

THEATRE ARCHIVE PROJECT

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Tony Dorney – interview transcript

Interviewer: Kate Dorney

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Music Hall and London Theatre 1950-1968, meeting David Mercer, Olivier at the Old Vic, premiere of Oh, What a Lovely War!

KD: I wonder if we could start by my asking where and when you first went to the theatre, what your earliest memories are?

TD: Yes I think in the late 1940s when I'd have been 8 or 9, I was taken on at least 2 occasions, to the New Cross Empire which is in south east London, and it was music hall. The main attraction, I was taken by my mother and father, the main attraction, at the time, they topped the bill, was a group, or a troupe, called Big Bill Campbell, and they were cowboys: it was a cowboy act. They dressed up in what I suppose now we would say is mock cowboy gear, and they sang songs, guitars, jews harps, and, I guess a bit of gun twirling and rope spinning. But they used to top the bill: it was a big act, and the only other one I remember with any fame, and I think he was famous in his day, and he was known as 'G.H Elliott, the Chocolate Coloured Coon' and I suppose he was a minstrel type comedian

KD: Oh, so he won't actually have been black, then

TD: I'm not sure, I don't... at this range... at home later on, we had a book with the radio stars, there was no television remember. And he was in it, but in character, in costume – as would have been Leslie Hutchinson, known as Hutch who was a black singer, a famous black singer of his time – a cabaret man and other radio performers, Peter Brough, the ventriloquists, Gert and Daisy, of music hall and radio fame. So – but – they're the only acts I remember from that time

KD: And why were you taken, were you taken at your request, or because your mum and dad...

TD: No, no, I think it was a treat, it must have been a treat. It wasn't far, you know, it was a short – it still is – it's a short bus ride from Bermondsey where we lived, but it would have been, obviously, a bit special

KD: And what was the actual building like, can you remember much about it?

TD: No, not really, it was a theatre, as far as I would ... obviously had a stage, you know, and a curtain, and seats, and probably at that time, it probably wasn't too bad, in décor, because it was just after the war and it was always in constant use, I guess, but I don't really remember much

KD: OK, and after that?

TD: After that, I think my next would have been the pantomime, at the Trocadero, at the Elephant and Castle, which was, again, a couple of miles bus ride from where we

lived and I was taken, I'm not sure by who, but to see Cinderella, and a well known actress and film star of her day, Jean Kent. I think she played Dandini, and we were up in the circle, I do remember that. And it was a splendid place for those days, and very large

KD: And when you went, would you have spoken to the other kids at school, was it something that everyone did?

TD: No, I don't... oh, yeah, I think people did, obviously, pantomime was popular and it.. and people used to go, but no, I just remember going it, so, but not entering any disc... and enjoyed it, because it was colourful, and it was music, and it was funny

KD: Costumes...

TD: Yeah, oh yeah

KD: Fancy costumes?

TD: Oh yeah, costumes, it was sort of, I guess, sort of 18th century: costumes, tri-corn hats, and you know, buttoned up frock coats, you know, from that time...

KD: Because it always strikes me when people talk about it, the costumes were very lavish, and certainly in the West End productions...

TD: Mm-hm

KD: and everything else, and you wonder how, because everything was still rationed. Unless it was left over from before the war

TD: Well, I guess, like, some of it must have been pre-war. Because it would have been 1948, and the war ended in 1945, and I don't know if the place was open during the war for plays... I've got no idea, I just assume that... yeah, things were short, and I can only assume that a lot of it was pre-war and had been kept

KD: And then... what was your next, kind of, big memory of theatre: you mentioned something about going with the school?

TD: Yes, we went in, was it 52, I think...to...

KD: yeah, 1952

TD: ... to the Old Vic, I – the school I attended, was a secondary modern, and I'd have been in perhaps the second, second year by then, and we were doing Julius Caesar at school, and we went to the Old Vic, which was probably only two miles away. We were taken by a school bus, it was the LCC then, the London County Council, so we would have gone, I, I don't know how many, probably a classful of us, to see the play at the Old Vic

KD: The matinee performance?

TD: It was a matinee, yes, it would have been, yeah

KD: And were there other kids there, do you remember, was it a?

