

# THEATRE ARCHIVE PROJECT

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## Pearl Goodman – interview transcript

**Interviewer: Kate Harris**

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Actress and singer. Audiences; digs; domestic service; The Flying Doctor; Joan Littlewood; Ewan MacColl; Johnny Noble; Gerry Raffles; rehearsals; David Scase; Theatre Workshop; touring; training; Uranium 235.

KH: Can we just start with how you first became involved with Theatre Workshop?

PG: Well I'd been in the Land Army for about three years when I was asked if I would do a song at the end of a programme going out from Chichester to the servicemen. And as I was a local singer, and known very well, and I had sung In Town Tonight when I was 17, I was obviously the choice for this. So I said I would. And I was working one day with the cows and a van came up and some... no photographers then of course – but I was aware of this lady with... I've never seen anyone who looks just like Joan Littlewood. Her eyes sort of went from left to right, left to right and she said 'Now Pearly bird, last night I went to the Assembly Rooms and I heard you sing Schubert's Ave Maria, and think I would like you to sing two songs after my programme'. She was then employed by Northern Regional and she did a lot of this. And I think that probably gave her the first ideas of how many people that she met who could sing and who could talk and who could act... of starting her theatre.

KH: And what were your first impressions when you met Joan?

PG: Well as I said I had... her face was quite unique. There was this bulging forehead, and lovely fine eyebrows with heavy lids, and she seemed to look from under and weight you up entirely as though she knew you at one glance. She also had a very beguiling voice, very low in register. And I always remember she held a cigarette between very taut fingers all the time. And when one was finished, one of her - the people who she brought down with her – hastily brought out another one and lit it. And I knew, I mean this woman could really sort of beguile you into joining the Foreign Legion, I felt! And I said 'Well thank you very much. And yes, I would be only too pleased to do that'.

So a date was arranged at the YMCA... YWCA sorry. And there was Addy Street, there was the Shipham's paste factory managers, The Tannery, all the big firms in Chichester then, where all the local boys who were in any of the services would have known – existed in Chichester remembered it very well. And most of them probably would have remembered me. And so we did all this. And finally I had to sing Ave Maria and Sussex by the Sea. I thought I was temporarily engaged at the time. I must say 'temporarily'

because I had three engagements, they were all pretty temporary. And the... he was pilot but he'd sent his friend. And Joan thought I was... she said 'Don't you ask her to marry you because she's going to join my theatre'. So she said 'No look darling I'm going to start a Theatre Workshop' which actually meant very little to me, as I was about 21. 'You will join me won't you?', because she said 'I have found seven talented people in my journeys and I consider you one'. And Ewan MacColl – who was then her husband but they didn't... I think they were more or less separated in a way. You know they didn't call themselves 'Mr and Mrs'. Ewan MacColl – who was a great folk singer – is not going to sing unless I find a good singer to sing with him. And I think he'll be very happy with you'. And I would say 'Yes Joan, of course. Yes, yes, yes, I'll join your theatre'. All the time trying to keep this chap's hand from playing with my bangle on my... you know. And so I said goodbye to home and the Mayor, and everybody said goodbye and off we went. And then we heard it and... the Sussex by the Sea and the Ave Maria, which seemed rather strange to do the two. And I heard no more from Joan.

And then, when I was in my... I'd been married then. I'd been five years in the Land Army and my husband then got shipped abroad, and I thought that 'Well, what was I to do now?'. Because the war had ended and strangely enough I then worked for a Colonel Rex Spence, and he was a diplomat in Singleton – which is just outside of Chichester. And I had... instead of 72 cows to milk with an old man I had two cows to make milk and butter for the family. I had a beautiful flat. I was told I could use the Bechstein piano, and of all things the Welsh Guards in the stables. So I had very little work to do because most of them were farmer's sons and they would take the cows, they would milk the cows and I would just make the butter and take it in.

But I was there with another girl. But when Colonel Benson was in London, then he left it to his housekeeper. And I always remember when we were voting for... to get the Labour party in. He came out and he said to Brenda and myself 'If you're going down to vote, I'll give you a lift if you like'. 'Oh thank you very much, thank you'. And he said 'You're voting Conservative I suppose?' so Brenda Northend said 'Oh yes, yes, I'm voting Conservative'. So I said, 'Well I'm not!' I said, 'I'm voting Labour'. He said 'Well then, you can walk'. And I did. And anyway I was treated... everything was alright but I really had a little bit of sidelining after that. And then one day the housekeeper came out to me – I was gathering eggs – and she always worried me to death because she was also a friend of the family so you couldn't have any sort of 'wink, wink, nudge, nudge' with her on anything. And she gave me this telegram, which was always a very worrying thing to get then because though the war was over, lots of young men had been killed in accidents you know – their vehicles or whatever. And it said on there 'Rehearsals for Johnny Noble and Molière, The Flying Doctor. Meet Gerry Raffles 5.15 at Manchester Station on May 5th'. And I thought, 'And I will, too!'. By that time most of the eggs had dropped down onto the ground which... oh my goodness that woman's face! So I just thought 'There's no point, you know, in apologising, I'll go'. So I went upstairs and I packed my bags, I said goodbye to Brenda. I went down to my mother's and [she] said 'But you can't, you can't go'. And she said to my father 'Fred she's... she's going... she's going up to Manchester'.

So I had before that – I'd done In Town Tonight and met Ray Milan, and he introduced me to an agent – I was then 18 ½. And I was then singing around London and living in Theatre Girls Club in Greek Street. So I had been about and I had been made Miss Gaumont British – no fault of my own I might tell you. I don't suppose you want to know all this, but anyway inadvertently I became Miss Gaumont British – because I didn't know what I was going in for. And I had... since I'd... I'd left school at 14 and gone into domestic service. And then daily jobs and... but done a lot of singing and also quite a bit of travelling after that. So going up to Manchester didn't hold any, you know,

fears for me. But I heard my mother say to the neighbour next door 'Well she's been to London, I suppose she just gets off at Manchester'. [Laughs] So I thought 'Now what am I in for?'. And I just thought 'No, no getting up, milking cows at half past four in the morning. I am going to be an actress and a singer'. And coming from a working class home, at 14 you have to work. And whatever singing I did after that was all done in my spare time, after I finished work or whatever. So I couldn't really anticipate the thought that I would be able to do it all the time. This was going to be... this was hard and delightful at the same time.

