

MH: Okay, we're rolling. So today is March 29, and we are at the wonderful Spartan Instruments in Lowell, Massachusetts, with?

CP: Chris Pantazelos.

MH: Who we're delighted to have coming back to the Lowell Folk Festival this summer. So we just want to catch up, because it's been a while since I've spoken with you and I want to hear what you're doing. When did you actually open this?

CP: About a year ago actually, I started moving in here late March, early April and I was pretty much open by May 1st.

MH: Okay. And remind me of the history – so you first apprenticed under Peter?

CP: Yeah, there he is, down at Unique Strings,

MH: So tell me, how did you find yourself at his shop?

CP: Yes, so I actually had studied classical guitar at the Boston Conservatory, I was sent to maestro **Reuben Gregory** for some private tutoring, uh, with ear training and all that and he had known Peter because Peter had worked on his violin and bow and all that, and Reuben Gregory was raving about what a great job Peter had done on his instruments in the past, so at that point I needed some work on my classical guitar, this was 1985, but to preface that, before that in '79 when I had moved here from Greece for the third time, because I first came in '68, so '78 I came for the third time, I made a guitar on my own with some books, but I did it in the basement of where I was living at the time. So that guitar was okay. Not great, not bad, not great but I showed it to Peter. So after Reuben suggested I went and I met Peter in '85, it was August of '85, but I showed him the instrument, he says, "You know, it's got potential," so you know it almost instantly occurred to me right then and there to ask Peter if he would take me on as an apprentice because I was so fascinated with what he did. So even though I had built a guitar on my own I had really not decided in my mind that I wanted to do this as a living. But once I went in and I met Peter, then I just knew it, I just right there asked him, "Would you take me on?" and he said "Sure!"

MH: That's fabulous. Now I remember reading somewhere, maybe on your website, that your father played bouzouki?

CP: Yes.

MH: But you – were not encouraged? Talk a little bit about what would he have thought about you going into this as a living?

CP: Well because of the crafts in Greece at that time in the village, the scope, the reach of the craftsman was pretty limited - but in spite of that, I do remember as a kid he had an old bouzouki that he played and he put out of reach where I snuck and plucked the strings

making sure that they didn't hear me! So I remember that, but also really, you see because people in the villages in Greece had to live through the war, actually when the Germans invaded and then the whole mess with the civil war that lasted until 1948 so we're talking about from 1940 until '48, a very rough time in Greece where people really suffered and the crafts, you know they wanted to make sure that you would secure a good living. So that's why a lot of them, including my parents, decided to immigrate and they came here as migrants, you know. So they came here seeking a future and of course like everyone else they wanted to get a job that you could make a living at.

MH: What job did your father get?

CP: So he, he worked in restaurants mostly and sometimes working two jobs, day and night, and so did my mother - you know that whole thing, and whatever she could get like in factories making clothing or in laundry and so on. So they, they worked hard and they wanted us to hopefully get an education and all that. So they were not really thrilled about the idea of music and musical instruments, but at the same time I think they were not as rigid or as strict I would say as a lot of other people would have been in their case, and even though my parents were not very educated I think over the years they sort of went along with what I decided to do, and with my brother and sister also. So I didn't meet that much resistance, hopefully. (Laughs)

MH: That's good! And then you worked with Peter for how long? A long time?

CP: Yes I started with Peter in '85 like I said, and until two years ago when Peter unfortunately, well actually three years ago Peter became ill he could not work and I kept working there at his shop until almost exactly one year ago, meaning the spring of 2015. And then I decided to move closer to home here and open up my shop here, and I wanted to be more in the business of building instruments - guitars mostly - as opposed to repairing, but I'm still doing a lot of repairing and I'm still struggling to find the time to do the building. So it's good, you know in a way it's good. It helps pay the bills, but I'm not complaining because every instrument that needs to be repaired has a history of it's own. Sometimes you have to deal with all instruments that are quite a challenge to repair and it becomes sort of a challenge to find a way to repair an instrument that years ago we would've thrown away in the trash. You know, so you have to, every one is a puzzle to solve and say "how can I repair this and make it survive?" work it and not only to be because medically to look viable but to actually function, to actually bring it back to life and make it work again and take the stress of putting new strings on it and so on.

MH: Exactly. So, what is your favorite instrument to make?

CP: All of them!

MH: All of them, you love all of them. (Laughs) So what are you working on currently?

