Interviewee:	John Cage
Interviewer:	Mary Emma Harris
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John Cage and Merce Cunningham visited Black Mountain College in April 1948. On that visit Cage gave the first complete performance of his “Sonatas and Interludes” for prepared piano. The returned as guest faculty for the summer of 1948. At that time Cage directed an Amateur Festival of the Music of Eric Satie. It was in the summer of 1948 that John Cage attended the wedding of Vera Baker and Paul Williams in the Quiet House. Both Cage and Cunningham returned in the summer of 1952. It was that summer that Cage’s “happening” took place and that he read the *The Huang Po Doctrine of Universal Mind.* Cunningham taught in the summer of 1953. It was that summer that he brought dancers from New York and formed his dance company. Cage visited in the summer of 1953 and designed the intaglio program for the company’s performances. Cage visited.

The two articles referred to are “Forerunners of Modern Music,” *Tiger’s Eye*, No. 7 (March 1949):52-56 and “Defense of Satie,” in *John Cage*, ed., Richard Kostelanetz (New York; Praeger, 1970):81.
“Forerunners of Modern Music,” in *Silence* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961):62.67.

MEH: —in the spring of ‘48.

JC: Yes. On a tour with Merce Cunningham.

MEH: Were you expected?

JC: Well, we made tours. Merce dancing and I making the accompaniments. And we would write to colleges all over the country trying to get engagements. I had long been interested in Black Mountain. Already in the late thirties, I had written from Seattle asking to become a member of the faculty.

MEH: How had you heard about the college?

JC: It was well-known. And it was known to be the most interesting college and the

most devoted to experimental work in the arts. So that when I began working at the Cornish School in Seattle with a percussion orchestra, I found my—And I was writing to composers all over the country getting percussion music. And we were making tours. It occurred to me even then to leave the Cornish School and join the faculty at Black Mountain. But my work was relatively unknown, and I don't think they even replied to my letter. However, later, in the late forties when we were making a tour, we wrote—as to other colleges, we wrote to Black Mountain asking for an engagement. And they wrote back and said that they would like to have us come but that they had no money to pay us, and we accepted that arrangement anyway. They agreed to put us up and to feed us. And so between two engagements—I think one was in Virginia, and the next one was in, oh, Chicago, perhaps—we went to Black Mountain. I forget how long we stayed, but several days. And it was a great pleasure. There were many parties. And when we got in the car to drive away—we had parked it in front of that building where the studies were, you know, and hadn't used it while we were there. So that when we drove it back, we discovered that this large pile of presents that all the students and faculty had put under the car in lieu of any payment. It included, for instance, oh, paintings and food and drawings, and so on.

MEH: Apparently, from correspondence, Albers and the people at the college were very excited by your visit. Just—only you and Merce Cunningham were travelling together then?

JC: Yes.

MEH: There were no other dancers?

JC: No. And we had marvelous conversations. And at the time, my ideas were those expressed in an article that's in *Silence* called "Forerunners of—". Isn't it called "Forerunners of New Music"?

MEH: Yes. It was published in *Tiger's Eye,* I believe.

JC: Yes.

MEH: As "Forerunners of Modern Music".

JC: Yes. And it's—

MEH: And, now, that's not the—you're not talking about the one that you did that summer of ' 48—on Beethoven and Satie?

JC: No. This one is still published as "Forerunners of Modern Music" there.

MEH: Ah-so. Oh, right. Right. I had forgotten it was republished in there.

JC: And these were my ideas at the moment. This appeared in March 1949. I probably wrote it after Black Mountain, because, you see, I was there in '48.

MEH: Right. See, what I was thinking was, having read this—

JC: But these ideas were the ones in my head.

MEH: Right. Having read this in *Tiger's Eye* and having read your—in Kostelanetz documentary, your lecture from the summer of '48, I thought maybe this had come out of your lecture in the summer of '48, which the college didn't publish.

JC: I'm not a good historian, but the one about—?

MEH: These were—

JC: The one about Satie, you mean? That wasn't '48. It must have been later, because I went to Paris in '49 to collect the materials to—

JC: The one about Satie, you mean?

MEH: Right.

MEH: No. It was '48.

JC: Are you sure? The summer of '48?

MEH: That was the summer of '48. Yes. The summer of the *Ruse of Medusa*, the summer of '48.

JC: All this happened in the summer of '48?

MEH: Right.

JC: Well, anyway, these ideas were in my head. And, as you can see, the basic idea is not too far from German aesthetic thinking.

MEH: How would that be?

JC: I see things as a dialectic here. In other words, certain things are related to the mind, and certain things are related to the heart. You see, structure is properly mind-controlled. “Both the mind and structure delight in precision, clarity, and the observance of rules. Whereas form wants only freedom to be. It belongs to the heart.” So it's a dialectic between the mind and the heart, and that is precisely the thing that interested German aestheticians—the marriage of form and content.

MEH: Um-hm.

JC: Hmm?

MEH: Right.

JC: Therefore, I saw eye-to-eye with Albers at that time, and our conversations were ones characterized by agreement.

MEH: At that time?

JC: At that time.

MEH: Right.

JC: I had not yet gotten involved in chance operations. And I saw the whole business of art as he saw it, of having a very strict structure in which freedom could exist.

MEH: Even if you have disagreed later, wouldn't you say that both of you have held—even in your later work, there's always structure within which you work, and there's—

JC: No.

MEH: No, there's not?

JC: No. There's been a parting of the ways between Albers and myself and to such an extent that we haven't seen one another for years and years, nor would he want to see me. But this is not true of my relations with Anni Albers. I'm sure we would get along very well. What was very interesting that—it seemed to me later that this dialectic between mind and heart that can exist in one person's work, did of course exist in Albers' work. He was careful, for instance, to break his rules slightly in order to—even though they looked very strict, there was always something wrong and introduced purposefully in order to let freedom enter into structure. But in his very life, his marriage with Anni was essentially a marriage of himself, mind, with heart—Anni. I think. And that the heart is always more open than the mind, or frequently. At least, in her case it is. So that I have the feeling that were I to see her now, we would be as friendly as we were then. Whereas if I saw Albers, it would be a question of disagreements and a sense of separation over ideas. It must have been then, if it was indeed the summer of '48, that we had the Satie festival. If that's the case—

MEH: It was indeed.

