

THEATRE ARCHIVE PROJECT

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Trevor Griffiths – interview transcript

Interviewer: Kimberley Whitehead

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Professor of Drama at London Metropolitan University. Birmingham Rep during 1960s.

KW: First of all I'd like to ask you if you thought there was a noticeable change in theatre between 1963 to at the end of the sixties that you noticed.

TG: Well I think it's difficult to say because I was growing up in that time but I suppose a lot of the changes that I saw were to do with how much more widely I travelled to go to the theatre. I suppose I started off in Birmingham going to the Birmingham Rep (Birmingham Repertory Theatre) and then moved from that to venturing further a-field to places like Stratford and occasionally to London. And I think therefore there was access to a different kind of range of material and also I suppose I also started working in amateur theatre fairly early on and that probably influenced my sense of what was going on because I think the amateur theatre I was involved in with was the Midlands Art Centre which started when I was an adolescent and where Mike Lee did his early work and I think the fact of having access to someone like Mike who was working on the early stages of developing his theory of improvisation meant that we were probably seeing work which was more cutting edge than perhaps one would otherwise have done and also being involved in work oneself that was perhaps more cutting edge. Birmingham Rep was good but I suppose fairly traditional although I don't remember seeing much in the way of what would then have been thought of as avant-garde work there. I think so it was a fairly conventional diet of classics: Ibsen, Chekhov, Shakespeare and quite worthy stuff but nothing that I thought of at that stage of being very radical. I suppose the most radical thing I saw in that period, I think that made the greatest impression on me was the touring version of 'Oh, What a Lovely War!' which would have been some time in the very early sixties when I was, I suppose about 14, and I suppose that was the first time I'd come across epic theatre. That made probably the biggest impact on me in terms of the kind of theatre I became interested in and that was a touring company at one of the touring houses in Birmingham which was a big theatre I suppose. I think that I was aware at the end of the sixties of the change in the removal of censorship in three particular instances I suppose. One was earlier in the sixties when we did a production of David Rudkin's *Afore Night Come* at the Midlands Art Centre where we weren't allowed to use the swear words in it. I think, if I remember rightly we were allowed to say 'fuck' twice and otherwise we had to substitute the word 'swithe' which of course had the effect on all the audiences of everyone saying, 'what does 'swithe' mean?' to one another since nobody knew what it meant unless they happened to have read Chaucer or something. Which had precisely the opposite effect to what the censorship, the internal censorship there tried to do. And I did see the *Doctor Faustus* that the RSC did just after censorship was abandoned in which they got a, I think they slightly anticipated *Hair* (Shaftesbury Theatre, 27 September 1968) by managing to have a nude Helen of Troy but I think it's very interesting because what they actually did was

have a woman who walked across the back of the stage so far away, and Stratford Upon Avon is a huge theatre, right at the back of the audience so you were clearly aware that this was somebody with no clothes on but I think unless you'd known that this was a kind of historic moment in theatre, you wouldn't really have known what was going on at all. And similarly I think with Hair, which again is always quoted, what was interesting about that was that I went to the 5:00 Friday matinee showing of Hair and at the end of Hair there was supposed to be this moment when everyone could get up on stage and join in with the cast and dancing and so on. You couldn't do it at the 5:00 showing because the equity law and regulations said that they had to have a suitable break between the shows so it was quite interesting, you had an audience that thought that it was going to be allowed to do something and then was kind of very much not allowed to do it so it was kind of interesting moment there on that. I suppose that was also one of the first times I saw a plant in the audience being used to take the show on because there was somebody in the audience who had to say it was all disgusting and so forth.

KW: Was it obvious that they were a plant?