CP: I'm working on several things actually in terms of repairs as you can see, around here and doing everything from bouzouki to guitar to ouds and lutes and so on. In terms of

building, I'm sort of in the middle of a building projects I'm building an acoustic bass, guitar, I'm building a steel string guitar, a little bacalama for my son, some bouzouki projects and I just finished a couple of oud forms so I can build some oud both Turkish and Arabic.

MH: and can you explain the difference between those two?

CP: Sure. So the terms follow pretty much the styles of music because Turkish and Arabic have some distinctions between them in terms of style of music. In very, very general terms I would say Turkish is more melodic music, Arabic is very rhythmic or percussive. And so the oud for the Turkish music is usually smaller than the Arabic, it does not have as much ornamentation on it and so obviously conversely the Arabic instrument is bigger and has more ornamentation on it usually. And so the size is basically the difference and the tuning. One instrument is, they're tuned apart by one step. For example the Turkish we call it D tuning, we call the Arabic a C tuning, so after the first string.

MH: Yeah. (Aside) Feel free to ask questions too! (Laughs) , So just before we leave the topic of Peter, is that shop not open anymore?

CP: Unfortunately, and very sadly, Peter lost his son, I believe he died on the 16th of this month. I saw Peter, uh, actually he is a man that always had a lot of moral strength and I think he was holding up better than I expected frankly. I mean obviously I cannot feel his pain but you know the funeral and the wake I think he was holding it better than expected. So unfortunately Peter has not been able to work. Matthew, who died, was hoping to go on but unfortunately that's not the case anymore. So Peter's other son Nicholas is just as gifted, and Matthew incidentally was incredibly, incredibly talented and I mean, honestly he was the best artist that I know of that I had seen in modern Art right now. Both sculpture and painting. And he was incredibly talented, he would've made a wonderful lives here, and he was hoping to, unfortunately we lost him. Peter's other son Nicholas, his younger son, is also very talented and I actually hope that he will decide to take it over. I'm hoping, it would be nice, it would be nice.

MH: Well because I remember everybody describing it as a center, a gathering place for musicians?

CP: Wt was, it was. I think a shop like that does become one. I mean it's becoming such a thing for me here as well, and inevitably musicians sort of want to be not only with a craftsman that may build and repair their instrument, but it often becomes a meeting place for musicians to see other musicians as well. And if you're Hospitable like Peter was in like I've learned to be in this business, I think you welcome your friends and clients and I've learned from Peter that you can work and continue to have people and have a cup of coffee and socialize while you work. And I've learned to do that. Actually Peter once in a while got carried away and do more socializing then work, (laughs) but he was an incredible craftsmen but I try to be a good boy and keep working while I socialize. (Laughs)

MH: (laughs) Well, okay and where in Greece was your family from?

CP: From Sparta.

MH: Sparta, of course.

CP: My village that you see up there is called Georgeettzy meaning Georgetown, loosely translated into English, so the Peloponnesus, the southern area of Greece, near Sparta, yeah. We're Sparti.

MH: okay. Um, I wanted to ask a little bit about the inlay the beautiful inlay. Do you have any to look at that you've done?

CP: Sure, yeah, yeah actually I do I have a jazz guitar here that I am keeping. I built this and I'm keeping it for my son. The reason is that the wood that I used on the back and sides is carved from his mother's maple tree that was felled in his mother's yard back in 2004. So I built this jazz guitar recently, actually a couple of years ago I think, actually it was labeled 2008. So, it's a jazz guitar that I built to keep for him and I've decorated it with decorations in, how about if I turn it, inspired with decorations by the Greek bouzouki, especially on the peg guard as you can see.

MH: And what are those materials? Is that real mother of pearl, or...

CP: Yes. You have some pearl, some abalone, some reconstituted stones like turquoise, for example the blue around the wings of the butterfly there, you have, the background is what is called, like imitation tortoise, yes it's like a brown imitation tortoise, incidentally it is illegal to use real tortoise these days and real Ivory, so we use substitutes. So those are the primary materials, pearl abalone and some reconstituted like the yellow and the green I reconstituted materials. Usually they're cast from the Industry of semi precious stones, cast in the resin into a sheet. So that's pretty much...

MH: Can you just strum it?

CP: Oh, sure. (strums)

MH: That is if it's in tune!

CP: Hopefully the sound, the sound of a jazz guitar, not that I can play...

MH: Resonant.

CP: Yeah.

MH: So is it curly maple?

