FATHER DOHERTY'S MIRACLE

BRIAN DOHERTY *(Founder)*[1]: "How does it feel to have your dream come true?" is the question nearly everybody asks me. "Marvellous!" I reply. "A bachelor having a baby—miraculous!" I ponder, and, like a battered boxer in the twelfth round, try to recall what happened in the early ones:

The cold February night in 1962 at Jean Marsh's flat, having drinks with kindred spirits, when the idea of the Festival was born;

The meeting in the Town Hall with about 30 amateurs from the area, a few weeks later, when we decided to take the plunge, with me as producer and Maynard Burgess as director;

The following frenzied three months, organizing, fundraising, casting, rehearsing "The Hell Scene" from *Man and Superman*, while still practicing law—fortunately my law form co-operated, even though they thought I'd gone off my rocker;

The opening night, June 29, 1962—a success, with loud applause (never did it sound so sweet!), thanks to the inspired efforts of dear Maynard, supported by his small but splendid amateur cast and crew, backed by our tireless original committee.

CALVIN RAND *(Founding Vice-President)*: Brian was the leader, the founder, and I became his associate working very closely with him from the beginning on every aspect of developing the theatre. But he had done it before, I had not; I had just been a theatregoer. I was a teacher, a professor of English at the University of Buffalo at that time. He had founded two theatres—the Red Barn on Lake Simcoe and one other up in that area, two summer theatres—and he was the kind of guy who started things and he loved theatre. Even though he was a lawyer, he was more of a theatre person than a lawyer.

SANDY WEBSTER *(Actor)*: Brian Doherty was always in theatre. In the thirties he wrote a very successful Broadway comedy called *Father Malachy's Miracle*. He was a trained lawyer but he had this penchant for theatre. *Father Malachy's Miracle*, by the standard of the day, had quite a successful run on Broadway.

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: He was well known long before he came here. I remember when he came to Niagara Falls to be with Bill Martin, his boss in the legal firm. I read it in the paper and said, "Is that *the* Brian Doherty?" and everybody said, "Who's Brian Doherty?" I said, "He did *Father Malachy's Miracle*." But I remember Bill was dead keen on Shakespeare. We had a group that discussed Shakespeare and then we went up to Stratford. I said to Bill, "Brian must be very pleased with the way things are going," and Bill replied, "Yes, but if he spent as much time with his clients as he spent with the Shaw Festival it would be a lot better."

CALVIN RAND: I got involved through a telephone call that came to me at my house in April or May 1962. I was living in Niagara as a landed immigrant with my wife and family. The telephone call said: "Mr Rand, this is Brian Doherty. You don't know me but I'm your neighbour and I'm interested in developing a theatre down here. Would you like to help?" It was that simple. I said: "I don't know you but it sounds like an interesting idea. Let's talk about it."

I guess a month or so before Brian phoned me there had been a meeting in Jean Marsh's apartment in the winter of 1962. There was a group of people including Brian; I think Dorothy Middleditch; Barbara Tranter may have been involved at that point, and there was a visitor there, Peggy Pat Meyer. Her father was married to an American woman who lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and she was over here temporarily, a Broadway actress who had been in Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* in the fifties. That was where the idea of a Shaw Festival was conceived.

The next meeting to continue what had started at that first meeting with Brian and three or four ladies was I believe at Brian's home— Randwood Apartments, the gatehouse right on Charlotte Street; I was living up there in the big house. I became part of the group and that was sort of the beginning of it.

SANDY WEBSTER: Brian and I had worked

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[1] Excerpted from an article by Brian Doherty in the 1973 Shaw Festival souvenir program

together and had some time together in Hamilton where I was working for the first FM station in Canada, CJSH, and he was sharing the same building. We used to go and have a drink together. I wasn't probing him very carefully. To me, he was just a person who had a great interest in the theatre and had gone beyond the point of mere interest and had taken on a few things and pioneered a few things. He had mentioned to me that he had this notion about the Shaw Festival as something that might work because there was a playwright who really was a playwright and who had enough of a repertory that he could give Shakespeare a good run for his money. This turned out to be quite right.