TG: It was fairly obvious. I suppose I was probably quite sophisticated by 1968 but I think there certainly were people in the audience who were not aware to start with and there was some applause for the comments because I think politically it was quite, you know it was anti-the Vietnam war and kind of anti-establishment and pro-hippy and all that kind of thing. Old people didn't like that much and so I think there was a kind of sense in which the audience was a bit polarised so some of the people in the audience liked that and then of course they realised it was a plant and sort of moved in the other direction I suppose and to be embarrassed by what had happened so it was kind of interesting because I think it was really just like that, it wasn't common to have that kind of interaction with audiences until, my impression is anyway until, somewhere around 1968 when those kind of things seemed to be things that were happening more often.

KW: Yeah, did you think that audiences really appreciated having the chance to interact?

TG: I'm not sure. I think some did and some didn't. And I suppose it's always at that point some people don't, some people like to sort of hide in audiences and I'm not a great one for being dragged on stage and I think a lot of people probably thought it was interesting to have a kind of voice of the audience but in that particular kind of theatre which was the traditional proscenium arch theatre I think...and Hair was interesting because I suppose it was very clearly a West End show by the time it arrived in Britain I think and wasn't, the kind of, it had already been packaged as a kind of, I suppose, for cultural tourists who wanted to find out about hippies rather than as what it might have been in America. I think by then it was certainly a commercialised operation to some extent but although it did seem to be, I suppose voicing a kind of, aspirations of people of my generation to some extent. I'm not so sure what it would look like now, but I think obviously things change and the music style was obviously very different from the kind of thing one traditionally saw in the West End . But it was a West End show.

KW: Yeah. Do any of these productions that you've seen, do you remember if you felt really shocked by them, if there's anything that really, you know, blew you away?

TG: I think the, actually in the sixties, the thing that probably shocked me most was a production of The Representative which was done at the Birmingham Rep which is the play about the Pope and the holocaust and I suppose that was the first time I'd seen a play about something of that magnitude on stage. I suppose I'd seen political plays by then but this was, it was notable for two things. I think one reason it had an actor called Lance Percival who was basically very much a kind of light comic sort of actor who was playing, I remember him very much as a kind of storm trooper figure in this, he was a very unsympathetic character so that was quite interesting as a kind of example of

playing against type. But at the end of the play there was a tableau and it was very clear that the play had ended and it was the first and one of the very few times I've been in a theatre when nobody clapped and so everybody was just, I think, sitting there stunned and after a while they brought the house lights up and everybody left and I think what I, what does stay with me to this day is that I think nobody spoke until they were well out of the theatre so there was a kind of sense of the power of the sort of documentary style had made a major impact. And it's interesting because the only other time that that happened was again with a show about the holocaust at the Roundhouse much, much later, when again it ended with a tableau and again nobody clapped. It's interesting because I actually saw *The Representative* twice at that production and the second time people did clap so it was obviously something to do with the way the audience was made up and the kind of power of the performance. I think the most powerful reaction was obviously the one where people had been shocked out of conventional responses. And certainly what I remember most about it I think that's the most shocking thing and certainly the thing that made the greatest impact on me.

KW: So these shocking plays, did they sort of provide a talking point afterwards, you know, did you want to tell your friends about them and to talk about how they thought about it?

TG: Yes. Well, I think possibly there was a kind of, I think being interested in theatre, wasn't necessarily in Birmingham as a young man in the sixties wasn't exactly seen as a very cool thing to be interested in. And so there were probably a group of sort of probably three or four of us who went after school down to the Midlands Art Theatre and talked about these sorts of things but I think generally you would have been regarded as, to quote from something written on one of my schoolbooks, an arty pseud. And, so I think, it was the kind of inhibition about that and I didn't come from a background, there was no theatre at all in my background so it was no real kind of sense of being able to talk about these things other than to a small, kind of yeah, coterie of arty pseuds I suppose.

KW: Yeah. So to decide what plays to go and see, was it like what your friends were going to see or did you read theatre critics in the papers?