CP: Yes, yeah. When they filled the street the harvester said it was Norwegian maple. I really haven't - Because there's so many species, I cannot say that with any authority but it is possible because species did cross the Atlantic back-and-forth, so even though Maple is native to this continent it's possible that it's one of the species. But it does have properties very similar to the European Maples that I use in this country, or Europe as well which is Lighter Wood than American hard maple. So it's quite appropriate for a jazz guitar.

MH: It's beautiful. And the back, yeah, the green is really stunning.

CP: Most American players would find it excessive.

MH: Oh you mean the ornamentation?

CP: Yeah, because you know the American palate is a little bit more conservative. But like I said, I sort of did this intending to keep it for my son and with the inspiration of the decorations from the bouzoukis. As a matter of fact the peg guard itself is the exact peg guard of the bouzouki, it would just have been rotated and be in here, around here instead of reaching all the way up.

MH: Uh huh - and how old is your son?

CP: He's, uh - sixteen.

MH: And he plays?

CP: Well, he plays drums. He sort of strums the guitar, a few years back he was doing more of that. He wanted to play the Greek bouzouki and the baklama, now he's more into the drums. But he's doing a good job, he's coming along. He's been playing for about a year and a half and he's coming along. So once in a while I get him to strum and I still think that one of these days he's going to get back in to the guitar or the bouzouki or whatever else he chooses to play.

AS: Does he ever listen to Greek music?

CP: All the time actually, and he has a very good understanding of music. But he has a great, great diversity in his taste for music. Of course most of his likes right now are with modern music and you know - but I say give it time. But he does listen to a lot of Greek music, middle eastern music - he's gotten to meet a lot of my clients and customers because he actually comes here after school most days and we do some crafting, he sits and does his homework here. So he's very talented as well, and he's gotten to meet a lot of the musicians, he actually knows them personally, he appreciates the music, yeah.

MH: Wonderful. And are the clients coming from close by in Lowell or are a wider - where are they coming from?

CP: Uh, I would say both actually. Meaning I do have new clients that have discovered me in this area. University of Massachusetts in Lowell obviously has a very good music department and some of the students from there, but also a lot of the clients that were always with me in the past, you know, have stayed with me. And unfortunately since Peter has not been able to work, most of those clients have come with me and I appreciate that. So, again you can be in state, in the area of out of state and so on, so...

MH: Well and there we know William, but how many luthiers would you say there are in Massachusetts? Roughly?

CP: I honestly don't know. What I do know is that its very difficult for a luthier shop to be in business in – I can say Massachusetts. A few years back I opened up the phone book and in terms of the yellow pages, in terms of making instruments I saw about eight entries or eight people listed. So I said, let me make a phone call, to see you know are these people still in business? So it was the current book of that year, I think it was in 2006 or 7, so out of all eight I think no more then two were still in business. So it's a sad thing but you know it is difficult. It's difficult to make a living in the crafts and it is particularly difficult to be a builder only. So you do repairs as well, it does help.

MH: That's probably true of violin makers, and a lot of times, it takes a lot of self promoting to make it in the arts and the crafts and you can obviously see the positive to that. Yes there are people who are overdoing it and self promoting beyond their actual talent, but also it's understandable that people need to make a living.

MH: Well I think probably word of mouth, for musicians that's one of the best ways to get...

CP: Yeah, that's the way that traditionally we did business with Peter down at Unique Strings and that's the way I'm still doing business. It's mostly word of mouth through my clients.

MH: Okay. Is there anything that you're working on that we could watch you do a little bit of?

CP: Oh! Yeah, today actually I was going to make an appoliance or a tool, so that's what you saw me in the middle of, cutting wood there. But lets see, in terms of construction? Well I can show you what I'm in the middle of in terms of construction, how's that?

MH: Yeah!

CP: Okay, so I'll just go around here, and I'll have to dust these instruments off because I haven't worked on them for a while.

MH: Okay.

CP: But what I'll show you is this guitar here that is going to be a flat top guitar...

MH: Is that ebony? What is this?

CP: Oh that's rosewood. Let me dust it off. Like I said, it was covered with dust. So actually with the move and everything I haven't had a chance to work on it at all, but any day now I literally expect to be working back on it. I have to finish putting the binding on it. I already have, somewhere around here, a fingerboard made for it. So it will be a flat top folk guitar. As you can see here there's a little bit less decoration on the peg guards, same outline but less decoration. (Aside) I can hold it up here?

MH: No, no, keep talking, it's better.

CP: So I need to finish the binding. The bridge blank I have made, I have the fingerboard blank all ready to go and of course it will be sanded and cleaned up and all of that, there will be a rod in the neck but it is...

