

PLAY WITH TIME

By Eric Henry Sanders

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PLAY WITH TIME

Characters

Fredericka: A visual artist known for her luminous paintings of water.

Philip: A world-famous composer nearing the end of his long career.

Place and Time

Present-day New York.

Running Time

Approximately 80 minutes (72 pages).

Themes and Content

In 2018, the renowned composer Philip Glass and the esteemed visual artist Fredericka Foster were asked by *Nautilus Magazine* to meet for a discussion of time, the arts, and their individual work. The resulting article was about 2,000 words, but the fascinating transcript, recorded over two separate meetings, was nearly two hours long. With the permission of Glass and Foster, *PLAY WITH TIME* reconfigures the transcript of their conversation to create a new theatre piece that is at once a meditation on those themes, an exploration of the lives and work of the artists themselves, and a new creation that diverges from realism, documentary, or biography.

The resulting play reimagines the Foster-Glass conversations using an analogous method to Glass's own iterative compositions, inspired by the experimental works of his early influences like Samuel Beckett, the Dadaists, Brion Gysin, and William S. Burroughs. The technique is intended to create a playful, funny, poignant, and engaging point of entry into the artists' discussion, one that touches on such weighty subjects as the characteristics of Time, and its influence and impact on art and musical composition.

The final project combines the text with live music, projected imagery, and dance to bring to life the ideas and experiences of these two brilliant minds in conversation with one another.

STARTING

Fredericka and Philip are speaking on the phone to each other but without phones as props. They each sit in their own separate living spaces. A living room. An office. A kitchen. A piano. A painting studio.

Though they are not in the same place to begin, the distance between them is permeable. They can see each other where indicated or where directed, looking across time and space, to make eye contact, and to engage directly.

The default mode, however, is that Fredericka and Philip speak to each other as they would if they were on the phone -- moving in their own space without eye contact, involved in their own separate activities -- but without phones.

At the start, Fredericka is looking at a number of water photographs she spreads out on a table. These are projected on a screen behind her. She is in the process of determining which photograph to use as the basis of her next painting.

Philip stands in his apartment at the piano. Sheet music is spread out and he is looking at a score-in-progress.

Fredericka begins to record their conversation.

FREDERICKA

Okay. Would you like to start?

PHILIP

Yes, we can start.

FREDERICKA

(Warmly.)

Okay. Bye-bye.

PHILIP

(Reciprocal.)

Give my best to Ben and we'll talk when we can.

FREDERICKA

Thank you so much for this.

PHILIP

I'm glad that we could do it.

FREDERICKA

Bye.

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STARTING OVER

They reprise the same positions from the beginning of "Starting," and begin again.

FREDERICKA

Okay. Would you like to start?

PHILIP

Yes, we can start. What is the general topic? Are we talking about time, I think?

FREDERICKA

Yes, that's right. And the now. And the importance of the now.

PHILIP

Interesting. That's a funny thing.

FREDERICKA

What *is* the general topic?

PHILIP

Are we talking about time, I think?

FREDERICKA

All right, but I'm sure we have enough. Thank you so much for this. It was absolutely delightful.

PHILIP

Oh good, good, good. I'm glad that we could do it.

FREDERICKA

And have a great time in Berlin.

PHILIP

Okay. It'll be fast, I'll tell you that. Give my best to Ben and we'll talk when we can.

FREDERICKA

Bye. Okay. Bye-bye.

PHILIP

Bye.

THE "NOW"

Pause.

Philip sits at his piano. He plays the first bars of Philip Glass's composition, "Mad Rush." His playing trails off.

Simultaneously, Fredericka sets one of her photos in the middle of the table. She wonders to herself: Is this the one?

While considering the question she looks for a CD to play. She takes her time.

Fredericka finds what she's been looking for. She turns on the stereo, ejects the CD slot, places the disc in to play. It is a CD of "Mad Rush," a recording of Philip's playing. It picks up where he left off and continues quietly in her background.

Okay.

FREDERICKA

We've started.

PHILIP

Yes, that's right.

FREDERICKA

Interesting. That's a funny thing.

PHILIP

We're talking about time.

FREDERICKA

We're talking about time but we're talking about now. That's a funny way to see it.

PHILIP

To me, "now" is what happens when I get finally free of the bully that lives in my head --

FREDERICKA

-- I have a different way of thinking about it --

PHILIP

FREDERICKA

-- That chatty monster that's always going on and on and on --

PHILIP

-- I think that there are two kinds of time --

FREDERICKA

-- That chatty monster. And when I finally get free of that --

PHILIP

-- I have a different way --

FREDERICKA

-- Music is one of the ways I do that --

PHILIP

There's the times that we measure and the times we can't measure --

FREDERICKA

-- Painting is a way I do that --

PHILIP

-- We do both of those things.

FREDERICKA

-- And when I finally get free of that, then I have an opportunity to experience my own reality. My own lived reality. What's actually happening.

PHILIP

There's the time that we measure and the times that we can't measure, and we do both of those things. I think the idea of now is okay. That's a good idea, but I think of the *flow* of time. You can also think of the flow of now and you can think of the flow of eternity.

FREDERICKA

When I finally get free of that...

PHILIP

The *idea* of now. That's a good idea.

The music stops.

FREDERICKA

When I finally get free of that... When I finally get free of that ... that, that... I have an opportunity to experience my lived reality. My own lived reality.

Fredericka remembers an instance when the monster was silenced. It was a time when she was standing at her easel in her bright studio, a sisal rug spotted with paint beneath her feet, a brush in hand.

She is looking at one of her water paintings and experiencing joy without thought or any judgement of what she sees. It was a too fleeting moment when she felt solid and seen by the world.

He has missed her thoughts. Philip plays a few notes of "Mad Rush," and when he stops, he listens to them reverberate. He is thinking of the music and the mechanics of the piece, how he came to that composition -- in 1979 -- when he was 42 years old.

Philip pictures the span of his playing as it reverberates in his studio, in his building, through the streets of New York, into the atmosphere, and into eternal space.

PHILIP

I think the idea of now is okay, but I think of the flow of now and I think of the flow of eternity.

He picks up his playing...

FREDERICKA

We are in eternity, right?

She interrupts him.

He stops playing.

PHILIP

Hmm?

FREDERICKA

We are in eternity.

PHILIP

We talked about that a little bit the other day.

FREDERICKA

I mean, you can't separate us from eternity, we're definitely a part of it. All that flow of now exists within what we think of as eternity. How can we not be part of it?

He is looking at the piano, he plays two minutes of "Mad Rush." The music fades out with the lights.

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TWO KINDS OF TIME

No music to begin.

PHILIP

We can start.

FREDERICKA

How can we not be part of eternity?

Pause. No reply.

Pause. No reply.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

How -- ?

PHILIP

We can start.

FREDERICKA

Yes, that's right.

PHILIP

I'm thinking of also, is it something that you can measure or not measure as the two kinds of time, times you measure and times you don't measure.

FREDERICKA

Times you measure?

PHILIP

And times you don't measure.

