the love theme. Right, then even Coombs, the guy who was the sort of vulgar pilot in World War II that Ben Rosenau had worked for when he was in the Army. Or I guess it would be the Navy.

Crawford: Airforce.

05-00:17:30

Jeanrenaud: Yes. So everybody got a theme, and that was really kind of where we first started. I read the story; I was familiar with everything; but then we wrote themes for everything. Charlie would start reading the story. I recorded every rehearsal that we had. It was a very slow process, because it was impossible for me to remember all the time what I did. Maybe I'd have time to jot something down.

Our rehearsals were usually a couple hours long. So then I would go back, and I would listen to the whole thing, and then I would notate. A lot of times, we would really like the section, how that worked. So then I could go back to that section and I could really see what it was that I did and notate it all out.

Then there was a whole thing of how to put the music in with the words. That was tricky to me, to figure out, okay, well, I don't want to have every single word in here, because it's just impractical. But a lot of times there's words, that then would trigger me to do something. We had a theme for Churchill. When I hear the word "Churchill," then I do this. It pretty much goes along that way.

Crawford: Play a bit of that, would you?

05-00:19:43

Jeanrenaud: Oh, the Churchill thing is pretty easy. [music] It's basically [music] this theme.

Crawford: You used that around an actual clip of Churchill; was it his voice?

05-00:20:02

Jeanrenaud: No, that was Charlie. It was that very famous speech about "I cannot tell you this is the end, but I perhaps can tell you it's the end of the beginning."

Crawford: But then Coombs was very antagonistic to Churchill, wasn't he? So that was a different music.

05-00:20:24

Jeanrenaud: Right. Coombs was really different, because Coombs was — Let's see if I have any music from Coombs.

Crawford: You can reach? Okay.

05-00:20:40

Jeanrenaud: There is one theme that's like, actually it is a blues theme. Now, this was Lou Coombs. [music]

Crawford: Oh, very much, yes.

05-00:21:14

Jeanrenaud: So that was Lou Coombs. Then Selma. Where's Selma's?

Crawford: Selma with the bright gray eyes. He falls in love with her during the whole story, he thinks.

05-00:21:29

Jeanrenaud: He does. If I can find Selma's theme. They're all slightly different.

Crawford: How would you define Ben, or describe him?

05-00:21:50

Jeanrenaud: Ben was a really straight-ahead, honest guy, who is obviously the center of the story. It's all about Ben, really.

Crawford: Mm-hm. But he feels that through this boy, who he would like to help, in a way, that he's failed his own son.

05-00:22:15

Jeanrenaud: Yes.

Crawford: So the story goes pretty deeply.

05-00:22:19

Jeanrenaud: It covers a lot of territory, because it covers his own relationship with his own son, which is not a very good relationship. The son has moved to the West Bank. There's that whole thing. So yes, it's a very complex story, actually. There's a lot of layers to it.

Crawford: Well into the story, he decides that they are in love, that Selma loves him. "I'm an old man with a teenage heart."

05-00:22:51

Jeanrenaud: Right. Exactly. But then Selma does not reciprocate.

Crawford: Varon said, "I had to get some new chops for this piece." You can see that he would, because having music in an oral history, which is basically what it was, the language would be different, wouldn't it? It would carry the language differently.

05-00:23:18

Jeanrenaud: Yes, and he made lots of revisions all the way through the process, too. So as I was composing music, he would be changing things, too. Not only some of the words and everything, but the order of stuff. It changed many, many times. Which it was why it was good that I was putting it into my computer. But it was tricky. I learned how to do a lot of this, because then I would have to insert things and then move things around. Which seems like it would be really easy, but it was actually harder to do than you think, when there's music in there, too.

But it was all great and I think it worked out well, and we were all really happy with it, in the end. But definitely, even how I play the song "Second Time Around," that was really David Ford's idea. Because he said, "Well, that's this era." He knows a lot about music. He can't necessarily tell me certain musical terms, but he knows so much about music. So even all these tunes, "Second Time Around" and —

Crawford: "Take Five"?

05-00:24:45

Jeanrenaud: Right. He would know about all this stuff. So from him mentioning it, then I'd go research that tune or whatever, and then I'd make some arrangement of it, and then we'd start sticking that in in places.

Crawford: Do you have to get rights for that?

05-00:25:04

Jeanrenaud: We actually didn't, because there are no words. I'm playing the tune, but it's an arrangement; it's not really the tune, strictly.