JC: And they invited—They liked us, our being there and invited us back then for the summer and asked me to arrange a series of concerts. And I chose the music of Satie because there were few musicians in the Black Mountain community. Most of them were painters. And I knew that I could play much of the music of Satie and that I could probably find in the community others so that we could be able to go through the whole body of his work. Whereas if I'd chosen just modern music in general, we would just get a smattering of this, that, and the other. And many things that would be important, such as the work of Schoenberg, wouldn't be able to be well-represented because there weren't proper musicians there, nor could I play it. So the first thing that developed was that since the community was largely German—if not really German, it was—

MEH: The music community definitely was.

JC: Well, also the art community was from the Bauhaus, for instance. The whole feeling was German, and many of the people were German. So that Albers' first question to me was, "Won't you also give a series of lectures because we see no reason for listening to French music? And you will have to explain to us why we should listen to something so trivial and so un-Germanic, you see, as the music of Satie."

MEH: It was that he didn't take it seriously?

JC: No Germans take French music seriously. When Debussy went to visit Brahms in Vienna, the servant answered the door. Debussy had not warned Brahms that he was visiting. But he happened to be in Vienna and went to his house, knocked at the door, and the servant came to the door and said, "Who are you?" And he said, "I'm Claude Debussy". And Brahms sent back word, "Who

is that?" And Debussy sent back word, "French musician." And Brahms refused to see him, and he said, "There is no such thing." It has been that strong, that feeling. And even with Schoenberg. He said in one of his letters that his discovery of a way of composing music by means of the twelve tones insured the supremacy of German music for the next one hundred years. And that attitude was not separated from Black Mountain thinking. It was essentially through Albers a Germanic situation, and Mrs. Jalowetz, and so on and so forth. And the connection—

MEH: I believe Erwin Bodky—

JC: I never knew Jalowetz, but he had been closely connected with Webern and probably with Schoenberg.

MEH: Definitely with Schoenberg.

JC: So that whole feeling of the supremacy and seriousness, furthermore, of German art was part and parcel of Black Mountain thinking. However, it was watered down a great deal by the fact that the students were all Americans. And then when they invited us and I offered French music, I had then to give a series of lectures in order to show why one would listen to French music or the music of Satie. And I did that. Most of the lectures were analytical, and they tried to show how the music was written. And I haven't kept them. There were twenty-five concerts, and they were only half-an-hour long, including the lecture. And they took place after the evening meal.

MEH: Were they in the dining hall by the water?

JC: In the dining hall. Yes. And at first the entire community attended. And then there was a—I think if a graph had been prepared, which it wasn't, it would

show that there was a decline in interest as the concerts continued. And then there was a—it came—the interest revived. And when the final concerts came which—that included the "Piège de Mèduse" and the various ballets like "Mercure" and "Parade" and so forth, the entire community was again present. But there was a drop in interest in the course of it. Then my lecture in the middle. I forget just when it came, but I decided to confront the notion of German thinking. And I took Beethoven as the prime musical mountain, and I opposed him to Satie and determined the struggle between them in favor of Satie. And this aroused the anger, actually, of many of the faculty, particularly of the then husband of M.C. Richards—Levi—

MEH: Oh.

JC: —who was teaching philosophy. It also angered Paul Goodman, [MEH note: Goodman was not there in the summer of 1948. He taught in the summer of 1950.] who was there then. He said I had no right to speak against a man as great as Beethoven, whereas, Satie, himself, had done it. Satie said that the only reason Beethoven was so well-known was because he had a good publicity manager. And he insisted that what music needed was less sauerkraut in it and so forth and so on. So I was simply being faithful to Satie and at the same time being faithful to my own views.

MEH: But, actually, your views, even though they may have a parallel in German philosophy at this time—the relationship of structure and form and heart and mind—this had grown not out of the study of German philosophers. Or had it?

JC: No. It had—Well, I don't know how my thought developed. It's so hard to discover how one's thought develops, but there are many strands in the

process. And *Silence*, my book, is an attempt to show how these ideas developed. And that's why there are head notes at the beginning of each text, because the book is actually a story of a change in ideas. And you see when the ideas were and when the next ones came, and you could deduce from it what the adventure was. I was, after all, a pupil of Schoenberg, so that I was—I had chosen to study with a German, rather than a Frenchman. And the closest, of course, to a Frenchman, at the time was Stravinsky who, though he was Russian, his experience was French, and I think his music would be more properly classed as French music than German.

MEH: You were already at this time involved with Dr. Suzuki and Zen?

JC: Um hm. But not as fully as I was just a few years later. So that by the time I returned to Black Mountain—Wasn't it in '52? Or was it '5l?

MEH: ‘52.

JC: ‘52. When I returned to Black Mountain in '52, I was then fully involved in Zen Buddhism and in chance operations. So that that first summer my ideas were represented by this text. And in '52, they were represented by later texts—

MEH: Right.

JC: —dealing with Zen and chance operations. By that time, of course, Albers was—he was not there the second time. And when I did—as I did rarely see him, we had only disagreements.

MEH: These were philosophical disagreements?

JC: Yes. He refused the notion of chance operations. He refused the notion of composition as process. He insisted upon a fusion of structure and form, which characterized my "Sonatas and Interludes." I believe I played my "Sonatas and

Interludes" there.

MEH: Yes. You—In this chronology—I can't think of the—Henmar? Is that the publisher?.

JC: Henmar.

MEH: Henmar.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: It's been tremendously helpful to me in putting things together. You have listed your "Sonatas and Interludes" as being played in the spring of ‘48.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: Does this little program do anything?

JC: That's true. It may—

MEH: Well, I have—

JC: I did play them there.

MEH: Yes. But I have a program from '52, I think it is. Right. Okay. See—It's attached. Johanna Jalowetz's daughter has this program. You have to turn it the other way. And it's a little tissue paper program that she had—

JC: Yes.

MEH: —glued to another. So do you think you played it both times or—?

JC: I can check and see—

MEH: Yeah.

JC: —that it was another performance.

MEH: Okay.

JC: I played it in the spring of '48. Yes.

MEH: Albers was receptive to it then?

JC: Oh, yes. Because it corresponds quite closely to the way he worked, because it had these ideas behind it. And my way of working was not separate, say, from his way of working.

MEH: Right. Did you know Fuller before you went to Black Mountain?

JC: Umm. Let's see if I did.

MEH: Of him?

JC: I'm trying to figure out whether I met him there or whether—I'm not sure of this, but I may have met him there. I heard a lecture he gave there, which I thought was just marvelous and have never forgotten. And then we asked him to be in the "Piège de Mèduse". And that summer, also, he put up the dome, which failed.