TD: Yeah, I think it was an almost total school, schoolchild audience

KD: Must have been nice for the actors

TD: Well, yeah, we, it was, it was a play, it was a day out, it was something different, but none of us were much into Shakespeare, and I guess we must have found it pretty boring, certainly at the scene when Caesar is killed and appeared to us to go on for twenty minutes, you know, rolling around, staggering around, and still speaking, and someone laughed out loud, and that, that caused a titter, but, you know, that was twelve year old kids

KD: And did you... so you were studying it at school?

TD: Yes

KD: and did... did you find it helpful to go, or was it... it was really just boring... it didn't help you to understand the language?

TD: Oh yeah, I think to have it spoken, because we used to read it at school, and none of us of course, could read it, and, I think it kicked off something in me, because certainly since, I enjoy Shakespeare, and we can go and watch it almost any time. But, it was, not that striking then

KD: And did you perceive a distinction between the music hall and theatre?

TD: No, I've got to say, at that stage, I really don't think so

KD: But the Old Vic, is, was, kind of famously a bit of a dump

TD: Yeah, yeah, it didn't strike me as plush, say, as some of the better cinemas we would go to at the time, as the Trocadero, which was very fancy, and well-kept

KD: And did you ever go and see Julius Caesar again after that, have you ever recovered your affection for it?

TD: I've, yeah, I've certainly recovered affection for it, but I don't think I've ever seen it on the stage. I've seen several... I've seen the Marlon Brando film version, and, several, television productions, I guess

KD: And after that, did you go and see anything else with the school?

TD: Yes, we went to the theatre at Stratford East, where we saw... is it Titus Andronicus... the one with the lion?

KD: I don't know

TD: No, no, sorry, that's wrong, it was

KD: Androcles

TD: Androcles and the Lion, yeah, we did, that was Stratford East again, and it wasn't very salubrious there

KD: Oh really?

TD: No

KD: And what was the production like?

TD: I don't remember too much about it, it doesn't ring much of a bell with me today, except that it was very plainly staged, and the... I think the lion was played in pantomime form, you know, by one or two actors, and we were used to cinema: we'd seen real lions jumping on Tarzan, and so that wasn't at all impressive

KD: So cinema is obviously a big influence, a formative...

TD: Yes

KD: ...influence. How often... we've picked out four major theatrical experiences, how often were you going to the cinema?

TD: Between 3 and 4 times a week

KD: From the age of 11, 12?

TD: Yeah, say from 11 onwards, I lived 100 yards from a small cinema, called the Rialto, in (Southwark Park Road, and it changed the programme three times a week, Monday,

Tuesday, Wednesday, it was double bill, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, it was double bill, and Sunday was a double bill, which was just played once. And we tried to go to most of them

KD: And is there anything in particular you remember... a particular film that you? Because presumably if it changed all the time, you never had the kind of desperation to go and see a particular film?

TD: No, no, we went to the pictures, because it was, we didn't know it then, it was escapism, but it was different, lots of excitement

KD: So, just to recap, about the cinema, so you were going two or three times a week, the films, the programme changed?

TD: In that particular cinema, and probably most of the local ones, yeah, three times a week. In addition to which, there was also the Saturday morning cinema, which I guess was common, country-wide. You had to join, I don't know, I think you paid sixpence, and they showed adventure stories, serialized, cartoons, and the great thing about that was, the place was full of kids, and you could shout at the screen, which you couldn't do when you were there with your mum and dad or with adults, watching a serious film, but... and that was... mostly, everyone did it, they were clubs. I forget what they were called, but they were, you know, clubs, and you had your own film that was shown or there'd be a clip of a film for the club

KD: And is there anything... you don't remember being desperate to go and see anything, it was just kind of indiscriminate?

TD: No, we went, it was what you did, it was pretty colourless then. We certainly didn't have television, radio plays wouldn't have interested me then, and the music was your mum and dad's music, so the cinema, apart from playing in the streets and playing football and cricket, was the big thing, and of course, there was lots of cinemas in those days. Not as many, as the time, my mother and father told me, even more, when they were young, because there were places where we lived that had been cinemas and were no longer, but, anyway, there were plenty of them everywhere.

