

# THEATRE ARCHIVE PROJECT

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## John Haynes – interview transcript

**Interviewer: Tom Dymond**

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Photographer. Samuel Beckett; Edward Bond; George Devine; Bill Gaskill; David Hare; Jocelyn Herbert; Home; Keith Johnson; The Living Theatre; Charles Marowitz; Joe Orton; John Osborne; photography; rehearsals; Royal Court Theatre; David Storey; Taking the Stage.

Note, this transcript has been edited by the interviewee and so may differ slightly from the recording.

TD: We're recording now. So my first question was going to be how did you first become interested in photography?

JH: That came out of seeing a book by Cartier-Bresson. It was actually while I was working backstage at the Royal Court Theatre, and I saw Cartier-Bresson's book, or someone showed it to me, *Les Européens*. And at that stage I'd come out of the... just come out of doing my National Service in the RAF in Singapore, and found myself. I didn't want to go back into any sort of structured working, like I'd worked in an office before, but I knew that was going nowhere. I didn't want to ever go back to that. And so I... through someone I was in RAF with I got involved in working backstage in theatre. I worked at the Palace Theatre. Sorry, this is going to be a rather long answer, but that's the way it... that's how it proceeded. But I was working as a sort of electrician. I had no idea what electricians was, but I got a job and worked backstage. It meant money to live, and I saw *West Side Story* - the original production - which kind of blew me away.

And then I heard about the Royal Court and I thought 'that's the place I want to work'. I don't know why I thought that, but I did. I knew that was new writing, and it was John Osborne, it was the theatre that everything was coming out of. So I wrote away and got a job as a second day man, all the electricians on the switchboard. And it was there that I met someone who showed me the book of Cartier-Bresson and I thought 'Wow! This is something. I mean, I don't think I could do it, but maybe I could do it if I'm ever going to go into photo...'

And I'd also seen theatre photography at the Royal Court. And in those days it was generally a rather static affair, and except that Lord Snowdon - Armstrong-Jones as he was then - he had the very sort of photographs that I could look to and admire. It was very much done in a reportage style, people usually took photographs in that era when I went... sixties I think - very early sixties. They were very posed and I couldn't relate to them at all.

But from the Cartier-Bresson book my father... I said I'd... you know I'd really like to try to take photographs. And he could very ill afford it, but he bought me a Leica ... I think it was a second hand Leica for £140 in those days. I mean it would cost £1,000, no question, plus now. But I went out and I started taking pictures in the street. I did lots of reportage-type photography, à la Cartier-Bresson, stopping moments hopefully with a geometry and nice sort of backgrounds and things like that. But I learnt. I taught myself to be a photographer really.

At the same time working at the Court, Keith Johnson, who was... he wrote a book called Impro, and it was all about masks and mime. And he was quite an off-the-wall character. He was the assistant to George Devine, and his friend Roger Mayne, who was married to Ann Jellicoe, was a major photographer in those days. I think he'd already done that book Southam Street, but he introduced me to him, and that flowed into my becoming a photographer really. And the Royal Court at that stage was not a part of my photography, I was just learning. But Keith Johnson was a major influence and the fact that he brought me in.

There was a studio that was run by William Gaskill and Keith [Johnson], and under the auspices of George Devine, who said basically that actors, you know, once they've left drama school never get any training. So they set up this thing to actually do classes in drama. And Keith pulled me in to take photographs. And they are my first photographs. I took pictures of George Devine teaching a half... no it was a full mask class. That was the flow.

And it was then that I started taking actor's portraits, but I realised that that really also wasn't my area. But somehow I got an introduction to The Sunday Times, and the picture editor was Julie Hamilton, and she encouraged me. And I took some pictures in to show her, and I suddenly... you know, life suddenly depends... sometimes depends on something happening, you know that's it's not going... everything is going full circle. Suddenly the picture editor is deposed and another picture editor comes on who was the leading photographer at the time, and because I was new he started to use me, so I got a lucky break, worked for The Sunday Times and did everything from sort of hard news, to going to Ireland to photograph Bantry Bay and things like that. It was a wonderful experience.

TD: So in a way that was your apprenticeship in a way.

JH: That was my apprenticeship. It taught me much more than ever I could have done if I'd have just stuck to taking theatre pictures, or when I did take theatre pictures... I'd also worked a bit as a theatre photographer. I'd worked for the Open Space which Charles Marowitz started. And it was then called the London Traverse and it was run by Michael Geliot, Charles Marowitz and... who was it... Michal Geliot... oh Jim Haynes, my namesake. I think that's how I got the job. I wrote to him because he was Jim Haynes. He ran the Open... the Arts Lab in London at that stage. Oh God there's some memories coming up here. Sorry. So I got jobs like that.

But after... I'm not sure if that was after the... it probably was after the experience with The Sunday Times. Again you know The Sunday Times came to an end because the picture editor changed, didn't get used so much, and I realised I had to specialise in something. And I'd worked at the Royal Court a little as a photographer, only I think when Gaskill employed me on The Double Dealer, and then I'd do rehearsal pictures only and wouldn't do the production. I was a little green in those days I suspect, and you know, I suppose I was learning my trade.

But there was one interesting thing, because you know I see Bill Gaskill socially we go to the art galleries and talk about things from those days, and I was talking about the past and I said, 'You know, do you remember I went out with Edward Bond...' they employed me to do programme pictures occasionally, and I did... that first Gaskill season they had a combined programme for all three plays. One of them was the first play I ever photographed which was *The Cresta Run*, by N.F. Simpson and directed by Keith Johnson – that's why I got that. But I did the rehearsal pictures... well not the rehearsal pictures, programme pictures... Edward Bond was around and somehow Bill had said 'Go out with him and look at South London'. And Bill said to me recently, the idea... he said, 'No-one's ever known about the South London pictures... that's a completely... you know it's in none of the books or anywhere'. And I went out with him in his car. I don't think we spoke very much but... he took me round South London, but he wouldn't be drawn on where the play had been set...or it had been inspired from at all. We'd just stop. And there's a moment in the play where they go to Battersea Park and get on a boat. So we went there and I did that. But basically in the end the rest were just streets of South London. And so they put some of those in the programme at the time. So I get jobs like that.