FREDERICKA

I have gotten into trouble with the times I can't measure because of "now" time. You know, when you're supposed to be somewhere in twenty minutes, you only have allowed ten, and then the subway that is supposed to take twenty minutes, takes ten minutes. So I get fooled. Time seems very immeasurable, time feels elastic to me --

PHILIP

A lot of the things in music happen in measured time.

FREDERICKA

-- Yet, I know it cannot be. You know that time is based on the time it takes the world to go around its axis and around the sun so we can all get together on this plane, in social time. But that other time is very magical to me. It defies measurement.

PHILIP

In social time. In music. In the sun. On this plane.

FREDERICKA

And when I'm painting, there is no time.

PHILIP

In music.

Beat.

Beat.

FREDERICKA

I become a verb: (*Beat.*) Painting. Seeing.

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DO THEY SEEM AS REAL?

*Abstract projections from inside the Prado
ending on "Las Meninas."*

PHILIP

When you look at a painting, time always seems to be in the present.

FREDERICKA

Absolutely. *(Pause.)* Would you like to start?

PHILIP

When you look at a painting, time always seems to be in the present.

FREDERICKA

But, you know how there's a bridge made to the past by all those painters?

No reply.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

You know how there's a bridge made to the past? By all those painters... All those painters that I feel very influenced by, and I had an extraordinary experience in Spain when I was so discouraged, Philip. I'm in the Prado -- I had been looking at art for days and I hadn't seen one woman artist. I'm in the Prado and looking at Diego Velazquez's "Las Meninas" and right in my eyes from 1656. It was just amazing, it was like a contact with a living human being, and he said, "It's okay, Fredericka, just keep painting." *(Pause.)* It was the most extraordinary thing.

PHILIP

When you look at a painting --

FREDERICKA

Have you connected emotionally with musicians from the past? Do they seem as real?

PHILIP

-- Time always seems to be in the present. But, a lot of the things in music happen in measured time.

FREDERICKA

Do they seem as real?

PHILIP

(Hearing her.)

John Cage used to talk about that a little bit. But he didn't talk about it in a very detailed way.

BALLET TO THE FLEXIBILITY OF TIME

An empty stage.

A Ballet to the Flexibility of Time without music, but to their dialogue.

A trio of dancers begin slowly and at the margins of the stage and converge towards the middle, speeding up at the end to dangerously close quarters where the dancers nearly collide with one another, as indicated.

PHILIP

I'm used to the flexibility of time...

FREDERICKA

Ah!

PHILIP

I'm used to time becoming slower and faster.

FREDERICKA

Huh.

Long pause.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

So, are you in the flow of it, then?

PHILIP

Well, it has a dynamic, too.

FREDERICKA

Or are you the cause of it?

PHILIP

I'll give you an example: if I'm on a tour, say, with a dance company, so every night we're in a different sized theater. Let's say that you have a space that's ten meters wide. Then the dance company will ... the first thing they do when they get there, by the way, is that they reset the dance to set up that space.

FREDERICKA

I had no idea.

They have to.

PHILIP

Ah!

FREDERICKA

But then an interesting thing happens.

PHILIP

Huh.

FREDERICKA

Let's say you play in a little theater in Hoboken --

PHILIP

-- I didn't ever think of that --

FREDERICKA

-- Or you are somewhere that's very different. You are playing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It is twice as big.

PHILIP

Fantastic.

FREDERICKA

No, there's another part of this, Fredericka.

PHILIP

They change the time!

FREDERICKA

They have to change the time, too. Here's the thing, you're playing with the dance company and if you're playing in a larger theater, you have to play slower and if you're in a smaller theater, you have to play faster.

PHILIP

Of course.

FREDERICKA

Here's the thing, they have to change the time, too. You're playing with the dance company and if you're playing with the dance company in a larger theater, you have to play slower. In a larger theatre, you have to play slower. And if you are playing with the dance company --

PHILIP

FREDERICKA

-- and if you're in a smaller theater --

PHILIP

You have to play faster.

FREDERICKA

You have to play faster.

PHILIP

So, the relation of time and space is very dynamic, if you can see what I'm saying. We can get back to the motionless time at a certain point but it's important also to say that there's this sort of time, too.

FREDERICKA

Are you the cause of it?

As the language speeds up, so too, has the dance constricted and sped up.

PHILIP

I'm used to the flexibility of time...

FREDERICKA

Ah!

PHILIP

I'm used to time becoming slower and faster.

FREDERICKA

Huh.

PHILIP

I'm used to the flexibility of time...

FREDERICKA

Ah!

PHILIP

To time becoming slower and faster.

FREDERICKA

Huh. So --

PHILIP

I'm used to the flexibility of time...

FREDERICKA

Ah!

PHILIP

I'm used to time becoming slower and faster.

FREDERICKA

So ... huh.

PHILIP

It has a dynamic, too.

FREDERICKA

-- Are you in the flow of it, then?

PHILIP

Well, it has a dynamic --

FREDERICKA

Or are you the cause of it?

PHILIP

It depends. It has a dynamic, too.

FREDERICKA

Ah.

PHILIP

I'm used to it.

FREDERICKA

Huh.

PHILIP

And it depends upon the flexibility --

FREDERICKA

-- But are you the cause of it or --

PHILIP

It depends.

FREDERICKA

-- Or when you're composing, are you thinking that your music will be played at these different times? And are you in the flow of it? Or maybe you are the cause of it? When you're composing, are you thinking that your music will be played at these different times?

PHILIP

If it's a concert piece then it doesn't have to respond to the space in that way except for maybe an echo in a very big space. It depends. If it's a concert piece then it doesn't have to respond to the space in that way.

FREDERICKA

Are you thinking that your music will be played? At these different times?

PHILIP

I don't have to play a string quartet slower because I'm in a bigger hall because the string quartet isn't slower. The string quartet isn't going anywhere. The string quartet is the string quartet. They're sitting. They're sitting where they're going to sit if they're sitting, if it's a string quartet. But if it's a dance company --

FREDERICKA

-- Ah! --

PHILIP

-- If it's a dance company, I have to. What I do is, if it's a dance company, I have a range of speeds. I'm used to the flexibility of time. I'm used to time becoming slower and faster. And I know if I'm playing with a company -- the first thing we do when we get to the theater is we measure the space.

FREDERICKA

Huh.

PHILIP

Now in this space and time, in this space and time you get into space right away when you start to do this.

FREDERICKA

I had no idea.

PHILIP

Yes, they have to.

FREDERICKA

That's...

PHILIP
Yes?

FREDERICKA
Fantastic. That's ...

PHILIP
But then an interesting thing happens. Within maybe half an hour, they will block out the space so that the dance will now fit the new space. It might be ten minutes, it might be fourteen or fifteen. It might be a big difference. Now if the people playing with them, if they don't pay attention to that, it's going to look really funny.

FREDERICKA
I didn't ever think of that.

PHILIP
In fact, you can actually have accidents on the stage playing at the wrong speed.

FREDERICKA
I didn't ever think of that.

PHILIP
No, there's another part of this, Fredericka.

FREDERICKA
They change the time!

