John Combs: I started taking piano lessons at age 5 in the cultural center of Eastern Montana, which of course is, Miles City. [laughs] Then became interested in band music and started back in fifth grade and went through your typical high school band program. [unintelligible] in junior high and high school. I was interested in it and very good at it, and so I continued that through college I received my bachelor’s degree in education in music from the University of Montana. Taught music for three years in Shelby, Montana. Then went to the University of Southern California in Los Angeles for a year and a half, received my master’s degree, and came to Missoula, Montana and was employed as director of [unintelligible] and other instruments.

HH: How long?

JC: How long have I been here?

HH: Yeah.

JC: This is my 11th year.

HH: Okay. What is your idea of American cultural music?

JC: I saw that question before and thought, that’s very difficult because of the fact that what America is in terms of its diversity of cultures. So I guess you could answer it in what have we brought over from Europe or from Africa or from the Orient, and that is...and how it’s changed, that is, our culture. Or you could say what is it that we have developed while we’re here. So it’s a very long, complex answer, I think, to what could be a simple question. I suppose if...from what I have learned, I would say that obviously the influences of jazz are our own, and I think in my medium, I suppose to a certain extent, American band music is our own. There are, of
course, other wind pieces especially of European origin, but we have spent a great deal of time creating original band works. So I would think that that would also kind of [unintelligible] some original cultural music on record.

HH: [unintelligible]?

JC: Yeah, well that’s pretty much what’s being written for us. A lot of it depending on what the skill level is of the ensemble, there’s a lot of music that’s very run of the mill, putting [unintelligible], cranking it out—that sort of thing. Mostly with the younger groups. But the more advanced groups really get into some music that I think is going to be of more lasting quality. Of course, that’s what that group [unintelligible], and it’s very, very challenging and very interesting to perform, and it is music that allows for not only intellectual interest but also emotional interest [unintelligible] music that I think [unintelligible].

HH: Along with that, do you feel that fans [unintelligible] is increasing?

JC: I don’t have any statistics to support it but...other than the fact that band programs are continuing throughout the United States and there are tens of thousands of them. And every year, I get albums and albums of recordings that publishers want to show you how you could, of course, purchase for your ensemble songs which are...you know, talked about, some of which aren’t great and some of which are really very, very good pieces of music. So I think there’s a tremendous amount of literature being written. How much of it will last of course for the next hundred years, god only knows. But yeah, I think it’s got to be growing, just by the amount of literature being produced over the years.

HH: [unintelligible]?

JC: Boy, that is a good question. Two ways, I guess. One is obviously to educate the student that I have walking into my room that this is a part of their culture. This is music that Americans have written for Americans, and it can’t get any more cultural than that. Then it’s going to be played by Americans, and a lot of the pieces that we do are of American [unintelligible]. [unintelligible] full series of American folk rhapsodies [unintelligible] just in the past couple of years. But there’s all kinds of music that’s really about the United States, and so just presenting that to them and getting the proper styles because there can be some things you might pick up from the South that we have that [unintelligible] or some things from the eastern part of the United States and then [unintelligible]. How would we approach this piece as Montanans? So that is brought in because that’s how we are going to be able to appreciate a performance.

The other part is educating the administrator or the person who has come to the concert, and this is probably a lot more difficult task because you don’t have them for an hour a day all week long. Their time of seeing you is [unintelligible] to either a concert performance maybe a couple a year or just a period of [unintelligible] rubbing your shoulders now and then. I think that that is where the American educator is really up against it because we are paid to educate the
student, and with that we kind of assume that you’re going to be educating the public as well. So as these kids graduate out, hopefully they are an educated person, but you look at the percentages of how many kids graduate out of band as opposed to graduate out of Hellgate High School, and it’s not a very educated [unintelligible]. And the numbers that come to band concerts, I mean, you’ve sat in concerts and you’ve seen the place is not exactly packed. [unintelligible]. So that’s why I feel as if it’s a losing battle. And how to get that across I don’t know. [unintelligible].

HH: Okay, well, I guess you partly answered this questions, but do you feel that Americans see music as an important part of their culture?