MEH: He had—

JC: And he wasn't disturbed at all by that failure. And I found him an absolutely marvelous man. And he agreed to be the Baron Mèduse in the play. And he has since said, which I don't think is true because his lecture before he was in the play was very beautiful—he said that being in the play gave him the courage to do the lecturing he has since done. But I think the courage was already in him.

MEH: What was—? There are letters before your coming down that summer of '48. And from you and Merce Cunningham and from the Lippolds saying, "It's hot in New York. We have a hearse. Let us come."

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: What was the importance of a place like Black Mountain then? You were travelling at other colleges. You'd been at Mills College and—

JC: Oh, well, as I told you, already in the thirties we knew that the liveliest educational institution in the country was Black Mountain.

MEH: And you did find it to be?

JC: I believe so. Yes. I have been—I still feel that, though I accept the criticisms that have since been made by M.C. Richards, because she found that Black Mountain was not free of the jealousies and strifes and so forth, that characterized other institutions and that made her do what she's since done. But except for a few events like that first trouble I had with Levi, the Black Mountain community seemed really marvelous and certainly marvelous in relation to any other school in the country. And since then the question that's so frequently asked is, "What school now comes the closest to what Black Mountain was?" And many schools have tried to do that, but I don't think have succeeded. The closest, for me, to an experience comparable to Black Mountain was the summer workshop at Emma Lake in Saskatchewan from the University of Saskatchewan, and which I have written a text about in—that it comes in A Year from Monday called "Emma Lake." I think. In each case, the number of people was comparable, around a hundred people. And it may be that one of the great problems for other schools that would like to be like Black Mountain is that their numbers are different. When you have several thousand, you simply don't have the possibilities that you have when you have one hundred.

MEH: Did you have any connection with Ted Dreier?

JC: I think he was there the first time, wasn't he?

MEH: Right. He was.

JC: And we had conversations, and I remember enjoying him and his wife. I wasn't invited, was I, the first summer, to teach composition?

MEH: I'm not sure. I think that—

JC: I don't think so.

MEH: I don't think so. I think you were to do the Satie festival.

JC: To do the Satie festival.

MEH: Right.

JC: Right.

MEH: In fact, did you teach a course that summer that you remember? I don't—

JC: I don't think so. I had—there were people who would ask me questions, and naturally I'd answer them. But I think any giving of my ideas was given through the festival and also through the conversations at the meals. And then later, when I was asked to teach composition in '52, I had no pupils. And then—but I think, nevertheless, that doing my work—I was writing the *Williams Mix* then and having meals with the students—had the same effect that giving classes would have had.

MEH: You were working that summer on the *Williams Mix* at Black Mountain?

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: You had the equipment, or were you—?

JC: No. I was writing the score.

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: And one page of which is in the Kostelanetz book, and it's a score of nearly 500 pages. And the whole magnetic tape thing is drawn like a dressmaker's pattern to prepare for the splicing, which we did later. We didn't do the splicing at Black

Mountain, but we wrote the score. And David Tudor helped me. But what I had proposed was that if I had any students, that I would teach them by letting them help me with my work. And this was what kept them from studying with me, was that they were unwilling to engage in the act of apprenticeship.

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: They wanted to do their own work. And one of them was very brilliant. I forget now his name. Do you have his name?

MEH: Is it Jay Watt by any chance?

JC: That's right.

MEH: Yeah.

JC: Is he still living?

MEH: I don't know. I want to ask some people.

JC: It would be interesting for you to discover whether he's still living. He was very brilliant.

MEH: That's what people say. That's why I know the name, Jay Watt. Everyone—

JC: And he was absolutely indignant at the prospect of doing my work, since he was interested in his own work.

MEH: Oh. Yes. But, apparently, he didn't study with Wolpe either.

JC: No. He would—He was averse to studying with anyone since he would prefer to have taught. No. He was very bright. What was interesting about him and the reason why I asked whether he's still alive is that he told me that he had—the reason he was interested in his own work was because he had very little time to live and that he was going to die in six months. Well, of course, he didn't. I said, "That makes no difference whether you're going to die in six months or six

years or sixty years". I said, "I'm also going to die, and death isn't part of our concern. Our concern is what are we going to do while we're alive?" And so I refused to be—to commiserate with him over the fact that he was going to die. I had had a very good friend, Hazel Dreis, a bookbinder in San Francisco, who had been told by doctors that she was going to die in six months, and she had lived—and as far as I know, she still lives—longer than anyone else. And I bet you a nickel that Jay Watt is still living. But he had this notion that he was going to die. He also got involved after he left Black Mountain in a rather killing relation to drinking and perhaps even to dopes and things. I don't know. But he had a tendency toward self-destruction, even though—and probably would have preferred to die.

MEH: But at Black Mountain, he really objected to the nature of apprenticeship or to the nature of your music?

JC: I think he was not so concerned with the nature of my music as to the nature of his own music. And I had determined to offer what I could best offer, namely, my own work and the opportunity to engage in its discipline, which—the discipline of chance operations, which didn't interest him. However, I was at that time already deeply involved with Zen Buddhism, and I had been three years with Suzuki, And my favorite text of all that literature of Zen Buddhism was *The Huang Po Doctrine of Universal Mind* in its original translation, not in the second one published by Grove, but the one published by the London Buddhist Society [London, 1947]. And so I offered to—besides the other things that were done there—I forget what other things were done. Oh, well, the "happening" was done.

MEH: Right.

JC: I offered to read the entire Huang Po Doctrine in one sitting. And part of the Huang Po Doctrine is a dialogue between a teacher and student. And I forget now whether the—in that dialogue, my assistant, second reader, was Elaine de Kooning or Francine du Plessix.

MEH: Yes.

JC: You know.

MEH: Yeah. P-L-E-S-S-I-X.

JC: Right. Who is now Francine Gray.

MEH: Right.

JC: I think she may have been the second reader because—was Elaine de Kooning there that summer?

MEH: Elaine de Kooning was there in '48, so it would have been Francine Gray.

MEH: Right.

JC: Later. Yes. She did the reading. Well, for several people that reading was the turning point in their lives. It's an extraordinary text. And one fellow had been in the war in South Korea and had just happened to come to Black Mountain that evening. And he didn't know what he was going to do with his life, but he later wrote to me and said that that evening had changed his mind and helped him.

MEH: That was not by any chance Terence Burns, was it?