Crawford: Paul Desmond's song. I think it's the most often played song in the media.

05-00:26:09

Jeanrenaud: Oh, really? Well, that's kind of cool. [music] This is it, yeah. [music] Now, all the time when I'm playing this, I have to make certain adaptations, because I have to follow Charlie's words. [music] Like this part. This is all because David said, "Oh, this should be a little choppy." [music] Because of Charlie's words. They would take things slowly. [music] They would accompany each other to plays. I can't remember the words. Ben wouldn't object to that. But certain words I have like that, because I know, okay, Ben wouldn't object to that, that's when it's the end of the thing. I would have to

adapt, because his delivery of the words would change every night. It'd be close, but it's different.

Crawford: If this piece goes to Broadway and you don't want to go, would somebody else be able to perform the score?

05-00:28:06

Jeanrenaud: That was the whole point. Because when Charlie asked me to do it, I said, "Well, Charlie, I'm not really performing anymore. I'm composing. I love to compose, but performing, I'm done." But then after we worked for nine months together and we went through this whole thing, I knew it by then. I really rehearsed it a lot, and it seemed like, oh, my goodness, it's just going to be really difficult to try and teach somebody else this. But it's all written out. That was the whole reason I did it, was so that eventually, somebody else could play it.

But I think it's trickier. Not only that, Charlie would've had to rehearse with the other person a lot, because you figure I rehearsed with him a lot, so I got really used to adapting to him and following him. Whoever does it, that's what you have to do. So I thought, well. At that point, that's why I said to Charlie, "Well, Charlie, if you pick me up and bring me home, I'll do it." Because it would've been a lot of time.

Crawford: Charlie said in this article about it, in this review of the piece. "I was in a café the other day, writing a new story. And I came to the end of a paragraph and I thought, music here. It's like I've internalized a little copy of Joan sitting inside my consciousness."

05-00:29:50

Jeanrenaud: I know, that's really sweet.

Crawford: Will you do another collaboration with him?

05-00:29:55

Jeanrenaud: It'd be kind of nice to do. He knows that I'm really not so interested in performing anymore, so I think that makes the whole process maybe a little less appealing, in a sense, for him. This was great. I know he would like to do other ones, but whether I really am going to do that is the question.

Crawford: One little area, very small, but it stood out for me, when they were talking about the men talking were too loud and too cocky.

05-00:30:32

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right.

Crawford: Could you do those two little bits? And he used some expressions that he said, "I would not say those in front of the boy." I think that was where it was.

05-00:31:28

Jeanrenaud: Right, "Cock sucking —" When he gets all into that. And then he says, "Blood," and we cut off together.

Crawford: Okay. So then let's hear Selma's theme just briefly.

05-00:32:43

Jeanrenaud: There's a lot of different Selma things. Let's see. This is one of them, but — [music] And then it goes on. Selma. [music] Selma's always [music] that kind of thing. Selma's always around there, with those notes.

Crawford: And then the love theme was the most energetic. It was wonderful the way the moods changed, I thought, from the narration to getting into the love that he was feeling and thinking he was having a heart attack. [laughter]

05-00:33:52

Jeanrenaud: Oh, right. Even right there, that was David's idea for me. He said early on, "Oh, why don't you write a theme for each one of the characters?" So that was really a great idea. It is something you typically do if you're scoring a movie. You'll give characters themes. So it was very logical. But I hadn't thought of it. We usually rehearsed every week for a couple hours. So before they came the next time, I had written all these different themes. But then I would play them, and we would make improvements on them or select certain ones over other ones or something. So it was that kind of a process. It was a lot of back and forth. I trusted both of them so much. They were just so helpful. It was great to get their feedback, and then I would incorporate it.

Crawford: You like to score films. We talked off camera about that. Let's talk about the project you're working on now.

05-00:35:31

Jeanrenaud: Well, the one that I'm doing now, it's really kind of a demo for this documentary that these people want to do about — I was calling it *Cars* for a while. It's really about transportation, and it's about how the world is evolving. So it used to be, when we grew up, the car held all this promise of independence. You could pick up girls because you had a car. And social status. There were all these things connected to having a car.

But now of course, all that's changing. Now you don't really need a car for the convenience. There's Lyft, there's Uber, there's all these different modes of transportation now. So that's what basically this documentary is about. It's really interesting, because even how things like gasoline or how cars produce soot, a lot of soot. So there's all these different aspects of transportation and cars. Basically, this is a project with David Hodge and Hi-Jin Hodge, H-I-dash-J-I-N. They are trying to get funding to do this documentary.