KD: And, you... one of the people I've interviewed before said that she decided who she'd go and see on stage based on what they'd been in on the radio or at the cinema, but that didn't influence you?

TD: No, no, we knew... the only actors names or actresses even, really, we were... it was all male dominated wasn't it, gangster, cowboys and we would just go... be keener to see one with someone in that we liked: Roy Rogers and Trigger, was a favourite and we used to boo as always... I don't know if kids still do, at the kissing: at the love scenes in any movie: we did used to boo

KD: Because that's not what you were there for?

TD: No, no, no, but no, it was some time before you'd go to see a film because someone was in it or because you knew the story. We just did it because it was what we did and we liked it. I only ever came out of one film, ever, because, and I forget what the film was, I wasn't really enjoying it, but we always saw them through, because the person I was with, just couldn't stand it any more

KD: Oh really?

TD: ...so we left. The other thing we used to do while we're talking about cinema: we didn't wait for the show to start. We would go in as soon as we could, so you'd go into the middle of a film, and people still say it, 'this is where we came in'. So you might really go in the middle of a thriller. It didn't matter. You'd see the end, you'd see all the

rest of it, the newsreel, the coming attractions, the trailers, and you'd see the next film, and then when you got to the bit where you came in...

KD: You'd leave?

TD: Mostly, yeah, if it wasn't that gripping, if you didn't want to see it again; and then you'd come out. And people say this is where I came in, or where we came in, and that's where that comes from.

KD: So, when, actually, did you go, after school, or...

TD: Yeah, after school, apart from the Saturday mornings which was obviously, but yeah, it would be perhaps afternoons on holiday they'd perhaps put special shows on, or different ones. But yeah, it would be the early evening, if you could

KD: And did you carry on your interest in going to the cinema as you got older: you know when the kind of new wave...

TD: Yeah, always

KD: ... realist stuff started?

TD: Yeah, always into the cinema, and there was a bit of a lull I suppose some years ago when the films perhaps didn't interest me, and the last cinema here, in Dartford where we live, closed, I don't know, twenty years ago, and until the multi-screens came along, it wasn't too easy to go to the pictures, it was easier to watch telly. But now, I go quite often, still. But you do choose now, don't you, you know more what you want, or you think you do. And, so, but yes, still keen...

KD: And when was your next kind of big theatrical experience after *Androcles and the lion* in the pantomime?

TD: Yeah, as I started growing up, being a teenager, mainly influenced by the Sunday Times, I started to buy the Sunday Times because it had a colour magazine and from about 17 onwards I'd read *The New Statesman* and the left-wing magazine *Tribune* and of course they had, among other book reviews, theatrical reviews and *Oh What A Lovely War!* became famous.

KD: Before you went to see it? You went word of mouth or recommendation?

TD: Oh yes, I guess it was in the media. It was certainly in the papers and discussed on programmes on the television, there may have even been excerpts and I was very interested in, it was anti-war and of course, being, as I said I read *The New Statesman* and *Tribune* and stuff like that. It was right up our alley so, it was something we wanted to see. Also, it was well-known, people were talking about it and had been to see it, it wasn't too far for us at Stratford East. Which we'd already been to as a boy and so we booked up and we went to see it.

KD: And that was 1963?

TD: Yes, it would have been.

KD: And did you, did you appreciate the music-hall style references, the montage effect, there was lots of different, it obviously wasn't classical theatre.

TD: No, it was, it was strange. I'd never really seen anything like it. I'd never seen a Pierrot show at the end of the pier, perhaps before my time, or certainly we were never taken. But I understood what it was, that it was a way of showing, in a theatrical sense, the dreadful business that the first world war was. But it was also very enjoyable. It was musical, it was part of the times, and as a young man, moving into better, different times, it felt, that it was something to be. But I did enjoy it.

KD: So Victor Spinnetti was he already famous?

TD: No, I don't think so. He certainly loomed large in that production, but no I don't think I'd heard of him really. I'd heard of Joan Littlewood because of having read all the stuff, she was obviously quite well known and often mentioned.

KD: And you said, when we were speaking before the interview started that you didn't go and see *Look Back in Anger* and that when you saw it on the film you didn't like it.