PHILIP
You can actually have accidents on the stage playing at the wrong speed.

The space of the ballet has gotten narrower and narrower. As the dancers are about to crash into one another...

Pause.

They stop.

The language slows down.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
So, when we talk about time, I -- on a daily basis -- I'm dealing with length of time and speed of time. On a daily basis....

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

And I'm doing that all the time.

The dancers smile at each other, glad to have avoided the accident. Then as they begin to move off stage, one slips and falls.

The others look at the dancer.

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ETERNITY, OR, JASPER JOHNS CARRIES A METRONOME

Later.

Original setting.

Fredericka is distracted by a thought.

PHILIP

Musicians carry metronomes around with them. You know what these are.

FREDERICKA

(Half-listening.)

Mmm.

PHILIP

I remember --

FREDERICKA

(To herself.)

I remember.

Beat.

PHILIP

I remember I was visiting Jasper Johns once --

*This is the thought that has been distracting
her...*

FREDERICKA

Have you connected with musicians from the past? Emotionally?

Pause.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Do they seem as real?

Pause.

PHILIP

A lot of the things in music happen in measured time.

Pause.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Most of us don't need the metronome anymore.

She lets her train of thought go so that she can hear him.

FREDERICKA

I remember.

PHILIP

I can tell you how many beats in a second.

FREDERICKA

-- You know --

PHILIP

-- I know what it sounds like --

FREDERICKA

-- It's ... so interesting ... when you were saying that --

PHILIP

-- And I can get very, very close.

FREDERICKA

-- About getting the time of a metronome.

PHILIP

If I have to do 120 beats in a minute, I can do 120 beats in a minute. I can do it without a metronome. I can get within two or three seconds. I can tell you how many beats -- most people can do that.

FREDERICKA

In space, I can, when I'm hanging pictures, I can tell you where it is within an eighth of an inch.

PHILIP

You learn to do it, in other words.

FREDERICKA

I can be exactly on when making a straight line --

PHILIP

Most people can learn to get within two or three seconds.

FREDERICKA

And because of the experience of seeing, paying attention to seeing --

PHILIP

Okay, now here's the thing, you're coming to this as someone.... When you look at a canvas the time is irrelevant, actually.

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

I remember I was visiting Jasper Johns once. I was looking at some of the paintings he has in his storage and he had one of his number paintings up, which he had painted ten years ago. And I said, "Jasper, what are you doing?" He said, "I'm still working on that painting." I mean, ten years. Nothing.

FREDERICKA

You know, it's so interesting. When you were saying that.

PHILIP

I guess eventually he finished. I guess eventually, I'm not sure. But for him, and for you, I would say, when I look at your paintings, a day might go by fast or slow but the painting doesn't go by fast or slow, the painting is the painting. You can slip into the painting and you can get to that zero time very easily, I guess. I mean, I'm not a painter so I haven't done it. What's it like for you?

FREDERICKA

Seeing and painting are the same.

PHILIP

What's it like for you to be painting for hours and hours on -- It doesn't matter whether it's minutes or hours?

FREDERICKA

You're seeing your own vision.

PHILIP

Time is going by.

FREDERICKA

As it were.

PHILIP

But time doesn't really affect the painting. Or does it?

FREDERICKA

Seeing and painting --

PHILIP

And I said, "Jasper, what are you doing?"

FREDERICKA

-- Are the same.

PHILIP

Ten years.

FREDERICKA

Ten years.

PHILIP

Like nothing.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

What's it like for you?

WATER FOLLOWS RULES OF ETERNITY

Fredericka is establishing a composition for a water painting. It is projected behind her.

FREDERICKA

When I begin and when I begin and when I'm developing a composition, it's very, very slow. It feels slow to me because I haven't yet. When I begin, that's a very mechanical part for me and until I've got the composition established it feels very slow; because water follows rules. If you want to feel the water move -- because that's what I want to accomplish -- I have to pay attention. To that. Because.... Because water follows rules. But once I've got that down, to feel the water move, then, I can put music on, I can start to dance with the painting, I can change the composition to make the rhythm more important. (*Beat.*) And then the time disappears. (*Beat.*) First it speeds up. And then it completely disappears. And I have no consciousness of time at all. (*Pause.*) So, I burn up teapots.

She remembers a particular teapot. It was a tin-cheap metal from a family-owned hardware store on Bowery that closed a few years ago. The service at the store was never as good as it should have been, and the owner, a roundish man who smelled of cigarettes, acted like customers were a nuisance.

But she liked that teapot.

PHILIP

I can tell you how many beats in a second.

FREDERICKA

In space, I can, when I'm hanging pictures --

PHILIP

-- I know what it sounds like --

FREDERICKA

-- I can tell you where it is within an eighth of an inch.

PHILIP

I can get very, very Very close to that.

FREDERICKA

You know, I'll put a teapot on the stove – not anymore, I got an electric one – and I don't hear the noise of the teapot. The time disappears. I'm paying attention to music and the painting until I smell something and then I realize I'm in trouble. That kind of attention has no awareness outside of that bubble that you're in, to me, that is... That's what I live for. (*Beat.*) That's the time you find in religion, in love, in everything that matters.

Pause.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

I shouldn't say religion, I should say the life of the spirit, which is really a different thing, isn't it? Now we're into eternity. That's a different kind of time.

Pause in which she thinks of time as a thing in space moving at light speed forever and ever.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

But what do you mean by eternity?

PHILIP

Well, that's an interesting question. That's an interesting question. We can talk about the flow of eternity.

FREDERICKA

But what do you mean by eternity?

PHILIP

If you think of it that way, is it a fixed position in space?

FREDERICKA

Is that where the seeds are planted?

PHILIP

Well, obviously it isn't.

FREDERICKA

No --

PHILIP

Eternity doesn't have a fixed position.

FREDERICKA

-- It can't be.

PHILIP

Let's say that you could go as fast as light, perhaps. Even light takes time to travel.

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

We know that.

FREDERICKA

Yes, yes.

PHILIP

But if you wanted to get to the edge of ... would eternity be somewhere beyond the edge of time?

FREDERICKA

When I think of eternity...

PHILIP

Even light takes time to travel.

FREDERICKA

-- When I think --

PHILIP

-- The point is --

FREDERICKA

Yes?

PHILIP

Is eternity reachable?

FREDERICKA

When I think of eternity I think of something that includes everything --

PHILIP

Or does it describe a place that has no boundary?

FREDERICKA

-- All time that ever was or ever will be. (*Beat.*) Right?

IS TIME FASTER?*Etude No. 5.**Fredericka is crafting a painting by brushing a blank canvas. The emerging painting appears on a screen in a time lapse behind her.*

PHILIP

Mmm, hmm. (*Pause.*) You know, all... All these... (*Seven second pause.*) All these are interesting (*Beat.*) Things (*Beat.*) To talk on in one way. (*Ten second pause.*) But there are other ... things that can be even more concrete when we talk about time. Of course, we can measure time. (*Ten second pause.*) But I don't mean that exactly. (*Beat.*) I am talking (*Beat.*) I am talking (*Beat.*) About speed of time. (*Three second pause.*) How fast does it go? (*Three second pause.*) Now that's... That's a whole different idea, is it not?