What I worked on was like a promo piece to try and get funding. I've done some other work with them. They do beautiful work. I did something with a

dancer, actually, Yayoi Kambara, who used to be with ODC, but now she has her own company. They had done some work with her, where they filmed the dancers, and then I did music for that, too. It was basically a piece called *Trust*. They do a lot of pieces for installations in museums. So for instance, this piece, they're going to do it at the Asian Art Museum really soon, actually. Next week, I think; or maybe it's April.

05-00:38:18

Jeanrenaud

I think it's typical, because installations have projections on different surfaces. Or they might have scrimms hung and stuff, so say it becomes more of a labyrinth, in a sense, than just a room with four white walls. It becomes a kind of more interesting setup. A little atmosphere, too. And they always have people talking about the topic. So in the one about cars and transportation, there's all these people saying different things about transportation — public transportation, cars.

Then for *Trust*, it's people talking about, what does trust mean to you? Then people have different responses to that. But then in the end, in the space for the installation, they're going to have places that are marked where the audience members can stand. You'd have to just stand there and watch the piece. That's part of the trust thing, because dancers are going to be moving around, so you have to trust that they're not going to run into you; and you have to trust that you're not going to get in their way.

Crawford:

This is all taped?

05-00:40:00

Jeanrenaud:

All taped. Now he filmed me too. Up to this point, I have not seen that footage, but he's talking about for when it's at the Asian Art Museum, that there is some footage of me playing. There's a lot of footage of the dancers with me. Hard to describe.

Crawford:

How would you describe the dancing?

05-00:40:28

Jeanrenaud:

Oh, it's pretty free-flowing, I would say. There's interaction between the dancers. Say two dancers would interact, or maybe use each other's bodies to move.. Say a dancer needs to push off from something, they could push off from one of the dancers, for instance. So there is interaction between the dancers. It's physical.

Crawford:

How long a piece is that?

05-00:41:04

Jeanrenaud:

It's had so many incarnations now I really don't know. Because I did, I think, three segments, and those segments can vary in length from three to five minutes. So the piece could be a fifteen-minute piece, and then they could even have it be longer. It just depends on how they end up. I think when



Yayoi did it, she did it at Z Space, before a show. So it was in the lobby of Z Space.

Crawford: This same piece?

05-00:41:44

Jeanrenaud: It's not the same because it didn't have the audience members' participation. That's what I mean; it's sort of evolved to different things. The one where it's really going to be the one I think it was initially intended for, which was an installation for a museum, is going to be more what it's like when they do it at the Asian Art Museum, and have the audience members in these certain spots. When they've done it before, it was really for Yayoi's opening of her show, and so it was the dancers themselves, and there was a projection, and then there was my music that was on speakers. So it was completely different than the way it's going to be.

Crawford: Well, let's move on to *Visual Music*. Please tell me what you think is new about it, in terms of your composing.

05-00:42:48

Jeanrenaud: *Visual Music* was something that came to be because all of these pieces that ended up on the CD were composed over a period of about five or six years. So not too dissimilar from when I recorded the CD *Strange Toys*. When I had the opportunity to go into this recording studio to record some of my own material — which is really the first time I had had that opportunity, where somebody else wanted me to do it and I could go in and record whatever I wanted — I thought, okay, well, let me look at all the work that I've composed over the last five or six years.

So then I chose certain pieces that I thought were the strongest ones that I'd composed in that time, and also made sure that they made sense together. A lot of those pieces, at that time, I was working with electronics and I was working with loopers. So a lot of these pieces were something that I could play live by myself; I didn't need to have playback. Now the music has gotten more complicated, so I can't do it with loopers. But at that time, it was much simpler; it was how I got started, and I could use loopers and it was really great. So I could perform it that way, too; you could create layers when you were performing; but if you're using a looper, you can do it all yourself.

A lot of those pieces became part of *Strange Toys*, that CD. So then this most recent CD, *Visual Music*, I realized I had all this material. Some of it, I had already been in the studio to record, because some of it was for dance companies, and they needed to perform with it for their shows. I had already gone in and made some really good recordings of some of these pieces.

So I thought, well, let me see what I've got here. Also, the project for the Met; some of those I actually hadn't recorded, so I went in and I recorded those. I recorded them, but I hadn't recorded them in a really great studio, so I went

into a studio and recorded them. I ended up placing these pieces together in a sequence that made sense to me and that also, hopefully, would showcase each piece to its best. I tried to avoid putting pieces that were similar together. I tried to split things up.