TD: No.

KD: Why, because it wasn't your idea of political...?

TD: No. I don't know how old I would have been, but certainly I wasn't married and I wasn't, it just seemed to be to be a play about people who, I think they'd been to university

KD: Yeah.

TD: And they were living in the same sort of conditions as we were, I remember the bloke's wife always appeared to be ironing when he was yelling at her, and being horrible, but it didn't appeal to me and it wasn't political in a right/left, in a class war sense that I was interested in. If it was, I certainly didn't see it in it.

KD: Do you remember any, you said that you were reading the newspapers and the arts columns, and that you had *The Sunday Times* because of the colour magazine, so Harold Hobson, obviously one of the most famous critics. Do you remember him talking about it? Do you remember it creating any kind of stir?

TD: If you mean with me, not really. I mean I read it, but after I'd seen the film, it didn't ring with me, it wasn't something I was interested in. Later on, again, there were films, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, they were more, though they were set in my neck of the woods, they did seem to be, I did like them and they did resonate for the age. But not *Look Back in Anger*, I think I still wouldn't like *Look Back in Anger*.

KD: No, I don't really like it. Too much shouting. Tell me a bit about *Kismet*, when you went to see *Kismet*. Because that was an early...

TD: Yes, it was. I'd been either my first year at work, or at most my second, 55 or 56,

KD: 55, I think.

TD: 55 again, the famous show in the newspapers. Everyone knew about it, and people were singing the hits, the song, 'Stranger in Paradise' had been certainly top of the pops. So I, at that time working in and around the West End and parts of central London, so I knew where the Stoll Theatre on Kingsway [was]. So I bought tickets for New Year's Eve of that year and I took my mother and father and my sister, what, she'd be about 7 I guess?

KD: Yeah, yeah, I suppose she would.

TD: to see it. And again it was wonderful, it was colourful, it was Arabian Nights style as I remember it. By that time most of the hit songs, 'Stranger in Paradise', 'Baubles, Bangles, Beads' when you actually got to watch it there were more good tunes and songs in it that I still know today. So that made a great impression. And the follow-up was, it being New Year's Eve and in the West End, we joined the crowds afterwards, coming out, going into Trafalgar Square, which I think they probably stopped a few years ago. But you know thousands and thousands of people packed into Trafalgar Square to see in the new year. Just made it a more memorable experience.

KD: So did you go, did you eat before you went?

TD: We wouldn't have eaten out. My mother and father, apart from the expense, would barely have had so much as a cup of tea out, if they'd been out for a few hours.

KD: So you didn't have a drink in the interval or anything?

TD: Probably ice cream. It is even possible, it's only about 5 miles from where we lived to there, and I don't remember, but because it was after midnight, and we didn't live on a tube line. In those days the tube line didn't reach into Bermondsey, there was certainly a bus route, but it's possible, because my father was a great walker, that we walked home.

KD: Even the 7 year old?

TD: Yeah, oh yeah, she'd've had to walk as well, yeah.

KD: Ok. Right, tell me about your Royal Shakespeare Company experience, no, not the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre?

TD: Yes well again, through the newspapers and programmes on the television like Monitor, which I did watch, you know, told you what was going on and showed quite a bit of it. The National Theatre was exciting to me, that we were going to have a National Theatre and that it was going to be, at least at the beginning, at the Old Vic, which was only a short bus ride away from home. And I had been there as a kid at school so it wasn't something that I hadn't done. It became, we were keen to go, we were excited to go, we wanted to see Othello because it was the big talked about thing, everyone talked about it.

KD: So this is 61/62 probably? This is before Oh What A Lovely War?

TD: Yes. Is it, I can't remember?

KD: I think so. Nevermind, carry on.

TD: It probably is. But, we wanted to see Othello like I said, but you couldn't get tickets, I think people were queuing round the block, through the night, which I wasn't prepared to do. But we did see The Recruiting Officer which I enjoyed. It was, again, very bright and well staged, but I've got to be honest, I didn't realize, and I'm still not sure, which character was Laurence Olivier. I didn't like to ask anyone around me, I knew he was in it but the disguises or the costumes...