FREDERICKA

But --

PHILIP

-- We all --

FREDERICKA

But what do you mean by eternity?

PHILIP

I am talking about speed of time.

FREDERICKA

-- Yes, and --

PHILIP

We all have those experiences ... You're. You, you. You're waiting to go.... Ww... You're in. In the dentist's off -- You're sitting in the chair, the dentist's chair, and --

FREDERICKA

-- Right --

PHILIP

He goes, "This'll only take a minute." And, of course, it takes a lot ... it feels like it takes half an hour. It probably only did take --

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

It probably only did take a minute. So, I mean there's that kind of subjective – That – So, the flow of time we know can be subjective in that way. When you are having a good time, time goes by very quickly.

FREDERICKA

I have gotten into trouble with the times I can't measure because of "now" time.

PHILIP

When you are having a miserable time, it's going by very slowly. Both things --

FREDERICKA

-- Right --

PHILIP

That's -- Those are very subjective things. Those are... Those are...

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

There's -- there's another way to look at this.

Five second pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I had a very strange conversation with one of my children once.

FREDERICKA

That meets with my lived experience.

PHILIP

It wasn't so strange, it was strange to me.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

It was, uh, at the end of the summer, and, umm, and I said, "How was the summer?" And -- I think it was Marlowe, the little one -- he said, "It was fine, daddy, but it went by so fast."

Beat.

FREDERICKA

Now, what would that mean?

PHILIP

I thought about that and I said, when I was a kid -- This is what... This is what I thought: When I was a kid, the summers seemed to go on forever. Uhh. If I -- That, that -- If I went to, uhh, -- say, I was sent to a camp or something like that where the kids play together, umm, it seemed that, that, maybe that two months... It felt like a year. It felt like it was never going to end. Now here I'm talking to my son who is, umm... umm... fifty years younger than me, and he says to me, "Summer went by very fast."

He looks at her.

She meets his gaze.

Beat.

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Okay now, here's what I thought: *(Pause.)* What if both of us were right?

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Is time passing by faster now than it did fifty years ago?

FREDERICKA

And...

Long pause.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Wow.

PHILIP

So. Okay. Now, now. Let me throw another idea at you. We know that --

FREDERICKA

But that's -- Now we're in the range of physicists, Philip --

PHILIP

-- Well, we are --

FREDERICKA

-- When you ask that question, right? --

PHILIP

-- We are, actually. We are --

FREDERICKA

And I can't --

PHILIP

But, but, but we're also talking about a subjective and an objective way of looking at it, but I'm not quite finished with this little story --

FREDERICKA

Okay.

PHILIP

Then I was reflecting on the physicist's idea of the universe expanding. You know, we know that the universe is expanding. And, you know, we know we can measure that. We can measure hours by the way time is operating. Or the way we see things. When we see a star exploding far away we realize that it happened thirty years ago or it happened forty years ago or fifty years ago. Right?

FREDERICKA

Right.

PHILIP

It took time for that to happen. So for various reasons -- which I don't pretend to be able to explain very well -- I -- when a physicist tells me that the universe is expanding -- I say, "Ok." (*Beat.*) "I know what that means." (*Beat.*) "I know balloons can expand, (*Beat.*) Things can get bigger." And I don't know exactly how they're measuring it but ... Let's say I take it literally. It's literally (*Beat.*) Getting (*Beat.*) Bigger. (*Beat.*) Now, let's go back to the dance floor. Right?

FREDERICKA

Right.

PHILIP

If you're playing with the dance company in a larger theater --

FREDERICKA

-- You have to play slower.

PHILIP

The dance floor is getting bigger. Time has to slow down.

Beat.

FREDERICKA

And that is exactly what they are saying happens in the universe, also, that time is slowing down.

PHILIP

Right. But...

FREDERICKA

But in our lives ...

PHILIP

But, wait a second. What ... What if... Okay, here's a question: When I talk to my son Marlowe and he says the summer went by very fast, and I'm thinking, when I was his age, the summer went by very slow. All right. So -- So everything's speeding up. Now, what if it's really true? Everything's speeding up? (*Beat.*) I mean, we're saying, "Oh that's just subjective -- you're just imagining it," but what if in fact it's really happening? What if time is actually ... In other words, for the universe to keep expanding, then the time has to go faster too.

FREDERICKA

It certainly feels that way.

PHILIP

It does feel that way.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

It does feel that way. What's happening to the time? Many of us have the feeling that, what's happening to the time?

FREDERICKA

In our lives. It certainly...

PHILIP

It seems like just yesterday I was twenty years old. You know, or... what happened to that forty years?

FREDERICKA

It certainly -- Yes.

PHILIP

What happened to that forty years?

PHILIP (CONT'D)
(To himself.)

How could it go by so fast?

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
(To himself.)

Well...

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Well.... What if time is speeding up?

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WHAT IF IT'S REALLY TRUE?

Continuation.

Pause.

FREDERICKA

That meets with my lived experience.

PHILIP

What if, in fact, it's really happening?

FREDERICKA

It certainly feels like time is speeding up.

PHILIP

We never acknowledge that as being real, we say it just feels that way, right?

Pause.

FREDERICKA

That meets with my lived experience.

PHILIP

The dance floor is getting bigger.

Pause.

FREDERICKA

Yes. Summers...

PHILIP

If I look at a clock, it doesn't seem to be going faster, it reads the same, but of course if everything is changing at the same time, there is no way to measure it.

FREDERICKA

Right, exactly. So --

PHILIP

Unless you talk to someone who's a different generation than you and say, "How was the summer?" And they say, "Oh, it went by very fast." Well, yeah, it went fast for me, too, but in 1947 it went by very slowly.

Summers went by slowly.

FREDERICKA

Pause.

Fredericka remembers a day when it was hot. She was very young and she was with a parent -- a tall presence -- and all she can remember of the moment was the heat on her head and shoulders while looking at the late summer grass. She remembers the oppressive sun. The humidity. And the feeling of being nearly too hot and tired to move.

For me, too.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Now – so, so --

PHILIP

The whole idea ...

FREDERICKA

PHILIP

I don't want to get you confused or upset, but what if it's really true? So, okay, now what happens is, is that everything's expanding, that's fine. Time had to go quicker so that you can – to fill up the space, so to speak. You know.

It's...

FREDERICKA

PHILIP

What I'm suggesting is that these are not subjective experiences, they're objective ones.

It's a wonderful idea.

FREDERICKA

PHILIP

It's also a little terrifying, isn't it?

FREDERICKA

When you talk about it, it is.

PHILIP

I mean, what if two hundred years from now, a life span felt like it was a few days?

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WAS MARLOWE EVER BORED?

"Floe" is played as background music.

PHILIP

That's right, that's right.

FREDERICKA

Has to be.

PHILIP

That's right.

FREDERICKA

Has to be.

PHILIP

Has to be.

FREDERICKA

So, the reason --

PHILIP

-- Well, that's right.