JC: I think American use music, but I don’t know if they see it as a part of their culture. I am always dismayed how many Americans don’t know what their own music is. They don’t have a clue about America band music at all. Very, very few of them really are knowledgeable in the areas of jazz and improvisation. Rock and roll, I guess, is an offshoot of—some would say—an offshoot of jazz. I suppose that a lot of people are aware that, but I think that that music is pretty much [unintelligible] a use of music rather than sitting down and listening and enjoying music—feeling music for the music’s sake. A lot of times the music that we hear now is meant to accompany what we’re doing. [unintelligible].

HH: [unintelligible] people feel that way as opposed to Europeans [unintelligible]?

JC: It’s because America’s...I think it’s because of America’s youthfulness. One hundred years ago where would we have been sitting if we were just here years ago? Sitting in the grass and there would be some Indian tents down there. There’s hasn’t been a time for America to develop this kind of [unintelligible]. My sister lives in England, and they have developed those kind of cultural feelings over hundreds of years. I mean, she went to a restaurant the other day and they asked her if she wanted to sit in the new section or the old section [unintelligible] section, and they came back and said, “I’m sorry, [unintelligible].” And so they brought her in there, and it was built in 1680. [laughs] That was the new section.

[speaks to child] Yes, honey.

Child: [unintelligible]

JC: [speaks to child] I will after—

[Break in audio]

JC: To continue with that thought, I think it’s just a matter that we haven’t really had the time to develop that culture. I think that’s something that takes hundreds of years. I mean, just look at the scale system. When did it start? And it’s been around forever. So I think we have a lot of great things that we’ve done, but it just takes time. Which would you say would be the more
cultured half of the United States—the east or the west? Most people I think would say the east, but it’s been there for 100, another 100, 200 years longer so it’s just something I think develops and takes time.

HH: Do you feel that marching bands and pep bands have influenced the way that people see music?

JC: Yeah, I know that has because it makes a big difference in my job. It is where the common man, if I can be so rude, is going to hear most of what my program does, and that is unfortunate but it’s a reality. And we’ve put ourselves into that as band directors. Somewhere, a long time ago. It wasn’t my fault, but we did that a long time ago. So yeah, that’s...a lot of people think that that’s pretty much what those kids do during the day is practice pep band music. Unfortunately one of them was a school board member, but I was able to educate him.

Ul: Do you see any evolution in the styles of music that is being offered to you to perform as a band director?

JC: Oh, yeah. That’s been a big difference. I would have to go farther back than when I was educated because I haven’t been a teacher that long—13 years. There’s going to be some change. But since I was a high school student, which started in 1968, as I recall a lot of the music that we had were transcriptions of orchestral pieces. They’re either direct transcriptions, which are absolutely murder because I was a clarinetist and I had to play the violin parts [laughs] when I was a freshman in high school—that wasn’t always a thrill. To watered-down transcriptions, which were some help. I mean, they did get arrangements, but still it wasn’t the same thing. My generation then saw, really, the first real outpouring of vast amounts of quality—high quality—band literature. I mean, in quantity as well. There are some great composers out there that were really pouring it out and not having it sound trite, I guess would be a word. Of course, there are a lot of guys out there that are doing that as well. But you have to ask the question too, what is their function? Some of these guys function very well in a training band situation where you wanted something for kids in junior high school or whatever. And then there are those composers who are who are writing for the art of band literature.

I think that as the band has grown in popularity and just...I mean, like I said, the number of bands that there are if you have a good piece of music, it’s going to sell. Of course, this is America so there’s just been a lot of really great pieces of music written in the last 25 years that I think will be of lasting quality. So it’s changed a lot. A good example of that is to...not knocking any anybody because they all have their function, but if you go to listen to a Missoula city band program, you’ll hear music that was pretty much available to people of the 1940s, 1950s band era. It was nice. It was good music, and there are some great marches and stuff, but boy, it’s not anything compared to what’s available now in terms of interest and excitement in the music. Another way you can do that is just go look at some of the music that’s available for band—look at the publishers or the date of publications on any of the music in UM band library or come over to Hellgate and look at the older pieces of music and look what they are—
marches and transcriptions. So we’ve evolved for sure, in a very positive direction to making the band the medium of really great music instead of so much the orchestra and band has to then just play what was written for it.