JC: I don't know who it was. But it was an important event, and the whole college was so busy that it had to take place late at night. I think we began reading about eleven o'clock in the evening, and it probably went until something like two in the morning.

MEH: And you read the entire—?

JC: Text.

MEH: Text. That summer.

JC: With all the notes, and everything, and the introduction—everything in that one sitting. The other important event, I guess, that summer was the so-called "happening". And it was—the whole idea developed in one single day following lunch. And I made the score for it and got the various people to agree to participate. And the first person to arrive was Mrs. Jalowetz. Do you know this story?

MEH: No.

JC: - And she had come early, as she said, in order to get the best seat. And I showed her how the seats were arranged, and I said, "Now, they are all equally good", which is the—one of the basic principles of Zen Buddhism.

MEH: The seats were in the center?

JC: No. The seats were such that all parts of the audience were facing one another, but the center was empty.

MEH: Oh.

JC: And there were aisles sufficiently wide between the four triangles that faced the center, so that activity of the dancers—I think Merce Cunningham alone—could be through the audience and around it. I'm—was opposed then and still am to the notion of the theatre-in-the-round, which means that the theatre's in the center and the audience around. What I favor is the notion of the “audience-in-the-round” where the activity takes place around and among the audience. And that's how that arrangement of seats was made. On each seat was a coffee

cup, and it was not explained what it was for. But the event ended with the pouring of coffee into the cups, which in many cases had been used as ashtrays. And you probably know as much as I know now, since there's been writing about it, what took place during the "happening." Don't you?

MEH: Well, Duberman published several accounts all of which were contradictory.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: But, apparently—

JC: Well, if you have questions, I'll answer them, rather than describing it all.

MEH: Yeah. Right. I'm really—I think that the general facts come together that Tudor was playing.

JC: Yes.

MEH: Your music? He really wasn't composing at the time.

JC: No. But—No, he wasn't. He played my music and music probably of Christian Wolff and—

MEH: Right.

JC: Morton Feldman.

MEH: And—

JC: All the ones that we were—And probably Earle Brown.

MEH: Yeah. And then M.C. and Charles Olson were reading. And also—

JC: Their poetry:

MEH: Yes.

JC: And Bob Rauschenberg was playing music on an old Victrola.

MEH: And some of his all—

JC: Paintings were on the wall.

MEH: All white then, weren't they?

JC: Were on the ceilings.

MEH: Right. Yeah. I'm really more interested than in the details, which seem to come together, in what—This has been described as a "happening", you know, in retrospect.

JC: Yes.

MEH: What were you trying to—? Was this a theatre event that you were working with? What were you trying to do?

JC: Well, M.C. had translated *The Theatre and it's Double* of Artaud, and we got the idea from Artaud that theatre could take place free of a text. That if a text were in it, that it needn't determine the other actions. That sounds, that activities, and so forth, could all be free rather than tied together. Are you—does that—is that clear?

MEH: Yes.

JC: So that rather than the dance expressing the music or the music expressing the dance, that the two could go together independently, neither one controlling the other. And this was extended on this occasion not only to music and dance, but to poetry and to painting, and so forth, and to the audience. So that the audience was not focused in one particular direction.

MEH: So, actually, there was planning behind this event and intent?

JC: Oh. Of course.

MEH: Yes. It wasn't a spontaneous—

JC: It was very quickly arranged, but the ideas were all there.

MEH: Right.

JC: And a score was made. I made a score, which I don't think I have any longer, that gave what I called "time brackets." So that Olson, instead of reading his poetry when he wished, had a particular "time bracket" within which he could do that. And the lecture that I gave included long silences.

MEH: Right. How would you—what do you see as the relationship between Rauschenberg's all-white and all-black paintings of that period and your silent piece? Do you see—?

JC: Well, I say in Silence that his silent piece came—I mean, his—

MEH: Came first.

JC: —came first. And that my silent piece came later. I already had the idea, but I had the feeling that many critics of my work have had, that it was not a proper thing to do. So that I was reluctant to do the silent piece until I had the encouragement from Rauschenberg's white paintings. Then I knew that it was not a joke on my part but was an idea that was shared with others—at least one—Robert Rauschenberg. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Then what was the idea? I mean, I'm not sure that there's—

JC: The idea is that music doesn't have to be made intentionally because it is already existing apart from our intentions.

MEH: But would this same concept not really apply to Rauschenberg's paintings, would it?

JC: It does indeed. No painting needs to be made since an empty surface already has images and events—

MEH: But he was—

JC: —visual events on it.

MEH: These were really not empty surfaces. They were carefully painted.

JC: No, they were not.

MEH: Oh, they weren't?

JC: They were simply canvases painted white, but not carefully painted white, not carefully painted in the sense of painting a cow. They were simply painted in order to be white rather than some other color.

MEH: Or of canvas.

JC: Or of canvas

MEH: Right.

JC: But they were empty of what people connected with painting.

MEH: Right. It seems that Rauschenberg went one step beyond the geometric abstractionists, who had said, you know, that "We will separate narrative content from painting. We will use only visual elements". And he reduced it to the bare minimum.

JC: Uh, no. I disagree.

MEH: You disagree?

JC: He saw that when he did nothing, that everything was already done. In other words, he saw the complexity of an empty surface. And now, wherever you look—if you look, for instance, at a wall that is just painted white—these are too complicated because they're bricks—but if you look at a plain wall like that one over there, for instance, you see—and it's due to Rauschenberg that you see it—that it's not plain white. That plain white is impossible, that any surface is full of activity. I tried to say that in my text I mentioned.

MEH: Yes, Right. And essentially from this point, this is what you're saying in your

silent piece.

JC: Exactly.

MEH: That silence is full of sound.

JC: Right. And it is.

MEH: Right. Was this ever performed, to your knowledge, at Black Mountain?

JC: No.

MEH: No. When you were at Black Mountain in the summer of ’52, were you also teaching at Burnsville or was only Cunningham teaching there?

JC: Just Cunningham.

MEH: Just Cunningham. Right. How would you describe—? You had been at Black Mountain in ‘48, when the college was still very much—

JC: I don't think I taught at Burnsville. No.

MEH: But you did visit over there?