CALVIN RAND: As I've written in a chapter I've done on this, it's unclear who said, "Let's do Shaw." There are two stories. One is that Brian Doherty said, "Let's do a theatre," At any rate, someone said, "Let's do a theatre to get things going in town because we love theatre," and someone else said, "Well, what are we going to do?" and either Brian or, I was told, it was probably this Peggy Pat Meyer said, "Well, why don't we do Shaw?"

ALICE CRAWLEY *(Set Designer)*: With anything that just starts, you don't realize it's going to be history. We certainly—well, we may have had a little inkling it might be history because I remember Brian, at the first meeting I went to, wondering what authors we should try other than Shakespeare and because Shaw had written so many plays he decided he would be the best one. It's proved true too.

I had done some work in St Catharines with the St Catharines Community Theatre that had been going for a while before that. Brian called me to go to a meeting. There were six or eight people there. The only ones I remember were Brian and Jean Marsh. I don't think I had ever met the other people. Whether that is the meeting he describes in *Not Bloody Likely* or another one, I can't really tell. Then there was quite a large meeting at the Court House. I'm pretty sure the ones who had been at the first meeting I went to were asked to go to that one, but whether there were two meetings before that or just the one, I don't know.

TIM DEVLIN *(Actor)*: It was called "Salute to Shaw." I was surprised I still had this program from that season. It tells you the different people who bought advertising space and who was involved in the various things, staff for the Court House Players as they were called, and the various ticket agencies. The *St Catharines Standard* gave us a lot of pre-buildup about it happening: "Canadians Dominate Cast in *Candida* at Niagara." Even there it's called the Shaw Festival, and that's July 21, 1962: "Second Production in Shaw Festival." So it was referred to as the Shaw Festival because everyone knew the idea, "Salute to Shaw," was to develop a festival.

This is, "Salute to Bernard Shaw Planned for Theatre in Niagara-on-the-Lake," from May 26. The article says: "At meetings this week, Miss Jean Malloy, Miss Joan Fordham and Mrs Alice Crawley were present to help in the planning. Frank Gorbet of Welland, who directed the local group's festival-winning play *Desire Under the Elms*, will direct the first play," which I think was *Don Juan in Hell*, which was done as a reading. "Well-known directors of each group will be responsible for the production. Among them are Maynard Burgess of Niagara Falls, who has considerable New York experience, and Mrs Barbara Spigel of Niagara Falls, Ontario, who was with the Old Vic in England." Now, that never happened. She was supposed to direct something. They haven't named anything here.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH *(Secretary)*: Barbara Spigel was the one who helped us at the beginning, a great help. She had been involved with the Niagara Falls, NY, Little Theatre and that was why Barbara and her husband moved over here, because of her interest in the Shaw Festival.

TIM DEVLIN: I don't think they had even set the season when this "Salute to Shaw" was planned. I really think it was money, it was money and people. I think that at this stage in the game they had invited in people like Maynard Burgess, Barbara Spigel and a few who had had some professional experience and they began that season without the involvement of all these other theatre companies and were so strapped for help and input, scenery and everything that you need that it simply wasn't happening. We were all suddenly dragged in because that announcement was in the paper in July and it was only just barely before we did it.

There were other things planned. The May 26 article says: "It was proposed that the plays will be

given at alternate weekends. During the weekend when the Town Hall theatre is not being used, there will be a Shaw film shown at the Brock Theatre on Queen Street. Niagara town council has given approval for the use of the Town Hall theatre. The production will be nonprofit with any proceeds resulting going to the town of Niagara for improvements in the hall, such as additional seating, new washrooms and other projects." So the money was put to some use.

CALVIN RAND: The Stratford Festival had been going for about 10 years and had inspired all of us to focus on a playwright. None of us was interested in doing summer theatre; there was a lot of summer theatre around, warmed-over Broadway shows and so on. We wanted a focus, we wanted a great playwright, we wanted a sort of intellectual. So Bernard Shaw was decided upon. There was a Shaw festival in Malvern, England, which Shaw had written some of his later plays for in the 1930s and 1940s—I guess it died with the war—so there was a precedent for a Shaw theatre.