So I get out at Manchester and I see great big hoardings of Tate [inaudible] to make you regular, gentleman's trusses and a fairly grey afternoon. And I went into the ladies room and I looked absolutely burnt brown compared to the pale faces all dabbing their faces with pancake makeup. And I thought 'Now I've got to meet this...' and I was such a romantic person, I think 'I've got to meet Gerry Raffles, what a name'. And so I hung about and hung about. And it was getting greyer and chillier. And suddenly a rather large young man sort of exploded onto the platform. And he was looking around. And he really was... he looked like the head of a Greek sculpture. He had flat black curls and he had a classic... you know he really was the most handsome chap. But just at that moment his briefcase came undone and all the papers went bowling all... and I was trying to catch some and he was you know. And I said 'Gerry?' and he said 'Pearl?'. And so we then went to have a cup of tea and he said 'Well you know, you know you're married, how long are you thinking of staying with us?' 'Well' I said 'I don't really know. I don't know anything at the moment'. So he said 'Well, we'd better come and meet the others'.

So we then went to what was rather like a Mancunian assembly rooms, and I met about 11 people. And Joan always had this way of coming very slowly towards you – always with the cigarette in the hand, very expressive hands, but very thin, straight fingers. And looking at you almost – not a very nice thing to say but if I was looking at a snake's eyes I would be coming nearer and nearer because I couldn't get away – and that's how I felt, you don't get away from this lady. And she said 'Pearl, I didn't think you were going to come. I can't believe it'. And then after that I spoke to everybody... Ewan who was a very sort of shy, sensitive sort of man, and I thought you wouldn't want to be on the wrong side of. He had auburn hair and he was extremely, I thought, on the defensive. And he said 'Oh well we've heard of some of... we've heard some of Joan's discoveries, we'll find out what you're like'. Then Rosie Williams shouted out... oh he said 'I'd better go and show you where you're having your digs. He's a Professor at the Manchester University and he teaches Spanish'. So he said 'I'll show you the way'. So Rosie Williams shouted out 'Pearl be careful, no girl's the same girl after meeting Ewan'.

So we walked and we went to Sale. And he said, 'Take your shoes off'. I was a well-brought-up Chichester girl and I said, 'No I'm not going to take my shoes off'. I thought 'I'm not going to be stripped in the street am I?!' So he said, 'Take your shoes off'. So I took my shoes off. He said 'Now sing'. And I won't be able to do it. I can't sing in a street like this. Well he said 'I will'. So he had this habit of cupping a hand over... I can't remember whether it was his left or his right ear. I think it was because he heard his own voice better, the resonance of it. And this mighty voice, and it was such a musical voice. I've heard very many types of singers – men singers – in my life, but I've never heard quite one the same as Ewan's, a very individual voice. And so had I been told about mine because I had a very low register, a very high, so it meant that I could sing in oratorio and in opera as well. And as he started to sing, then window went up and doors came undone, and ladies with their turbaned head you know with their curlers underneath, and their brooms, and they were all standing you know. And then in the end everybody collapsing, he was very much aware of this. And he took me to a very

nice house outside of Manchester and that's where I would be staying for at least a week. And I couldn't bear the thought of not going back to them. I just felt I have an evening here, I've met a group of... oh they were all sort of dressed any old how you know – as I'd been used to land army uniform and seeing every man I knew in uniform also – that these rather sort of dishevelled people who'd all got together. But I think that Howard – who reminded me of a nice grasshopper really because he seemed to be all elbows and knees – and Rosalie Williams, David Scase had been a member of the BBC and had come with Joan. There was Ruth Brant who was a costume maker in the BBC and... but she was the only Southern woman.

KH: OK, you were just talking about how you wanted to go back to the people that you'd met. You didn't want to stay in Sale on your own.

PG: Well I was imbued with a feeling of excitement and I didn't really want sort of about six o'clock in the evening, to be in a strange family who had about four little children. And that was that. I couldn't, so next morning I had to go back to the Assembly Rooms and we did the beginnings of Molière. Well I hadn't realised that my mind had become so atrophied really, because I was the maid in that. And I had to come from the wings in a rather spectacular jump and dance one foot behind the... you know I mean Land Girl. And then I had to shout out 'Sganarelle'. I could not... this name I'd never heard in my life. I did everything 'til it got to shouting out 'Sganarelle' and I could not do it. And they could not... because they'd been in Unity Theatre, they had been... most of them had all been in some sort of theatre. Whereas I'd been in the great wide open spaces you know, for five years. But finally I did get it, I must have done. And then I was... I had not sung for Ewan up 'til then. He had, it seemed to me, distinctly avoided me all through the week. And I think he was going to say to Joan 'Well if she's no good she'll have to go back'. So one day when we were... oh every morning we had certain relaxing exercises to do, which were very good for us.

KH: What were they... what were they, the relaxing exercises that you did?

PG: Well one was – which I still do now actually – is to... you very slowly you unroll your head. You curl up your head on your neck as though you can feel every vertebra. And you gradually loosen your shoulders, and you go right down until your knuckles touch the floor. And then if someone came by they could do that, you know. So Ewan used to go round and say... he seemed to have... he seemed actually to have a thing about me. I couldn't do anything right for Ewan. And he would say I wasn't concentrating, and I think this was all because he hadn't yet heard me sing. And at that time I think that Joan and Ewan's marriage was on a... you know, sticky wicket. And I think anybody she had found then would not have been right for him.

And as I say, then one day he came up because he'd been writing the script for Johnny Noble, when we were rehearsing. And he said... he had a beard and he looked very weary and he sort of said, 'Miss Turner'. Well I said, 'I'm not Miss Turner am I?'. 'Well Pearl, come with me'. So we went down the stairs and into another room, and he sang one of his Scottish songs – a gorgeous song. And then he said, 'Well let's have a song from you'. So I said, 'Well it's very difficult for me to sing without a piano' because I'd always done that. 'Oh you won't get any piano' he said, 'there's going to be no piano. Absolutely not' he said, 'it'll all be unaccompanied'. So he said 'Sing. And I don't want

Cherry Ripe either'. So I sang something or other, and he sort of looked up and went rather red, and he said, 'Well listen to me singing this'. And it was a Scottish folk song – a very passionate Scottish folk song. He said, 'and try and do it too', which I did. And I had a very... I had a three octave range. And so he said, 'Well I'll think you'll... I don't think I'll mind singing in duo with you'. He said, 'In fact I think we'll make them all sit up and take notice of us'. He said, 'You have rather unique voice'. Well he certainly had a unique voice. And so you know he really had to acknowledge that I was going to be kept on anyway. And not only that you see, Ruth Brant was a very upper middle class woman who did the costumes. All the rest were Midlanders, Northerners – Joan wasn't. But... so he seemed to have his knife into anybody that had any other kind of accent. And up until then... but after that you know he was fine.

But he was a remote man. He kept his distance you know very much. And you had to be a little careful because he was a romancer. And... oh I don't know you know, in those days there were lots of things that happened in a group that are travelling together. And I'd only been married six months, so I was not on the market at all for anybody. So you know, I really sort of got... that I was a bit of a prig or something but... and even Joan, you know she... I think she... because she knew this group would be on their own a lot, she rather encouraged people to go out with each other. And there were two gay chaps there – I didn't know that then – but she... that was alright by her if they did their job. But I didn't quite know what they were you see. And so we set off then, in an old lorry – as many as we could get in an old lorry. I think we had about a week in Manchester.