And then... now my memory's coming back a bit. It was from those odd jobs I'd get at the Court, then I'd go away and do something else for someone, or a portrait. Suddenly another sort of a change of route, *The Sunday Times* came to an end, and it was about 1970, and I'd done a... they'd called me in just to do one play over the three season – *Café La MaMa* season, an American season. I did *Café La MaMa* and another play. And then someone else did another. And at that stage the Court were employing different photographers. So Zoe Dominic did *Saved*, and , and I wasn't really in the running at all. I'd gone away and you know... and suddenly I was approached... Lindsay Anderson was doing *Home* with Ralph Richardson and John Gielgud. And somehow he hadn't liked the rehearsal pictures, whoever did them, it was a girl I think. And I was called up by the new press officer at the Royal Court, it was Gloria Taylor, who was actually Malcolm McDowell's brother... [Laughs] sister. Yes, her brother was Malcolm McDowell. And I did *Home*, and luckily I'd worked for *The Sunday Times*, because you know I was much more confident, and dealt with those two knights basically. Very difficult play to photograph, sitting there in two chairs – sitting there also was Dandy Nichols and Mona Washbourne, were the two ladies. And nothing very much happened. There was a table you know, and it was quite sort of static. But you know I suppose I made something of it. And you know, I know there's that picture, I don't know if you've seen *Taking the Stage*, but that picture on the front cover of...

TD: Yes.

JH: It comes out of that. And suddenly I sort of blended in with the Royal Court. And I got the next play, and I think it was *Lear*. And so Bill I knew a bit, but you know he hadn't really used me properly. And I suddenly fitted in and found myself doing every play there – *Theatre Upstairs*, everywhere. And all the rest of my work sprang out of that, working with different directors from who I'd worked with at the Royal Court. And so that's the lead in basically.

TD: So you were called in to do photographs for rehearsal, but what was that like? Did the actors react to you being there?

JH: Well rehearsals always... I mean, the first one, because I was called in to redo the rehearsal pictures of the Home, and I was really sort of on tenterhooks sort of two major knights of the theatre. But in actual fact, because Lindsay Anderson was such a commanding presence who controlled the actors and everyone else in sight, he... you know, it was very easy. If I'd have had a nervous director it would have been very much more difficult, but you know I had a right to be there and that's how it felt. In fact that's how the Royal Court ethos was always like that in those days, it was you know everyone who's involved was there to make the production successful really. And also I'd photographed lots of people at The Sunday Times. The Sunday Times business news would send out to photograph these managing directors – pompous people, pompous politicians, really pompous politicians – and you'd photograph them. So I knew how to handle myself with difficult people, and so it was quite easy when it came to it. But of course we have some pictures, always much more interesting sometimes than the production.

TD: Yes, definitely sometimes, yes. Yes, excellent. I just want to go back just a little bit. You said you really wanted to work in the Royal Court almost in any way to begin with, as an electrician.

JH: Yes, that's right.

TD: Why was that?

JH: It seemed like it was chosen. And when I... just going forward rather than going back – you know for those first years I didn't really want to work anywhere else. It felt like the right place to be. And it was the fact that it was playwright theatre. And also I was nurtured very much by Gaskill, & Anderson and it was a very welcoming place to be when every... you've probably read this but unlike anywhere else they were all interested in the photographs, they actually looked at your contacts, they chose the front of house. I mean that picture behind me was chosen by Bill Gaskill at that time for Lear. But the original thing I think came through me reading about John Osborne and Look Back in Anger and the Royal Court, and the writers' theatre. I think that was my initial push. And as soon as I got in contact with it I knew it was the place I wanted to be, even as I was working as a second day man, it felt good, and you know he was around... George Devine was around, you could smell his pipe everywhere. And he used to put pastilles on the front of the dress circle, a tin of blackcurrant soothing throat pastilles and eat them while he's smoking his pipe.

If you've seen Taking the Stage there's an anecdote in the front of the book which isn't totally correct because it's... Lindsay couldn't... they couldn't find out where... Tony Richardson was directing, and it was the production of Midsummer Night's Dream, that's right. And he stopped the rehearsal and said 'Would anyone like to come and see John Osborne on television', and in actual... and that meant, you know, not just the actors on the stage, it was the stage hands as well, everyone. And somehow we all piled back to this mews cottage, and no-one could remember actually whose it was. But I suspect it belonged to Tony Richardson's family or something. And we watched John Osborne on television ranting about something or thing. But you know, it was sort of part of the Royal Court ethos, you know, and it made me feel very good to be around that place

because they treated you as equal, usually people say 'Oh, the photographer's arrived.'  
[Laughs]

TD: Well people speak of a family atmosphere. People retain their links throughout their lives from that theatre, which is quite rare isn't it?

JH: Yes, yes. It was a marvellous place to be. They all... well in my time you know there was Lindsay and Bill, and Anthony Page, and they would fight to the death, you know other people outside that theatre. Although they wouldn't get on with each other maybe, but you know, anyone said anything against the Royal Court or the other person they would stand together... it was very solid the Royal Court, and it did feel very, very good.

And they you know, they weren't easy people to work with. They were quite difficult. You know, being a photographer I wasn't there all the time... I came in and went out again. But you know Lindsay would give me a very hard time and sort of tear my pictures up... [Laughs] so completely deflate me. But you know it was... you wanted to work there whatever, you wanted to do better afterwards. So it was a very good learning curve indeed. And it carried on to the nineties – into the nineties – after that.

TD: How much interest had you had in the theatre prior to working there?

JH: Just before my National Service my parents moved down to St. Leonards-on-Sea... you know in my teens I had been to see the odd show and the odd bit of theatre,, like West End commercial theatre basically. But when my parents moved down to Sussex there was a really good rep at Bexhill... well you know, I hadn't been interested in theatre at all, but on leaves I would go off to see The Penguin Players at the De La Warr Pavillion , Bexhill, and they'd do Rattigan and sort of I suspect Shaw and you know the typical rep sort of things, but they were all good, solid plays and I enjoyed them very, very much indeed. What was that... yes, Priestley's Mr Kettle and Mrs Moon, I mentioned it because it was about a couple who gave up work to do just what they wanted, which was my mood after National Service... And so there was great interest in that.