UI: With this evolution of music as you see it... Do current trends or fads... I think we have to admit there’s different genre of music, and do you see that filtering back down through into the band music? And if you do, is there a time line that’s involved there, or is it pretty, as it were, instantaneous or—

JC: Are you referring to like popular music.

UI: Yeah.

JC: Yeah, it’s pretty, pretty instantaneous because they know that they’ve got a hot number and so they’ve got to get it out. It’s usually within a year. Sure, that’s going to happen. It’s happened all through the history of music. I mean, I don’t think that there’s any time that that hasn’t happened. That fads haven’t affected it. I mean, you can look back at Mozart’s music. He was affected by fads as well. Some of it for his own kicks, but sure that’s going to happen and it did [unintelligible]. But there again, I have the choice of what to play and what not to play and which ensemble to use that in for pep band and marching band. Great! I mean, sure. Fad it all up. That’s what that music is for, and that’s how we use that. But in my symphonic band, no way. Except for maybe a pop concert where we played *Phantom of the Opera*. Last year, big hit.

Sandy Shoen: Do you think high school band programs create an American flavor in the future?

JC: Ah, that’s good, Sandy. [pauses] Yeah, yeah. I think in high school bands are a lot of why those pieces of music are written. Is that what you mean? If we had high school orchestra programs that were as...I don’t know if the word successful is the right word or not, as populist anyway, it would be a totally different scene. So yeah...Now, I’m not sure I understand your question. [laughs]

SS: Well, high school bands do they contribute... Do they make music in America more popular or do composers write some type of [unintelligible] for it?

JC: Okay, yeah. For sure. I think they’re going to make it. Because like I said, just for sheer numbers. There’s so many of them there, and so many kids are involved. And there are a lot of those pieces that you look at are commissioned works. So they’re not only involved in just the medium of the message; they’re also helping create that message by employing gifted composers to write for them and that’s where it’s at.

HH: You were saying something earlier about bands becoming more popular. And do you think that TV has anything to do with that at all?
JC: Well, I don’t know how TV...at least in my perception, I don’t know how TV has helped. We get a glimpse of marching bands. Get a shot of the Tonight Show band. But I don’t know...I don’t think that they’ve been all that big at—

HH: You don't think that people realize the music behind lots of nighttime soap operas [unintelligible]? You don’t think people realize that—

JC: I think they realize that there are musicians, but it's not necessarily as we think of as [unintelligible]. I'm sure that there are people that listen to that stuff. I know we, as trained musicians, go to a movie and sometimes enjoy the score as much or more than we’re enjoying the movie. My wife who is not a musician doesn't do that at all. It is affecting her on is much more subliminal level than it does me. So I don’t know about how that would affect them.

[long pause; break in audio]

JC: —or I’ll ask it. Why did America come up with bands instead of orchestras? Why is it when you go over to Europe, we’ll have a foreign exchange student come over here and he will come from a school orchestra of 120 and the school band is ten or twelve and he’ll come into the exact reverse in this school. I think part of the reason is, of course, their orchestras have been there forever, but when you came over here, the band instrument was far more popular. A lot of it because of some of its military heritage. I think because just the fact that when people traveled some place, as they were doing a lot of, they went first and were preceded with the military. So those origins started militarily. In Fort Missoula, Fort Keogh. I know in Miles City, my own [unintelligible], there was an army band out there in the 1880s, and they still don't have an orchestra. So I think just the way that America was settled has a lot to do with it. This might be a little cynical—I don’t know and this this is strictly my own opinion—but I think that in a lot of ways that band instruments are a lot more American. Because you can build a trumpet and for 120, 300, whatever it started out to be worth, and a few years later it’s worth 50 bucks and you need to get a new instrument. It really doesn't appreciate in value that much. Americans are more into having this thing new, having it shiny, having it exciting than they are having a cello that’s been around since the 1680s and is has incredible huge value to it. You know what I mean? Like I said, that might sound a little cynical, but I think it’s right. [laughs] So American businessmen crank them out. I mean, they can crank out these instruments in a hurry.