FREDERICKA

So, the reason --

PHILIP

-- Has to be --

FREDERICKA

The reason I think summer went by so fast. For your son. I think summer went by.

PHILIP

Well, I don't know.

FREDERICKA

He probably never experienced boredom.

PHILIP

-- That's a good question.

FREDERICKA

To be honest with you. Your son probably never experienced boredom.

That's... That's...

PHILIP

Has to be.

FREDERICKA

A good question.

PHILIP

I was hardly ever bored my entire life.

FREDERICKA

When I see him I'll ask.

PHILIP

I can't remember being bored.

FREDERICKA

I'll ask him what he thinks --

PHILIP

Hardly.

FREDERICKA

-- About boredom.

PHILIP

Has to be.

FREDERICKA

That's right.

PHILIP

Ask.

FREDERICKA

I don't know what he thinks about that.

PHILIP

Pause.

THEIR LIFE IN HOURS

Philip plays Metamorphosis One. He stops.

Pause.

They are both lost in thought.

Then...

PHILIP

What about the insects and birds --

FREDERICKA

The what?

PHILIP

Or creatures that only live for three days?

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

They have very short-term life spans.

FREDERICKA

I've thought about that a lot.

PHILIP

A fly.

Beat.

FREDERICKA

When I have been watching water --

PHILIP

A fly can measure their life in hours.

FREDERICKA

When I have been watching water I have suddenly had the experience of feeling like my consciousness had entered into something -- Something like... Something like a fish.

PHILIP

What if...

FREDERICKA

-- Yes, I've thought about that a lot. I realized I was prey and the shadows over my head --
I had that experience to the point that my heartbeat has sped up.

PHILIP

If, if two ...

FREDERICKA

I've had the feeling that my consciousness has entered into the consciousness of another
being. That is such a strange feeling with a completely different sense of time than I have.
I wonder --

PHILIP

What if, two hundred years from now, a life span felt like it was a few days?

FREDERICKA

I wonder if they ever have to think about time?

PHILIP

To us, we look at their life as pathetically quick --

FREDERICKA

Maybe it's just lived experience?

PHILIP

-- "How was the summer?" "What happened to that forty years?"

FREDERICKA

I wonder...

PHILIP

What's happening to the time?

FREDERICKA

Maybe that's the only level of time that they -- a fish, a fly -- can experience?

PHILIP

In 1947, time went by very slowly.

FREDERICKA

We, because we can think about time, also can experience this other feeling.

PHILIP

In 1947...

FREDERICKA

The whole idea of age. You know where people start measuring age by how much time they have left? I think that is so idiotic. We've never known how much time we have left.

PHILIP

That's right.

FREDERICKA

Never.

PHILIP

Yes.

FREDERICKA

So, it seems to me, it's not even worth thinking about. You have to stay grounded in the moment that you're living. And if you don't... If you don't, you're just in trouble.

THE GIFT OF TIMELESSNESS

Fredericka waits.

Long pause.

FREDERICKA

I hear you thinking.

PHILIP

You know, I'm thinking about this, umm. This discussion... We're, we're -- It's surprising because it's more complicated than... When I think of the possibility...

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

...Well, we know the universe is expanding....

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

And the idea that that will affect the flow of time -- it seems obvious it has to happen that way.

Long pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

But then how do we experience it as these creatures that are time bound?

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

In the White Tara, one of the White Tara prayers that we learned from Gelek Rimpoche, they talk about at the time of death you receive the gift of timelessness. (*Beat.*) Remember that?

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

What that means is time simply has stopped for that person. And people say well, they're afraid of dying because they think there's nothing there. That's not actually the issue. The issue is that there's no time there. You might still be completely aware, but the passage of time is not taking place any longer.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

You've buried people in your lifetime, maybe your parents or friends. Some people think what happens is that you go into another body. That's one idea. *(Beat.)* Other people might say nothing happens. You simply don't exist anymore. But that seems also unlikely to me. *(Beat.)* What seems more likely is that time has slowed down to a zero.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

It doesn't mean that your mind has stopped, it just says that your mind is no longer functioning in the realm of time.

Pause while Philip considers this idea.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Yes, that's right. It's the combination of mind and body ... we wouldn't be able to experience time without the body.

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Now, that's okay for human beings, but what does it mean for planets and stars?

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

What does that actually mean?

MOSTLY QUESTIONS

PHILIP

What does that mean? Actually?

FREDERICKA

When we're not experiencing time, could that be the same thing as eternity?

PHILIP

What does it mean for planets and stars?

FREDERICKA

What's the difference?

PHILIP

Are we talking about that we have no way of measuring timelessness?

Pause.

FREDERICKA

I look at the stars at night and I think how many of these actually exist now, except in my mind?

PHILIP

-- All these are interesting things --

FREDERICKA

When we are getting waves and information in the form of light, or some other forms, or a star that has been dead and gone for two million years, right?

PHILIP

-- But the main point is that when we talk about timelessness, what are we really talking about? Are we talking about that we have no way of measuring timelessness? Or that what we're measuring is a shadow of it? The same way that the shadow of a person is not the same as the person.... These are very curious things to think about.

FREDERICKA

I can't wrap my mind around it.

PHILIP

It's very challenging to come up with a coherent picture of time when you start looking at it in all these different ways.

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

And even when we talk about time stopping, we have to talk about it in different ways: It can stop through a meditative process; it can stop through a leaving the body process. It can stop because of the sheer distance that it takes the image to travel 150 trillion miles or something like that, something grand, uncountable.

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WHAT WE DO WITH THE TIME WE HAVE

Philip begin packing. He doesn't get very far with it.

PHILIP

Clearly, we have lives. We have children, we pay taxes, we get hungry, we go to sleep, we get up, we make paintings, we crash our cars against walls. We do all this stuff. And, at times, we do it fast. At times we do it slow and it can be confusing, because you're like a musician playing for a dance company. You have restrictions as to what you can do. The space will inform how fast the time has to move.

FREDERICKA

Clearly, we have lives.

PHILIP

We have children.

FREDERICKA

We pay taxes.

PHILIP

We get hungry.

FREDERICKA

We go to sleep.

PHILIP

We get up.

FREDERICKA

We make paintings.

PHILIP

We crash our cars into walls.

FREDERICKA

We do all this stuff.

PHILIP

We do all this stuff.

FREDERICKA

We do it fast.

PHILIP
At times we do it slow.

FREDERICKA
And it can be confusing.

PHILIP
Because you're like a musician --

FREDERICKA
-- Playing for a dance company.

PHILIP
You have restrictions as to what you can do.

FREDERICKA
-- Time and space are absolutely connected --

PHILIP
You see clearly that time and space are connected.

FREDERICKA
-- You have restrictions --

PHILIP
The space will inform how fast the time has to move.

FREDERICKA
The space will inform time.

PHILIP
How fast the time has to move.

FREDERICKA
I had never thought about it before in that way.

REFRAIN

Fredericka speaks to Philip directly across the divide.