Then I went to Singapore and theatre was you know... it wasn't involved in my life at all. And except I met a guy in Singapore with me who was Derrick Goodwin, he later came back... and he was instrumental in getting me working backstage in the theatre. He came back and he became... he set up a place called The Living Theatre which was in Leicester. And it was... the directors of it were Ken Loach, Bill Hays, and later on Jill Gascoigne was the leading actress there. And I went up, because you know I'd been with him in Singapore, I went up and lit some shows for him up there. And my wife Jane also came with me, she was an actress in those days, long gone. And so after the Services, the Living Theatre was the first contact for me working in theatre, before I went to the Court.

TD: What kind of things were the Living Theatre putting on? Were they doing Brechtian plays?

JH: They were putting all the Royal Courts plays on.

TD: Oh were they?

JH: Before I was there, yes. And they were... no afterwards... no, I can't remember what year it was actually. But they did... while I was there Luther, The Knack, and my wife Jane went up to play Beattie in... no, she understudied Beattie, Jill Gascoigne played Beattie in Roots, Arnold Wesker play. So Derek who was an interesting man... you know he influenced me in reading and things like that, was always into writing... and worked as an assistant at the Court, so he was very, very involved in the Royal Court style of theatre in those days. All really good plays.

TD: It was like a Royal Court satellite almost, because most of the kind of... the impression we have of the theatres in that time, like regional theatres, they were still doing kind of Rattigan and things for quite a long time before these things kind of like filtered down.

JH: Yes, yes. That's right, I mean his compatriot... sorry it was John Neville at Nottingham Playhouse, they were putting on very good plays, and they had you know people like... I think Barbara Leigh Hunt, Judi Dench up there, you know in repertory. So it was... yes, I'm just wondering when... how it was. It must have been after my work. It was after my Royal Court when I was working as an electrician. Then that and then The Sunday Times after that, and then back to the Royal Court – yes it was in that sequence.

TD: You also did some work at the Hampstead Theatre as well didn't you?

JH: I did.

TD: How did that come about?

JH: I started there in almost the same time as I started The Open Space I suppose, somewhere in the mid sixties, going right into... not knowing how to do these things, but right into... I think it was James Roose Evans and saying I'd like work for very little - it was £5 or something. And I did that. And I actually stayed working at the Hampstead Theatre from the mid sixties, and I did everything there until again mid nineties – after the Royal Court. I worked longer there, but that was a different sort of theatre. It was a theatre that did plays aimed for the West End basically. And they also put on very good stuff, anyway it was very easy to do compared with other places. [Laughs]

TD: You mentioned a bit George Devine earlier.

JH: Yes.

TD: And obviously your involvement kind of coincided really with... well, with his death almost.

JH: Yes, sorry...

TD: And so I was wondering how... if you felt the institution had changed with his death afterwards, if it was palpable?

JH: Oh, I think it was a big... I mean, I wasn't as... you know even though I didn't really know George Devine as such, except that I'd photographed him in those lessons he took, but it was his theatre and you know everyone... as far as I know he was the main man there. And so the succession into Bill Gaskill, who was definitely his chosen one, was an area I can't really talk about because I don't know it. But I'm very pleased it was Bill Gaskill because you know, I just think he is the greatest director we've had basically. Just those early plays still ring in my mind. There was Lear... all the Bond plays that Bill directed are sensational. But anyway that's beside the point.

What did I... I had something else that crossed my mind... oh yes the other play, the thing that came out of... just when you said Hampstead, that was a long line of working... like the Court But also LAMDA, which I still do. One of the... the chap who ran the theatre upstairs, Roger Croucher, left to take over LAMDA, and he brought me in about 1979, and so I've done every LAMDA show in the main theatre there since then.

TD: Oh wow!

JH: So there's that connection. There were three big connections from those early, early days that sort of kept me in work I suspect. [Laughs] Although I would get work elsewhere, I'd go you know work on... I've done about 200 shows I suppose at the National, but the Court was the foundation, yes.

TD: Can we just go back to the Actors Studio briefly?

JH: Sure.

JH: Actors who... yes, they were invited I think. Very often they were people who worked at the theatre, who were working in the plays at the theatre. But I think they put you know, notices in The Stage also for anyone who wanted to come. And they were mainly concentrating on classes and improvisation and mask, like Keith was very, very into mask – and so was Bill in fact. So I know very little more than that, except that you know I went in a few times, took some pictures of them. So I couldn't talk about them as an actor might talk about them if you know what I mean.

TD: No, no, sure.

JH: Yes, yes.

TD: I was just going to say you've worked with so many different people as well, and you mentioned John Osborne, I was wondering how you found him and what he was like?

JH: Wonderful. Wonderful. I mean, again he was out of my era. He'd gone by the time I got there.

TD: Yes.

JH: It was very much Bill's theatre then... and he'd bring him in you know. But that's what was wonderful about Court, you know they brought in all those... you know it was very much from David Storey – which was also a wonderful experience I ought to talk about because that was a major influence my life. You know, before I'd gone to the Court I'd read three of... the first three of David Storey's novels. So working for him was really... I mean, his plays are very, very different to his novels, except some of the actual themes of the books would be continued into the play. But that... sorry I've lost my thread now, going on to David Storey. I must talk about David Storey because he was very important. And then of course there was David Hare, Harold Brenton, all those people that came after. So what was the first question, the answer wasn't...?

TD: John Osborne originally.

JH: Oh yes John... OK, so John Osborne I knew later, because he used to invite me to his parties and things, mainly because I'd been associated with the Court. And he would... long story because I did work with him when he was... he did a play called *The End of My Old Cigar*, which was done at Greenwich which Max Stafford-Clark directed. And you know they probably had their own theatre, photographer but I remember sort of talking and asking if I could come and take some pictures, and of course he was a delight and I went over and took some pictures of that. And somehow you know I got invited to his summer... he used to have a summer party every year in Edenbridge his home. And he wrote some very scathing ... he used to send me postcards... you know well the last play he did which was like a revival of *Look Back in Anger* called *Deja Vu* he sent me a wonderful postcard saying 'Look, I'd love you to do this play, John' and I'm not going to say what he actually said, I can't, because it was scathing about who else was involved in it. But you know, he'd call... I don't know, you'd go to his parties and you'd get a card from him, but I didn't know the man at all. I knew more his wife who was Helen... she used to write for *The Observer*... Helen Dawson, she was the drama critic.