I think that violin manufacturers have figured that out because they can get the kids this age and they figured that out, and Suzuki came up with a perfect method of doing it and they’re coming up through the ranks. And just in the last two years, you can see that happening. There are so many more orchestra kids in this program in this town. It's amazing. And they’re going to compete. I mean it it’s going to be...Numerically, they’re going to be competing in a few years. But I think that that’s why we are band oriented.

[long pause]
Ul: Why do you think that the big band era died out so quickly as it did back in the ’40s and ’50s?

JC: Okay, that's easy to answer, and I think it comes down to economics. What is easier to pay for? A four- or five-piece ensemble or a 20-piece road band and their bus and meals and all their equipment? Plus a singer or two. It was very expensive, and it was great music. It’s super, and you find a few of them around still. But the big bands had...They were almost all instrumental ensembles in the early ’30s. Late ’30s, they started adding vocalists, and vocalists were big—big hit. I mean, let's face it. Let’s hear some words and the lyrics, and World War Two came in and we were singing “Don’t Sit under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else But Me” and all these things that pull...all these other songs that pull at people's heartstrings. It was the words that did it. And so the instrumentalist portion wasn’t as important. And you can back up a singer with...you don’t need a full jazz band. Then you got guys like Frank Sinatra who came in and got his combo going. Believe it or not I think one of the big killers of the big band era was Elvis Presley. Because Elvis came in and he was listening to a totally different thing—guitar and a bass line. I mean, it's history. Those guys were drying up, and he was kind of the final nail. Then that's of course that's when rock and roll did its thing, and what did you need for that. So these guys could go around and it was no big deal. So it was economics. Because I know that that sound is popular. And people still like to hear it.

Ul: You would have thought that because of all the people liking it, that there would have still been that amount of support behind it to keep it going and not allow it to die out as it has basically.

JC: Yeah. But the media. I think that is...the people in charge of those records, the people that create the recordings, are a lot of the time the people who determine what the tastes are. You know that’s true. I see that happen all the time in high school. Those kids don’t know what’s good and bad. The record company’s tell them. They count on the fact they don’t like an album too much because after they’ve heard that one, [snaps fingers] then they crank out another one and they have to get that latest album. They really are profit mongers. They’re not in it for the art at all I don’t think, and if they are, it’s only because they use the rock and roll to supplement the creation of good music. Because Columbia, I mean, they produce a tremendous amount of rock and roll stuff. And they’ve said flat out, it’s the profits from those record sales that go to, allow them to produce the classical and jazz recordings which just wouldn't be able to hold on. I think that they are really kind of in charge of their own destiny.

Ul: So then really you feel as a as a band director and a music teacher in high school, it's not only your job to introduce kids to quality music, but also to teach them why it is quality music?

JC: You bet. You bet. What is it in this music that is of lasting quality, and some point I don’t beat them over the head with it, but I mean it just makes logical sense. I'm sorry that the 1-4-5-1 chord progression can only...you can only listen to that so long and for so many years and actually listen to it and it's got to become boring. I mean they've only done...Rock music hasn't
changed diddly, and in the last 20 years, I mean, these kids are listening to the same thing I was listening to in high school. Same chord progressions, same screaming same junk, and it hasn't changed. The names have changed, and maybe the articulation of things is different. Rap is absolutely...I mean, they've just stripped everything away. They stripped away harmony, they stripped away melody. Now, you're back down to basics of rhythm. I mean, let's go back to the jungle. So, and it's true and it's hip. Why? Because that's what the record companies are telling them that it's great.

SS: Why do you think kids like that?

JC: Because kids don't know. They don't know. They want to be...they want to be where it's at, man. And so that's where it is. And it's got the beat, and kids like to feel a rhythm. So that provides it for them. There it is. Everybody else is listening to it. You can see it come. Just look at what's happening in England now, and it'll be here in five to ten years. All the time. That's the way it always is. And so that's cool over there. So then it hits the coasts and then it moves in, and Montana gets it about a year after L.A.