TIM DEVLIN: As I recall—and please remember I could be wrong in any of this, it was a long time ago—they were having a great deal of difficulty in getting support in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I can remember much, much reference to the matron ladies not thinking that Shaw was going to be the right thing to be doing down there and we were not getting the kind of help we thought we should get, so there was literally no money and everything had to be done on a volunteer basis. I'll be really honest with you, I was not particularly interested in Shaw. I guess I was like the matron ladies; I thought, "I don't quite understand why they want to make a festival around this one author." I was getting very into musical comedy and if I'd had to choose I would have made it a musical comedy festival.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH *(Secretary)*: My husband liked musicals and I liked straight drama or comedy. He would always be bored. He would say, "It was so long-winded. Why don't they cut out half of it?" I would say, "If they cut out half of it, it wouldn't be a Shaw play." But afterwards he and hundreds of others got completely won over and they would complain if we didn't give three Shaw plays, or we would do a play by another author—We did Somerset Maugham one year—and then people would leave the theatre and say, "But it's not as good as Shaw." There's so much wonderful meat and wit and humour in Shaw that you get spoiled and you realize others just haven't got as much depth to them.

CALVIN RAND: Brian rounded up the actors. I helped round up a lot of the money through patrons and friends. He had been living in Niagara Falls before he moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake and he had pretty good contacts with the little theatres, the amateur theatres in the area. He was able to use those contacts to round up the local people.

TIM DEVLIN: They quite cleverly went to all the local theatre companies, of which there is an abundance and always has been in the Niagara Peninsula. There was the Grantham Operatic Society, which I think is now called the Garden City Operatic Society, the St Catharines Community Theatre, the Welland Theatre Society and one in Niagara Falls.

BARBARA RANSOM *(Actress)*: Brian lived over at the Stables, behind Calvin Rand's, and that may have had something to do with how I became acquainted with him. We had friends, Saul and Joan Herzog, who live at the Stables, and Joan appeared in a crowd scene the following year, I think. Peter and Rita Brown also lived in the Stables. Brian was in one of the gatehouses. There were two gatehouses and then the Stables around, so it was quite a nice little enclave. I think mostly he just got in touch with somebody at the St Catharines Community Theatre and that's how he got us all. I really don't know exactly how he found us, but most of us were involved there.

CALVIN RAND: Brian knew Maynard Burgess, who was an executive at the Union Carbide company and was a director of the Niagara Falls, NY, Little Theatre, and he became the first artistic director. So it was amateur theatre, no one got paid; it was just little theatre.

ALICE CRAWLEY: There were two plays that first year. One was *Don Juan in Hell* and another girl designed that set. As I remember, it was just three stools and I can't remember whether there were lecterns in front of them, or something like that. They just read or seemed to be reading the parts. It was lit with red lights. The second play was *Candida* and I did the set for that.

BARBARA RANSOM: I can't remember being asked to go down and why we went, but I know the evening I was to have an interview with Brian Doherty there was a party at Dr Mitchell's at Niagara-on-the-Lake and my husband and I were going, but I had first to go and meet Brian. I think it was just a meeting; I think it was a done deal. We got there and I was given the part [of Candida]; so I think he was pretty desperate, he wanted some people quickly. Later I went off to the party and was talking to someone who had acted and had done that part and she said, "Oh, I think you'll be all right. You're a bit older"—I think I was 28 or 30 at the time and I had a little boy. She said, "You're mature enough, you can do that." I look back now and think how immature I was.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: I had just arrived a year and a half before Brian had his preliminary meeting at Jean Marsh's. Then he put a notice in the *Niagara Advance* to say there was a group trying to form for some summer theatre. I thought it would be amateur—it *was* amateur, the idea was to have a little theatre. Brian had been adjudicator at the little theatre competitions for the Dominion Drama Festival awards. He had gone around and seen all these little theatre groups and that they were quite thriving. He felt maybe Niagara-on-the-Lake could have something like that which they could do in the summer which would keep the interest of the people, because it was quite a dead little town. If you weren't involved in one of the churches' activities there wasn't anything else. There was no horticultural society; there was the historical society, I believe. Anyway, he really started it for that reason.