KH: So you'd rehearsed... was this just with the Molière or had you rehearsed other things?

PG: Yes and Ewan was completing Johnny Noble. So some went up... went by train and others went into the... in the lorry with all the scenery and all the props and all the costumes, and I can't tell you – there was no covering either. Needless to say I was one of them. Joan and Gerry and Rosalie and David Scase and Howard, all went by train. And we... they had booked the Conservative Rooms in Kendal. And we had that I think... we'd taken that on for about a month. So I found digs with a Mr and Mrs Burn, he worked at the Kays Shoe factory. And they couldn't have been a nicer couple. And I was there with Phil, and we carried on then our morning exercises from nine o'clock 'til about eleven. And then we did the rehearsals for whatever was, you know, we had to do.

But I had such a lot of singing to do with Ewan who... because I had sung locally – I mean there were some places I would have to sing probably – if we were going to Dewsbury Empire – I would have to extend my voice a great deal. Which it wasn't used to you see. When I was in Chichester and around there, then I sang to the servicemen out... but that was fine in the voice I had. But to project it to a big room was going to be a different thing altogether, and you knew that. And he had a very powerful singing voice. So I was doing this daily stint with Ewan, who used to sometimes say, 'Clear off, clear off. You're no good today, no. I'm sorry you know, if you can't remember then I can't remember either. And I've got other things to do' and you'd go, 'Oh dear'. And Joan would say, 'Well I know you've got work to do with Ewan, Pearl. But you have got to fill in with the actresses as well'.

So I then came down with laryngitis, a week before we were going to go on. And so I was told that I mustn't sing or talk for a week, which was extremely good advice actually – which was very difficult for me not to talk. And so we all used to go to a kind of British

restaurant. And we were allowed two shillings for an evening meal, and two shillings for a lunch. You could get sort of some sort of Welsh Rarebit and chips with that you know. But how we would have got on for buying rubbish food then, there was any to have. I don't think sweets were off ration, anything like that then. And so... and it was my job also to go and find... every town we went I had to go ahead and find the cheapest restaurants. And I was so, you know I was so willing. I was so willing to do anything that I had to do. It was so different from the hard slog that I'd had since I was 14, of doing every job that I didn't want to do. Never thought I would ever have a job I wanted to do. So I didn't mind in the slightest doing this, but it did take its toll you know. I got very thin.

KH: Do you think other people minded?

PG: Well a lot of people were spoilt, Phil was very spoilt – and she was a contralto and so she used to sing in some of the... when there was a chorus of women, and she would lead that. But if her mother said – I think she lived near Manchester – if her mother said she should go home for a weekend, they used to let her go, because she didn't have any real main part. Whereas if I was singing with Ewan, I had to be there. So there were one... and Christian Lynne, lovely Swedish girl but they were...and Ruth were women who had held down jobs and knew how to stand up for themselves you know. And... but they weren't on every night – sometimes twice – to do the singing as I was. And in one place we were at, Ewan stopped off because he was going to write a documentary on coal. I don't know what I should say about this really. Well there was a talk that Ewan had either not joined up or had joined up and got out of it, and was a bit on the run.

KH: OK.

PG: So we were told things like, 'Pearl you'll have to sing 22 songs tonight because Ewan is writing a documentary on coal'. Well I said, 'What's he doing that for? I don't do that. Don't ask him to sing 22 songs'. And because my laryngitis hadn't cleared up really properly – because when I had all this extra singing I was getting bouts of it coming back you see. And I remember that Rosalie Williams had got cartilage trouble in her knee, and she had to do quite a complicated dance in street and she had to bind her knee right up. And I don't know how she got through it. And Ewan used to stand on one side of the stage and we were both dressed in sort of oilskins, with a lantern and Wellington boots and a sou-wester – in the hot weather as well. And so I was... we stood there and sang the narration. And I could see the pain in Rosie's face when she tried to... I mean she looked frantic sometimes as to how she was going to do it. So that when I got up there on my own one night – I had this laryngitis – Rosie was giving me extremely supporting looks to get me through it. And I was singing [sings] 'On the top of Old Smokey, all covered in snow. I walked with my lover, my Johnny, my Joe.' And afterwards everybody said, 'Much better like that'. Well I was singing this out you know, and I was sort of whispering all these songs. And then one day, it might have been Sheffield really. It was in the lunch hour, and it was sunny for a change and I was sitting outside having some lunch I think. And some students, some young men students came up and asked me all about this new workshop because nobody knew what it was about. They said, 'There's this strange group you know, that's come. That sing and they... no not like the real theatre'.

KH: Where were you performing, in general?

PG: Let me see. From Kendal I think we went to Whitley Bay, would that be quite near? Blackburn, Bury, Penrith, Dewsbury Empire, Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle, Wigan, Manchester, Cheshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, Liverpool... everywhere... a Chinese theatre, where a Chinaman offered Howard £100 for me. And I felt so sorry for our group because we didn't have any money, I almost said, 'Alright then'.

KH: Were you staying just a week in each place then?

PG: About a week in each place yes. And with these students – these young men students – they were going to come that evening. And I always have been actually dedicated to what I'm doing on the stage. I enter that world and I don't want to get out of it you know. You don't want to be aware of anything else that's going on. I can't sort of be looking for my mum in the audience you know – and doing my work – or anywhere else. And I was right in the middle of this lovely folk song, when one of these men students got up and said, 'Hello Pearl!'. Well you know I lost the song altogether. And I had to walk out. I couldn't just stand there you know. So Ewan then... oh I think thought Ewan, I've got to meet Ewan after that you know. And you know sort of the, 'You didn't tell your boyfriends'. Well I said, 'They're not my boyfriends are they' I mean I didn't tell them to do that. But no we had all sorts of things like that.

When we got to Dewsbury Empire, and we were all looking a bit green and pale by then. I think we'd had to dump the lorry. I think we all had to go... the cheap... you know ended up on Crewe station for four hours. Well known that Crewe... well I never knew it was so well known that we really did stay there for four hours. And I remember too that we were booked for this Dewsbury Empire – it was a huge place. And there were pigeons flying around at that top you know. And it absolutely stunk of urine. And there was a little group of orchestra playing Fingal's Cave in caps and macs because there was no heating. And every night they had to build a little platform on the side of the wall for me to stand, and one for Ewan. And then somehow or other, at different times we had to step down to go into the wings and come out again. And you had to sort of – somehow with your Wellingtons – try and get onto the stage when the lights were down to do this.