HH: I was told once that people can relate to it better. Do you think that that is true?

JC: To what?

HH: To rock and roll and country music better.

JC: Oh, I'm sure they can. I mean it's very simplistic. And it's easy to relate to stuff that's easy to relate to. I mean you can hear somebody singing their heart out and stuff like, you know. I mean, sure, it is. It's easy to relate to, and it takes more...I think it takes more listening rather than just hearing to really appreciate finer aspects of better music. It's like getting to know a person. You can meet somebody who's really popular and neat right off the bat, and yet there really there's not too much to them. Kind of skeletal. And. Yet there are those people who are very refined and very cultured and very knowledgeable, and they're just a wellspring of information and friendship and value and all that stuff. That's kind of what good music can be. But you've got to introduce yourself to it, and you've got to be willing to participate in it. That's what I try and get across in four years of band. Sometimes you succeed and sometimes you don't, but at least those kids that have chosen to be there that long are exposed to that and I'm sure that they are in choral areas and orchestra areas as well. I know that they are.

[long pause]

Ul: What do you feel your status is within our society today?

JC: You heard what do I feel my status. That's a very important difference. One of the reasons that I chose education is because I really consider it an essential element in this culture. The passing of knowledge from one generation to the next, and—to get really excited here—the
passing of the torch from one generation is absolutely essential. I mean, all of our knowledge, everything that we’ve accrued in the last 2,000 years plus is just as old as we are in terms of terms of its ability to last unless we pass it on. So I think that educators, unfortunately, are not looked upon by society as important as they are. Not only by the amount that, perhaps, society pays them, but...see, that’s pretty much an American foible in that your value is related to your income. And we know that that’s not true. We can look at a lot...You can think of, I know, a half dozen jobs [snaps fingers] like that that people get paid vast amounts more than they’re really worth. And I can just have you interview a professional athlete, and they’ll tell you that themselves—what value they really are to society. As opposed to how much they’re making. I think I see my position as being important and, in a lot of ways, essential. Although I’m sure that there are things that are more important in my area to pass on to the next generation, this is the one that I’ve chosen to do.

HH: So do you see music as important as math and science in education.

JC: I think that the education community is soon going to discover that music is a critical element in education. I think that there is supporting documentation coming just every year—there’s somebody else that’s finding out with the right brain-left brain, what other class are you using both hemispheres to the degree that you are in instrumental music. There’s no other class. That’s it. There’s just a recent study that came out that showed that students who were involved in instrumental music as opposed to students who were not, did better in their SAT scores, and the difference was their involvement in music. So there’s something in how the brain processes information and how it learns and music that are a real high correlation.

The Greeks—and some people think they had their act together and in some ways they did—that was the core of their curriculum, and everything else stemmed out from that—music. So yeah, I see it is as important. What I think we’ve probably heard this before, what value is to know how to make a great living, how to make all this money and whatever, without really appreciating the value of life itself. That’s part of what the arts do is that they help us appreciate our culture and our lives and see us and see us working together in those things. That’s very, very important. My students could tell me it’s a lot more important than their algebra assignment. [laughs] But their algebra teacher would not.

UI: So do you think maybe that’s a shortcoming of our music programs as they are today is that we don’t really get across the overall value of a musical education? I mean, when most people think of music it’s...as a band program or a choral program, well, they think that you get together and you’re going to play a certain a certain group of songs or they’re going to sing works by a certain person. And I’m not interested in that anyway so why should I be involved in it at all. It’s kind of seems to me, do you agree, that maybe we should be trying to get the point across that this has more value than just from the musical aspect or from the aesthetic aspect of it?
JC: Yeah. Getting the program beyond performance. All my bands deal with a performance. And how much covers actually our actual culture other than what I choose to bring into it, it’s just from performance to performance—gig to gig. And [sighs] that’s a little frustrating to me sometimes. But to teach that is...boy, that’s an assignment in this culture because we are [snaps fingers] this move-it, sort of get down the road, do something new, make it exciting sort of thing, and the historical lasting values of things just aren’t really that important. That’s hue cultural vision. And to try and change that. Wow! That’s quite a job. I don’t know if I would even be possible. I’m sure it is, but boy, there would have to be some major changes in American society, I think, before that really was able to take hold.