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: You were there as a visitor. When you were at Black Mountain in '48, the college was still very much under the spiritual control of Albers and Dreier, the early founders. When you came back, the guiding light was Olson—

JC: He was not the "guiding light". That was the trouble. He was the tallest man [LAUGHS], but he was by no means the "guiding light." And that's why the place fell to pieces. He was the tallest. He was the least—he didn't have the capacity that Albers did to hold a disparate group of people together. Albers was devoted to this notion of freedom and strictness and the two together, and he gave a great deal of freedom to the students at the same time that he gave them a great sense of discipline. And when he would come in to give a talk to

the student body, everyone practically clicked their heels in attention. Another interesting thing about him, to show why he was such a great teacher, he asked me in that spring of '48 to suggest a painter to join the faculty in the summer. And I said, "Well, do you want someone like yourself or someone entirely different or what do you want?" you know. And he said, "I want someone as different from myself as possible, who doesn't have my ideas at all but has other ideas".

MEH: Did you perchance suggest de Kooning? Was this—?

JC: Yes, I did.

MEH: I still was not clear as to how de Kooning had come there.

JC: It was through me that—

MEH: Um-hm.

JC: And the reason I suggested de Kooning was that—And he was not known at the time. His work was not yet sold, and he was poor as a church mouse. And I did it partly because I admired his work, partly because I realized my affinity for Albers at the time, and that though I admired de Kooning's work, I didn't understand it or feel the same way as de Kooning did. And I thought that of all the people who were doing interesting work, that de Kooning was as far from Albers as one could get. I think that still is a fairly good judgment. And, besides, de Kooning was so poor he needed the job, even though it gave so little money. I think it gave a hundred dollars for the whole summer. But both he and Elaine enjoyed it very much. And then the Lippolds were there.

MEH: Right. You knew the Lippolds in New York. They also came through you?

JC: I had known them. Yes.

MEH: So that summer, that first summer, of those of you who later formed a community of thinking in New York, the Lippolds were there, you and Cunningham were there, the—

JC: Bucky Fuller.

MEH: Bucky Fuller. Ray Johnson. Wasn't Ray Johnson there that summer?

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: And the Williamses.

JC: Um-hm. And M.C.

MEH: And M.C. Yes. I find it incredible that in one situation coming from disparate points, there's this meeting of minds and of understanding.

JC: Um-hm. And Remy Charlip. But I guess that was in '52, wasn't it?

MEH: Right.

JC: And Viola Farber. Merce met her at Black Mountain.

MEH: And Cy Twombly and Rauschenberg you had met in—

JC: Cy Twombly, too.

MEH: —you had met in New York, or—? [MEH note: Cage met Rauschenberg in New York in the winter of 1948-49.]

JC: No. At Black Mountain. No. It was a marvelous place, whatever criticisms M.C. Richards has of it. Now, apart from the problems which she encountered as a member of the faculty, just the fact that almost everyone in the student body and faculty were interesting people was remarkable.

MEH: Um-hm. Yes. I'm interested in the phenomenon.

JC: Do you want a cup of coffee or—?

MEH: No. I'm fine. In the phenomenon that allowed this to happen. I'm looking into the

early years at the college and the period of time during which ideas of structure within the college were being formulated, and the college was becoming popularized as a place where there was freedom. I'm really interested in the geography of relationships, that in 1943, five years before you ever came to the college, there was some relationship with six other people who would come five years later.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: That, you know, the seeds were being planted and that these things came together. I mean, why were so many interesting people at one place with so much in common at one time?

JC: Such a question is, of course, hard to answer. And there may not be an answer. But one could invent an answer. But it might not be the answer. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Who would know?

JC: I asked that historian, Aragon, how history takes place. I said, "Is it something that actually happened?" And he said, "Oh, no. You have to invent it."

MEH: So many people now, especially in North Carolina, are talking about starting a new Black Mountain and—

JC: Well, this is the wrong way around.

MEH: Right. Agreed. And so this is where I feel like they need to look at the—not at what happened later at the college, but the—

JC: They have to see what are the present necessities.

MEH: Right.

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

MEH: Let's see. You were talking about—oh, starting a new Black Mountain.

JC: That what you have to do is discover the present necessities, rather than be nostalgic about past accomplishments. This was what characterized the effectiveness of the Chinese revolution, that instead of trying to do the same as the Russians had done, Mao Zedong looked at the particular problems in China and then took the proper steps. He didn't by any means try to do in China exactly what had been done in Russia, because the situation in China was different. And any situation is necessarily different from what it was when Black Mountain started. Therefore, if you want to have a Black Mountain now, the best way to do it is to forget Black Mountain—[HOUSEKEEPER SINGS IN THE BACKGROUND]

MEH: I agree.

JC: —and to look at the situation as it now stands and do what is now necessary.

MEH: Right. Yeah.

JC: And I think one might get an inkling of what was now necessary in terms of education through drawing lines between M.C. Richards, who was part of Black Mountain, her recent books, the *Crossing Point* and the *Centering*, those two books, and the book of Buckminster Fuller, *Education Automation*, and the book of Ivan Illich, who has the school in Cuernavaca in Mexico, and draw those three things somehow together into a new school?

MEH: Perhaps—if people are deeply involved in a need for something in education which is lacking in other institutions, that need should be the real impetus for starting a new school, that there's something about other schools that isn't meeting a need.

JC: We may not need a school, you know.

MEH: Right. Then, I mean, then this will grow out of really not necessarily someone's else's philosophy, but the immediate needs. It will form itself.

JC: Not only the immediate needs. But the reason I suggest Richards, Fuller, and Illich, and perhaps Brown—Norman O. Brown—and there may be others, but you have to realize that in any change or approaching of problems that somebody's mind or minds have to do it. And we have not yet gotten to the point where a group of people have a mind, but we are certainly at the point where you could say about Black Mountain that the success of Black Mountain was largely due to the mind of Josef Albers. Wouldn't you say so?

MEH: I would say, yes, to the extent that he brought with him—

JC: That's why I used the word "largely".

MEH: Yeah. He brought with him an important attitude toward experimentation and—

JC: He had this notion that I also had of the mind and the heart and a kind of dialectic between the two. And he was able to make a strict situation that was characterized by freedom. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Agreed. Except I think other people played a role in planting the early seeds, that John Rice was very important to this. That the college basically was an American experiment in its beginnings.

JC: Yes.

MEH: And the sort of idealism and naiveté that someone like Dreier brought to the college was essential even though many of the students revolted against him.

JC: Well, then let me ask you this question: Before the advent of Albers, were there the brilliant students and was there the lively activity?

MEH: Not until after the war did the nature—

JC: And Albers was already there.