And the manager of the Dewsbury Empire kept coming into my dressing room and saying, 'Oh I do love your songs. Oh...' you know, 'there's just one song I'd like you to sing just for me.' All in a Northern accent but I can't do it at the moment. And so when we came... every time we left a place Joan always came on to the front of the stage and said 'Thank you so much' even when we only had 42 people in Workington for a week. And we still had to do it when there were about three people there. And she came onto the stage and she would say 'We are a new theatre and we are not political, but we are trying to change English theatre into... that working class people are quite capable of being dancers...' and very you know forward for her age... for the age because they do now like Billy Elliot, they didn't then. And that they can sing and write poetry and plays as well as anybody else given the chance. So Joan... and then it was about time for Joan to go on the end and say this, when up comes the manger through the aisle with a huge bouquet – and Joan thinks it for her! She puts her arms out you see and he goes, 'Oh no, no. For my brave angel'. I mean you don't do that to Joan you know. There were no

stars you know, you did your job. So I walked up and took the flowers and Joan came and said, 'I think you better give the last speech then'. Well you know, what was I – 24? I'd only ever heard her say it you know. I was very unsure of the whole business up to then you know – like the rest of them, where only one or two that had been in Unity Theatre. There was one old pro named Harold – who was in Molière – left. Joan sacked the whole company because she was too soft hearted to sack him, then came back and told us we all had to be on a lorry by six in the morning because we thought we'd all lost our jobs. I think that I was a bit wrong when I said Joan said it wasn't a political group, because I made the most awful gaffe. I said 'Thank you so much for being this lovely audience' – I mean the lovely audience of about 42 every night – 'and the people that I have lived with, and worked with... and thank you so much. And we are a little on the left side of...' and I didn't know how I was going to go on because that was something that we had been told we must never mention – that we had a political feeling – we didn't.

KH: Why were you told never to mention that?

PG: Because with the Labour party coming into power then, I think Joan felt that anybody who was Conservative wouldn't come. 'Oh it's one of those Labour Party things' you know 'Don't go'. And then we got... David then said he was being demobbed. And I remember that I was at Blackburn then, and we were doing five bob a night digs. And I found this place – and she had her hair all skewered up you know and she was made up. And so she said, 'There's your room'. So I said, 'Thank you'. So when I looked at the bedclothes they hadn't been changed. So I went through to the kitchen and she was sort of puffing at a cigarette you know. I remember there was a canary in a cage, and it was doing acrobatic dances and the cage was going... there was a man with a moustache sort of washing up at the sink. And all the china had GNR – Great Northern Railway – because he'd been working and every time he took the crockery when he went. And so I said, 'I'm sorry but...' – her name was Minnie – I said, 'Minnie, the bedclothes haven't been changed'. She said, 'No, I'll do that when your friend arrives'. I said, 'He's not my friend, he's my husband', she said, 'Yes that's what they all say'. Anyway she said she was a girl from the proper theatre, ever so clean! So that night I had to sleep in my coat, I slept in my coat and my stockings.

And I know that every night I was there we had fish and chips with beetroot, every night. And then of course when we got to Newcastle – Newcastle People's Theatre – people gave us hospitality. And then David had come back then, and he thought that this was the order of the digs I'd always had – this very nice middle class home and you know everybody being... I had lent Joan my wedding ring because she was a mother in one of the plays – so you see nobody actually thought we were married. And David stayed for about a month – but didn't get on with Ewan at all – and would often be playing the piano well into the rehearsals so they used to say, 'David if you don't mind you know...'. 'Oh...' David said, 'well I've only got this page to do'. Something I would never have done you know, I would have scuttled off. But not him.

KH: So what plays were you doing when you joined the company? You mentioned the Molière.

PG: Well the Molière was first. It was put together from two or three Molière plays by Ewan MacColl – and this was called The Flying Doctor – and it had a dance prologue which was lovely. All the characters came in and did a very slow motion dance, which sort of directed you into the type of play it was. And I can't remember the actual of it now. I know there was the... that Sganarelle was like the clown that came in and out and danced and so forth, and mixed everything up. And that... what's her name now...? Lucinda, was the daughter of the... well of the gentleman who – and his wife – who didn't want her to marry this chap. And that was rather like the Mozart's – you know plays – which was all mixed up with how do you outwit the parents and Sganarelle being the one who brought them together and so forth. And I was the maid in that, and so every now and again I had to burst onto the stage and do my dance in red velvet and a lovely sort of flying cap. And Sganarelle would come... we both used at the same time, sort of go into the middle of the stage and did a dance together, then off. And then the play would go on and they did... and then we came in and did that. And another... the scenery was extremely ingenious because they had a thick round type stage with the outside of a house, with a window, and it had... each side there was two thick ropes and Sganarelle and myself we used to have to put the – when it was an indoor scene – we pulled it around and that was... you know it was minimalist if you like. And then when it was an outdoor scene then we pulled it round again. So you know with the two plays I had rather a lot of work to do. And...

KH: So what was the play you were doing with it?

PG: The play we were doing with it I think... all that time when we were in Manchester we did Molière and then got it right in Kendal. All this time Ewan was writing Johnny Noble. I think he'd writing quite a bit of Johnny Noble before it even started. And then you see, Joan took the acting scenes, which was of a Tyneside chap and his girl and... a bit like West Side Story. And he wanted to join the Spanish War and so they did this lovely stylised... all of it was stylised dancing. He was extremely athletic, David was, and Rosalie was the choreographer. So they did these lovely scenes with bare feet, he was... had a striped top and sailor trousers tied up to his knee. And she had a very classic simple dress with a huge skirt. She had lovely shaped legs, as these choreographers have because they use them so much. And so a lot of the action took place in the streets. And it was a time of, I suppose... I can't think exactly when the people joined up the Spanish War, was it about '35, something like that? Mmm. Anyway it was it a time of, I think, General Strike too. And so we had streets where you know, the mothers stood there with the... you know awful clothes and the kids were doing hopscotch. And then when the boys went away to Spain – the three of them – then it was lovely because there were three platform lights with a couple under each saying goodbye to each other, with the light falling on them. And I thought that was something nobody had seen before, you know in anything that had gone on in London.

I mean there'd been some good plays, loads of Shakespeare and all the rest of it. But... and Oscar Wilde, also a brilliant playwright but it never reached the realms of the working people. It was always educated people that did all these things. So then Ewan and I would then sing the appropriate folk songs, like 'On the top of Old Smokey all covered in snow, she waits for her lover, her Johnny, her Joe. Her love has not faded, although they're apart. She is still waiting with her sweetheart.' But that was set to a lovely folk song, and also Robbie Burns words... not Robbie Burns words, but some very lovely words of Ewan was put to the song of it. And it was very, very moving.