FREDERICKA

I was so discouraged. You know how there's a bridge? To the past? A bridge by all those painters. I had been looking and I was so discouraged. I realized in Spain, Philip, I was prey. And the shadows over my head. I had been looking at art for days. I had been looking at art and I hadn't seen one woman artist. In Spain, to feel influenced by all those painters, and I hadn't seen one. I'm in the Prado, looking, and looking, and looking and there right in my eyes from 1656. "Las Meninas." Like contact with a human being. Like a living human being. I had that experience to the point that my heartbeat has sped up. I've had the feeling that my consciousness has entered into the consciousness of another being. And Diego Velazquez said, "It's okay." (*Beat.*) "It's okay. Keep painting." And I had been looking and I was so discouraged and it was the most extraordinary thing. "It's okay," he said. "It's okay, Fredericka."

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

How can we not be part of eternity?

TIME: YOUR ENTIRE LIFE

*Music: Philip Glass and Foday Musa Suso,
"The Screens -- Land of the Dead."*

PHILIP

I'm talking in riddles because that's what it feels like to me.

FREDERICKA

-- You were learning from Ravi Shankar --

PHILIP

-- That's what it feels like --

FREDERICKA

-- You were learning the whole idea of removing the bars from the music.

PHILIP

Well, there's more.

FREDERICKA

-- Because every single note has to have the same importance --

PHILIP

-- Value.

FREDERICKA

The same value.

PHILIP

There are more mysteries about time and music that I can let you in on. You probably haven't thought at all about that. Let's say I spent an evening writing a piece of music that takes five minutes to listen to. It's taken me ten hours to write it. That's also a very curious experience.

FREDERICKA

When I'm painting --

PHILIP

-- When you look at a painting --

FREDERICKA

There is no time.

PHILIP

Time always seems to be in the present.

FREDERICKA

There is no time.

PHILIP

When you look at a painting.

FREDERICKA

My painting is slow.

PHILIP

If I wake up in the middle of the night and I want to listen to that piece of music, I could be sleepy and so I'm not quite sure what my parameters are. You know how that happens when you're not quite awake?

FREDERICKA

I become a verb: *(Beat.)* Painting. Seeing.

PHILIP

So you think, does that piece take ten hours or does it take five minutes?

FREDERICKA

Yes. Yes.

PHILIP

And until you're wide awake, you might get actually confused about that.

FREDERICKA

So...

Beat as Fredericka considers.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

So, to me, you're talking about that moment when I think my muse is visiting me. And then I thought about what you said about setting up a time that was absolute that your muse could count on your being present, from -- what was it -- ten to two?

PHILIP

Yes.

FREDERICKA

That you set a specific time when you were a young composer. And --

PHILIP

-- Yeah. Well, as I --

FREDERICKA

I find --

PHILIP

-- I did it, but, you know--

FREDERICKA

-- I find that my muse comes to visit me at 5:20am.

PHILIP

You know, we talk about this, the tyranny of time --

FREDERICKA

You've worked with time your entire life.

PHILIP

-- But we can also talk about the tyranny of imagination.

FREDERICKA

You've worked with time. You've worked with time your entire life. You've worked with. Time. Time your entire life. Time: your entire life.

PHILIP

You know we, we most of us, have mastered the twenty-four hour clock. We know how much time we need to sleep, we know how much time we need eat, we know how much time we need to exercise and you can say that we've figured out how to get through that twenty-four hours.

FREDERICKA

I struggle with that.

PHILIP

I remember when I was with my friend, Foday Suso, and he would come pretty close to -- he would come on time -- if we had an appointment. I would say, "Foday, do you have a watch?" He'd say, "No, I don't have a watch." And I'd say, "How do you know what time it is?" He said, "I look at the sky."

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I say, "Does that work for you?" And he said, "Pretty much." (*Long pause.*)

TIME COLLAPSING ON ITSELF

Metamorphosis Four.

PHILIP

I would say.

FREDERICKA

When you're composing, Philip.

PHILIP

He'd say.

FREDERICKA

When you're composing, Philip, are you composing? Are you thinking? That your music will be played at these different times? These different times when you are composing? These different times while your music will be? At these different times when you are different?

PHILIP

He'd say. And I'd say, he said, "I look at the sky." I say, I'd said, I would say, I said, "Does that work for you?" And he'd say, "Pretty much," he said.

FREDERICKA

My painting is slow. When you're composing, Philip, are you composing?

PHILIP

-- These are interesting things --

FREDERICKA

I look at the stars at night and I think how many of these stars I look at, at night, and I think how many? Except in my mind how many, actually? How many actually exist now, except in my mind?

PHILIP

-- All these --

FREDERICKA

When we are getting waves and information in the form of light, or some other forms, or a star that has been dead and gone for two million years, right?

PHILIP

-- These are interesting things --

FREDERICKA

That's where you can get changed. --

PHILIP

-- I would say.

FREDERICKA

-- You can get changed.

PHILIP

A kind of mastery of your own attention.

FREDERICKA

Time's other name.

PHILIP

Yes, he said, "that's absolutely what it is."

FREDERICKA

It's "change." Time's other name.

PHILIP

When you are painting --

FREDERICKA

-- When you are composing --

PHILIP

When you are painting --

FREDERICKA

When somehow you move into that space, it seems like the work does itself.

PHILIP

It's a kind of gift of attention.

FREDERICKA

There's something about attention, intention...

PHILIP

If I wake up in the middle of the night --

FREDERICKA

When did I do that?

PHILIP

-- And I want to listen to that piece of music, does that piece take ten hours or does it take five minutes?

FREDERICKA

I'll look at the painting and I'm absolutely astonished. When did I?

PHILIP

Does that piece take five minutes? Or five minutes?

FREDERICKA

You use time well.

PHILIP

Or five minutes or ten hours? Five minutes or forty years?

FREDERICKA

You've managed to stretch time.

PHILIP

Well, I guess so --

FREDERICKA

-- You've managed to stretch time into three or four lifetimes.

PHILIP

-- I don't know --

FREDERICKA

-- Into three or four...

PHILIP

That's kind --

FREDERICKA

When?

PHILIP

-- But I don't know if that's really true.

FREDERICKA

When did I? Do that?

PHILIP

But. But! I would say --

FREDERICKA

You know I'll look at the painting and I'm absolutely astonished.

PHILIP

What I'm saying --

FREDERICKA

And I can't repeat it.

PHILIP

What I'm saying: in painting, over the period of a lifetime you may find that you paint very differently than you did when you were younger.

FREDERICKA

I wish I could repeat it but I never can.

PHILIP

And some of that may very well be a kind of mastery of your own attention.

FREDERICKA

When? I wish I could.

PHILIP

I was talking once with Gelek Rimpoche about meditation and I asked him, "Isn't it just paying attention?" "Yes," he said, "that's absolutely what it is."

FREDERICKA

Somehow when you move into that space. When you are composing. When you are painting --

PHILIP

Meditation is a nice fuzzy word that we all like to talk about -- but paying attention is different.

FREDERICKA

-- It seems like the work does itself. You're not doing it anymore.

PHILIP

I never have quite enough time.

FREDERICKA

That's where you can get changed. Time's other name.