MH: So another question: so on a violin, this is called perfling, that goes around?

CP: Yes.

MH: So how do you do it? Do you use a machine or?

CP: Both ways, so I use sort of a combination of a small tool called a router. So basically you have to rout a small channel around the circumference here, or the perimeter I should say, and you know I use a combination of the electrical tools and some hand tools to clean it up to the point that it will take the binding. So here you can see that I have not started any inlay yet.

MH: No.

CP: But the center strip, obviously it's there and on the top I've started, and usually what I do is I try to keep thematic unity in terms of the appearance of the instrument so what you see here, for example, is the binding around the rosette in the center is what will be here so you'll have some – we start with the abalone, and then I'll have this rose pattern that I made out of woods, so when varnished these woods really look great. The yellow is called something like silkwood and the red is blood wood, the same woods will be used around the perimeter here as well as the back, they are pretty much the same code of woods that I use.

MH: Right.

CP: So, I did answer your question? So this is rosewood here, and its India rosewood these days.

MH: Where do you get your woods?

CP: There are some suppliers that sell for the industry. They sell a set of sides and back, so another words two planks long enough to make the sides, two planks long and wide enough to make the back.

MH: And where are they located?

CP: All over the country actually. There are several suppliers and I do business with a few of them and you know the wood, this is Indian rosewood, does come from India and in old times you see a lot of what was known as Brazilian rosewood which has, again, become illegal to export out of Brazil and to import into the United States. However, sometimes old stumps that were left in the ground, when they were harvesting in the old days they didn't care to harvest the tree very low into the ground so some old stumps are actually being harvested today and sold. However they have a lot of irregular grain and they're very unstable, so unless you actually age that wood, it's not advisable to use it. And actually, I do that with all of my wood anyway. When I buy wood, I like to let it sit for several years and its air dry in my shop or where it's stored for several years before I use it.

MH: Um, the... (looking at tools) Actually I have my father's little Delta bandsaw like that. (laughs)

CP: Yeah, I have a few power tools. I find, most of the work I find I'm very comfortable doing by hand believe it or not, it's just as efficient. But some of the basic work, yeah okay we'll use the bandsaw or the table saws and so on...

MH: Sure, sure. And the rosettes? Those are for what instruments?

CP: The rosettes that you see here, a pattern for example that I'm going to cut for a oud.

MH: Okay.

CP: And there's all kinds of patterns. You're actually looking at that upside down, I'll turn it. It's not a very clean pattern, the photocopy – I can see if I have some better ones – but the, um, these are actually some rosettes that were already cut – but because I'm familiar with the pattern I can cut it without much of a problem.

MH: How do you cut it? Are you using...

CP: On a little – excuse me -

MH: Oh can you actually hold it? So the light comes...

CP: Oh sure. How's that, does that work?

MH: Yup. That's good.

CP: So I cut it on a little coping saw.

MH: A coping saw.

CP: Yeah. So actually it is hand done, in other words – excuse me – the blade has to go through – I feed this into the blade instead of the pattern but it's still much done by hand, only the electricity moves the blade, that's it.

MH: Sure. And you're cutting what I remember Peter talking about some – it was a plastic, basically?

CP: Yeah I actually choose to use common vinyl sheet. Peter used a lot of, uh – I can't remember what the plastic he was using, but I use just common vinyl sheet, I find the color's right and everything. The material that Peter used had a little more of a translucency, almost like a bone appearance, but again bone comes in all kinds of shades. You can get that appearance in bone or you can get a dark white like this so...

MH: Yeah, and then over time it ages.

CP: Yeah, so the material that Peter used does age a little bit more than vinyl and vinyl stays a little bit whiter, but again it's just a matter of taste and what you find easier to work with. Because I use vinyl for bindings as well, I've just gotten comfortable working with it, so...

MH: That's great.

CP: That's what I use. This is another pattern there. A very simple pattern, but this actually might be one that my son cut. Believe it or not, he cut two sets and he did a very good job.

MH: Yeah - let's hope he does!

CP: Yeah, I still have to refine it,

MH: Refine, sand it,

CP: Well actually you can like scrape it, see how these little almost like hairs up here, this is a little bit more refined over here, yeah that's a little bit more refined right there. But that's what you have for patterns. And they're usually used inside the oud rosettes – that's actually the very first one that my son cut!

MH: Oh really? And did you make that instrument or was that a repair?

CP: No that's an instrument that I restored, yes.

MH: Do we have one that you made in here?