And then it transferred to Spain, and they had all the scenes of that, or some scenes of that, not much of that, not just a... what actually nearly wrecked the audience – nobody expected – was that David Scase had worked in the sound department at the BBC. And he had brought with him loads of music. I mean when you hear trains coming on... [sings] da, da, da, da.... Well he brought a lot of those with them, amplified them so that when we got then to the Second World War, planes came and they were... duck... they thought 'Gosh we've been hit!' you know – and the boffer guns – it was amazing! It really was because it really did deserve, I think, to open in London at the Royal – I think a lot of the theatres hadn't really opened again then. But you know, if Joan had done that first, if she'd been able to do the Stratford East first. But then a lot of the experience was made in that year that we were travelling.

KH: Did you find it surprising when you were presented with this script and it was so different to what was traditionally on the stage? Was it a surprise to you when first started acting?

PG: Not me because I was a singer. When I left Theatre Workshop and became... and lived in Chichester, when I did Street Car – I mean it's like learning a whole book – and I... it was only then I was doing more the conventional theatre... and St Joan you know, Shaw's Joan of Arc and A Man for All Seasons and Charlie's Aunt and things like that. But primarily when Joan met me I was a singer. And in fact when she put me into some of the acting parts, I hardly knew what I was up to. But you began to realise that they had... I can't think now and it's a long time ago we have to think this out. But I know at one point Ewan was trying to find somebody who could do the American accent. Well because my Southern speaking voice can go more easily into that, then I became a gangster's moll you see.

So not only did they do these three big plays – I mean they were huge plays – but they also at times did other small plays which only had three people in. And you could go home for that weekend or something like that. And then of course Uranium 235, well! I think I'm not wrong in saying we had 60 changes of clothes, each of us.

KH: Because I've read that and it's extraordinary the way it jumps around, in terms of time and space.

PG: Oh my goodness, yes, yes. From the Greek philosophers right through. And the worry was, doing what you had to do and banging into each other going off you know. Some saying, 'You've got my tights!' you know and somebody, you know doing you up at the back as you went on and... anyway afterwards you know, getting Ewan and Joan saying, 'Well what was that supposed to be?' you know, 'amateur night!'. And... but it was a terrific thing. And...

KH: Could you just maybe say a little bit about it for the benefit of the tape?

PG: Well it was how... it built up to the fear of the H-Bomb. And from the early philosophers, it built up how knowledge was acquired to make our lives better. And then finally it gets bad... and I can't remember to this extent because I was then... I'm 86

now and I was 24 then. But I do remember that at... almost at the end they had this huge explosion which rocked people nearly right out of their seats – and it was amplified as well. And Ewan came from behind in his black mac and sort of said... and shouted out you know, 'You! You!' you know. 'All of you, is this what we're coming to? Your children, their children, the end of the world!'. And everybody's going 'what... what...'. And it never... I mean first of all theatre – Chichester – they do that often now and I don't think anybody's done it since Ewan did. And walked down, and thundered down, and really got it into people's heads that... I being pregnant at the time began to think that 'would my children ever reach 20?'.

KH: Outside of your little group, do you think that a lot of people were aware... or going to see the play would have been as aware of the H-Bomb, of the power of atomic energy, that kind of thing?

PG: In 1945 no, no. I can't... when did America... You can look this up can't you?

KH: Yes. No I was just wondering because having read it, it always seems to me such an extraordinary play...

PG: Yes.

KH: ...and being put on, it seems really before its time.

PG: Yes.

KH: Because it's almost before people were aware.

PG: Yes, yes.

KH: But I just wondered whether that was me just thinking that retrospectively or whether that was something...

PG: I think a lot of people were against America holding the H-Bomb because, you know, in a way we didn't know whether to trust America to that extent because they were such a powerful country. Supposing they turned it on us you know. So I mean he was aware of what could happen but... I mean... well Nagasaki of course, that was it wasn't it?

KH: Yes Hiroshima, yes.

PG: That would have been it. Yes, well they did have it then didn't they? And Hiroshima, that was it yes. For all I... I don't quite know whether that was at the time or whether that came... yes it must... yes it finished the war, of course.

KH: Yes, it finished the war yes.

PG: So maybe there was something in Uranium 235... Ewan was quite an intellectual, he really was. And then of course in his book you'll read about his meeting with Peggy Segar and Low Max. Only then of course he went back to his songs which were: 'She meets me at the factory gates, it's a dirty old town, a dirty old town'. And I never felt – and it was very sad about his daughter of course too – but... because she was Kirsty MacColl, but I think that he never... he was never that close with his children. He was very... he calls the book 'Journey Man' and he was. He wasn't really involved with family life I don't think. A very highly creative man and I don't understand why more hasn't been done about him. And why there hasn't been a programme of him singing all his folk songs. And I would have loved to have had a recording of he and I singing together.

KH: What do you think it was that made Ewan MacColl and Joan Littlewood such a team at the time when they were working together?

PG: Well Joan was against all sort of authority. And obviously if he'd scarpered from them, so was he. They were... their minds were. I don't know that they were... maybe they weren't in love when they married, but they were two of... two people that thought the same at a time when other people didn't. And I think that she got the drama medal at RADA... because she was the daughter of a London girl and a Dutch seaman – she never knew who her father was. And that's who she looks like, you know the... Saskia, you know Rembrandt's Saskia, Joan looked liked that. She looks Dutch. And I think they decided to go against all... I mean when everybody had had to fight a war and were... had to be so restricted with food and clothes and everything, as soon as the war ended I think they wanted to be free to do what they want. And they wanted to be recognised as both working class people who had... who were highly creative and they wanted to do something for the working class. I think that Joan got caught up in a lot of other things, and when she did Oh! What a Lovely War, it seems to me now that she's not given the... you know Richard Attenborough who put it on as a film, got more recognition than she did actually doing that.

KH: What do you think made her such a good director when you were being directed by her?

PG: Well she's like all great directors. She was highly talented to direct you into the way you knew was right. You might be doing something you thought was right, but she'd say, 'Come back tonight and we'll go over it'. And then you knew she got it right, because she was able to put herself into other people's shoes – everybody's shoes. She knew exactly how everybody reacted from grief and love and hard work, and exhaustion, she knew it all. And after... I mean after I left – that was just before they

went to Filey Holiday Camp – I had to come home then because I was nearly six months pregnant. But... her ability to...

KH: You were talking about being directed by her.

PG: Yes. She was able to submerge herself into whatever character presented itself. Didn't have to think about it, knew exactly. Like some mothers can sense just what their child feels and wants, Joan was able to do that with every actor and actress. And then of course when she went to Stratford East – they were taken up by Ken Tynan – and of course they all came over in a body. I mean Shelagh... who did Taste of Honey?

KH: Oh, Shelagh Delaney.