Crawford: Are you looking at mood and tempo and various different kinds of elements?

05-00:46:10

Jeanrenaud: Yep.

Crawford: Because the moods are so diverse in this one.

05-00:46:13

Jeanrenaud: Exactly.

Crawford: Very much like *Strange Toys*.

05-00:46:18

Jeanrenaud: Well, and there's something that's kind of similar in both of them. In *Strange Toys*, there was actually a piece I had written for this choreographer, Cid Pearlman, in six movements. It was all with the looper, and I performed live with them when I played the piece. But then I took each of those six movements, and when I did the CD *Strange Toys*, I actually put those movements in different places on the CD. So they were not all six together, like they are when you would hear them performed with the dancers. They were all split up in different places. So with *Visual Music*, I did the same thing with these Met pieces, the pieces I composed for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Crawford: You have "Harmonic Harlem," and then you have a piece called "Hypocrite." So what came first, the name? Or did you compose this and think, that's the title?

05-00:47:35

Jeanrenaud: "Hypocrite" was definitely one of the Met pieces. That was the name of the piece. So all those, like "Pilasters," "Hypocrite," "Virgin and Child," "St. Paul," "Winter — ". I think there's probably a couple more of them. "Spinario." Well, I don't know if "Spinario" made it on there, even though it was one of my favorites.

Crawford: "Oulipo" is on there.

05-00:48:02

Jeanrenaud: "Oulipo" was part of another project I did with Cid Pearlman and Denise Leto, who's a poet.

Crawford: I thought that could be a really long piece. It was very brief, and I thought, would you ever expand it?

05-00:48:20

Jeanrenaud: It is a really nice piece. I'm not sure. One gal who was a student of mine; she's just amazing. She's a great cellist. Meta Weiss. She and her husband, who's a cellist, recorded the piece, and it's on their recent CD, which is maybe a year old now. So other people have played the piece besides me, which is nice. That's always nice when that happens.

Crawford: We didn't talk very much about working with Willie Winant. I think you have done a lot with him. I've seen a little clip of something on YouTube. But talk about him as a performer.

05-00:49:10

Jeanrenaud: I've known Willie for a long time, because he was also at Mills College. So when I first joined Kronos in 1978, as I mentioned, Kronos had a residency at Mills College. So that was my initial contact with and then I have stayed in touch with him ever since. Willie was a student then at Mills. Willie's been on their faculty for years and he's a really great percussionist.

I've done a lot of stuff with Willie over the years. I did some things with him in Kronos; but then once I left Kronos, I really have always enjoyed playing with rhythmic players, players that specifically play the drums, or in Willie's case, percussion. So marimba, so many different kinds of instruments. But basically, they're beat-based. I really like that. When I was in the quartet, you can really think of the cello, often, as sort of like the bass and drums. It's kind of the rhythm section. So I think for me, it was really nice then, when I wrote several things for Willie and me. It was great, because I had somebody else who became the rhythmic player. I could follow Willie, instead of me being the one that people had to follow.

Crawford: Willie has said that many of the great contemporary composers, like [Karlheinz] Stockhausen and [György] Ligeti, knew jazz intimately and followed American jazz. Do you hear that in their music? [Pierre] Boulez, not so much, he said.

05-00:51:15

Jeanrenaud: Well, I don't know. They're all such unique composers, really. When I was in Kronos is when I played the most of that kind of repertoire. Boulez and — Well, [Béla] Bartók, of course, but who else did we just mention?

Crawford: Ligeti and Berio.

05-00:51:39

Jeanrenaud: Oh, Berio and Ligeti, Those guys are all just great composers. I'm sure all those guys were very aware of jazz, and probably listened to jazz.

Crawford: Well, last question for today. Which of your music do you think will have the longest legs?

05-00:52:27

Jeanrenaud: I have no idea. That's really hard to say. In a way, I feel it's a bit presumptuous to think any of my music will last for a long time. Part of it is because I came to composing very late, essentially. I've played the cello now for fifty years, and I've composed music for probably twenty; but that's a big difference between twenty and fifty. And in those years with Kronos, I played and worked with some of *the* best composers around. So it's very difficult for me to look at my music in that light, you know what I mean? I enjoy what I do, and obviously a lot of the stuff that I do is influenced by all those composers that I played their music and I listened to. But on the other hand, I'm no Bartók, I'll put it that way.