CP: An oud, here? No, there isn't one that I made here, there are several that I I'm working on but there isn't one and I do have some photographs in my camera that we can use...

MH: Okay, so we can use whatever you would like to be shown.

CP: Yeah, okay. I can email them to you. There are actually some on the website,

MH: Okay, there are some...

CP: The website that shows my new shop here has some photographs but the old website, there's a link to the old website and it has a lot more photographs of instruments from the past, yeah.

MH: Okay. Well let me just (aside) – do you have any other questions? Let me see if I can get some photos...

AS: What is that smaller instrument right there?

CP: That is the baglama that I'm building for my son. So basically its like a soprano bouzouki. And again that has some sentimental value because the wood in the back, it's strips of European walnut, which is lighter then American walnut usually, and the lighter stave on the back is Cyprus, and both of those woods I actually brought in my suitcase years ago, that my father had cut on our property in Greece and I aged them for years. So it's got that sentimental value to it and that's why that's going to be his instrument.

AS: And it's six strings?

CP: It's six strings but it's actually what we would consider a three course, yeah, so its double strings, yeah.

MH: Uh huh.

CP: Oh and the other instrument that I meant to show you Maggie, that I'm working on currently is over there as well and that is an experimental project and it is a bass guitar actually, but an acoustic bass guitar. So, very similar to the acoustic guitar that I just showed you, but this will be a bass and maybe I'll have a little bit more done on both of these by the time we get to the festival I'll show them over there. But the idea with this instrument is that we need the string length of a bass – let me just give it a cleaning – so about 34 inches, about 86 centimeters, which is the common string length that most guitar style bass players play, in other words not a violin style bass but a guitar oriented bass player plays. What happens is that on the market today, the majority of acoustic bass guitars are on a small body. In other words, long string length on a small body. But I build an instrument here with a pretty big body, so most people are saying "guitarrone" when they see this. And it is, actually, it is closer in size to the guitarrone, uh, but I did a

little bit of research before building this instrument and the majority of my research was to make sure that it can be functional, so I purposely designed it so the lower bouts are quite wide. The upper bout is quite narrow because the way most bass players play is on their lap and so this should not be in the way, here, that is sort of irrelevant there. So you play up here, yeah.

MH: Oh, I can't wait to hear what that sounds like, right?

CP: I think it will sound good, and this was a commission from a friend of mine, and he's a bass player and his major complaint was, like most players, that the conventional instruments that are out there just have no acoustic sound and people have to amplify them. So it was agreed that we wanted an instrument with a much bigger body, and that's what we have here. So the width of this instrument actually is about the same as the length of most guitars, so we have about fifty centimeters here, most guitars' length is about you know 48 to 50, yeah. Though acoustic guitars can be a little bit long. So we have quite a big instrument. But it's, like I said it works well because like I said, I designed it so the upper bout can be narrower and manageable, so it works good.

MH: To be able to play, yeah. And is that person who commissioned it a professional musician?

CP: No, he's an amateur, as most people are – well actually he's a Greek player, so actually with ethnic music it's even more difficult to be a professional in this area.

MH: Mhmm – except for the Athena Restaurant or something, right? (laughs)

CP: (Laughs) Even all the people that play there, they all have another job!

MH: Yeah.

CP: I mean other than Fred, there, who is quite elderly now, most of them have another job. Fred was teaching and everything. But yeah, that's the bass, so I think it's at exactly the same stage as the other guitar.

MH: Yeah. So what happens – that gets cut away, right?

CP: Actually with my guitars, and if you notice on the jazz guitars as well, I actually extend the fingerboard and I put some extra frets. And I extend it longer on the treble side and shorter on the bass side, so that's all that reflects – there's going to be a little bit of an extension, yeah, where the fingerboard goes on there.

MH: Great, okay.

AS: What's the Greek musician scene like around here?

CP: Uh, well in Lowell actually there are two Greek restaurants and one of them has music every week. The other one I think occasionally, but it's nice to have that and of course with the economy gone bad, most of the bands and the music has suffered a lot and I think the Greek music and the arts and the crafts is not what it used to be.

AS: Yeah.

CP: And so it is more difficult for musicians to be professionals, it is more difficult to go and see live music at a restaurant. It's still there but its sporadic, it's here and there and some of them do attempt – some restaurants open up and feature music and it lasts however long it lasts. It's not like the old days where you had a restaurant feature music for years and years and they had become quite...

MH: Yeah. I think it's coming back though, live music.