PG: Shelagh Delaney, in fact did the idea but Joan had to actually sort it all out and edit it completely to make it into the film it was... or the play it was. And Brendan Behan you see... and I mean because Joan absolutely loved these characters who were monstrous. I mean Brendan Behan apparently you know – someone said to him, 'Oh you've got a nice new suit' so he said, 'Oh have I?' went out and rolled in the dirt and said, 'Now I haven't'. But of course a lot of the more unscrupulous ones would go and have a marvellous training and then leave her... and because... and if anybody knew – it was like the Festival Theatre – if you played down there you were sure to get a job afterwards. So of course a lot of them got jobs afterwards. But of course Steptoe, you know and Eva Bunnage is it? A lot... of so many of them all started off with Joan.

KH: What... when you were there what was the training like?

PG: Well we would all have to sit in some disused hall and then the script... the story would be sketched out to us, what they were trying to do. And we would then all be given our scripts. And I didn't have anything to do on the stage – my work was solely music with Ewan – so it was always 'Pearl will go with Ewan'. I had of course parts to play in Molière, and also if any other characters fell out I would have to go on. But on the whole that wasn't me. And then they would start straight away with, you know reading, moves. One of the exercises was that you blindfolded... they put all sorts of things in your way and you had to... you were on the stage with a full light on you, and you had to make your way through these boxes and chairs and things like that you know. And if you touched it you were wrong, you had to start again. There was the other exercise which was... Ewan used to put a chair and he'd say to each one, 'Go and sit in it'. And everybody did, just sat in it, got up and went away. So he said, 'As for Pearl, she terrified me, terrified!'. He said, 'Alright here is a chair', so he went up and he sat in it. And he said, 'That's all I asked you to do. I didn't tell act sitting in it' – all the others were wrong as well, what they'd done. We'd all acted what we thought we ought to do on a chair you know. But in fact when there's a chair you know, you just sit in it. And if you're on the stage, you can't act sitting on a chair you know, you sit in it as you would. And... I mean the year I was with them we played these all the time – a week at a time – and to make money, and you know when you perfect sometime really well there's no point into going into something else. Well the other thing was of course when we got to Middlesbrough, we were then absolutely broke.

KH: Where was the money coming from? Was it coming from doing the touring or were you funded?

PG: Yes from the box office. And also when we went to the People's Theatre, they would give us some money. And sometimes a Mayor of a city would give us some money to help us on. And sometimes 'well-to-do' people who believed in it would give us some. And we just had to make funds wherever we could. And... but we had a bad showing, I think the last place. And we ended up in Middlesbrough, and we were booked in some hall – you know St Mark's, Luke or John – it was freezing weather. And in fact, you know, the snow was blowing into the hall and it stayed there because it was as cold inside as it was out. And still Joan made us go on. There were only about three people who didn't understand what they were watching.

And one night... one you know... when we first got there we saw this char sort of washing the floor, we thought well it's clean anyway. We hadn't any food and we hadn't looked for any digs – didn't know what we were going to do. I think one night when I was away they slept in the police station, they had nowhere to go. And so we went through and unpacked all the stuff, and ironed it and hung it up you know. And then we gathered in the foyer – well you know front part of the hall and Gerry said to this woman, 'Do you know where we get any fish and chips love?'. So she looked at him you know and, 'Well' he said, 'well I don't know' he said, 'what shall we do then, look for fish and chips' he said to all of us, 'or get our digs first?' So I said, 'Oh I don't know, don't know'. I was then pregnant and I was hungry all the time.

And then we sort of... this woman got up and said, 'No just you wait there, you just wait there'. So we said, 'Well we...', 'No, wait there'. And a cultured voice, not this char as we thought you know. And a big limousine came up with a man... a driver. And she told the women to get in the big car and the lorry came behind with the rest of them. And she said, 'We are willing to...' they were Colonel and Mrs Pennyman. 'We are willing to put you up in our home for a week and feed you'. So off we go and it was like 'Last Night I Dreamt I was in Manderley'. The gates opened, we got this great drive then there was this great house. I mean I've done a little sketch of that there. And we went in this sort of the baronial hall, there was this huge fire. And you know, there was a couple of old retainers there, they were putting on plates and knives and forks, and all the rest of it. And we had herrings rolled in oatmeal, and strong cups of tea and great slices of bread. And Gerry... and they were talking... Joan was talking to Ada – Mrs Pennyman was Labour and Colonel Pennyman was Conservative – and they were talking over about their aims and all the rest of it. I had a four poster bed... and David had gone back then. And Gerry then – thinking he was doing the right thing – he went round got all the plates, all the bones and the fish on them, and put it into this great baronial fire. Well can you imagine the smell? And the bones all you know... And so oh God it was freezing you know. You wonder how you survived then because... well you know no central... nothing, nothing.

And next morning Gerry... oh, Joan hadn't reached there, she had to go somewhere else to raise some money. And he said, 'Now look Pearl' he said, 'I want you to...'. He said, 'I think he's got a soft spot for you' and he said, 'He listens to a certain folk song you sing every night'. I thought yes that old one you know, that one that I'm always singing that everybody listens to. And he said, 'Look, they've let us stay for a week but we've got another week before we go to Filey Holiday Camp'. He said, 'Do you think... go out for a walk with him will you when he takes the dogs', 'I can't do that!'. 'Yes you can' he said, 'he's sixty anyway' he said, 'you can always leg it'. So anyway I said, 'Would you

like me to come on a walk with you?' I thought whatever will my mother say. So off we go and he's got a lovely soft scarf and he's got a sort of trilby hat yes, and his camel great coat and his stick, and his gun. And so I'm chattering away you know and saying we hardly knew where we were going to go after this. And he said, 'Well where were you going to go anyway?' I said well we didn't really know because by then we had... we had to get our own lunch – which was usually sort of cheese and stuff like that – but there was always a meal got for us in the evening, and somewhere to sleep. And these lovely grounds. And so finally he said, 'Come and sit...' he took off his scarf and put it on a trunk, tree. 'Come and sit down' I said, 'Now Colonel Pennymen'. 'Now' he said, 'just don't worry your head. Don't worry your pretty head about it. Ada and I are going to offer you another week here, and if...' he said that, 'if Joan is agreeable we're going to see whether you'd like to take over our stables as a permanent – or semi-permanent – home for your Workshop. And you can cook and feed yourself, you know take it over like studios'. He said, 'Oh perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me a kiss now?' and so I did and he had a bristly white moustache you know.

So when we came back through the wood I could see – there was a sort of French windows – and I could see all of them looking out of the door you know. And I was going... And I remember that Gerry picked Joan up and swung her around you know, and said, 'Oh you know you're the most marvellous woman in the world' I thought, 'Thank you, I risked my virgin'... no not my virginity exactly, as I was pregnant but, I risked you know, 'I risked my good name for you'. But after that I had to go home, because you know I was... the trouble was whereas if you were pregnant then you got free orange juice and you got also iron tablets. And things that I... and orange on your book, and egg on it – I couldn't get any of those you see – so I really had to go back.