We had lived in England and I was bored to tears here culturally. I read about it in the *Advance* and did it because I thought it would be fun, so I volunteered. Then Brian wanted somebody who could type and I could type. At that time I was working as a stringer for the *Standard*, so I thought I would help with the publicity. So I was publicity and typing, and being able to take shorthand and type, I got the job as secretary.

CALVIN RAND: The idea was to start very slowly on weekends, doing something simple like *Don Juan in Hell*. It was decided to do just four weekends. On opening night in June 1962 it was about 95 in the shade, so unbearably hot that a lot of people just couldn't stand it. They raced out because there was no air conditioning and we couldn't open the windows.

ALICE CRAWLEY: According to Brian's story, it was terribly hot for the *Don Juan in Hell*; I guess it was appropriate.

CALVIN RAND: There are a lot of summer theatres where there is no air conditioning but there are doors and windows that can open. This one is so enclosed with buildings on both sides, with noise from outside, that opening the windows didn't help. We tried. There were dogs barking. Some friends who lived right next door, Harry Sherlock, on the opposite side from the liquor store, kept a lot of hunting dogs out in the back and they barked all night long. Even with the windows closed you could hear those barking. To sit in there listening to Shaw for three hours was awful; I'll never forget it. Dorothy Middleditch and I went around town borrowing fans from the liquor store and other places to put up in the auditorium but it didn't help very much, it just circulated hot air. It was horrible, and we all wondered why the Shaw Festival lasted after that first night. But people came back and it did cool off.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: Paxton Whitehead always said that it was enough for the Shaw Festival to stage an opening for us to have a thunderstorm. That was a very hot summer and the Court House was like a Turkish bath, because of course they had darkened the windows with cardboard and pieces of brown paper. There weren't even any curtains. You couldn't open a door or window, and then you got 200 or so people in there and before the thing was over you were sticking to the chairs. So Brian sent out a call that he wanted electric fans. Calvin and I went up and down the main street. McClellands at that time had one, a standing one. I got it and put it at the back, going from one side to the other trying to cool it off. But that balcony was really purgatory. And imagine sitting through three hours of George Bernard Shaw, because that was the funny part of it. I guess a few people did get up and walk out, but fortunately they chose very light plays; the heaviest one was *Heartbreak House* in 1964, that was the longest one.

CALVIN RAND: I think the Broadway production of the *Don Juan in Hell* sequence from *Man and Superman* had been done around that time with Tyrone Power, Sir Cedric Hardwicke—that's two of the four; I forget who the other two were. I think Ricardo Montalban was one and the woman was—it wasn't Irene Worth, it was someone like that. But that reading of *Don Juan in Hell* was sort of current at the time, so it was decided to do that. There were no sets, costumes—I think in the New York production they were just in black tie, evening dress, so maybe this one was too, I don't remember.

TIM DEVLIN: I initially went down only to assist in the setting up and to lend my support. I remember a meeting and we were all there and kind of looking at each other wondering, "What on earth is it they're trying to do and what do they want from us?" I think already *Don Juan in Hell* had either played or was about to play when they brought us in. *Don Juan in Hell* was a so-so success. I think people were a little startled seeing it as a reading, thinking they were going to the theatre, and to do a reading was a little advanced for the type of audience that was available.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: I mainly did the tickets at the door, with Marie Usher and Jim Usher. Buy-ahead tickets could be bought at the Ushers' real estate office, and at the door we had a little folding table and we'd sit there and sell tickets. One night I went in early to sell the tickets, or take the tickets, because we didn't have ticket-tearers—nothing as sophisticated! We had ushers. Brian enlisted all the teenage girls he could. They had to come in white dresses and they looked very pretty. Anyway, this night I went in there and there was an awful commotion coming out of the jail, right next to my table. This voice was yelling and hoarse, and screaming, "Let me out, let me out." One of the policemen came in, because the police office at that time was in the front of the Court House, and I said, "What in the world is going on?" He said, "Oh, we found a drunk in the park"—they were always rolling around in the long grass there—"and we locked him up." The man was having DTs. He was awful, he was screaming, and I said, "You can't have that man down there, we're doing *Don Juan in Hell* upstairs." I thought for a moment it would be better to leave the drunk there; it would add to the sound effects. But Chief Warner came along and they took him in the police car to St.Catharines and put him in the jail there where he could make all the noise he wanted.