TG: Well I think most of that time it was very much confined to what was on in the Birmingham Rep, if we had visiting companies at the Arts Centre or productions that people the same age as me were doing at the Arts Centre and visiting companies, there were two, I think it was mainly one place where visiting companies came and so, which was where you'd get the ?, I remember seeing Marcel Marceau in that time and I think I probably saw most things that were on in Birmingham at that time but I didn't really travel until 1967, 1968 when I, well I went to university in 1967 and I started going to Stratford really, just before I went to university because it was to do with access to transport and the journey from Birmingham to Stratford is, still is, rather difficult, but without access to a car or anything like that it was very difficult to make those kinds of journeys. And occasionally I went to London, I didn't really start going to the theatre in London until I was at university apart from the odd trip. I went with the school stage staff to see a Lionel Blair musical called 'Blitz' which was about the blitz in the second world war and which was notable for having lots of very high tech stuff for that period. They used very big bridges and they also used trucks, motorised trucks, with radio control which was very much state of the art for the early sixties and that was exciting but mostly, I think it was just what was available. I think I read, I did read newspaper criticisms of things that were happening elsewhere. And I think we were, certainly in terms of things we decided we wanted to do, or we were interested in, we were by the early sixties kind of feeling that Osborne and Wesker were a bit old hat and that we were much more interested in people that we thought were more challenging which I

suppose would be Beckett and Brecht and people that were influenced by them rather than just the sort of basically naturalistic writers like Osborne and Wesker.

KW: Was it people like Osborne that got you interested though, in the power of the theatre? Had you heard of them, you know, when you were younger that, how much they'd shook it up?

TG: The thing that really got me was actually, I think the first time I ever went to the theatre was a school production of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* and I was completely amazed to see that you could use, that you could dramatise debate in the way that that did and that I suppose I started, I probably did more productions than I saw in those early days as a stage manager and so on and that was mainly classics and I suppose the school wouldn't do anything too outrageously modern. But I think reading a lot of Osborne, there was a lot of high-quality drama on television in that time, but I think it was very much a sense, yeah I mean I remember reading 'Anger' (*Look Back in Anger*, *The Royal Court*, 8 May 1956) and after in the early sixties and sort of having a sense of the change, the supposed change that had occurred and the feeling that it was kind of rather parochial change and that the really important changes were those to do with the kind of work that Joan Littlewood was doing and with the sort of changes in theatre shapes and yeah, people like Beckett and Brecht.

KW: Yeah. What did you think of, when you saw *Oh, What a Lovely War!*? You know, how it was very unrealistic, with all the songs etc. Did you think that worked well, did the audience like it?

TG: Yeah, yeah. I think again it was kind of interesting because by the time it got to Birmingham as well I think it had already gone from Stratford to London to Birmingham and I think the tour was obviously organised by people who were seeing it as a kind of, more in terms of the audience being people that might remember it or you know, whose parents remembered it and liked the old songs and so forth. Whereas I think as a young person I saw the sort of the attack on the generals and the attack on the waste as very much the thing I was interested in so I saw it as very radical but I think at the Birmingham Hippodrome, which I think is where I saw it, you know it was also, it also had those kind of West End qualities for a lot of the audience. It was the nearest thing, it was a West End hit for a lot of people whereas I think I was much more aware of it as a kind of piece of radical theatre and it certainly affected me and I suppose I still remember the moment when the famous soldiers decide to go like lambs to the slaughter and they go baaahing and then they're all shot down and I think the non-naturalistic use of the stage effects certainly made a great, great impact on me at that time.

KW: When you started going away from home to visit, when you went to Stratford and to London, was it quite an event for you where you did used to look forward to it and plan it beforehand?

TG: Very much so, yes, because it was quite, I suppose going to Stratford for example meant, I didn't drive at that point, meant finding someone who would like to go to Stratford who had a car. And I suppose, and with London, and I suppose it was tied up as well with growing up in terms of who I went with and why I went with them. I don't want to say anymore about that.

KW: Did you used to enjoy performances more when it was a very young audience or did you not, did you sort of just concentrate on your own perceptions of it?