CP: Yeah, let's hope so, yeah. But you know even parenthetically it was here, you know common American music, jazz clubs, in all kinds of big cities like Boston it's becoming more difficult to feature, for the nightclubs and the restaurants to feature music because the real estate prices are going up and they have to really look at the bottom line – is the music bringing in the clients? So then conversely a lot of the musicians are finding gigs outside of the big cities, so they're going to small towns. But again the hub of arts and crafts is shifting and it's not a standard like it used to be. You know hopefully we have more of an interest in the arts in general, in other words people taking up music, taking up instruments, becoming more aware of world music as well – that is something that is happening, especially with the Greek music, Arabic, Turkish and so on, is we're seeing more and more mainstream Americans who do not have a cultural affiliation to Greece and the Middle East picking up instruments from Greece and the Middle East. But I'll tell you categorically, in the old days when we assumed that music was brought into Europe, like the Renaissance music was brought in with the conquests? It wasn't. The crusaders brought back no musical instruments like our modern crusaders are bringing back no musical instruments. So in all the years that this Iraqi fiasco has been going on, I have not seen one soldier come in either Peter's shop or here, saying "I brought this instrument from the Middle East." It doesn't happen, you know merchants are the ones that carry music and culture.

MH: And refugees. Refugees too.

CP: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Okay. Do you have anything else you can think of? I want to get a picture of these walls. These people, are they relatives?

CP: That's my grandfather and his brother. This is Mano, who was the greatest, considered the Stradivari of the oud and one of his apprentices next to him, this is my family picture with my grandfather and his kids at the time, and that's my name and my son's name in Arabic.

MH: Oh right there – yeah!

CP: (Laughs) But in Greek pronunciation!

MH: Did you paint that?

CP: No, actually we went to the Islamic Center in...uh...

MH: Cambridge?

CP: No, uh, way out in Worcester.

MH: Oh in Worcester! Okay.

CP: In Worcester. They had like an open invitation day so we went and they were doing this calligraphy.

MH: Oh – that's lovely. So show me again your village?

CP: So, that's Greece, Athens is here just to give you a point of reference and Sparti is here, my village is to the North and it's called Gyorgitz, it's not listed but its where I have the pencil mark right there.

MH: Okay.

CP: So yeah, we're up in the mountains, the altitude is like way up there.

MH: Do you go back? Do you try to get back?

CP: Yeah, I try to get back. Last time we were there was 2013 the summer. So I'm hoping to go back this summer, we'll see if we can make it or not.

MH: And in this picture? Who's that?

CP: That is actually me when I was a boy, and – oh sorry go ahead – and when we came from Greece, a few days later my uncle took that picture and I'm the boy on the right,

MH: On the right!

CP: ...and then my sister and my little brother. Yeah.

MH: Wow. In Lynn you settled? Was there a big neighborhood?

CP: Yes there was quite a big community in Lynn, there still is actually. Lowell was the other big Greek community. Actually Lowell there was a huge Greek community,

competing with Chicago, New York. All of New England, I should say, was competing with Chicago and New York. Roslindale had a big section down there, Watertown, but Lowell was the biggest at least in New England. So, quite a big community and then I think Lynn was the secondary one.

AS: Do you come from like an Islamic background?

CP: No, no my family's Greek. There's very few Muslims in Greece, my family were Christians from Greece. But you know, these days, especially again with what you see, you have to appreciate other cultures. So I actually have a friend who's Jewish and he's actually the one who actually let me know about this and we both went, so you know you have to go show support and solidarity in a time of, yeah.

MH: Well then there's – you must know Ferdin Osgurin? Who's a Turkish musician and instrument maker – has made some instruments but is an amazing calligrapher.

CP: Yeah, yeah yeah! He does also the marbling of the paper, yeah yeah.

MH: But I think he's not able to work or he had some health issue...

CP: Oh, what a shame – what happened?

MH: I hope he's better. I think heart. I have to check in on him, yeah. Yeah there's a large community, I mean large! And is there a woman...Beth Cohen?

CP: Oh you haven't met Beth?

MH: I've met her but it's been years and years.

CP: Oh, Beth is great, yeah – she's a violinist, she actually does make a living in music, she teaches, she's a professional teacher, she does a lot of performances and free concerts also at Tufts. I went recently, they had a performance – actually she plays just about all string instruments! She's a Julliard grad on violin but she plays just about every string instrument from Greece and the Middle East, the Balkans and so on. So she had a program reflecting this, she titles it "The Art of the Bow," and she was presenting this and she had quite a few guest artists playing with her from Greek to Arabic and so on!

