

MARY HAINEY

MH: You know I can't remember how I got into this company

DC: What position did you have at Shaw beyond that of actor?

MH: Nothing. I sometimes say that I may have become an actress; I don't like saying actor, because my mother was an actress. Her first actual professional job was at the Shaw Festival, I believe, it was 1966 doing the "Applecourt". I came here as a young child to spend the summer with her. When I came to the end of High School, I literally did not know what I wanted to do. My mom was doing Romeo and Juliet out in Calgary and there were a lot of youngish people in that show, who had been to a school called the National Theatre School. I had never heard of it as I had not too, too much interest in it. They said why don't you think about trying out for so I said yeah. I worked with a friend of my Mom's and auditioned and I got in and I loved it. So my training was at the National Theatre School. It was a difficult time because during those three years we had three different heads of the school. The first year we belonged to those who had auditioned us and then we did not belong to anyone. It was a good time really and there was good vocal training. Most of the kids in my class from what I know, did not break out into the theatre. I know one girl became a lawyer, which is the same thing really. Jim Rankin, who was in my class, was here for a while in Chris's day and decided to go to his first love, which is puppetry. I think he got the stage fright, which happens. It was the same thing that happened with my mother. It is sort of a scary thought when you start to think about what you are doing. It is really absolute bloody frightening. I have done that before and you start to get an anxiety thing and you think I am going out there and ooh.

MH: I came to the Shaw company in 1978 I honestly can't remember how that happened. Amelia Hall was in my audition for the National Theatre School I don't know if that had anything to do with it. I honestly can't remember how I got into this company. How the heck did I get here? I have been here ever since except for a break in 1981 when I went to Stratford for five years under the reign of John Hirsch and then came back here. So it has been a good long haul of it. I am tired; this is my 25th season. Actually I was here a year before Chris Newton. There was a general manager Richard Kirchner. So I have seen a few artistic directors come and go.

Outstanding memories. My mom, and I were in a show together in 1979 in a play called The Corn is Green. Betty Leighton, who was playing the lead had to leave two weeks early so they brought my mom in, which is sort of cool. We had to enter stage left and to get to stage left you had to under the stage so we went together we waited and waited. So for the second show I went to her dressing room and she wasn't there, where the hell is she I went under the stage to the assistant stage manager who in those day stood stage left with the script, that doesn't happen anymore so I waited and waited and asked how many pages has she left and he said about five so I went down the stairs and there was my mother running with the wig girl she said don't ask and she grabbed her bike which was her prop and we went on and when we got off I said where the bloody hell were you She said "I have been outside" what do you mean outside where there is grass and sidewalks...she swore a lot, but I won't do that I went through the door and it was the wrong bloody door wasn't it. So the door locked behind her ran around to the front lobby doors banging "let me in". The ushers let her in, she ran down the stairs grabbed the wig girl and said "get me to stage left". I will never forget that. Tony van Bridge went downstairs with red tape and put these

huge arrows on the floor and up the stairs and put an X on the right door. That is my best memory of Shaw. Scary for her. Talk about an actor's nightmare.

What changes have I seen over the years? It's funny to be in a company, funny is not the right word, lucky to have been in a company for so long and now it is strange that as time goes by even though a lot of us may feel this way that in your brain in your heart you are still seventeen. Then you look in the mirror and realize you're in your fifties now. Where did the time go as the seasons go so quickly and you see the new people that come in every year and this is a very general thing to say I am not thinking of any people specifically, but I am saddened by the younguns that come in that don't know who people are here that established people in the Canadian theatre. When I started here I was luck enough to have met some of these people. I was a dresser at Stratford in my summer breaks and I met people like Pat Galloway, and Roland Huggal, Douglas Campbell and Amelia Hall and I knew who they were. I am certainly not putting the older regime in this company on that level. These kids don't even know who those people were. It's the lack of training whether they went to a theatre school or not and to be prepared to work as hard as you do, this is very general, doesn't seem to be there and that saddens me. I think there are a lot of people who are heading towards film but think that they will do theatre and then realize it isn't as easy as I thought and it isn't it is bloody hard. That is something that I have noticed over the years the kids are not trained and "knowledged" (sic) enough in where this all came from. Who started this theatre? Do you know? Who started Stratford? Who is Tyrone Guthrie? You don't know who that is?

It's like theatre history. If they are studying theatre history then If the Canadian Players did happen then none of this would be here I know that I am of an age that I did know these people. Why would you know who Eric House was. It just astounds me, but then they don't know who Paul Newman is. It is just time. If there is theatre history then let's learn where all this came from.