KD: He was very fond of a disguise to be fair, so he wouldn't have been

TD: Yeah... but Maggie Smith was in it, she was obviously a young woman, and quite famous even then, and er

KD: Robert Stephens, do you remember him?

TD: No. Since of course, but no, no I didn't. I don't know if it's me, but I've never been that much interested in perhaps who was in things, I just liked to go. I mean it's a bit different now because I know who I think is a good actor or actresses that I like to watch, but I wanted to, I liked the play, and I liked the idea of a National Theatre and couldn't get tickets for Othello as I've said. But we did see Hobson's Choice, again a story, working class people, even from the North, making good. And I think Joan Plowright was in that and that also The Royal Hunt of the Sun was on but I didn't really know much about that at that time, and so, for whatever reason I didn't see it and I have since seen it on a film.

KD: And did you, it always seems very strange to me that that comes from the same era actually. Royal Hunt of the Sun just seems so very different to everything else that was around at the time?

TD: mmm, perhaps it was to do with the feeling of anti-colonialism, because although it wasn't British colonialism it was, I guess of a sort, well not of a sort, it was, wasn't it, pretty, well, very heavy-handed and I don't remember so much about the film. I know Christopher Plummer was in the film and very...

KD: was he the Sun God?

TD: He was Atahualpa. I don't know how you say it. He was the Inca, the Inca? And I think he seemed to be dressed in lots of feathers in the production. Yeah, my guess is, at the time, everything, I mean the colonies were being given up, weren't they? And we were generally anti-colonial.

KD: And so, what would you have worn? Have the 60s started swinging yet? Would you have been dressing down for the theatre?

TD: mmm, probably we might have stopped wearing ties, I can't remember. Certainly for many years, working class people, young lads especially like us, did dress up to go almost anywhere, even to the pub on Saturday night. And we did used to dress up to go to the cinema, and we certainly would have dressed up to go to the theatre. Though as I say, by that time, you take your ideas from what's going around you. We certainly would have been what we would have considered smart.

KD: Ok, and then after that you went off to Russia for a while. Is that right?

TD: I went, we had..

KD: And you met David Mercer?

TD: That's right. We did go, we booked a trip on a ship from Tibury, a Soviet ship called the Turbo Electric Ship Baltica. It was a famous ship in its day because Kruschev had crossed the Atlantic in it when he addressed the United Nations and during his speech he took off his shoe and banged the podium to make a point. It wasn't a very big ship, not like the massive ships there are now, and even the ships that I worked on in that period, but it certainly was quite well appointed. And I met David Mercer who of course I didn't know who he was then. And his friend, a bloke called Richard Cook who was a dentist, and we were booked in, we shared a cabin. Probably wouldn't happen today but there was a four berth cabin and we were booked into it. And we did this trip to Leningrad via Helsinki on the way out, and into what was Leningrad and on the way back into Copenhagen. And the idea was that we'd spend Mayday in Moscow, which we did. We spent some nights on the ship in Leningrad and used to do the tours in the town, and then a train to Moscow and we stayed in a hotel for the Mayday parade for a few days and then we traveled back. So yes I did get to know David Mercer.

KD: Did he say what he was doing? Did he say 'Hello, I'm David Mercer, I'm a famous playwright, I'm doing some research for a play?'

TD: No, no, no. They were lefties as were, perhaps a bit more lefty than us. And Richard spoke Russian, he certainly appeared to speak Russian and could read it, and it was useful to be with them for that reason. But they were there, we were there, David Dix and I, we were there really because we'd been working in a shipyard in Newcastle and we'd had enough. And it was away, and we booked a holiday, and we were interested in Soviet Russia and we thought Mayday in Moscow would be something to talk about, and here I am talking about it.

KD: Was it expensive?

TD: No, it was very cheap. I think in those days the Soviet authorities did make things, made it easier for you to go there, because some of it was impressive. Especially if you were half way there anyway. And no no it wasn't, it's hard to relate what you were earning and what it was, but it was probably about £40. It was probably 2, 3 weeks wages but it wasn't much. But, when we returned, we visited David Mercer at his house in West Hampstead we went to a party there, we were a bit, we were treated very well, I guess they were what you'd call left-wing intellectuals, been to university, older than us of course, we were very well treated. There was always plenty of drink, he invited us to, I think it was the final taping, of one of his plays. A TV play at the TV centre at Wood Green. I remember it was directed by Don Taylor because we were introduced to him and we sat behind him and his bank of switches and screens, with David Mercer, to watch this play being taped, being recorded. I don't remember the name of the play, I was more impressed with being in Television Centre and being treated, if you like, like an equal, and seeing the actor and actresses.