Ul: So what you’re really trying to do is teach enduring qualities in a throwaway society?

JC: Yeah, you got it. Isn’t that tough? And it’s not impossible. I mean, you can, and like I said you approach those...you get those kids that see and feel that. And there are kids that...you know, I’m not saying that just because you’re not in band, choir, or orchestra you don’t realize that, but there’re not very many.

Child: [unintelligible].

[Break in audio]

JC: I can’t do that yet. I somehow almost get the feeling and maybe it’s just my own poor perceptions that they’ve got to have time to be—

Ul: Kids.

JC: Yeah, kids.

SS: So when you start music appreciation?

JC: I don’t know. See, I like it. I thought it was good when I started. Five years old, and I wanted to do it. I thought it was kind of interesting, and I’d give it a shot. Then that’s what I was going to do. Of course, my parents were very encouraging and helpful in that way. Although they were not musicians, and I certainly wasn’t surrounded by much of a culture. I mean, Miles City’s radio station is KATL—cattle. [laughs] And they had one half hour of classical music every night. One half hour, one half hour. And if the music wasn’t over, they took it off. You could hear the needle going “rrrr.” And what came on next? The hog prices! [laughs] So you didn’t have much of a chance, and so I don’t even remember how I got introduced to Mozart and Beethoven and those guys. I don’t even remember. It wasn’t played in my home. I don’t have a clue.

HH: A lot of those pieces are in old cartoons and stuff.

JC: Yeah that’s right.
HH: And you don't realize until later that what they are. But if you watch an old Bugs Bunny [unintelligible].

JC: Oh yeah, he was hot with that. I'm sure that part of it was because of my piano training. My piano teacher had me do some things that I thought were really interesting. So I listened to some of that. But I don't know. I think we're going to wait just a little bit.

SS: Do you play some classical music around here?

JC: Oh yeah. In fact Manuel (?) really likes to listen to Chopin nocturnes at the end of the night—in the evening.

[speaks to child] Do you like to listen to Chopin in the evening? It's very quiet.

UI: I think you get—with children, well, with children up to the fifth grade—they're, so often, they're not introduced to any different kind of music. It's quite like your childhood. They never have the opportunity to hear it. So they really have no idea that there is such a thing as any other, any other kinds of music.

JC: Yeah. And what a difference it makes in their approach to music when they do get to some formal training. Boy, it's night and day.

UI: I'm done.

JC: I've got students in band who have grown up in musical homes, and it's just, they pick it up without really too much of a problem and then other kids who just have, I swear, have had not anything played to them. Must not have because they can't feel a beat. They can't catch on to anything. Just, it's amazing. I'm not sure if that's what...you know, I can't say that for absolute certainty because I haven't interviewed their parents and gone, “What did you play to this kid? Dumpster music or something, garbage dumpster.” But some of them obviously had some severe handicaps. Then I'm sure that there's a certain amount of just gift, if I can be so bold as to call it something, because my brothers grew up in the same household I did. And there was a definite difference in what they were able to do.

SS: Same thing with your sister, John?

JC: Yeah. Now that there might be the difference, if I think about it, because my sister did play some piano and did some stuff and that's who I would have heard growing up. I really didn't hear my brothers. She was eight years older than I am so she was able to play relatively decently when I was just a little shaver. Couldn't hurt.
HH: Do you think society kind of scares people away from stuff like music? Do you think to some people it’s, well, “I can’t do that. I’m not musical.”

JC: Oh yeah. You hear that a lot, don’t you? Yeah. I sometime think music educators do that to ourselves. I mean who do we put out in front of you. These people are just so incredible. And I’ve got kids, “Man, I can even start. I mean there’s no way I’m going to get there. I can’t possibly do it.” I see that every year happened with my freshmen in marching band. This is a horrible example, but they get out there and they have to do all the movements and the playing and all that stuff and they just, they feel like klutzes when they’re out there. They don’t really know it yet because they’re all by themselves, and then the other kids come out in a unified rehearsal because we rehearse it several times and blow their socks off. [laughs] The next day of rehearsal is always trying to buck them up. Come on, you can get this, you can do it! So we kind of tend to do it ourselves.