I feel that the training is not very good. The formal training, the voice, how you walk on stage, how you sit in a chair. I think it is from universities, community colleges and theatre schools I see some kids who come here who literally do not know how to walk in a period costume or just learn how to walk. This has been going on for years. I am not saying that I know it all, but I have learned it over the years. I was trained well enough. I was lucky enough to have a very good vocal coach at theatre school. I get the feeling from what I have seen that the training is not up to the standards it should be.

I am not saying that there nothing good is happening; we have the good with the bad. There are young kids that you see that you say "wow". They don't have the opportunity within the show, the production that they are in but there are workshops where you see what they can do. They are lucky enough to be in a company like this and they have only one line. Then you see them in the workshop and you go "Wow". You've got the stuff baby. That's great and has an opportunity to show it. That's a wonderful thing that happens here and in many other places.

I haven't had the opportunity to see much in New York and I must do that, which would be great. It is difficult to see other shows. I just actually did see Joe Zeigler he is a great actor and the director of Harvey. I saw him play Willy Lowman in Death of a Salesman in Toronto and he was absolutely fantastic. Actually when I saw him afterwards, it makes me cry, talent makes me cry, true talents makes me overwhelmed and this is how I was at the end of that show. "It is so great to see people like you and Ben Campbell, buddies of mine that I worked with back in Stratford way back in 84". We were doing decent roles, but now that we are older we have opportunities to play like Ben Campbell in the Entertainer and now Joe in Death of a Salesman and how they have grown as actors they are truly Canadian star quality. It makes me so happy and proud. And Nancy Polk (?) too and the simplicity of just playing.

It is the big thing of playing simple which is the big thing that Neil Monro told us. He was a great director. When Neil was very ill and was doing the preparation for An Inspector Calls a couple of years ago and his house was being sold there was a script left. It was his director's script of all the work he had done for Inspector Calls. I have it and to look in that book and when you see all the work he had done for that production is truly amazing.

Joe, who directed Harvey when he came to us with notes. It's been a long run and you start to push to get a laugh and you are not aware of it. So he emailed us some notes as he had to go back to Toronto. A good general note that he gave was don't work so hard and I took that note and at the end of the next show I wasn't so tired as I realized how hard I had been pushing. Like today is the 143. You start to push. You have to try to keep it fresh.

You talk about Neil. Sadly sadly missed.

The future of this company. I don't know. I think it's going on a good line now. I really like Jackie I think that she works very hard. Everybody is different. Everybody runs them differently. Times change, ideas change the types of plays change it is interesting to keep it fresh and alive we have gone slightly over the mandate, just a little bit. It is interesting to keep it fresh and alive and I think that is what her goal is. I like her a lot I just hope that financially we can keep going I think it is a little better. I think a couple of years ago it was pretty scary I think we are in a good place now. Hopefully it will stay that way.

We are enjoying our work and I always said that when I stop enjoying this When you can afford to retire or just take a year off to reenergize. As a performer if I need to stop and reenergize I can give more because the battery wears out. It's a give and take.

THERE IS A SECTION ABOUT STRATFORD THAT IS PERSONAL AND NOTHING IS TO BE INCLUDED FROM THAT BIT AT MARY'S REQUEST.

Here there is a sense of fun. We are enjoying our work. I have always said that when I no longer enjoy, I need to stop to reenergize as the battery wears out.

Neil was very big on give and take. One of his first shows here was Voyse Inheritance We went into Berkley Square and Neil was starting to show his stuff. Which was to do a scene on that stage which was between Peter Hutt and myself. We did a whole scene with one light on the main stage and the light from a candelabra. When a scene is dark the audience thinks it can't hear, it's weird, but you can. He said I am not changing anything and it worked beautifully. We had to be careful and remember to articulate, you don't have to yell on that stage s long as you articulate, you're gold. That was the big Neil Monroism, which was, bring it back to reality. Don't act, just talk to me. Just talk to me and each other and when we bring it to the stage if I can't hear I will tell you. I don't want anymore than we are doing just now. Working with Neil was hard, really hard work, but it didn't look hard to the audience, that was the trick. When I am in an audience and I see the actors working it takes away the reality for me. The real essence of theatre is to make it look effortless like a dancer that's not the point of it. I learned a lot from Neil, and that was number one. I had a great opportunity to do Joan and that was hard, but hopefully it did not look hard, I worked with him a lot.

Heath Lamberts was amazing I don't think I was here that year ( when he performed Cyrano)I came in and saw it. When we did One for the Pot Chris came in and rehearsed it and we took it to the Alex. We called it one for the pit I used to stand off stage and watch every single show, because the man was brilliant comedian but I couldn't see Heath Lamberts working with Neil.

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