PHILIP

I have the same shortage of time that everyone else has --

FREDERICKA

When you are composing.

PHILIP

-- As far as I can tell.

FREDERICKA

That's where...

PHILIP

I would say. He'd say.

FREDERICKA

Are you thinking?

PHILIP

And I'd say, he said, "I look at the sky."

FREDERICKA

Thinking that your music will be played at these different times?

PHILIP

I say, I'd said, I would say, I said --

FREDERICKA

When you're composing, Philip?

PHILIP

-- "Does that work for you?"

FREDERICKA

These times while your music will be?

PHILIP

And he'd say, "Pretty much," he said.

FREDERICKA

At these different times when you are composing? At these different times when you are different?

PHILIP

"Pretty much." (*Beat.*) "Pretty much." He'd say.

Pause.

FREDERICKA

That is a wonderful idea.

PHILIP

Yes...

Philip considers.

It really is a wonderful idea.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Yes.

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PRACTICAL MATTERS

They have come back to a grounded space. A kitchen. A living room. The present where they share a phone call.

PHILIP

I think we've wandered off the subject but I'm not so sure we've wandered very far away. Because, umm... --

FREDERICKA

But I -- Philip -- I'm worried the file is getting too big and I... I would feel better --

PHILIP

Okay.

FREDERICKA

To start. Just a second ...

She stops recording on one file and begins recording on another.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Okay.

PHILIP

Let's give ourselves another maybe... Let's give ourselves another half hour. Maybe. To -- 'Cause I have some --

FREDERICKA

Okay. Would you like to?

PHILIP

I have to start -- I'm going to Berlin tonight so I have to pack up and --

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

-- do that kind of stuff.

FREDERICKA

Absolutely.

PHILIP

But I'm happy to...

FREDERICKA

...So...

PHILIP

And also I'm wondering what are, what are --

FREDERICKA

Yes?

PHILIP

Has this... been useful? This talk? Do you think?

FREDERICKA

For me.

PHILIP

Okay.

FREDERICKA

It's been enormously useful.

PHILIP

Okay.

WHERE TO FIND HAPPINESS

Philip plays "Mad Rush."

PHILIP

What is the engine of change?

Pause.

FREDERICKA

When you're composing --

PHILIP

When you are painting --

FREDERICKA

Where?

PHILIP

What is the engine?

FREDERICKA

In our lives...

Philip stops playing. He writes a note in the margins of the sheet music.

PHILIP

What we mostly do... We get good at doing something and we do it for a while and then after a while we'll change, maybe. Maybe. Some people don't change at all. They'll draw the same circle and paint it orange and then maybe paint it blue and then red and orange again. They'll do the same thing over and over again.

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

If I look at Sol Lewitt's work, it's beautiful work, but it doesn't change that much and yet I don't have any trouble looking at it. So, it's not a criticism of the work. But, for some of us, we want more of a radical change. And so how do we do that?

FREDERICKA

Without time you can't have novelty.

PHILIP

Bob Wilson and I did *Einstein on the Beach* and it was very successful.

FREDERICKA

You know, but the thing that we have both kept alive, I can hear in our voice, is that little kid who is so curious, running around.

PHILIP

To avoid doing *The Son of Einstein*, I next did the opera *Satyagraha*, which was completely different. That was counter-intuitive.

FREDERICKA

I mean that little child, that still is totally alive in me. And I'm so grateful for that.

Pause.

PHILIP

Most people follow success with another similar one, but I wanted to keep creative thinking alive in the process.

FREDERICKA

I've seen so many people that that isn't true for, you know, that got discarded, destroyed in the sorrows of life. And that little child is still running. That's one of my engines.

PHILIP

I was looking for change.

FREDERICKA

Time's other name.

Pause.

PHILIP

New people bring an entirely different world with them.

FREDERICKA

Yes.

PHILIP

We like to please. And so, if we have a gallery, "We want some more of these paintings," or ... you know?

She knows. She sees her paintings as they flash by she sees them as evolving. She sees them flowing in her mind's eye.

FREDERICKA

The thing that happened to me, when Fischbach Gallery went online only, which really doesn't work for me, that meant I could -- my work could start to change. I did, because before --

PHILIP

-- I noticed that --

FREDERICKA

It really feels freeing to me.

PHILIP

Your work may take a few years -- but it will change.

FREDERICKA

And here I'm working on paper which I haven't done in years and I love it.

PHILIP

Some people won't change at all.

FREDERICKA

It feels very exciting to me.

PHILIP

I -- I've turned it into a formula.

FREDERICKA

It makes me feel younger.

PHILIP

The formula goes like this: I'm never happier than when I don't know what I'm doing.

FREDERICKA

Okay. I love that. Yep, that's right. That's right.

FERMATA

Fredericka in her studio.

FREDERICKA

Growing up... Growing up in Seattle, you are surrounded by water. It's everywhere. And in the summers I spent east of the mountains with my grandparents, we were on a lake. And I swam. Fished. And I swam. I've always had a connection with water.

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

And I learned that water was common to every single faith -- that was how the Water Series began. Because water is connected with spirituality, with poetry, with memory, it felt so perfect to me to pick that as my subject matter. It felt very intimate. Like I had landed in my home space as a painter.

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

But I didn't want to stand there and paint what I saw -- I didn't want to do water paintings. I didn't want to make landscapes. I wanted to have something that I could grab a hold of, but that still maintained its inherent abstract qualities. That's why I worked without a horizon because that allowed me to just focus on the water, and nothing else. Just the water. I wanted to do a photograph first -- many photographs first -- and then spend time figuring out what it was I was looking at.

Pause as Fredericka sees one of her compositions in her mind's eye.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

You put in a layer, and you've got it in one position. You move it over a little bit. You put it in another position, you move it over, you put in a layer, you keep moving it over. This is underneath. Because I had no intuitive sense about how water moved. None. And I used to defend myself, and then, at some point I realized, No. It's the weirdnesses in my vision that make my paintings interesting.

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

It's incredible to me the way that these shapes start to come alive. They are alive. They have gesture. They have posture. They have communicative abilities in the way they're moving with other things. And so then I started to feel that the water was actually communicating to me directly. And I started to realize that my primary job as a painter was to have a relationship with water.

THEY SPEAK TO US

Pause.

FREDERICKA

When I see a handprint ...

PHILIP

Hmm?

FREDERICKA

In the Southwest. When I see a handprint put there when that rock was still clay...

PHILIP

Yes?

FREDERICKA

Music absolutely carries culture with it. And so does painting. It's like somebody saying hello across tens of thousands of years.

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Communicating to me directly: "Keep painting." "Keep painting, Fredericka."

Beat.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

The way we are bound through culture, includes an awful lot of time.

PHILIP

Yes. That's right.

FREDERICKA

This infinite progression through human beings...

Pause.

FREDERICKA (CONT'D)

Through human beings who have been making music, making paintings since they became conscious. (*Beat.*) I mean, that's the world we're swimming in.

HOW DO YOU GET TO CARNEGIE HALL?

Continuation.