Ul: Mr. Easter, I think it’s time for you to ask another question.

[Break in audio]

HH: What's the difference between a conductor and a director?

JC: Oh, that’s good. Okay, well, I look at as a director...this is totally [unintelligible], this answer, you’ll understand. A director—and you can tell I teach high school because I can’t come up with a real [unintelligible]—a director is a person who is in charge of a vast array of activities besides just standing on a podium and conducting. Part of a director’s duty is to be a conductor, okay. But he’s also a counselor. He’s also a money manager. He’s also an accountant and a secretary and a manager. All those things are a necessary part of being a director. So I think as the director is just a large part of that, but a conductor is the guy...that's what I am when I finally get up on the podium and am able to do my job. I'd love to be a conductor of bands, but I’m the director.

Ul: Is there a social order within the music community between band directors or conductors and orchestra conductors and choir conductors?

JC: What do you mean by social order?

Ul: Does society perceive one to be more important than the other?

JC: Well, we have our different functions, I think. This is, again, kind of what I see in the Missoula and my past experiences. Band directors tend to be a little bit more utilitarian. Their jobs are connected with sports a lot. They’re involved in so many other different areas with the big fundraising thing and that you have that funky [unintelligible] of being director [unintelligible] kind of aspect to the guy. Choral directors are not forced into that at all. They don’t have to touch any of the athletic support at all, and so have a tendency to be a little bit
more...they're able to work with their medium a lot more, I think, because our medium forces us to do a lot of these other things. So I think that they have a...there's a freedom there. Because of where orchestra is—

[Break in audio]

JC: Orchestras and their lack of numerical superiority, maybe that would be a better was to put it, are...I think sometimes orchestra people tend to be a little bit more on the defensive because there's just not very many of them and they are...they really are intent into orchestra. Again, they don't have to worry about the athletic things. They don't have to even be concerned about singing or the Kiwanis Club every week or whatever, so they can really, even more intently, focus on their on their job and they need to because they're behind in that aspect. But I suppose that you'd have to really go to another community in Missoula. We are such a wonderful family here—through elementary through the college ranks. Just had an end-of-the-year picnic—end-of-the-year school year—barbeque at my home, and there must've been 30 music teachers here—retired, brand new, whatever. And this spring we had get-together at Bonner Park, which is wonderful and it doesn't happen very often. So there's not really anybody who tends to be more snobby than the other. I just don't see that happening. People are people, pretty much. I guess [unintelligible].

We had that real weird one.

SS: [unintelligible].

[Break in audio]

SS: So talking about the [unintelligible] and stuff like that, do you think music directors’ numbers are low in this country?

JC: No, There's still hope. Every town has got their band teacher, music teacher, whatever. It's a very popular thing. In fact, there's a lot of jobs. Although a lot of jobs people wouldn't want necessarily to have they're in Buffalo Chip, Montana, or someplace. But their jobs go wanting of people, and unfortunately there haven't been a lot of people going into the profession. So that as the old guard retires, I don't think that they're being replaced by necessarily very high quality people. So it's a real need, and I think that that's probably true of education in general. There's some real, real problems out there with who we're going to get teach this next generation because—

SS: [unintelligible].

JC: Yeah, that's good. That's good because it's tough. It's a great job. It really is. But it's been getting, it's been getting a bad rap especially public school. It's really been hit hard. And you don't have to do that too often before people think, I could do something else. The big money's
not going to bring it in. So what is it? I can’t do anything else. I mean, you’ve heard that too. It’s pretty frustrating. If you can imagine what if society had done to dentists what they do to educators. I mean, “Hey, want to be tooth fairy?” They just wouldn’t hack it.

UI: Well, let’s wrap this up. Are we supposed to say, that concludes this interview?

HH: This concludes the interview.

[End of Interview]