Crawford: *Strange Toys* came very close to getting a Grammy. That's exceptional.

05-00:53:49

Jeanrenaud: That's also political, though, you find out.

Crawford: Did you think it was political?

05-00:53:53

Jeanrenaud: I know it's political.

Crawford: You want to say why?

05-00:53:59

Jeanrenaud: I have a very good friend, Steve Mackey. Steve has a lot to do with me composing, in a way, because we worked with Steve a bunch. Then when I left Kronos, I still remained really good friends with Steve, and Steve and I used to kind of jam. We'd play some rock and roll tunes every once in a while together, because he traveled with Kronos several times and wrote pieces that were for the quartet and his electric guitar.

Steve was the one who told me, when I first started, "When you start improvising, you're going to start composing." And he was absolutely right. That was the first thing I really wanted to do when I left Kronos, was to improvise more, because I had done it when I was at Indiana University a little bit, but I never really got to pursue it wholeheartedly, because I was so busy trying to learn how to play my cello. Then also, when I first moved to San Francisco, I took some lessons from Joe Henderson, who was a great saxophone improviser. It was like, oh, my goodness, this is so much to learn. And I was just so busy with Kronos. But still, it was so great that I did that; but it was kind of always something I wanted to get back to, that I always felt like if I just had more time, I could work on that some more. So when I left Kronos, I thought, okay, this is it; I have time to improvise more.

So that's what I started doing. And that's when Steven said, "When you start doing that, you're going to start composing" he was absolutely right, because I was so used to written-out notation; that was sort of my element. Always had

been. So then when I would improvise and I liked something that I did, I would notate it, so that I would remember. As a result, that's how I started composing. Then it just kind of developed from there.

Crawford: Do you think Steve Mackey put you up for a Grammy?

05-00:56:25

Jeanrenaud: No. So the Steve thing about the Grammys. Steve just got a Grammy. Was it a year ago? It was a year or two ago or something. And he told me, he said, "It works like this." If you're a member of the Academy, which I am, you get to vote for who is nominated, first of all, for a Grammy. So it goes out to a huge number of people. Then essentially, you figure, oh, they just count the votes, and whoever gets the most votes is the one who's nominated." Well, not exactly, Steve told me, there's then a group of people who decide on these nominations. Even if somebody got the most number of votes, it doesn't mean that they would be nominated. So there you go.

[The following was added from an informal conversation.]

Crawford: Where does the commitment to what is original and inventive come from?

Jeanrenaud: It must have come from all my years in Kronos, even though we were talking before about how I played at Indiana University in the contemporary music ensemble that Fred Fox started there, so I was really interested in new music before I joined Kronos. That makes me think I have always had that interest and then Kronos was a perfect fit, and that extended my interest in new and unusual things.

But where it came from is really hard to know. Growing up on the farm it was pretty basic, with a lot of animals around. And then going to an all-girls school you don't think of as that innovative, but there were a lot of strong women who were teaching there, and my mom I wouldn't have thought of as being particularly innovative, but then again she was the one who suggested I go to the art academy in Memphis when I was in high school on Saturdays. I took all this cool stuff like jewelry making, painting, print-making. I was exposed to so many things.

Even when I went to IU, it's true, I was unconventional. I did take jazz improv with Dave Baker and played in early music ensembles. I played continuo parts. I never played the gamba but I played with gambas and other early music instruments. I took electronic music there, the program Xenakis started. And I took composition, which I was really bad at, with Fred Fox. [laughter]

Crawford: Do you still feel that joining Kronos was the best decision you ever made, and leaving it was the second best?

Jeanrenaud: I do. I'm now out of Kronos twenty years, and it's easy for me to look back and think I accomplished more when I was in Kronos. It's harder to see what I've accomplished since I've been out of Kronos, which is so big now and such a famous group, and what I do is pretty much under the radar.

Crawford: But you are creating music, and you're prolific.

Jeanrenaud: That's very nice. Even when I was in Kronos it was hard to see how significant all the stuff Kronos was doing was, but once I left, I thought, Wow, these guys have done great stuff and made a big difference in music. So now what I do, it's hard to look at in any other way.

Crawford: What adjective would you choose for yourself if I said "inventive," "independent," "untamed"?

Jeanrenaud: They are all so complimentary. Untamed and independent are particularly interesting to me. Maybe independent spirit. I think that's right.

Crawford: Thank you very much for these interviews, Joan.

[End of Interview]