TD: Critic, yes.

JH: She was the original one who said of Harold Hobson, [The Sunday Times drama critic] 'You turn the Sunday pages to Harold Hobson barking up the same tree every'... oh 'the wrong tree every Sunday'. I think that's what she said. So I'd known her you know, and so I suspect that was another link with John Osborne. And she reviewed... I had an exhibition called Up North and she came and reviewed it for The Observer, and I got a little by-line about it. But John Osborne, apart from that, I knew nothing about. But always you know I admired his Look Back in Anger.

TD: Up North you just mentioned; that was an exhibition on David Storey?

JH: Yes.

TD: ...what was the story behind that?

JH: The story was typically Lindsay. And that explains roughly how I worked at the Court. I'd always sort of expressed a desire to take other pictures rather than theatre pictures. You know I'd done reportage for The Sunday Times and because of David Storey's books... and he did... the incoming play was The Changing Room which you know I knew This Sporting Life the book, and indeed Flight into Camden and Radcliffe, I'd read all three of those. Radcliffe's an amazing book by the way. And so he was about to do... I did of course Home, and I met him there. He's an extraordinary nice man, David Storey, wonderful. He can tell the most wonderful stories. But the incoming play was going to be... or the play that was muted for next spring was The Changing Room, OK. And so I said oh you know... I had somehow said you know 'well, it would be nice to take some pictures, I'd really like to go to the North'. Without saying anything he put it in the next programme. He put... Lindsay had it written in 'An exhibition by John Haynes on the North of England.' So it was one of those things, you know I had to do it whether I wanted to... well of course I wanted to do it.

So I basically went up North – and there's some good stories about that as well – and I just spent a week going from Wakefield, which is where he wrote, and where he was born, and wrote... most of his writing came out of Wakefield. When he came to London he still went back to Wakefield in his novels. And I went to the Dales, and the North York Moors, and Hull, and all... I just went all around. And I thought I'd try and get some sort of background to this Yorkshire man who's totally different to me, you know who comes from the South. And also you know the North is an extraordinary place. It's full of industry and smoking chimneys, and fantastic countryside – some of the best countryside in England is the Dales I suspect. And Lindsay, one of his earlier... he did an earlier... he was a documentary filmmaker before he made This Sporting Life, and he had worked for... I think it was a firm in... and he'd also done a documentary on Wakefield Express which was a... Are you all right on...?

[Interruption as Recorder is put onto mains power]

JH: So Lindsay had done these documentaries in the North of England, and under the patronage of a company called Sorage or Storage or something. But anyway he gave me an address to go and see, and I went to see... Sutcliffe's, that's what it was called – Lois

Sutcliffe, the wife of the owner. A lady who you know had been involved with Lindsay making the documentaries. And I was shown round the factories, so I took pictures of workers in their curlers and things like that. It was very good experience. And David Storey said 'Why don't you go and see my aunt; she's a medium, Mrs'... I can't remember the name, Aunt Edie I think. But basically I went to see this aunt, and went into her parlour and I think they gave me a cup of tea. But the thing I remember about it was the fact that she said to me, 'You're going to meet royalty.' And she said something about 'patio outside my house', and she said, 'You're going to meet royalty very soon.' And I said, 'I probably won't, you know, it's impossible'. And I came back to London, and the next week I was called in to photograph David... I think it was the preparation of The Changing Room, they had the model of the set of The Changing Room. And I went to Jocelyn Herbert's and there was Lindsay, David, Jocelyn, and Lord Snowdon came to take photographs while I was there. It was sort of... it was you know... now, he wasn't actually main royalty, but he was subsidiary royalty. So I think maybe she more or less got it right and so basically that...

But basically the North of England was very, very, very, you know evocative to me. And I took some reasonably good photographs I think, very inexperienced. But even now I think some good stuff there. And we put them up at the theatre and it you know provided the background to The Changing Room, and it did quite well. And it was fine. I've always wanted to do that.

TD: So were these put in the actual theatre itself around the lobby or...?

JH: They were put all over the theatre. So they were in the downstairs bar, because it was not the same as it is now at the Royal Court. But there was upstairs bar, in the foyer, all round. The Royal Court always had the best display in those days in London. They had these two massive like 45 by 55 inch blow-ups outside the... either side of the main doors. And we did them that size round the place. And I remember in the circle bar I did this dustman unloading some coal. You know, you don't see that sort of thing any more. And we had it massive, like six foot or something across the wall. So it was very exciting for me. And although you know I don't think too many people saw it, but it was a good thing. And it was another thing that came out of Lindsay's patronage, but he was like that. He was very... everyone who worked with him he was very loyal to, apart from being a brilliant director. I think that's... does that answer the subject there?

TD: [Laughs] Yes definitely, because you got in and out quite a lot.

JH: Too many words.

TD: You got in and out the theatre a lot obviously because you were...

JH: In those days, yes.

TD: ...you know depending what other things were going on. But do you think... what kind of contact did you have with the artistic directors at all? Did you have any contact

with them at all? Was it literally just for directors who were doing the plays you would kind of see?

JH: Oh, I mean most of the plays were directed by Anderson, Gaskill and Anthony Page in those days. I mean later on there was Max Stafford-Clark. I've always have very good relationships with them, and sort of... I mean, Bill came to my wedding ... but you know we didn't socialise as such, although we'd go... you know he was running the theatre, but we have socialised over the years. And Lindsay... you know I'd have periods of going to coffee with him... he used to live very close to me and I'd bump into him in Waitrose, up there in Swiss Cottage. But you know I always had very good relationships outside, but not close, but sort of very good working relationships really.

TD: There was quite a shift in the seventies thought wasn't there to some extent, when Stuart Burge came in and the kind of financial things?

JH: Did he come before Max?