FREDERICKA

We can see culture coming at us and giving us the connection with people --

PHILIP

I find that because I've been working for so long that some of the old pieces are still around.

FREDERICKA

-- People that lived thousands of years ago.

PHILIP

And people are listening to pieces I wrote thirty or forty years ago. They like them. And I said, "Oh, that's interesting." Maybe try to play them myself and see what happens. If I go back and play them...

FREDERICKA

We are bound in time through culture.

PHILIP

And what happens is that I don't play them the same way.

FREDERICKA

-- This is interesting --

PHILIP

I am playing a piece at Carnegie Hall in two weeks that I wrote in 1970.

FREDERICKA

-- That time, that forty-nine years --

PHILIP

A different person is playing the piece.

FREDERICKA

And the pieces that you're playing, you're playing differently because you've had all those years of experience --

PHILIP

-- Yeah, that's right.

FREDERICKA

-- So, they're really not the same.

PHILIP

They're not the same. *(Beat.)* But they don't sound all that different, either.

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WHAT AGE AM I?

Philip at his piano. Not playing.

Fredericka in her studio.

PHILIP

What was his name?

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Was that me?

Beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

If I had a picture of it, I see this kid with long hair, a skinny guy with a T-shirt and jeans and ...

FREDERICKA

It loses its meaning.

PHILIP

I noticed that someone was playing this piece from 1970 -- two, two or three different people -- someone in Iceland and someone in Italy, another person in Slovenia, I mean, completely different places. And they were young groups getting together and playing pieces I wrote fifty years ago. And that's when I said, I wonder what it's like if I played it? So we started doing that. We're taking one of those pieces and we're playing it at Carnegie Hall in February. We're rehearsing it.

FREDERICKA

Because of that thread of time --

PHILIP

I have to rehearse it.

FREDERICKA

-- That has run through the music.

PHILIP

And, you know, the music just came back to me, we've been rehearsing it and I haven't looked at it yet because we've rehearsed for about a week and I'm going to wait until then. I'll take a look at it then.

NUMBER THEORY

The phrases in the following take their form from the number sequence sung in Einstein on the Beach, Knee Play 5. Fredericka's lines are repeated as counterpoint until Philip's lines are completed.

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe

What makes it easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of

(Rest.) Easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of reincarnations I've had in this life.

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe

What makes it easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of

(Rest.) Easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of reincarnations I've had in this life.

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe

(Beat.) Easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of

What makes it easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of reincarnations I've had in this life.

PHILIP

I think that's true. I think that's a very true statement. When we talk about novelty -- it's by finding something new, a "nova." The root of the world tells you what it means. It means newness. Novelty is newness. And when you say, "How do I continue to change?"

PHILIP (CONT'D)

"What is the engine of change for me? What's it gonna be?" It can be a lot of different ones but having that... it's like keeping the ball in the air. You just gotta keep it up there. At the same time, just for fun, I'll go back and play something I wrote fifty years ago.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I think that's true. I think that's a very true statement. When we talk about novelty -- it's by finding something new, a "nova." The root of the world tells you what it means. It means newness. Novelty is newness. And when you say, "How do I continue to change?"

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe

What makes it easy for me to believe in
reincarnation is the number of

(Rest.) Easy for me to believe in
reincarnation is the number of
reincarnations I've had in this life.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

"What is the engine of change for me?

What's it gonna be?" It can be a lot of
different ones but having that.... it's like
keeping the ball in the air. You just gotta
keep it up there. At the same time, just for
fun, I'll go back and play something I
wrote fifty years ago. Just to shock myself
a little bit.

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe in reincarnation is the number of reincarnations I've
had in this life.

ELEGY FOR TIME

PHILIP

The dance floor is getting bigger.

FREDERICKA

Have you connected emotionally with musicians from the past? --

PHILIP

When you look at a painting, time always seems to be in the present.

FREDERICKA

-- Do they seem as real?

PHILIP

A lot of the things in music happen in measured time.

FREDERICKA

I'm so grateful --

PHILIP

-- "This'll only take a minute."

FREDERICKA

-- We've never known how much we have left.

PHILIP

What happened to that forty years?

FREDERICKA

A most extraordinary experience.

PHILIP

Sol Lewitt. John Cage. Galek Rimpoche.

FREDERICKA

"It's okay, Fredericka" --

PHILIP

Jasper Johns. "What are you doing?" --

FREDERICKA

What makes it easy for me to believe in reincarnation.

Ten years...
PHILIP

Eternity --
FREDERICKA

-- He said, "I'm still working on that painting."
PHILIP

-- Is that where the seeds are planted?
FREDERICKA

Ten years... nothing.
PHILIP

Have you?
FREDERICKA

What if it's true?
PHILIP

Emotionally?
FREDERICKA

The dance floor is getting bigger.
PHILIP

Do they seem as real?
FREDERICKA

He said, "I'm still working."
PHILIP

Is that where the seeds are planted?
FREDERICKA

The length of time and the speed of time.
PHILIP

Eternity.
FREDERICKA

It felt like it was never going to end.
PHILIP

Time.
FREDERICKA

For days.
PHILIP

And the shadows over my head.
FREDERICKA

It felt like it was never going to end.
PHILIP

Long Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
I'm going to have to start getting ready to go.

FREDERICKA
We didn't talk much about time and impermanence. That certainly is part of our thinking. Have we not covered anything else that you wanted to say?

PHILIP
Well, I don't know. Let's see what happens when they -- when someone edits it and looks at it and we may, we may have to come back and look at a few topics that we missed.

FREDERICKA
All right, but I'm sure we have enough. And thank you so much for this. It was absolutely delightful.

STARTING

As from the beginning.

PHILIP

Are we talking about time I think?

Pause.

FREDERICKA

Yes, that's right. And the now --

PHILIP

-- Interesting --

FREDERICKA

-- And the importance of the now.

PHILIP

-- That's a funny thing.

Pause.

FREDERICKA

We didn't talk much.

PHILIP

Well, I don't know.

FREDERICKA

We didn't talk much about time and impermanence.

PHILIP

Let's see what happens.

FREDERICKA

That certainly is part of our thinking.

PHILIP

Let's see ...

FREDERICKA

Have we not covered anything else that you wanted to say?

Well, I don't know.

PHILIP

Pause.

Are we talking about time?

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Pause.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Let's see what happens when someone edits it, and looks at it, and we may have to come back and look at a few topics that we missed.

FREDERICKA

All right, but I'm sure we have enough. Thank you so much for this. It was absolutely delightful.

PHILIP

Oh good, good, good. I'm glad that we could do it.

FREDERICKA

And have a great time in Berlin.

PHILIP

Okay. It'll be fast, I'll tell you that. *(Beat.)* Give my best to Ben and we'll talk when we can.

FREDERICKA

Bye. Okay. Bye-bye.

PHILIP

Bye.

Pause.

Fredericka looks at Philip.

Philip returns Fredericka's look.

They return to where they began.

FREDERICKA

Okay.

Yes.

PHILIP

Would you like to start?

FREDERICKA

Yes. (*Beat.*) We can start.

PHILIP

End.

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