TG: I was always very conscious, still am, of the make-up of an audience and I think that because when you go to Stratford there's always a lot of school parties anyway but I think, and I was conscious there of being an adult because I wasn't at school and I was about to go to university so I was going to be all grown up. But at the same time I

wasn't as old as all these rather fuddy-duddy people that I thought made up the majority of the audience and the two first things I saw at Stratford (Royal Shakespeare Company, aka RSC) were Macbeth that Peter Hall had done that had a terrific opening with, the heath was a kind of red rug which was actually as it turned out made up of individual soldiers so that when the witches were doing their initial appearance the heath started to sort of appear as though it was alive and to writhe and then they got up and that was the kind of idea of the stage boiling which was very startling. And the other thing was 'The Revenger's Tragedy' which was a very, I suppose, people have subsequently called it camp and I suppose in some ways it was quite a camp production but it was certainly a very, those were two very interesting things to see because they made you very aware in the audience of being somewhat different from what you'd expect in, certainly 'The Revenger's Tragedy', I think hardly anybody knew it at that time and it's a fairly weird play anyway so I think that was very exciting and I do remember thinking, I suppose there was a sense at that time that the RSC although it was doing Shakespeare was quite a radical organisation and one was aware of it as young and vital and something one could identify with, where probably as an eighteen-year old now you wouldn't but in those days I think one did. And yeah I was always aware that the audience was on the whole I suppose that they, particularly at Stratford that there was people who were there who didn't quite know why they were there. They were there because they were on, I suppose even then there was a big tourism half and I think a lot of people were there because they'd been told that culture was important and that Shakespeare was the most cultural thing that you could get and they were there. But also there were real enthusiasts and I suppose I was becoming a real enthusiast at that point.

KW: So did you feel that the RSC succeeded in making the classics relevant to younger people and to your generation?

TG: Absolutely. Very much so and I think one of the things very much that they did at that time was talking about the need for classical actors to always be working with new work as well and the kind of interaction between that and I think that was something that was very important to me and I think in terms of my subsequent professional career has stayed with me as an important part of that as well, my involvement in professional theatre and in my academic work and just a sense of the kind of importance of the classical disciplines but also the sense of treating each classical play as though it was something new that you're looking at for the first time and I think that's what I got from the RSC and I remember at that time there was a great debate going on about how people couldn't speak verse anymore and it's quite interesting because that happens about every ten years somebody says this and I thought it was interesting because they weren't sort of speaking beautifully a la John Gielgud, didn't really matter because what I was interested in was what I thought was the kind of immediacy and a communication and I suppose Shakespeare our contemporary kind of approach which certainly spoke to me very much given my age at that point.

KW: Do you think that in your professional career anything that you've done has been directly influenced by any of your memories of seeing those productions?

TG: Well I think in one very direct sense, I mean slightly going outside of the '68 period I was at the first night of Peter Brook's A Midsummer Night's Dream (RSC, 1970) which had a very direct effect on my career because I decided to do my MA dissertation on it and then my PhD. I subsequently published a book which derived entirely from the experience of seeing that production and which remains one of the kind of high spots of my theatre going but I think because what it did that I thought was important was it showed complete respect for the text, whatever that means, but I think it did virtually all the text and it approached each line as though it meant something but it did it in a

totally non-traditional way in terms of not having any real woods or anything like that and I just felt that it was a kind of moment where Shakespeare and Meyerhold and other kind of people who'd thought about the theatre came together to really just strip something and make it new for its audience and I suppose that's been a kind of guiding principle in what I've tried to do every since, I'm not sure whether I succeeded but I think it's been something that's been very important to me since then.

KW: So did you think that the scenery in that, you know how you said there wasn't any trees or anything, affected the overall effect a lot?