TD: Yes, he was the one before Max.

JH: He came before Max, yes.

TD: Yes.

JH: Yes. Well, again I fitted in with Stuart Burge, and there was Oscar Lewenstein wasn't there?

TD: Yes.

JH: And Robert Kidd and who else? And Nicholas Wright. Indeed they were all there, and I seemed to survive all those OK. And then Max. I formed a very good relationship with Max. And he was like, you know good friends with Bill and I seemed to always work for him. And again I've worked with him ever since. So that's a very long relation... in fact the longest working relation... there's him and... I mean Bill directs in mainstream theatre and directs at RADA. But Max and Richard Eyre, I've done all Richard Eyre's productions, so when he went to the National I did all his. So I've had long working relations with theatres and particular directors, but you know other than that... that's basically been my working life, those people.

TD: What was Bill like as a director? Which kind of plays stick in your mind?

JH: Well, I mean one I didn't do, Saved, was the best production I've ever seen in my life. But you know, it was me very early, me talking my very early influence of... I'd been

you know... having worked there a bit I'd got very much into the Royal Court and its plays, and a type of play. But that was like a... it came along and I hadn't photographed it, I just... I went to watch it and it was like... I remember it stunning me. It was sort of... it was wonderfully paced, working piece. It was like a musical movement... I think he's probably always done that, I'm not sure, like that, maybe it was Edward Bond's... in Edward Bond's stage direction there's a sequence with a chair at the end. It was just beautiful. I mean, the horror and the beauty, very stark. It's all the things that have seeped into my theatre.

I was talking to Bill about a German artist I like called Anselm Kiefer and he said, 'Well,' he said 'you know all that German sort of very rigorous, tough stuff'. And I said, 'Well, I thought it was exactly the same as your Royal Court in those days – very stark, bare, Brechtian, all that'. And that's the theatre that has seeped into me.

And Gaskill's productions were always very, very clean, pure, with wonderful pace And that ethos that I'm sure you've heard from Jocelyn Herbert possibly, about paring everything down to the absolute essentials and throwing away any rubbish out of the scenes. So everything... well you know, the plays you'd have very... sets that are not terribly elaborate. I'm sure of Jocelyn Herbert saying when the curtain goes up and the audience cheer the set then you know you've failed. I think you know that was... all that stuff influenced my photography you know, and still influences my picking of the theatre now, when I go and see the play and things I really like it. I liked That Face that was done from the Royal Court last year, that play that 19 year old...

TD: Polly Stenham, yes.

JH: Yes, Polly Stenham. But there's been a couple at the National I've seen recently that were just abysmal. [Laughs] One of them done by a Royal Court writer.

TD: I was going to ask...

JH: Yes.

TD: ...just to talk that bit more about the process really, I'm sort of trying to imagine how sort of like if you're taking photographs of rehearsal would you just sit on the rehearsal or...?

JH: Yes, I could go... you'd go in and say you'd take Lindsay, or Bill, or any of them, you'd just go in and you know I suspect I've got a sort of personality that does fit behind a camera, loses himself. I've always wanted... and obviously use very quiet cameras, always... you know, once the rehearsal started the actors are so concentrating on their play and getting it all right, then it's... you're able to... I stay fairly static for the first bit, and then I felt... you know, I always felt free to move around because I know they're not seeing me. It's that sort of Cartier-Bresson if you could say any way was his, was to take pictures and people not knowing. And you can't do really that in rehearsals, but you can be sort of as elusive as possible in a way.

TD: And if you're photographing the play itself, what context do you do that in? Is it a run-through or...?

JH: Always you know, that's the only way. I did mainly... all the subsidised theatres they always did run-throughs, and they still do them today. And you shoot the run of the play. Like at the Court I would shoot the play from beginning to end, and hopefully shoot it twice from the beginning to the end, because they'd usually have two dress rehearsals. And it all depends on the directors. Some directors are really sensitive and don't really like the photographer being there, and you almost feel sort of you're an imposition. You never felt that at the Royal Court. Whoever was on the stage would always... Samuel Beckett was there, you know you were part of it so you didn't feel you were making inference into the play, or interference with the play.

TD: You just mentioned Beckett, and obviously you had a book fairly recently didn't you, Images of Beckett.

JH: Yes, Images of Beckett, yes sure.

TD: How did that kind of close relationship come about? Was that just from working at the Court?

JH: How did the relationship come?

TD: Yes.

JH: Totally, I mean if I hadn't been at the Court at that particular time you know I wouldn't have photographed Samuel Beckett, because he notoriously hated his pictures being taken. But it was just him going into the Royal Court, and I think it was Not I that Anthony Page was directing. He was around and I suspect the Royal Court – I don't know the true story – wanted some pictures of him. And because he was a great friend of George Devine and Jocelyn Herbert, they were both great friends of Samuel Beckett, and I suspect it was because of Jocelyn Herbert being there that I was able to be let in, and take pictures of him, because he wouldn't let... you know even newspapers didn't get pictures of him.

And so I mean I was... that original time was Jocelyn Herbert taking me down to the steps from the stage door. I don't even know if I knew that I was to photograph him. And I can't quite remember who I was going to... I was called in to take a portrait basically, and I went downstairs and there he was sitting mid stage on a chair, and he had some magazines on his lap, and he had his dark glasses on. And there was like a Brechtian lighting, bright you know... Andy Phillips who worked for the Court always sort of did white light. Everything was white. There was a black background, white light, and there was Samuel Beckett sitting in the middle of the stage. And I was introduced to him, and Jocelyn said, 'John Haynes, Samuel Beckett', shook hands, and she left me. And there was no-one else in the theatre. You know so I... quite honestly I didn't know what to do. But obviously you know I had enough gumption, I just sort of did pictures of him with his dark glasses. Not really thin... what the fantastic is I've got... I'm seeing the

reflection of his books he was reading in his glasses. And so I did several like that, and then you know, I dared to ask him to take his glasses off. And then I got a main picture of him really. There's one picture... there's quite a... there's a few that are good, but there's one that's main. I mean, when he just took his glasses off I think, and sort of... then that was it.