KH: Can you tell me a little bit about the other people who were in the group at the time when you were a member of Theatre Workshop?

PG: Well when I arrived in Manchester, and was first introduced to them, there was Rosalie Williams - who was going to be the choreographer – but had been in Unity Theatre with Joan and Ewan. There was Howard Goorney who had also been at Unity, and also Gerry. And the others were Phil, who on one of Joan's numerous recordings of different things and at different places, had picked up these various talented young people and asked them if they would join, which I suppose then they did. There was David Scase, who was in the sound department of the BBC. There was also Ruth Brant who was... made the costumes for the BBC. There was Christian who was Swedish, and I don't know where she came from I'm sure. There was Bunny who got out of the army for saying that... they finally said they thought Bunny was mad so he... and he was discharged and came straight to us. There was also Jimmy Gilhooley, who I think ran in Liverpool... I think he ran one of the Liverpool Reps for a time. There was Bill. Now he was a man who was an accountant, and I never saw him in anything else but a jacket, trousers and a waistcoat. But he threw everything up, lost all his money – because he was getting none – and lost all his hair as well. Let me see, then there was Joan Littlewood of course, who had, I believe, had got the medal at RADA which was presented to her by Bernard Shaw. And also walked I think, from London to Manchester to start in Unity Theatre. Gerry who was the son of an industrial giant – I think he had several factories – and I think helped them quite a bit through it all. And also, let me see, me who was... I was always included as 'What do you think, you know we've got a Land Girl!'. People came and went, there was Nick. Nick who came in and thought that... he said he only joined because he thought that he might get off with me. Well

when he found I was married... he did stay on, poor old Nick. Oh dear, oh dear. And all of them looked as though they were the group from *Oliver Twist* you know – they did really. And then people came into it totally disillusioned and dropped out again and went home, you know. I think three or four of them did that. But...

KH: Was that because it... was that because it was quite hard?

PG: It was quite hard yes, it was a hard... yes when there was... it was cold. I mean five bob and... when we were getting sort of five, six, seven, eight, nine bob a day to have to live. A lot of them just felt they were better off in the Co-op you know. So Gerry who was totally devoted, all the way through. And Joan and Gerry, I think even with *Oh! What a Lovely War*, came up with some of the war songs first, and then built the *Oh! What a Lovely War* round it.

KH: What were the audiences like that you were playing to?

PG: Well when we got to Workington – in Workington it was just these rows and rows of little houses and I suppose... I don't know if there was any coal there or there'd be big factories and quite not... with great chimneys. And they... I mean the men wore flat caps and they always had a scarf, you know here. And all they ever were interested in was a bit of Vaudeville, if you had one of the comics that came round, and the dogs. I mean it was like... I always said it was like presenting a French novel to somebody who could hardly read English. I mean it seemed sometimes... I mean Joan was so dedicated to presenting high art to working class people who didn't have a clue really.

KH: What was their reaction to things like *Johnny Noble* which tried to represent even more...?

PG: Ah... they... yes... Yes they did. Yes they did go for *Johnny Noble*... they loved *Johnny Noble*. And all that... the aeroplanes, the boffer guns, all the noise and the trains going. They thought that was wonderful. Then of course you got to some places where you were royally introduced to the Mayor and all the Corporation. And Joan and Gerry, and Rosalie and David Scase and Howard, would all be put up in jolly nice digs, and we had to go around finding these awful digs you know with the mini ha ha's you know – the cods and beetroot at night!

KH: Do you think there was a kind of hierarchy within the group or was it quite equal in terms of you all having a say about what happened?

PG: There was a hierarchy, yes there was. Because after all these people had to come up with the ideas and we had I suppose... you take Jimmy Gilhooley and you take Nick, and one or two people like that, and you didn't even know if they were in it for the right reasons. And in fact, in *Don Perlimplin* and *Belisa in the Garden*, I was thinking about it because I didn't quite know how to interpret it. Because when Joan wrote to Manchester University, they said that it was actually played as a comedy, and not as a tragedy. And I

did say to her that I thought that when he... when the old man's in the garden – waiting for her to come out on the balcony, and he's dressed as a young boy – he waits for the right time for her to show herself. And I said, 'Don't you think that could be... it could be sort of religious?'. The agony in the garden and then... and at the end there's Marcolfa and there is Belisa, and another woman – could be like Mary, the two Marys. And Joan said, 'We'll have to give you a little bit more thought I think Pearl'. Well I wasn't given any more... I wasn't given any more thought for better digs I can tell you that. I can... I was annoyed quite often when they were all in one carriage – that crowd – and I was with all the younger ones you know, and the ones that I wasn't anything learning anything from. I wanted to be with somebody I was learning something from. And I could see that in a way. You know you've got to separate yourself a bit.

KH: What do you think the impact of those early years were? In that year that you when you were there, before they went to London and before they became very famous.

PG: Oh me?

KH: On you or on the group or...

PG: I don't know what... I don't know what impact it had on some of the group because, I suppose that Joan and Ewan, and Howard, and Rosalie, and David Scase – and myself although they didn't know it – sort of tried to understand what we were there for and what we wanted to learn about acting, getting the best out of it for ourselves. But some of them were there because I think they... after the war it was an absolute thrill to be in something like that – travelling around with a group of people – and they did what they were told. And there were a lot of group scenes you know, in the war scenes and so forth which was right for them.

But I did feel as though I was sidelined a bit there. And... but I had nothing. I mean apart from the singing, it was only towards the end when I was the gangster's moll and then I was Lucinda, and I was given better parts. And when I left, which was of course... was a great shock to Joan, after two years she asked me if I'd go back for a fortnight to the Manchester Theatre – Manchester Library Theatre. And I left my baby with an aunt. I mean, I daren't leave her with David. And I went back to teach a singer, and I think she used to sing after a religious programme on Sunday's after that. Isla... Isla somebody. And she and I became quite friendly because I had to teach her the folk songs. She had a sort of... not a natural singing voice, but it would be alright you know, it would be alright. But apparently she choked to death by eating a sandwich, yes. Yes that was awful because... well whatever, yes.

KH: Yes, that's horrible.

PG: Yes, yes. But... so I did a fortnight there and... that was terrific though really because I mean my baby was only about 10 months old. And they put in the local paper, "I took one look at my baby and knew I would have to go back to Theatre Workshop". I mean after all it was only for a fortnight. [Laughs]

KH: What kind of influence do you think Theatre Workshop had on you?