TG: Absolutely. Because I think traditionally people tended to do either to do it in Renaissance period costume or in some kind of version of classical Athenian costume and this was, I suppose it was at a period where it was sort of influenced by some Indian elements in the costuming but the white box and the sort of use of circus skills which I suppose comes from early twentieth century Meyerhold and so on, I think it did have that terrific impact of just, some people hated it but I think and some people couldn't see beyond the scenery but I think the scenery just cleared out the stuff that was getting in the way of actually hearing what the play might be about and in that sense it really did make a huge difference yeah.

KW: Had you heard about the A Midsummer Night's Dream before you went, heard that it was you know, sort of, breaking new ground?

TG: Well I saw it on the first night and I'd been sent to review it for the students newspaper at Warwick where I was as a student and so in that sense obviously we knew that it was happening and I do believe they had actually done a rehearsal at the Midlands Art Centre in Birmingham but I wasn't really in contact with that at that point so my recollection is that I went fairly cold to it but I think I did know, obviously I knew it was Peter Brook and I knew therefore that it was likely to be different and not run of the mill but I certainly hadn't expected it to be, the way it was which was I think quite extraordinary and certainly I think the one time I've been in an audience that was completely swept up by the event and it was very much like the first nights that you read about with people hugging and kissing each other in the aisles and so forth. It felt like a kind of genuinely transformative experience and it obviously wasn't in terms of what I ended up doing but I think it was one of those kind of moments where I think that whole audience, or pretty much that whole audience were just kind of swept along on a huge kind of emotional commitment to what it was seeing.

KW: So when did you start writing reviews for your student paper?

TG: I think I started in my first year, so 1967, 1968.

KW: Did that change how you watched the theatre? Did you sort of view it more coldly in a way?

TG: Well I think some of the stuff that I went to see which was at the Belgrade in Coventry left me fairly cold in a number of ways because I don't think, I don't remember anything that I saw there as being of particularly high quality and I think possibly I've not looked at those reviews for thirty odd years but certainly I think it was a fairly, in some ways they were fairly easy targets for a student writing to a student audience saying this is old-fashioned trash, perhaps I wasn't quite as rude as that but I think those were hard, on the other hand when I started reviewing the RSC productions at Stratford I think those were, I was certainly conscious I suppose there of addressing an academic audience more of my fellow students and my tutors. I don't know if my tutors read the student newspapers. I was being taught Shakespeare by Germaine Greer so I was kind of conscious of Germaine as a possible lurking audience which was quite scary at the time. And I certainly think what was interesting about that was I became very much aware

that probably not my reviews but other reviews were very much the kind of thing that people would be using to try and base their future understandings of productions on and so I became very aware early on of wanting to give a flavour of what was going on that was sort of beyond the 'Alan Howard was wonderful' or whatever type of review that you still I think very much get so I wanted it to try and locate things in context very much. And I remember there was a Measure for Measure where at the end of which Isabella didn't accept the Duke's proposal and it seemed very right to me at that point and I suppose that would have, I think that was 1970 as well and I suppose we were just in the very, very early days of feminism, the re-birth of feminism anyway and it made a lot of sense at that time, and I remember being deeply shocked when I read academic criticism and most of the academic criticism said, well of course she marries him or that's the impression I had, because it had never occurred to me that that was actually a probable ending from that experience of seeing that play and I suppose it's another way in which something's affected me because I've taught the play a lot since and that's always been an important way in which I've read the play and have had a matrix through which I've read other productions, major productions there. She has married the Duke and very often against the kind of tenor of the production's own staging I think.

KW: So when you used to watch these productions did you ever used to think of phrases that you could use in your reviews whilst you were watching them, like that came to mind like a title or whatever or did you used to concentrate on them and then think about it later?