MH: Oh that's great! I wonder – what would you think – in the craft area we're going to have you and William in one 10x20 tent. What would it be like to have a musician or two on hand that could do demonstrations?

CP: Yeah, that would be great!

MH: Who would that be? For both instruments, I mean, is there anybody that could...

CP: Okay, actually yes because the fellow that I recommended to you is from South Carolina but was hoping to be in this area, but there's another local fellow who actually I repaired his oud recently, and his name – he's a young guy I think, probably no older than in his thirties but a really fantastic oud player – his name is Brian Anspegian.

MH: How do you spell his name?

CP: A – N – S...let me look and write it down for you. I'll find his phone number as well, and Brian is a great oud player, he'd be great to have, and I find some other names also for other musicians that may be interested.

MH: Yeah! I just think it might be nice. I mean, people come and they ask questions but then to have somebody there that could –

CP: Yeah, Brian is a very good musician and I'll think of some others as well and I'll let you know.

MH: We could ask William as well...

CP: William I think plays the guitar much more than I do or much better than I do as a classical guitarist, I kind of hack at it, so I think William would be a better classical performer.

MH: Okay. But it would be nice to have someone that could play guitar and cuatro.

CP: Yes, I'm not really an ensemble player but William may have some of his musician friends and then I'll ask a couple of other people. I have some bouzouki players, I have to ask them if they are available.

MH: Right, and then we have to figure out what to pay them.

CP: Yeah.

MH: Yeah we haven't done that in the past but I think it makes sense.

CP: Actually, you know you're right because I was thinking this is something new, I don't think it actually is something that has been done in that sense that you hire them to be there and perform right there, yeah.

MH: Right.

CP: So, I don't know if you've ever met Charlie Makrides, yeah...

MH: I haven't met him! But what about him? He's a great player.

CP: He's a great player, he's a virtuoso, wonderful.

MH: And he did an apprenticeship, he might make sense...

CP: Yeah that's right! We did the apprenticeship – yeah, yeah, yeah!

MH: You know, if he could be on hand to – can he play more than one instrument, or?

CP: Oh, he can play just about any instrument. He plays the bouzouki, the guitar, everything. I'll give him a call actually and see.

MH: Give him a call!

CP: To make sure and see if he's got the weekend free.

MH: Okay!

CP: And if he can make it, because he does take on some, whatever comes along, uh, but if he can't make it I'll see who else is available. Like I said, what happens is on the weekends is when they may have something going on.

MH: Yeah. Well we'll pay them! I mean it might not be enough. Where do they live, these two? I think he lives in...

CP: In Melrose or something like that?

MH: I think that's right. And Brian Auspugian...

CP: Brian, I think I have information handy, I may have it right around here actually. Yeah that's oud. And then, oh, um Jim, put down the name of Jim Speros as well, S-P-E-R-O-S, he's a guitar player but he has his group and he works with a lot of bouzouki players and so on.

MH: Well I might leave it to you! You would know better than I.

CP: Yeah, I'll find some people, yeah – actually I don't know if I have Brian's – well this was the job that I did for Brian – but I don't have...

MH: I like your system! (laughs)

CH: Yeeah, well you know what it is? When there's parts that I take off from an instrument,

MH: Yeah you need to keep them safe.

CP: Yeah and I keep the information there as well. So I don't have his number but I'll find it.

MH: Well, I'll talk to everybody but I think that this is a great idea, so maybe you decide, and...

CP: Yeah, that will be fine. Let me just see, I thought maybe something that I need – oh no, this is just my shopping list for today, sorry! (laughs)

MH: Okay! (laughs) “Felt and clamps and ply.” Do you know what we can do...

CP: No no, don't worry about it, I'll just put in another piece. No no, I don't need that! (laughs) Let me write that down for you, and I'll remember to give them a call. And – let's see – let me ask you this: remind me of what the process is for somebody to be a volunteer there. The reason is –

MH: Oh! You just go to the website and there's a thing for volunteers to register.

CP: Okay, you register online?

MH: To the Lowell Folk Festival. Yes. No they're always looking for volunteers.

CP: Okay, because I'm going to have my son there anyway and he can sit in as a volunteer but I thought maybe we could get him to be an official volunteer! (laughs)

MH: Yeah, wonderful!

CP: Because you know he does a lot of this, you know.

MH: That's great, yeah! And Millie will be in touch, so she'll deal with, um – that would be a really great thing to have in there. Okay. I don't even know if he would have to register as a volunteer if he's going to be doing that?