KD: So when, this is what 1963/4?

TD: Yeah, soon after. I think we were in Russia in 62 or 63 so yeah it would have been, I reckon about 1963.

KD: SO did you ever talk to him about the theatre, because it's obviously about the same time that you went to see Oh What A Lovely War?

TD: No, no,, strangely I suppose not. We did spend a fortnight together in Russia, in the Soviet Union and we went to his party and I don't think we met again, I really don't know. But I was interested in as was David, David Dix that is, that he as doing more plays for the television, because he was, they were, obviously socialist, if not communist and I had seen a couple of his plays, and you know, I like them. They were what I wanted to, they weren't kitchen-sink exactly, they were certainly about working class life, the ones I remember, and I was just pleased to have met someone that I suppose had the same sort of feelings about it all as I did. And yes he was a dramatist and I liked drama.

KD: And tell me about your last pre-68, Fiddler on the Roof?

TD: Yes, Fiddler on the Roof, when it was in the West End, and I guess it had been on Broadway. It was very famous, it was the musical. Topol singing 'If I was a Rich Man' was constantly on the radio and he'd been interviewed on television shows and in between, before this period, after having met David Mercer and been to Russia we'd spent a year on a kibbutz in Israel, and David Dix was Jewish and I'd known him since we were 15. And having spent the time in Israel I knew a bit about Jewish life and the celebrations on the kibbutz were akin, the same sort of music and dancing went on there, but it was my feeling for Israal at the time, and it was a musical and Topol was Israeli, he was an Israeli and I booked up and I took my sister Christine to see it. Again, I'm not sure what theatre it was on at, I'm pretty sure it was the Haymarket

KD: the Haymarket theatre or a theatre on the Haymarket?

TD: No no a theatre in Haymarket. But yeah, again, very good, enjoyable show, very colourful.

KD: 68 roughly?

TD: no, before then I would have thought. 67

KD: and are you still in a suit and tie?

TD: Yeah, very much so. Yeah you dressed up to go

KD: Because it was a big West End?

TD: Yeah, because it was the West End, but also we didn't have this culture in those days, when you went out. In my case, I spent my working days in overalls and it just was a tradition, you just did it, a cultural thing. People dressed up. And we did certainly dress up to go to the West End to see a popular musical

KD: And would you have gone out before or after then? How old was, how old would Christine be? 20? 19?

TD: Yeah, she'd have been 19 or 20. I don't remember. We lived in Bermondsey, it was before I was married so we'd have gone up on the bus, tube from the Elephant [and Castle]. May have had a drink, I don't think we'd have had a drink in the theatre because I still don't like crush bars, I'd rather not do it than fight for a drink. And possibly we'd have had a drink in a coffee bar, a coffee or something on the way home.

KD: Ok, and just before we finish, do you have any recollections of the Lord Chamberlain and the business of censorship?

TD: Yeah I knew what the Lord Chamberlain did, I didn't know what else he did aside from theatre censorship but I did know that it came under his jurisdiction.

KD: How did you know that?

TD: I think just generally through the reading and the programmes that I watched on the television. I watched all the drama, not any drama, but certainly most of the plays, obviously something I was interested in and keen on. I suppose it's fair to say that if there wasn't so much drama on the television I may have gone to the theatre more often, but it was, in those days the plays were good. There were lots of famous plays, Cathy Come Home, you know, all that became a film it was first of all on the television. But it was something I was tuned into and when they started, I mean censorship business didn't worry me too much, except of course being what I was, or how I was, political censorship which it was part of the same thing I guess. You know, against the Establishment, I understand you couldn't make references

KD: No, 'impair relations with a foreign power' or 'persons living'

TD: No, and I remember, I was an avid watcher of That Was The Week That Was, the satirical tv show which was again, extraordinary, there'd never been anything like it. And I used to sit there some Saturday nights and think they're going to shut it, stop it any minute. I did, I used to think, they must switch this off, they cannot let this go on, I didn't think they would.