TG: I tried to concentrate on it. I don't like writing things down as I watch, maybe sometimes in the interval, I suppose it depends how gripping it is as well, because I think some of those things I was talking about at the Belgrade I probably had more or less made up my mind before I went to see them and I feel a bit ashamed about that now really. But I think I probably had a lot of the kind of prejudices that you'd expect on that period, I mean I think Ayckbourn (Alan) for example was clearly not a serious writer as far as I was concerned in those days and not somebody you'd take seriously which is not the view I now hold at all, a quite radically different view. I think a lot of people were, including me, were very dismissive of him at that point and I think that was, because he wasn't epic and he wasn't political, well he appeared not to be, I mean I think probably both of those are not quite true but at that point he seemed to be just a kind of genial farceur and I think probably a lot of us misread him at that point.

KW: Did you ever go to any plays specifically because of any actors or actresses that were in them, like a star performer?

TG: Yes I did, actually because I did, what again at that point seemed like a major adventure which was to see Ian McKellen at Nottingham Playhouse in the Edward II / Richard II which he did, can't remember the dates. And certainly I was aware that he was a star at that point, I think that I was actually, again I think I'd been asked to review it, it was certainly a review that I'd jumped at because of already knowing that name. Otherwise I think probably I was a bit anti-star because I think I'd been affected by a kind of sense that, the kind of theatre that I was committed to which was a kind of Brechtian theatre didn't have stars, shouldn't have stars. And yeah, so I think probably I was not in favour of stars and I'm not sure I'd have gone out of my way to avoid them but it certainly wouldn't have been a factor in making me want to go and see something at that stage.

KW: Were there any actors, apart from Ian McKellen that you particularly remember, you know they really interpreted their role interestingly?

TG: Alan Howard, from that period definitely. I think Anna Calder-Marshall at the Birmingham Rep, Judi Dench, what a surprise, The RSC, Twelfth Night (21 August 1969

). I think it was interesting because I think there would be a lot, Ian Richardson. There would be a lot of the RSC actors who subsequently went on to become famous but that who weren't, I think I was very conscious of wanting to see ensembles and valuing of the community group work rather than stars and I think that the RSC at that time was kind of making its own stars to a certain extent. I did see some star performances but, I suppose Marcel Marceau counts as a bit of a star but I wasn't conscious, I certainly didn't go out of my way to see anybody who was a star and I've always been much more interested in productions than I have in actors as well so.

KW: So did you used to buy programmes when you used to go to the theatre?

TG: Absolutely.

KW: And would you be interested in, as well as the actors, you know the lighting and who designed the scenery and stuff as much as the actors?

TG: Yeah very much so. And certainly I think it was quite interesting if I ever go back and look at the programmes I'm quite often surprised to see who was actually in a production because I remember the production, I may even remember a particular moment from that production but I won't remember that that was somebody who is now very famous I will just remember the moment rather than who the actor was.

KW: Did you ever sort of track the career of any people you were particularly interested in, in the theatre?

TG: Yes, I think particularly again with that kind of sense of people growing up through the RSC, Alan Howard, I think in later years, certainly there were occasions when I would go and see things because Alan Howard was in them and I suppose later people like Lindsay Duncan and Alan Rickman who I'd seen in earlier work and I guess yeah Ian Richardson again yes, so very much a kind of tracking of, Patrick Stewart was one I was very interested in, as a kind of example of someone who I saw do terrific stuff at the RSC and then one of the few people that I've actually made a point after he'd done Star Trek and came to the one person show about Dickens a few years ago and I actually went to see that just because, I liked him in Star Trek anyway! But because of that kind of sense of him in the RSC work and a very kind of sense of somebody who's a major figure. For me, probably, curiously more so than someone like Ben Kingsley who did become a kind of major, major star for a while who I wouldn't have tracked in quite the same way.

KW: Was there any theatres that were particular favourites because of the theatre, more than what they put on, you know like because of the way that they presented it, it was theatre-in-the-round or proscenium arch or, you know how the building looked?