CP: Okay, so he can just be, yeah.

MH: But tell me when she's in touch with you. Arbigian, is that an Armenian name?

CP: Anspegian, yeah. And...

MH: And Spiros...

CP: Spiros, there, maybe that's a little more clear...

MH: Yeah, yeah that's great.

CP: Okay, so I'll remember to give these guys a call and see.

MH: Okay, and we'll put this in your – I don't have a pen but you do – so this goes in your archive, and our archives are actually all eventually going to the state archives, so it's sort of neat. So you're already in there, but...

CP: Yeah, is that program still going on? The apprenticeship?

MH: Yeah – actually the deadline is soon, I mean if you're interested –

CP: No I wasn't thinking about it in particular, although that may be a good idea at some point, yeah!

MH: It's still going on, its every other year but actually the deadline is April 12th, so if you're interested you'd have to, like, look at it, yeah.

CP: Maybe we'll look at it online!

MH: Look at it online! Go to Mass Cultural Council, or I can send you links.

CP: We'll look at it – maybe we could get him interested in doing that! So I can just use the shop address, or do you need home? It doesn't matter, right?

MH: Doesn't matter. Okay, so – “send apprenticeship...” so do you have questions about how it's done? I mean you did it before and it hasn't changed that much.

CP: No, just send the particulars though, in other words what time I need to be there and so on and so forth...

MH: It's for nine months.

CP: Oh the apprenticeship! I thought you were talking about the event.

MH: Oh, no Millie will help you with all of that! She's going to get you all of that, and actually it's great you're local.

CP: Okay, yeah actually I'll do it in reverse so...

MH: That's fine. Oh that will be great.

CP: Let's see, fax is...

MH: Oh we don't need that.

CP: Okay, and spartaninstruments@gmail.com.

MH: So you'll reach out to these – to a musician and see if, um,

CP: Yeah, yeah. So basically your budget is for one musician, right?

MH: I think so. And the budget is for each artisan, I mean it's really more of an honorarium, but its four hundred dollars, right? For each, for the weekend.

CP: Right, okay.

MH: Plus meals. So I can't imagine we would have any more then – I don't know, we can look at the budget.

CP: Okay because in other words if I can get one person to do Armenian music, one for Greek, there may be a budget for both? Yeah, okay I got you, yeah.

MH: Yeah. We can play with it. Great, that's great! Um, I don't think we have any more, unless you have anymore questions?

AS: (referring to photo) These are like older rabbitike?

CP: That's a photograph actually of some of the most famous musicians of their day, yeah, probably a studio photograph. So Rosa was the woman there and she was, I believe, a Sephardic Jew – no actually she was Jewish but not Sephardic, what do you call it?

MH: Ashkenazi.

CP: Ashkenazi, yeah, I believe from the – as a matter of fact, her last name was Askenazi, how you pronounced it in Greek, yeah.

MH: Wow!

CP: So I forget whether or not she was born in Greece, but she was one of the top singers of the time of the thirties and Boulis is the fellow standing, with a hybrid sort of instrument, sort of like between an oud and a steel strung instrument, like it had actually a skin on it. They call it the Ahenk, A-H-E-N-K.

MH: Ahenk.

CP: Yeah, and then Sempcisz was the violin player, yeah.

AS: Yeah, I have a record I think with that photo on it.

CP: Oh so you're familiar with the music! Yes!

AS: Yes I love the old ravetike stuff, it's so amazing.

MH: That's great!

CP: Yeah, yeah. There's a few – I may have had one or two other photographs from that era.

MH: Smyrna, Smyrnaika is – oh my gosh, wow this is huge! I had no idea.

CP: Yes it's right in this area, right in here you know, yeah. So Smyrna's right over here, somewhere you can't really see it but I had gone actually once, crossed over here and into Smyrna. Yeah so Smyrna is a big cosmopolitan city.

MH: Yup,

CP: I loved it, I mean I was there in '95 and I loved it. It's a beautiful city. It's obviously totally redone, but in Istanbul you know a beautiful city as well. I mean well worth visiting both. Really great.

MH: Okay! Oops, so we're great!

CP: See, now you're getting me to get back and work on these, yeah finish these!

MH: What would William think! (laughs)

CP: Actually I don't know if Bill has ever tried to build anything big like that – I'll try to have it down there, yeah.

MH: Okay, well thank you very much!

CP: Well there you go, see now I've got to get to work on that. I'll put the other projects aside!

MH: Good, good I'm glad we inspired you!

CP: Thank you!