MEH: Albers had been there from almost the beginning. I'm interested in the building process. Early the college drew many students from progressive schools, children of wealthy people. It was only after the war that the group of students who later became major artists enrolled. So, I see the building years, as being as important as what happened later. And the college really evolved away from its founders. It developed a life of its own. They had very specific intentions as to what the school was going to be. But the college developed its own life and grew in different directions. Albers' attitude toward tradition was important. He was very much of the Bauhaus and the European avant-garde. Even though he was incredibly Germanic, there also was this attitude of exploration and of being a student and of—

JC: Oh, I agree. The question I ask you—I agree with the attitude that you have, that it was not entirely dependent upon Albers and that it had these other fine qualities from the people who came from Florida. But I doubt whether the thing that makes Black Mountain so luminous in our minds would have taken place. I doubt whether I would have gone and the other people, whom you say you're interested in geography, and so forth, would have come from different places to this place had it not been for Albers.

MEH: Oh, agreed. I'm not at all minimizing his role.

JC: I think that we were all people who were, so to speak, de-institutionalized. I'm a college drop-out. I went to Pomona College for two years, and I dropped out immediately because it wasn't interesting. No institutions are interesting. I still

believe that no institutions are interesting. I think governments aren't interesting. I think that individuals can be very interesting. When I finally decided to devote my life to music, I didn't go to a music school, but I went to a person—Schoenberg. When I grew interested in Oriental philosophy, I didn't go to a school of Tibetan yogis or anything like that to learn to sit square-legged. I went to the classes of Suzuki. And now that I'm interested in chess, I go to Marcel Duchamp or to Jack Collins to learn how to play. And that was what characterized Black Mountain was that people went really to Albers. And that's why it was largely a school of painting. And when I was there—I was there only for a short period, and, as we know. I had no students. There was—Had I stayed there a long time, people might have come to work with me.

MEH: Right.

JC: But I didn't. I haven't lived, really, as a teacher.

MEH: But you have had students.

JC: I had only those classes at the New School later, which were a little bit Black Mountainish, because they had—those classes attracted people all of whom did interesting work later—Allan Kaprow and George Brecht, and so on and so forth. It was like a little—it was Black Mountainish.

MEH: Yeah. Well, in a sense, the New School, as I have experienced it, draws people who are there not looking for credits or hours or diplomas, but people who are going because they—

JC: Maybe they want to learn something.

MEH: The courses I've taken there, I've taken because I wanted to study with a particular person.

JC: Right.

MEH: And—

JC: But that's no longer the case there. Now they get credits in everything, don't they?

MEH: But you don't have to.

JC: No. But that now has spoiled the school.

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: And was against the desires of that marvelous lady who was so influential at the time I was there, who was the head of the whole thing.

MEH: Who was this?

JC: What was her name? I think of her so often. But she's no longer connected with the school. But she was the guiding spirit of it.

MEH: Yeah. In '54 [‘53]—you went back to Black Mountain.

JC: That's why I think people are important. Hmm?

MEH: Oh, I think so.

JC: That's what I'm trying to say.

MEH: Right.

JC: And that brave and adventurous, and so forth, as Dreier and Rice, was it? Were. They needed and were fortunate to have Albers.

MEH: Yeah. I think Albers definitely determined the character of the school and the direction of the school. He arrived two months after it was founded, and it made the difference between its being what it became. I think—

JC: No. I think so.

MEH: There’s a statement I’m going to look for in North Carolina in an interview this

summer in which Rice, you know, just lamented the fact that the college might become controlled by a group of nincompoop artists, were his words. And Albers was crucial to the direction the school took.

JC: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

MEH: Without doubt. You went back to Black Mountain in the summer of ’53. This was the summer—

JC: I did?

MEH: Well, this was the summer that—this won't at all resemble the beautiful program that was printed.

JC: So, I was there three summers? No. Only two.

MEH: So, you didn't go back. Then I want to know—I understood that you designed this program. It's intaglio, and I typed it because I couldn't do it in—

JC: No. I didn't go back.

MEH: You didn't go back?

JC: No.

MEH: Then you had really nothing to do with this program. I understood you designed it.

JC: Oh, yes. Well, this is the one that was where we used no ink.

MEH: Yes . It's intaglio . It's beautifully done.

JC: Well, yes, I did design it.

MEH: That was the summer of '53.

JC: Yes.

MEH: So you went three summers. [**MEH:** Cage taught in the summers of 1948 and 1952 and visited in 1953.]

JC: I did?

MEH: Right. See, I didn't think you had gone that summer, and then—I don't think you were on the faculty that summer. You must have just done down—

JC: You're sure this wasn't '52?

MEH: Positive. See, this is the summer that Merce had his dancers with him.

JC: I see.

MEH: Which was '53.

JC: So then we were there all those times. And this time Earle Brown was there.

MEH: Right.

JC: And he and I did the printing of this, but I did the designing of it.

MEH: You did the designing.

JC: The design of this is now inscribed in a recent catalog to Earle. And that's why I say that I did it.

MEH: No. I had wondered. Someone had said Earle Brown had done it, and I think David Tudor said you had done it.

JC: No. I did it.

MEH: And I decided to ask.

JC: Um—

[CONVERSATION WITH HOUSEKEEPER NOT TRANSCRIBED.]

MEH: This summer I think also Paul Williams came down and Vera and—

JC: Weren't they already there?

MEH: They were there for the summer and into the fall. I don't—

JC: And maybe—Which summer were they married?

MEH: Oh, long before. Back in the—in fact, I think she graduated—

JC: No. I was present at the Black Mountain marriage ceremony of the two which was in the Quiet House.

MEH: Ah-so. That would have been in '48 then.

JC: Really?

MEH: I think she was a Williams when she graduated that fall.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: Lippold came down and examined her for graduation. And it was in the Quiet House?

JC: Um-hm. It was just lovely.

MEH: I think it was this last summer of 1953 that those of you who formed the Stony Point community began formulating this.

JC: You mean the community? Formulating the community, or what?

MEH: The what?

JC: Formulating the community?

MEH: Yes. The Gate Hill Cooperative.

JC: Well, as I recall, it was not done at Black Mountain, but was—The first word I had of it was from Paul Williams when I was here in New York living still at Grant Street and Monroe. And he came and proposed this idea of the community.

MEH: And what was he trying to do?