TG: I think in that period most of my theatre-going was to fairly conventional venues, mostly proscenium arch venues except for the work of the Midlands Art Centre which was sort of more of an arena stage both in the work we did and with the occasional visiting companies. So I think, what I remember about the old Rep in Birmingham which was a small theatre was very much the kind of sense of intimacy, so that was a bit of a favourite. Stratford became a favourite I think just because of the quality of the stuff I saw in it. I suppose I haven't had the same kind of very negative responses to that building that a lot of people had, both as audiences and as actors but I've never tried to work in it, I've only watched things in it. So I do find the ambience in Stratford, I do get quite excited by sort of arriving there and the theatre and the river and particularly if it's a nice sunny summer day or whatever, but I suppose that I preferred in that sense The Other Place in Stratford which was kind of more my kind of, I keep using the term cutting edge, I hope it's recognised I'm using it ironically, you know it was more cutting edge, it was my kind of space in the sense that it was much more of a neutral kind of

space. And I suppose I was fairly scornful of the kind of typical West End theatre in the abstract because I hadn't really been to that many anyway. But there wasn't, you know if you were in Birmingham, there wasn't that much that wasn't basically proscenium arch. And even the stuff directors were doing elsewhere, I suppose Nottingham was slightly different but most of it was in fairly conventional proscenium end-on sort of relationships, not very much that was very different. Slightly later I guess that stuff happened.

KW: Can you remember in plays that had intervals, can you remember if there was any intervals when people were really you know talking about it, you know they wanted to find out what would happen next or they didn't know what to make of it? Or was it wanting to get a cup of tea?

TG: Well it's interesting, I was thinking of probably one of the things I do remember from those days is the sort of the opposite of that I suppose which is that the Birmingham Rep still had, if you went to matinees, still had matinees in which the people bought afternoon tea into the audience so that there were kinds of, I thought of them then as little old ladies who would sit there and get their tea bought to them by ushers on trays which were passed down the seats. And the only other thing which strikes me about that again, again it's slightly out of this period but when I was in Edinburgh in the mid-seventies I remember again it was a matinee of *The Homecoming* at the Lyceum where again they were still doing this thing with the tea trays and the play started again and the interval had been put so that the stage opened on, if I remember this correctly, Ruth on the sofa kissing Joey in an embrace and what was very interesting and I think the other men are standing around having cigars or something. And basically the audience couldn't let it get started because they were all still doing their tea and there were people sort of saying, 'oh that's very strange, what's going on in there' except in Edinburgh accents and so on and there was about half a minute in which it looks as though the performance simply wouldn't get started because the interval, somehow the audience collectively didn't want the interval to end or wasn't very happy with what it was seeing on stage so those are the things I remember about intervals.

KW: Do you think the performers picked up on the fact that the audience weren't very keen?

TG: Oh yes. Because there was such a rustling and restlessness and I suppose it was like maybe when you get an audience of school kids when people simply won't stop and I think they were very aware that they didn't know how to deal with this, because obviously it's normally the lights or, I don't think there was a curtain at that stage, the lights going down normally everyone shuts up or if the curtain goes up people shut up and I suppose it was one of the things that was true I suppose about that period was this was a period when you were going from having curtains closed to not having curtains closed which seemed totally radical at the time and much more visible lighting than, which of course at that stage seemed terribly radical, but nobody notices it now of course but at that stage, 'Oh gosh it's a spotlight, wow!' So that was a change and things like still playing the National Anthem even before, or was it after performances? But certainly that was still happening when I was, first started going to the theatre.

KW: Did anyone ever get angry about it you know, or sort of seem reluctant to do it?

TG: Well, I think it's interesting because they did it in the cinema as well and basically everybody ran out of the cinema to get out before they started and I do remember so you know as soon as the credits started everyone was out because the credits would run and then you'd have the national anthem so everyone tried to get out. If you were caught you kind of had to stand except radical young chaps like me didn't [ironic] because we were expressing our disgust with capitalism and society and everything else

by doing that. So yeah, on the whole you got dirty looks for doing it but you know everyone was far too polite to complain too much but certainly it was an occasional issue I guess.

KW: Ok, thanks very much for talking to me.