CALVIN RAND: The *Don Juan in Hell* part, in looking back, was not so hot. It's a tough thing to do, you need some great performers, and of course they read it, they didn't have to memorize it like Ian Richardson many years later who had to memorize the entire thing in 1977-78; it was one of the great productions of the Shaw Festival. He played John Tanner in the whole thing including *Don Juan in Hell*. It took him about a month to get into it. But this was just a reading. Then *Candida*, which is also a simple one with a small cast, was done. We had a very good leading lady from St Catharines, Barbara Ransom, who was very good. Barbara was terrific. I remember that *Candida*. We've done good *Candidas* several times since then but that stands out. She was really fine.

BARBARA RANSOM: I had done quite a bit of acting before Shaw. I had done *All the Way Home*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and was nominated for best supporting actress in *Bus Stop*, so I had done those things with the Press Theatre. There was a printer's called Peninsula Press and we had the facility upstairs over it and that is why it became the Press Theatre. It later became a legitimate theatre with a manager, and a director from Toronto came over.

TIM DEVLIN: I was not there to be physically on the stage at all. I was happy to go down and work with Alice Crawley. She and I began with the St Catharines Community Theatre. We both worked on sets. Then suddenly my interest was in being on the stage and I kind of moved on to the stage and dropped out of the set side of things. The director of *Candida*, Maynard Burgess, was asking me if I would sit in and read with the people who were auditioning for Proserpine and other things, so I began reading the character Marchbanks and I had absolutely no interest in the character. They kept auditioning people for Marchbanks and Maynard couldn't find anybody he wanted. He kept asking me to play it but I was about to move to Toronto for a walk-on or a bit part in a Walt Disney film that was being done there.

BARBARA RANSOM: The young man who played the curate *was* a very young man, he was still in high

school. Reading over the play and thinking about the ages of us all, he was a very appropriate age, but he was really very young, maybe 17 or 18. And Tim Devlin seemed very young. But I can see that he was a good person for it. The woman who played the secretary was marvellous, Jean Malloy. I don't know what experience she had but she was just a perfect person for it. The man who played the minister and I were somewhere around the same age, rather young I think; Jean Malloy was older and more experienced. Probably we were all sort of typecast in a way and we did our best. We stood up and spoke out and tried to be heard. I don't think any of us had any formal training, but experience as far as local theatre was concerned. I have a feeling the man who played the father came in on very short notice but I may be mistaken. This was Ted Fordham. Someone else was to have done that role and he was brought in at the very end because the other fellow couldn't do it.

TIM DEVLIN: Johnson Butler was supposed to play it. He was a Thorold lawyer.

BARBARA RANSOM: I have a feeling there were things written around on places so Ted Fordham could do the part. Later that role was played by Stanley Holloway, so you can see how unbalanced it was.

TIM DEVLIN: I don't quite remember why I finally decided to play it. I was working full-time in advertising display in St Catharines so I sort of extended my departure from that job and my move to Toronto and stayed working for the summer to do this. I literally agreed at the absolute last minute to take the part because he was going to cancel the production. He said, "Well, there's nobody to play it." I remember Brian Doherty said to me, "You've got to do this or Maynard's going to play it himself with one of his wigs that he wears." Maynard Burgess wore a lot of toupees, all of which sat on the top of his head and were a totally different colour from the hair around the side. He had brush cuts and long hair and everything like that. He was late 50s or middle 50s; I don't know how old he was. A nice fellow, but I remember they were terrified he was going to end up playing Marchbanks himself if I wouldn't do it, so I ultimately said, "Okay, I'll play it."