And you know, he did have an aura around him that you know, you felt you didn't really want to bother him too much. And I felt that too. I mean, later on in my life I would have taken hundreds of pictures of him for God's sake, and probably wouldn't have got such good pictures. But I just took one film which was you know... I just can't... you know, it's unbelievable only taking one film of this major face that's stuck in front of me. But you know, not being a portraitist really, but I knew I had a something there. And so there was that experience that this first experience of photographing him and I got the pictures out of it.

And then later, as he came back as a director, like that ethos I told you about, all the directors looked at their pictures, so he did. And I think it was '76 I did a... after I'd done the pictures of Footfalls I was called to the pub next door to the theatre, and there he was sitting there looking at my contacts. And he just... and that was the only time really... I mean at that first time I hadn't... because I was I suppose nervous and everything about it, I'd taken pictures, and it was all black and white of course in those days, there was no... you know, I didn't even think about colour. Colour was not on my spectrum. And he sort of... he took his glasses off when he was looking at these pictures, and he looked up and he said 'These are wonderful pictures'. I went [laughs] But it was his eyes, these amazing blue, cornflower blue, eyes he had. I sort of reeled away from that. That's what I remember, going away and thinking what incredible eyes he's got.

And then there was another time later in '79 I went in and worked with him again as the director. Again he was ... I felt he always... you went into rehearsal feeling... it was like hushed. It was like going into a chapel or something. And there was people who... I suppose masses of academics wanted to get to him, and everyone was guarding him from that sort of thing. And you know, I shot him mainly from the side the last time... I got one very good picture of him with a cigar in his mouth, or a sort of small cigarette which I think was one of those French things. And I mainly shot him from the... which I didn't... you know one felt... even you know me with my experience of working for The Sunday Times, I didn't feel that I wanted to distract his attention when he was talking to Billie Whitelaw, which the last one was about. So there was those, and it was just like I'd worked at the Royal Court, and somehow been associated with his plays that I got it really.

TD: They're very strikingly, visually, a lot of his plays as well aren't they, which...?

JH: Wonderful, wonderful. I mean, it was almost I couldn't go wrong in a way, but you know the picture of the mouth and that space, the big black space, it was like a valve going like that. And of course I got them slightly closer than that. And you know the pictures of Patrick Magee playing Hamm in Endgame I mean, he put white glasses on him, so they were very strong images. Or just a face suspended in mid air in That Time, I think was... yes.

TD: That's interesting. You mentioned Jocelyn Herbert a couple of times, and I was wondering how much of a presence she was at the Court after being...

JH: I think she was a vast presence. Sort of, she'd be around... I mean she didn't do all the productions there, certainly after... she did I think before I was there with George Devine, she did a great deal of the productions there. But she was always around the Court, and you know I just knew her from... even if you know she wasn't doing a play I'd see her. And Jocelyn would invite me to parties, and she'd welcome you in to her space wherever she was. And again I knew her through very few meetings with her, but I knew her very well. Just recently they've had Cathy Courtney put on an exhibition at the Wimbledon School of Art. It was just Jocelyn's work, and I think all the archive of Jocelyn has gone to the Wimbledon School of Art.

TD: Yes.

JH: And it had these microphones on the wall of sort of David Storey, Lindsay, all talking about Jocelyn's work. But I was... oh God it was so... it was really heartbreaking. I had to... and listening to Jocelyn's voice. They had Jocelyn's voice, then they had David's, and Lindsay's, talking about her... So you'd get a great deal more out of hearing David and other people talking about Jocelyn. Just voices, very powerful. I just loved her sets; I thought they were again that sort of simplicity, that perfectly served the play, with extreme effect.

TD: Just her sets and stuff, is it in a way kind of harder to photograph something which is very simple but is something which more complex?

JH: There's no set rules, I don't think, on that. I mean, on a simple one I would crave mirrors and smoke to make the pictures much more easy, and sort of things I can play with. But the simpler the play, like Home, I think in a way it focuses you much more, and you are looking for moments, just brief moments to actually make it work. And in fact you know I suspect all my work I've looked for that. If there's just two people on stage, three people on stage, I always want that reaction between – probably like in that Home picture – between those people. I mean they can stand in graphic set pieces against wonderful backgrounds, and you can get good pictures there, that's easy. But the actually interaction of the actors on stage, in the say of their part was the main thing I looked for. And in a way if a play seems too easy you can easily fall down, and too many easy moments. Whereas you know I think the concentration of mind on sort of difficult, simple things is the way.

TD: When you photographed rehearsals, did you have a sense of if this play was going... if you thought this play was good or...?

JH: Always.

TD: Yes.

JH: Always. I've almost written off plays immediately as soon as I hear their dialogue. And also you know some... I think the other thing... I mean, I don't want to be too sort of sure about this, but you know you make very bad... I've often seen plays that I haven't liked very much in rehearsal and gone and seen them with an audience, and it's a totally different experience. So I realise my strong opinions are not always valid in a way. But I tend to like more rigorous, dim, dark plays. I like Ibsen.

I mean, what we haven't touched on is West End. I did, through the Court, get involved very much with the Court transfer of... The Changing Room was done by Michael Codron, and I... Michael Codron had been using a photographer, Lewis Morley who went to Australia. And somehow I was chosen by him. So I worked for Michael Codron, all his West End plays, the lot, for 20 years or so. I suspect I did those until he stopped producing so much. So I did West End plays. I also did West End plays that you know I just couldn't bear. I mean sort of bedroom farces and... [not Ayckbourn's Bedroom Farce] but do you know what I mean those Run for your Wife's and really commercial plays. Anyway I got employed to do that, you know I just couldn't stand them. And I found those are the most difficult to do. If you can't stand what's going on on stage it's a difficult number. [Laughs]

TD: Were there any plays which you saw which particularly stand out for you in those early years at the Court?

JH: Oh yes, all the Bond, and all the Storey were stand out sort of examples of... you've got Home, The Changing Room, was it Life Class. But the Bond's of... well I saw Narrow Road to the Deep North which was deeply upsetting, Lear, which is Harry Andrew's here...

TD: That one there, yes.