JC: He was an architect, but he didn't wish to be a licensed architect. And so he wanted a situation in which he could freely build without constraints from city governments. And he elected to invite, so to speak, people to join such a community. And the people he invited were people who connected with Black

Mountain, whom he knew. The original idea was that since he was already supporting my work and David Tudor's work with music on magnetic tape to make a tape studio out in the country and to also make a dance theatre for Merce Cunningham. And neither one of those projects developed, because probably the amount of money that he put into the land and the building of the houses made both him and Vera feel that they had done enough by doing that. So when we got out there, our reasons for going, namely, to have a studio and to have a theatre, had simply fallen by the wayside. But I had, meanwhile, developed my interest in mushrooms and nature, so I was glad to be there in any case.

MEH: You had never noticed the mushrooms at Black Mountain?

JC: No. I had always lived in the cities, and when I went to Black Mountain, I had, even then, the feeling that the insects and whatnot in the country were far more irritating than the cockroaches in the cities. And it was only in Stony Point that I discovered that I was starved for nature and took to walking in the woods. And my whole attitude toward insects changed.

MEH: You prefer insects to cockroaches now?

JC: I prefer being bitten by mosquitoes to cockroaches. Yes.

MEH: So you actually, even though you didn't have your theatre, you stayed at Stony Point? You did establish a residence there and live there?

JC: From '54—(pardon me)—until, oh, the first time I left was in—must have been '60 or '61, when I was made a fellow at Wesleyan University and then in '67, when I was made a composer-in-residence at the University of Cincinnati. Then the two following years, '67 through '69, I was at the University of Illinois, and

then at the University of California, Davis. And I needed the large income that all of these fellowships and residencies gave me, because I became in their late life the sole support of my mother and father. So that I was obliged to make a great deal of money. Whereas up until 1958, I never knew where the next dollar was coming from. And it was in '58 that I won the TV quiz in Italy. That was the first income that I—sizeable income that I had—and I spent most of it to buy a Volkswagen bus for the dance company so that we could tour.

MEH: Right. This was before the era of the endowment.

JC: Oh, yes. We were always penniless. And this was true of Rauschenberg. It was less true of Richard Lippold because his work sold almost immediately

MEH: He was doing major commissions in the fifties, architectural commissions.

JC: Um-hm. And he frequently helped Merce and me in our tours to Europe. He would contribute money. Black Mountain was characterized by poverty. And the food was very—was almost vegetarian. There was very little meat. So that the beefsteak became, oh, a dream. And eventually people would leave Black Mountain, you know, and they'd get away and just go and eat a steak someplace. They were so hungry. And so that it was absolutely reasonable, when the college finally collapsed, that the teachers, instead of being paid with money, were paid with steaks that came from the slaughtering of the college's own cattle.

MEH: Yeah. And all of these cattle had been there when you were eating—

JC: Yes.

MEH —potatoes and green beans?

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: Right. Perhaps, though, the poverty of the college was a stimulus.

JC: I don't agree with that kind of thinking. I don't think an artist has to be down-and-out in order to do his work.

MEH: Oh, yeah. I don't mean with being down-and-out is conducive to creative work although certainly, there were people who at Black Mountain were psychologically down-and-out at times.

[END OF SIDE 1. BEGINNING OF SIDE 2.]

JC: Okay. You're on.

MEH: [IRRELEVANT STATEMENT DELETED] I'm not saying this in the sense of its being down-and-out—that you create better if you're poor and hungry. But I wonder if a large financial vested interest in the college might have changed the nature of the college?

JC: Oh, surely. Anything would have changed it. And that would have changed it. It’s just that I—And it’s true that it was very poor, and it’s true that the work was very good. But I don't think we should draw lines simply because it was poor that that was why the work was good. That's all I think.

MEH: Oh, right. Yeah. Right.

JC: I think that if we were to make a new situation now, not the same as Black Mountain, that we ought not to think, for instance, if we're making a new one, that we should begin with poverty. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Right.

JC: That's all I'm saying.

MEH: Yeah. We might have to.

JC: We might have to, but I don't think that should be primary in our minds.

MEH: No. I think some of the problems that M.C. had at the college and some of the tensions that developed really grew out of the poverty. It was stressful especially for the older people. When Albers left in 1948, he was sixty. And people had to consider what was going to happen to them when they left the college at sixty-five. Who was going to hire them? How could they make a living? There was this constant tension. People with families were, you know, always worrying about how they could pay the dentist bill, how they could have new shoes for the kids. And so I think the poverty added to the tension at the college at points.

JC: Certainly.

MEH: Just the very basic necessities of life became an issue.

JC: Yes. I remember when I—you see, I had been poor all my life, and it wasn't until I was fifty years old that I began making money. And I remember that this idea passed through my mind that: Will I be working as much now that I'm comfortable? And I discovered that I worked even more when I was comfortable than I did when I had been uncomfortable. The amount of work that I did at Wesleyan University when I was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies—I was obliged to make a report of it. It was absolutely extra-ordinary.

MEH: Right. You think this is because you were comfortable or because you had a commitment?

JC: It was because absolutely every minute of the day was available for the work, and none of it had to be set aside for where does the next meal come from.

MEH: No. I find that now I have this grant, and I don’t constantly balance my bank account, I spend money generally for what I need—

JC: Yes.

MEH: —and buy things that don't—

JC: I don't want more things than—ever. I mean, I don't have anything more than before, really. It's just that I'm able to give all my time to what I'm doing. My problem now is the kind of use of the time that you are making now, and you are only one of many.

MEH: Right.

JC: So that I now have to do my work in between requests from other people.

MEH: You compose and your write.

JC: Heavens yes. Why? I have to compose, though, with the kitchen timer now. I had it on before you came, because I knew I had about forty-five minutes available to work.

MEH: I've become, you see, so involved in reading your ideas and hear so little of your music, you, know being played. And so I was wondering—I have a friend who plays the flute, and he asked if you'd written anything for flute in electronic—

JC: Um-hm.

MH: Okay. He said, "Well, tell him to compose something." And I said, "Does he just write all the time or does he compose?"

JC: No. There are many pieces for flute, tell him.

MEH: Oh, I'll—

JC: Albers' teaching was that nobody did <u>his</u> work, you know. They—no one turned out work that looked like Albers'. Each one did his own work. And Rauschenberg is a great example of that. And it was the result of Albers'

teaching. He gave them fantastic things to do that opened their minds.

MEH: Did you attend Albers' classes, or—?

JC: I may have attended one or I was told about it so clearly that I have the feeling that I was there. But he would do peculiar things like asking people to change their position, their habits of looking, and stand on their heads, for instance, you know, or look like that at things, in order to get them to change what it was they did when they made something. It reminded me of an exercise that Mark Tobey used to give his students, which was to look at something—a still life—and then go and put their noses against the wall and their toes and draw with charcoal on paper what they had seen in a physical situation where they couldn't, you see. It was that kind of exercise that Albers would give. Not the same, but he would—he was able to alter people's—and open up their eyes in terms of what they were going to do.