I was right at the end and people had already begun to learn their parts. I seem to recall that I memorized the entire third act in a 15-minute coffee break at work because I hate rehearsing with a book in my hand. I can remember sitting in the drug store next door trying to memorize dialogue on my coffee breaks so that I could drive frantically right after work down to Niagara-on-the-Lake and rehearse. I think just about everybody involved was in the same boat. We were not being paid; I don't think we even got expenses, gas money or anything. Everything was voluntary. St Catharines Community Theatre and Grantham Operatic Society loaned flats and paint and paint brushes; everything was loaned.

BARBARA RANSOM: There were no dressing rooms. It wasn't raked seating, it was just all flat on the floor. I think because we were all amateurs and had done it in places like basements it was not bad for us. We were quite happy; all we needed was a stage and curtains, and we had them, and a good set, and we had it.

TIM DEVLIN: To me, it was a stage. I've worked on worse. It was a stage, it was a room, it had seats and you could draw the curtains, turn the lights out and then aim lights at the stage. Believe it or not, when we were in production with that set of Alice's and the lighting and the ambiance of that theatre, always filled—no part theatres; it was always full, I can remember that, and I can remember the wonderful warm response we had from everyone, and the flowers and everything—in my mind's eye, scanning in the darkness on that stage, it was no different than if I were on the Festival stage. The thrill and the experience and the energy were as alive in that theatre. I think if you're an actor or a performer you adjust to where you're working. While I've worked in 3,000-seat theatres since, the thrill is the same.

BARBARA RANSOM: I don't think there were very many rehearsals. I think we did it very quickly. There certainly weren't the six weeks that one was accustomed to. I don't think Brian had a lot to do with it as we were rehearsing. I remember Calvin Rand being there quite often to watch our rehearsals, and going down and sitting with him on the chairs that were put out, and he said, "I'm very impressed, very impressed." It buoyed us on anyway. It was an adventure.

TIM DEVLIN: It had a flat floor with movable chairs that we had to put out every night. I would be setting up chairs and sweeping the stage in costume before they would open the doors. Sometimes they would open the doors and I would have to run like hell and get behind the curtain as people were coming in. We all were doing everything. I felt like I was trapped in an old Judy Garland/Mickey Rooney movie. It was a fun season and I remember it better than I remember many other productions, including things I did in England in professional theatre.

BARBARA RANSOM: My son Jeremy went with me to many of the rehearsals because of the time of day or because my husband was working. He got his introduction to backstage and he remembers it well, yet he turned two, I think, the day before the play opened. He would follow me up on stage so one of the girl friends of one of the actors would take him outside. That's what he remembers most, that he was taken off, and he remembers the clock tower in the middle of the road and just hates the sight of it now because it always meant he had gone out. He is with the National Ballet so maybe that was his early introduction to theatre.

TIM DEVLIN: Alice of course did us proud with that set. I don't know if any pictures survived.

ALICE CRAWLEY: Unfortunately nobody thought to take pictures in that first year so there were no pictures of the set I did.

BARBARA RANSOM: There were no pictures from 1962 in *Not Bloody Likely*. I know Jeremy as a young man went down to Niagara-on-the-Lake and all the pictures were up and he was very disappointed that my picture wasn't there or that other people in that first season weren't there.

TIM DEVLIN: In the late sixties in Toronto I was saying to someone that I played the first season at the Shaw Festival and someone argued in a very hostile way with me that they worked the first season doing something and that I was never there. I started to explain and I thought, "What is the matter with this person." They were talking about 1963. I said, "I'm not talking about '63, I'm talking about '62," and they said, "There was no '62." That was my first encounter with the sort of fact that when they came into money and had financial backing and were able to actually employ actors, they decided that it would be good thing to forget that all these amateurs ever had anything to do with it. I thought that was kind of sad because the only difference between an amateur and a professional is that one is paid and the other is not. I turned professional immediately after that and I was the same person still giving the same performance, good or bad. The fact that somebody gave me a pay cheque didn't make me any better.

INTERVIEWER: 1962 is listed in this souvenir program that was produced in 1973.