JH: ...was also deeply... gave me nightmares I remember. And Saved was the outstanding one I think probably for me. And that's of the early years, and you know those are the years I suppose I remember so I'm remembering on Storey and Beckett – certainly Beckett's Endgame which I did early with Patrick Magee who was an extraordinary sort of character actor... and a young Stephen Rea.

TD: What was he like?

JH: Again I didn't know him. His voice was quite extraordinary, and obviously he was a favourite of Sam Beckett's. And sort of there were brief peripheral moments of going into rehearsals with them ... but actually... but if we're talking about productions, so Bill had a Come Together Festival in 1970 which was a brilliant thing to do. Sort of he invited all the underground groups of London together... they ripped out the circle and made a whole stage from the stage right to the back of the stalls. And they just invited all the fringe groups.

[Interruption – mobile phone rings]

JH: And they brought all the fringe groups, so like there's the 'People's Show'. Everyone that was underground and brought them into the main theatre, so that they looked at what was happening there. It was terrific. Of course that was also very good to photograph. And so other plays... all those plays were interesting, early David Hare, Harold Brenton's *Magnificence*, Peter Gill's plays.

TD: What was it about David Storey in particular?

JH: Well David Storey, I think because I'd been hooked into his novels, *This Sporting Life*, it was the first one I read and then *Radcliffe*. But it... his writing just came over to me. And I suspect the North of England also had played a part in it. His plays were very, very different in a way. He did one... his first play was *A Restoration of Arnold Middleton*. And that was slightly more off the wall, like you could say *Radcliffe* was. And there was this character went slightly mad. [Laughs] I think Jack Shepherd played it, I remember. And of course I'd met David Storey and he was extremely sympathetic and I admired his writing. And the presence of Lindsay Anderson on it was like a tremendous bonus, because he... like Bill did all Bond's, Lindsay did all David Storey's. I remember Bill saying they ought to change round one day. But it was just really evocative going to...

Lindsay did one of the rehearsals of *The Changing Room* in Twickenham. It was one of those sports clubs so that everyone dressed up, and I've got pictures of David Storey – because he was a rugby league player – diving and tackling people, so he took them out on the pitch and got them used to the sort of environment of rugby league sort of thing. And it was all those things that added up to the Court being a very interesting place indeed.

TD: I know in your early years you photographed some of Joe Orton's plays, was that performed when he was... was that when he was still alive?

JH: I did, that was before... that was very much a part of that London Traverse Season. I did *Loot*, and I photographed... I think it was Charles Marowitz did *Loot*, he did yes. Charles Marowitz is a very interesting character, American, who set up the Open Space Theatre with Thelma Holt. And he brought Joe Orton's... it had already been done *Loot* as a professional production, with Kenneth Williams playing the main part. What was his name... Truscott, "You're fucking nicked." [Laughs] I always remember that line. And there was... in this one there was Ken Cranham who I know very well, and Simon Ward, and it was Michael Bates who played Truscott of the Yard. A very funny play, you know I've done it several times at drama school, and it's still a very funny play.

And Joe Orton was around, and again like Beckett they asked me to photograph him, and I did. And I got on very well with him. And he used to leave me really obscene messages on my answering machine in those days, and he was a character... and I got that picture of him up against the poster of *Loot* with all the words like murder, rape, written all around it, you know. He was around the Open Space, but it was done at the Jeanetta Cochrane in those days. They took a lease or something on the Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, and *Loot* was put on there. And so very brief like, all the... you meet

people, acquaintances, and you know them, but you don't really know them. But he was a character Joe.

TD: You mentioned Charles Marowitz and Thelma Holt, what was the kind of ethos of the Open Space? It's not something I know very much about.

JH: Very much... I think Charles Marowitz is... I mean I can't really talk about it in theatre terms in way, it was very much Charles Marowitz's vision of putting on plays. Like he'd already written, and I don't know if he'd put them on before, but like Charles Marowitz's Hamlet, Charles Marowitz's Macbeth. Charles Marowitz's Macbeth with Thelma Holt appeared in the nude, which she still laughs about. And so he would put on plays, and he'd like have several people playing Hamlet, not just the one person. So they were quite evocative. And Marowitz had come out of Peter Brook's Theatre of Cruelty. There was a play called U.S. I think, I'm not sure at the RSC, but Marowitz has assisted Peter Brook, so obviously he was coming from a world of improvisation. But he spoke like a Bronx, New Yorker. I mean I don't know if he came from the Bronx but he was a... and again he was a tremendous character, always had a deep cold when he was doing a production, so he would snuffle. [Laughs] And he, you know he put on very odd plays apart from that, but they were always slightly close to the knuckle, but like sort of there was a play by Picasso called Three Little Girls I think it was and they all dressed in mini skirts, or less. There was a lot of legs in Charles Marowitz's day. But they were all serious plays, they weren't rubbish. And one of them... what was it... Fortune and Men's Eyes transferred, as did Loot transfer, that's correct.

TD: Did you photograph Fortune and Men's Eyes?

JH: Yes.

TD: Because that's... is that the one set in the prison isn't it?

JH: What?

TD: Is that the one set in the prison?

JH: Yes it is, yes.

TD: Yes.

JH: I can't remember much of it.

TD: Yes, John Herbert I seem to remember.

JH: Who?

TD: I think I've come across it somewhere.

JH: Have you?

TD: Yes. Just to jump forward a bit, obviously your exhibition Taking the Stage, which linked in with your book. I was wondering how that came about and...

JH: Well it came about because I... I felt 'well, I've got all these theatre pictures, and they're very confined to the Royal Court'. You know pictures elsewhere and West End and National, and elsewhere, but mainly it was basic Royal Court. And I went to Thames & Hudson, I thought you know it's ... it really is... if I can get a book... there's not many pictures of theatre books around of photographs. And there was Donald Cooper used to do a theatre annual every year. So I went to Thames & Hudson and I actually set up a... I did like ten pages of a mock-up book where I stuck all my best pictures in I think, and put them... laid them out rather like a Cartier-Bresson – in fact exactly like a Cartier-Bresson where I'd cribbed it from it. And I took it to Thames & Hudson and talked about it, and they said we'll think about it. And like I think I waited six months or something, and in the end they said yes. And they wanted someone to write the introduction, and Lindsay you know again said yes. And that was wonderful because it's all... and that's how it came about really.