PG: On me as... my first book, which I've done on being brought up in a community with two grandmothers, two grandfathers, aunts and uncles and being the first grandchild. I had a pretty good time but they all wanted to do something for the only grandchild. And my mother – who lived further up the road – would send me down to call into both grandmothers, different aunts... and I have, in my first book, described the smells of all the different houses that I had to visit. But I had to do it. You know and then I was dressed beautiful by then, they did knitting for me and I had capes and tam o'shanter. But when I got older and I went home at lunch time instead of my grandmother's... my mother then – who I always felt like she was a bit jealous of me because she felt that her mother was giving me something that she hadn't given her – and I was put in velvet dresses with a pinafore, and boots would you believe it.

And then as soon as I was 14 I was sent out to domestic service. And I didn't... apart from having this singing voice that was... I wanted... I mean that's all I could think of, I was going to make my life as a singer. It meant so much to me. I never thought about boys or anything, I wanted to be a singer. And so for a whole year I went into domestic service with a titled woman – and that was bad enough. After that my father said that... so that I could do my singing my mother said I had to have a daily job, because my father was at Shipham's factory. It was a comfortable working class home in Chichester, and all my relations were in the same way, they were comfortable. But working-classness is usually due to the money that's coming into it. And not more money than about £3.15 came into anybody's home but... you had all your family around you.

But then I went to the Land Army and then I had to work with 20 men, which was not as you would think now, something they were pleased about. They thought that these women were coming into the farms, were releasing them for war and they didn't want that. So I never had a name for a year. And the farmer finally – because I said I was so unhappy – brought another girl in, and then another girl so there were three of us then.

So... and then I got married and went into a very middle class family where they didn't really take me seriously at all because David had been in and out of relationships. I mean he... you know he was very handsome, he was a very good painter then. And so I was given a very, you know cold reception. And when I got married, well! I don't know what... well I do. But I had been enclosed all that time in other people's... what they wanted me to do. I really didn't know what I wanted to be my... I knew I wanted to be free but I never thought my life would change from that. When I met David at the... I was in the farm and I came down to a social in Lavant, and met him. He was the only chap with a cultured accent. All the others was you know, 'do ya go to the Pal, do ya go to 'Ammersith?' or you get Free French... and you know you had to be very careful. They said there were eight chaps to every girl – it was a garrison city. And I really didn't think I'd expect to see David after a fortnight you know. Because they didn't, they just passed off and forgot about you. But no, no, I mean that continued on and we got married. But then we had to go into digs in Blackpool so... you know and I was very much aware that I was not approved of by his family. You know and I'd come from quite a loving group of people, and I didn't really know quite how to deal with them. So Joan actually freed me. I mean I didn't even have David telling me what he thought I ought to do. There were times when – not like this, but when we were in digs... I then left the land army and followed him – where his mother would invite him for the weekend and not me. And you know, you get to lose your confidence if you're treated always like this. Especially if your singing has taken you into the middle class – which it did – and then on the other hand you're treated as coming from a different background.

And so with Joan, who was the same, and Ewan. Not Rosalie, Rosie was middle class and so was David Scase. But most of them there were working class Midlanders and Northerners. So with my singing and everything, I began to come into my own as a person. So that when David came back, thought I was in some old rep... but when he came back and he said, 'You know this theatre's really something, it's nothing like what I thought'. Well all he wanted to do then was to get me out of it. Because Joan said that two agents had come and there was a big show that was going on called The Song of Norway, and they'd come up because they hear of this – they'd heard of me as the singer – and they wanted me to go and audition. So she said, 'Well Pearl I can't stop you' but I thought, you know it's been bad enough for me to get here with David abroad, I can't go now whizzing into the West End. So I said, 'Well no Joan, I'll stay with you' you see. And what she did for me, she got me a part in The Bartered Bride and with the Northern Regional Orchestra.

And I couldn't read music, neither could Ewan. And there was a trio... I was alright, I did my song. I did my lovely song, I did another song and then I had to sing in trio. Well you really got to read your music to be able to do that and not let the other two down. So... God whatever was his name? I can't think of the conductor's name, he's so famous. He hit the... he got his baton and he hit it on a music stand, made everybody stop you see. And he came over, he said, 'Miss Turner, you sang a minim there and you can see it's a crochet, okay?'. Start again you know. I did the same thing. I said, 'Well I'm terribly sorry' I said, 'but I don't read music'. So he said, 'I've been conducting for 16 years' he said, 'how is it she can sing and can't read music? What have I been doing for 16 years?'. Oh he was so cross. Anyway the baritone then... when I had to come in, did that on my shoulder and I got through. And Joan was convinced that I never got any more jobs... I think she wasn't quite right there because I was with... the Coronation Street lady, Violet Carson. I sang, she play... she was a very good pianist and I sang with her on many of the Children's Hour things. I don't think they held that against me. After all there must have been a lot of people who couldn't read music. But... so I stayed with her you see. So I might have been in The Sound of Music, you know the old one. [Laughs] The very, very old one in it.

KH: I think we'll think we'll leave it there, unless you have anything else you want to...?

PG: No, no. Shall I read that little bit?

KH: Yes, do you want...?

PG: You can stick that in where you like. If you want to at all.

KH: It's the section from Pearl's book about her time in Theatre Workshop and her final thoughts about it.

PG: "Once I had told them I was leaving. I was imperceptibly dropped" And Joan read that, she read the book. And I just felt I'd done a year of some of the worst work imaginable. And I thought they could have sent me off with a bit more cheer than that. And I stayed and did all my commitments 'til they found somebody else. And so I've

ended it with leaving, going through Bury or Blackburn and the Sally Army was there you know. And all I could think of was to get into the train, get home. And so I sit there and I think back on my life in Theatre Workshop, and that's how it comes in. The first part, that night we stagger off to the pub was when we were in Middlesbrough before we had this marvellous invitation to stay with the Pennymans. And I think they did set up their workshop there for some time, but found then it was too much for them to... you know put on shows and go back there as well. So this is just before we were discovered. "That night we straggled off to the pub, very aware that the local inhabitants regarded us as not the proper theatre. And what on earth possessed a group of young people to brave the Northern winter in search of an ideal, dressed in old clothes and with a clapped out lorry? I think we all wondered about this from time to time, but we still carried on, cold, hungry, and often ill, but undaunted. Great fame came later but I'm sure no-one ever replaced that small group of actors with stars in their eyes. We were the true Theatre Workshop. Not those who followed once Joan and Gerry had arrived at Stratford East. But Howard, Rosalie, David Scase, Bill, Bunny, Christian, Ruth, Phil, Joan, Gerry, Ewan and the many others who joined us on that long, heartbreaking tour. Neither will they know the sheer creative excitement that filled our lives everyday." In fact Ewan never came to Stratford East. He said he... that his heart went when we all left.