TIM DEVLIN: I must try to get one of these programs. How nice to see my name mentioned. I remember when I came back from living and working in England and I looked up Alice, she told me she had been invited to a function or something at the Shaw Festival and was acknowledged as having done that set. I was thrilled for her. She's a wonderful lady.

BARBARA RANSOM: I know the set was a very nice Victorian look. Alice Crawley had found a wonderful shawl that she had draped over the fireplace. There should be pictures of it but I've never seen any.

ALICE CRAWLEY: The set for *Candida* was a Victorian room. We didn't have any flats at all so I borrowed flats from the community theatre in St Catharines. All I remember of it really is that I decided to have flocked wallpaper. I remember doing that with a girl who I think was visiting her aunt—Christa Grauer was her name, a very nice girl. She came and laboured with me over these. I cut a stencil and I think we put glue through the stencil and then powdered flocking stuff. It looked quite authentic actually. There was just one set. And that was that. We borrowed some nice furniture from people in Niagara-on-the-Lake who would lend them; I hope they got back to them. I found out in amateur theatre that everybody is all ready to rally round and collect the stuff but they forget about getting it back to the people and that has always worried me. I don't even know if the St Catharines theatre group got those flats back and, if they did, they had all that flocking to contend with. You don't think of those things at the time, though.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: Alice wanted the lace curtains draped, and I remember at two o'clock in the morning we were draping curtains on the set,

which was not even up yet. It eventually got up before the next day, before the opening, but I came staggering home and thought, "That set will never be up in time."

TIM DEVLIN: I can see the set. I can see my blocking and I know where the furniture was. Stage right there was a fireplace, because I had to take the poker and put it between Candida and me as if it was a sword. Upstage left was the exit from the drawing room. There was a desk upstage right. There was a two- or three-seater settee downstage left. I remember because I instigated a piece of business. The stage was very small and Proserpine and I had this very bizarre scene; I can't remember what it was about but I was acting very theatrical and poetic. In rehearsal I was trying to get at her, and every time I went around this settee—she was centre stage and I was extreme stage left—every time I went to go to her in this menacing way, I had to go round the settee, which weakened my move. It bothered me, so finally I was so annoyed with the settee that when we rehearsed it one day I got right on the settee and walked across it right at her, which had the menace I wanted. The director loved it and it stayed in.

BARBARA RANSOM: I remember on the last night of it I now had laryngitis, probably because I don't speak properly, from my diaphragm, so my throat went, but that had a good effect on it because it made it a deeper, more mature voice. A friend came up and said, "I liked tonight. This was a better night." Luckily we don't know how poorly we do things or how well we do things because we probably wouldn't do them. You just go up and do your best and if there is a director who has faith in you, that's all you need. You do what you can for him and if he says, "Yes, you're doing it beautifully," then off you go. For most people in this kind of thing, criticism is difficult but because you do your best, you do what you can, so it is terribly upsetting to be panned.

TIM DEVLIN: If I'm not mistaken, I believe that somehow *Variety* reviewed *Candida*. The Toronto papers also reviewed *Candida*, as did the *St Catharines Standard*. The reviews were basically very, very good and the success of that production meant that I think we added extra shows more than we had intended to do. I know we had matinees and there was one day when there were two shows in the day. I can recall that primarily because of a very funny incident that happened between the shows.

My voice teacher, Madam Julia Dennis—who is long deceased; she was in her 80s then—came to see the afternoon show. The reason I know it was an afternoon show is because she asked if we could have coffee between shows. I said, "Oh sure. We can slip next door." There was a little sort of greasy spoon next door. That afternoon somebody presented Barbara Ransom with a big bouquet of roses and she very kindly gave the man who played her husband, Morell, and me each a long-stemmed rose. I left the stage carrying this long-stemmed rose.

Remember, this was 1962 and I had grown my hair very long and very, very wavy. It was not quite Beatle time yet so long hair on guys was simply not a usual thing, but I wanted Marchbanks to look very poetic. I was wearing a velvet jacket and a very flouncy scarf at my neck, and I had all these curls pouring back off my head and down my back, and full stage makeup. In 1962, Niagara-on-the-Lake was a very different place from what it is now. It was not the beautiful tourist attraction; everything was very seedy and run down. There were these grand old estates that were decaying and collapsing. It was like *Gone With the Wind* after the Civil War. There was a large military presence at Fort George, an awful lot of soldiers based there.