TD: Because that toured around the world didn't it?

JH: Sorry?

TD: Did that tour around the world as an exhibition?

JH: Oh I see, the exhibition. They had the exhibition and that was lucky as well. The National agreed to put the exhibition on. I didn't have any money to put the exhibition on, but Thames & Hudson of course were very keen to sell it. And somehow someone got Canalgi Fine Art in Bond Street to put up the money for it. And we had the opening at the National Theatre, a big space at the National Theatre. It wasn't really hyped, and no-one came to see it I don't think. No critics came to see it, which is probably good.

But then Canalgi's were run by two very young guys, and they came up to me on the first night and said, 'Oh, we'll take your exhibition to New York, we've got a gallery there', which indeed they did have. And so I mean it was a terrible disappointment in lots of ways, but it did go to New York and they did have a very smart gallery on Upper East 80th Street, which you know I'd redone all the photographs to fit into frames. In fact I think that might be a frame from it, yes it is. We had them all like that. But of course it was a time that the... certainly the New York art scene didn't want to see theatre pictures you know in a gallery. I think people came to the first night but not many other people saw it, so it disappeared.

But it came back to England and Thelma Holt took it from... oh yes they took it to Russia, and took it to the Moscow Art Theatre where it proceeded to be stolen. The whole exhibition was in crates at the Moscow Art Theatre. And the British Council put up the money for the... had to have it all reprinted, and what remains of it is still at National Theatre right now. It went to Sussex University after that, and my daughter was at Sussex University then and sort of... it was very evocative that.

TD: This is just a bit more of a technical question I suppose really...

JH: Yes, yes, please.

TD: ... once you've taken a photograph what kind of happens to the image then? I know you have to develop it and such like...

JH: In those days it was very much rush it back to develop it in a dark room, which I had upstairs in those days, and later on I had under the stairs here. Develop it, make contacts, and deliver it back to the theatre for the... in those days for the director to look at. These days it would be delivered to a press office where they would choose their pictures. Because there's a whole scene of, you know there's a lot of theatre photographers who just go around and photograph photo-calls, and they sell their pictures. They make quite a lot of money out of doing it, and they will all have their various papers that they're linked to. But the production photographers goes back and someone chooses pictures. In those days, which was very privileged days, because they'd choose pictures and put them up front, now except for the West End where there's some rather grizzly front of houses, everything is not... there's no front of house at the Royal Court any more, there's not at the... they were taken all off the walls at the National... nothing. So they put sort of rather dreaded pictures. I thought about them this morning. They used to put you know pictures of the play, but now... where is it... that's the sort of pictures they put up. The advertising world has won in the theatre over performance in lots of ways.

TD: It's much more like film photography.

JH: They've copied film, totally. They put pictures of their stars outside. Go to the Old Vic, you see massive great pictures of them, just straight pictures of these people who are in the cast, with the predominance of the stars of course. Celebrity culture has won out totally on that area. The Royal Court was all about a reality of the play or something.

TD: So they just... like they'll just use it if they want it, and the rest you'll just kind of dispose of I suppose?

JH: Yes, well nowadays of course it's very much changed, and it changed in my photography because it took me a long time to stop doing my darkroom work, because everyone else... the press photographers immediately of course went on to digital straight away, because you can get... you just sling them out. You take your little

computer with you and you can sling them straight to a newspaper. And of course this caused havoc. The theatre photographers who worked for certain, or had worked with certain newspapers, now they... all of them I think send in their pictures so the better picture might win the day over them.

For me, it took me a long time to come away from the negative and stop using my... and it was a very sad day when I put like £2,000/£3,000 worth of enlargers and left them out there for the dustman to take away, because digital had completely wiped film out. Now I've got used to it and there was no more use for a darkroom as such. But nowadays it's like coming back, getting my pictures put on to the hard drive, looking at them, and it's so much easier. I mean I still spend a lot of time editing, that's takes my whole day sort of knocking out pictures that don't really work. And then I provide the theatre with a disc of the chosen pictures, and then they can do really what they like with them. And so it's a very, very different world. And from the early days of the care in Royal Court Theatre it's sort of disintegrated, and it's probably disintegrated my sort of adhesion to it, or love of the theatre photography. Anyway I've done too much of it.

TD: I've just got a couple more questions, just really to start to conclude.

JH: Yes, sure.

TD: Why did you stop working at the Royal Court?

JH: Why did I stop?

TD: Yes.

JH: I thought it might happen when say Oscar Lewenstein then Nicholas Wright took over. You know, changes of leadership like at The Sunday Times I told you about can bring about changes, you know, new brooms like to sweep clean. Well Stephen Daldry did sweep clean, I lost it then but I'd had it like 24 years. So there was no great loss, because you know I'd [worked] at the National Theatre and other places, and that's how all those things... they suddenly dwindle out and you don't hear from them any more. You think 'oh, that's that one gone'. But that's freelance isn't it. But you know, I've been very pleased to have those very strong connections but most of all with the Royal Court because it was the most important place to work I think. Even now that's the one...

TD: And finally what do you think of the Royal Court as an institution now and its output?

JH: Good. I mean, I don't go and see their plays now apart from the one I work on, which was *That Face*, which I thought was brilliant very much. But I don't go to anyone's plays any more. I have a tendency to go to concerts, go to art galleries; I go to the opera which was unheard of in my early days. But I will you know... occasionally a play comes along. I've seen, as I mentioned recently, I saw that one, *That Face*, I saw that Harper Reagan which I thought was an abysmal play and also at the National, and

the Harold Brenton which I thought was very unfortunate. They're packing them in. They're packing them... they're really packing them in those plays. And you know it's everything but...

TD: Well the National Theatre has such a turnover now doesn't it?

JH: It has sort of, yes.

TD: Rather than concentrating parts like in the old days they used to have like five or six a year, it's now kind of five or six a month.

JH: Oh yes. But I will go out of my way to see a play if I want to, but mainly it's cinema and you know music. Well mainly art if you want to know the truth. I go to more art galleries than I do go anywhere else.