MEH: This is where I see of tremendous influence on someone like Rauschenberg, whereas his product does not resemble Albers', but the process—[PHONE RINGS]

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

MEH: No. I turned it back on.

JC: The people who should be represented in Black Mountain music as far as I know—and you may be able to add to these names—are Stefan Wolpe, who was the last one to be there. Lou Harrison—

MEH: Okay. Digressing, you were responsible for Lou Harrison's coming there, weren't you?

JC: Yes.

MEH: Right.

JC: And myself, and Jalowetz, and this man you mentioned. I don't know of any others.

MEH: Let me see.

JC: And that's apart from the students.

MEH: Yes.

JC: Jay Watt. And do you know of any other brilliant music students? I don't.

MEH: Not really brilliant.

JC: No.

MEH: In their product.

JC: But if you had all of those, you would have the atmosphere that was there.

MEH: Would you include David Tudor's work as a composer?

JC: No, not as a composer. As a pianist. He didn't do any composing there except to help me with the *Williams Mix*.

MEH: Right.

JC: His composition dates from, oh, I don't know just when it dates from, but I would say from something like—well, from "Rain Forest." Oh, no, from "Bandoneon," the work called "Bandoneon!" which was premiered at the Nine Evenings for Experiments in Art and Technology.

MEH: Which is where? I'm not familiar with—

JC: Here in New York? You don't know the Nine Evenings?

MEH: No.

JC: But you've seen David?

MEH: Yes.

JC: Well, that was his first public performance of his work.

MEH: Ah-so. I'll have to check back with him.

JC: Right.

MEH: We talked mainly about Black Mountain when I talked to him.

JC: Yeah. Well, his work dates from the Nine Evenings at the Armory here, and that was an important thing. And then following that was his "Rainforest" for Merce Cunningham, and then his "Pavilion" in Osaka for the Pepsi-Cola. [LOUD RATTLING OF PAPER IN BACKGROUND BY HOUSEKEEPER]

MEH: Right.

JC: And then subsequent work.

MEH: Yes. You had known Lou Harrison in New York.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: And he was composing at this time.

JC: Um-hm.

MEH: How was it that he came to Black Mountain?

JC: Well, these are remarks that I would rather have you stop—

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

JC: Well, then I don't have to worry. Lou had had a nervous breakdown, and I was the one who cared for him, because there were no members of his family here. We were both poor as church mice, and he was in great need of hospitalization. I was able to raise money, actually, from Charles Ives to pay for the necessary hospital bills, and then finally got him into the hospital up at 168th Street, which was free. When he recovered, which was a long time. I forget the dates of that illness, but every time he was taken out of the hospital, it was I who took him

out. I had to be with him every minute for, say, three or four days a week, and then take him back to the hospital until he was allowed to go out entirely. Well, it was clear from that whole situation that he needed an environment less nerve-wracking than an urban environment, and so I thought of Black Mountain. I'm sure he liked the idea, and they did too. So there he was.

MEH: Duberman—he doesn't indicate this. He says it rather blatantly—that the feeling was that Wolpe had pushed Harrison out of Black Mountain.

JC: Well, Lou had then invited—invited me and invited Stefan. And he would invite other people—he's a very generous person—to Black Mountain to join the faculty. When he invited Stefan, Stefan not only accepted, but then proceeded to usurp Lou's proper position there, which was to teach composition.

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: - Finally, Stefan, I believe, remained, and Lou was eliminated, because Lou was still on the weak side. [**MEH:** Harrison had accepted a Guggenheim Fellowship.]

MEH: How would you describe Olson's role in the community at that time?

JC: Pardon?

MEH: How would you describe Olson's role in the community at that time?

JC: As I already have, as the tallest man. [LAUGHS]

MEH: As the tallest man. Duberman sees this period as an anarchy, and I see it as a monarchy.

JC: I <u>think</u> that you're both right. Olson was incapable of holding the place together, and so the anarchy. And he was terrifying when he attempted to assert his will, because of his size. I remember an argument with him in which he made me

feel absolutely miserable and completely separate from him. So he was capable of being a monarch, but an ineffective one, only arousing indignation on the part of the people whom he told what to do or whom he disagreed with. He was an impossible head of an institution—hopeless.

MEH: Even though Black Mountain wasn't quite an institution.

JC: Right. But he was hopeless in a principal position.

MEH: Right.

JC: He was, of course, a very great poet.

MEH: Um hm.

TAPE INTERRUPTS.

MEH: It's also listed in here. "Water Music" is listed as having been played on August 12th, 1952.

JC: Well, that's what it is.

MEH: So it was "Water Music"?

JC: My idea about the "Water Music" was to change its title according to either when it was played or where it was played—when or where.

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: And "Water Music". So that then when it was played the first time, it was called "66 West 12th."

MEH: Ah-so.

JC: Then it was played at Black Mountain, and it was called "August 12th, 1952". And when it was played at Maverick, it was called _____ . And when it was played here, it was called "Proctor Hall, GC". And then these other times it was called "Water Music."

MEH: Um-hm. It has a chronology of names . It's like building a family name and adding—

JC: Right.

MEH: —one name every generation. Another piece I was curious about—in the summer of '50, one of your pieces was premiered at the college.

JC: The "Music of Changes", wasn't it?

MEH: No. That was '51.

JC: Uh-huh.

MEH: It was—And David Tudor played the "Part One" that summer, and then he played the whole thing the next summer. But in the summer of '50', your "String Quartet in Four Parts"—

JC: Oh, that.

MEH: —was played at the college. And I was—These are the musicians who played.

JC: Uh-huh.

MEH: And I just wondered how—if you had any idea how that happened?

JC: Well, there was a string quartet there.

MEH: Right.

JC: And so they played it.

MEH: Right. Since it was a premier, I didn't know if you had particular associations.

JC: Was that the first performance?

MEH: According to the program, and according to this.

JC: It is.

MEH: Um-hm.

JC: I had forgotten that. I don't <u>think</u> I was present.

MEH: No. I don't think you were. But, generally, you know, if it’s a premier of a piece, then there's some contact between the composer and musicians.

JC: Yes. The first time I heard it was with the New Music String Quartet, '51.

[END OF INTERVIEW. END OF TRANSCRIPT.]