KD: Do you remember when they, was it Peter Cook? Impersonating Macmillan? And that the Lord Chamberlain wrote to Macmillan to apologise even though

TD: What because he'd let it slip through?

KD: Well no, it was television, he had not jurisdiction, but nevertheless they were completely

TD: I do remember that in particular, because he was known as 'Supermac' Macmillan. And the ordinary press, apart from the left wing press, they were never actually, although t they might have disagreed with his policies and said they were. It wasn't that stupid old sod, patrician ex-old etonian guardman, which is what they all were in those days.

KD: Including the Lord Chamberlain

TD: Yeah, I daresay. But yes, I really mean that. I used to sit there thinking, they must, not only, but mostly, for political reasons I guess. But they were also near the mark

sexually for those days, often. So then of course it was in the paper, there was the business of Lady Chatterley, that wasn't the same thing of course because it wasn't theatre. The Lady Chatterley trial and I think John Mortimer was one of the lawyers for the defence, and the Oz trial again that was, it was all that stuff about censorship. And then of course there was the theatre and so yeah I knew, I didn't realize about bills through Parliament, although eventually of course to change the lawi knew they'd have to have done it. But yeah I was aware of the Lord Chamberlain and what he did, and that it no longer, and other things were allowed more, a bit more, what would be considered outrageous. Was it Hair?

KD: Yep. Hair opened the day after the Bill went through Parliament, and then obviously, Tynan's Oh Calcutta!.

TD: That was bad language wasn't it?

KD: DO you remember him saying fuck?

TD: I do. I saw that interview.

KD: When was that? It must have been before, I'm sure it was.

TD: Well, I don't know, you'd have to look at records, but I guess it was a programme. I keep mentioning Monitor, there have been others haven't there? Arena, and even ITV

KD: Aquarius? Do you remember Aquarius with Peter Hall?

TD: Yeah, Aquarius, but I did see that interview.

KD: I can't remember, was someone interviewing him?

TD: Yeah, yeah, I think he was being interviewed, I mean a famous interviewer of the day was an ex editor of the New Statesman, John Freeman, he had a very famous show on the television called Face to Face where he interviewed, right up close, famous people of the day. Tony Hancock, I think was one, reduced to tears, not in a cruel way but just through emotion. Evelyn Waugh. John Freeman was editor of the New Statesman perhaps at the time I read it, used to read it, but he was also a television presenter and he did to arts and stuff. It is possible, I mean I don't know who the interview was with now, I mean Sheridan Morley has been around a longtime doing that sort of stuff. Do you know the year that the word was said?

KD: I think it might have been, no actually I don't. I thought it was 1966 but I don't think it is.

TD: Perhaps even later?

KD: But I'm sure it was before censorship was abolished because that was the point.

TD: He may even have been discussing it was he?

KD: Yeah, well it was, he said, you know, you can't even say...

TD: yeah, I did see that interview.

KD: Was he very influential in your ideas of theatre?

TD: I don't know about influential, because I know we're talking theatre and since the days I first mentioned it, I have been to the theatre and still go, not every week, not every month but certainly a couple of times a year. But I really, my stuff is watched on the television or at the cinema, and I just thought in common with several people in those days on the television discussing all sorts of things that he was an ok bloke. He wasn't anything, a bit I suppose I thought him a bit dilettante, I may even have thought him queer at the time, I know he smoked a lot, but it was all tied in with this feeling that

society, the country, society had to change. And it did change didn't it? And he was part of it, as was Malcolm Muggeridge who I did admire and watch, because he was so different, you can imagine I don't know how much older he was. Probably 30 years older, or 20 at least, but his accents and mannerisms. Funny looking man but I greatly admired him because I guess he was an intellectual, good presenter, this is before he got religious, because he certainly wasn't in the early days. But he was in that class I would have put with Tynan, people who were changing and they were on a lot. They were always up for a soundbite, you could always get something from them.

KD: Thank you very much.

TD: Thank you.