I took Madam Julia Dennis downstairs, still carrying this long-stemmed rose, from the Court House Theatre and into the greasy spoon. I, of course, wasn't thinking, chattering away, and we were enthused about the production and the response. It had been a particularly good show and she was very excited. We walked in and I had barely shut the door when I suddenly looked around and the place was full of soldiers. It went deathly silent and they all sort of looked like, "What's this coming in the door?" I thought, "Oh God, how do I do this now? I can't turn around and run, dragging an 80-year-old lady with me. I just have to tough it through."

The way it was laid out, there was a centre section of booths and booths all around the outside, so you could walk full circle. We got a table in the centre section. We were sitting talking about the production and I was very, very aware of one

particular soldier who kept walking round and round, going by, stopping, leaning over, looking me in the face, fascinated by all this makeup and not quite understanding—I'm sure they had no idea there was a theatre next door—looking at me very bizarrely. I would just nod and carry on, almost still playing the character. I felt almost more like Oscar Wilde than Shaw.

As we were leaving I paid for our teas and opened the door. I suddenly turned around on my heels to face this staring, gawking café, put the rose in my teeth, and did a ballet bow, a full-curtsy bow to this entire restaurant, and took the rose out of my mouth, waved it in the air and exited out of the place, leaving all these people sitting there with their jaws hanging. In an instance like that, you can only play it through. It was fun, and it's strange that things like that are the things you remember. I was dining out on that little story for a while.

BARBARA RANSOM: As I said earlier, the young man who played the curate, Terry Cahill, was very young and, as young people are, very cavalier about things. There was something tragic that had happened in Niagara-on-the-Lake at that time and I remember his, "Oh well." Life didn't matter that much. Later he was riding his bike over on St Paul Street and he was dragged under a bus or something. I know his family grieved terribly, but I always remembered his cavalier feeling that he had. I just think: That's a 17- or 18-year-old kid, how he would think, "Nothing can happen to me."

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: The costumes for the first year or two were almost all borrowed and improvised. The Welland Little Theatre lent us all theirs for *Candida* and we adapted them. I know there was a bit of a hoo-ha when we returned them because they said something was missing. Louis Berai adapted them, as we didn't have the money to buy anything or any material, so Brian called up all these little theatre people.

ALICE CRAWLEY: Louis Berai was a local couturier. His real name was Louis Aiken but he always called himself—it was a kind of trade name—Louis Berai. He decided he wanted to stay in St Catharines rather than go to Toronto or Montreal and he did very well.

TIM DEVLIN: He was of the famous Aiken family in St Catharines. I think they were in construction or something. He at that time was a very well known Canadian fashion designer. I worked in advertising and display and I used to do Louis' windows for him. He had a shop on Church Street right next to the post office at that time. I had forgotten he did the costumes. That's probably why I ended up in velvet with a big fluffy bow.

BARBARA RANSOM: I have the feeling Louis Berai found costumes and adapted them, put wonderful cord on them and made *Candida* look quite beautiful—and lovely hats.

ALICE CRAWLEY: I only remember one dress that the leading actress wore. It was borrowed from somebody and it seems to me somebody somehow bought that dress from the company, I don't know how. It turned up somewhere else and somebody wore it as a wedding dress. This is a vague memory in the back of my mind about this dress turning up, and I'm sure it was the same dress that she wore to her wedding. It was a lovely dress, a lace dress. I can't really remember, whether he just had managed to find authentic dresses—I know this one was, this lace one I'm talking about, but what the other people wore I'm not sure.

BARBARA RANSOM: Would it be the one I would have worn? Was it all lace—lace, lace, lace? It was a Victorian wedding dress. I do believe I have that piece. It is very, very light and I wouldn't have known where I got it from but I bet that's it. I don't know how I would have ended up with it but I do have that dress. I don't remember wearing it either, but I do have a dress like that.

TIM DEVLIN: Bonnie Clark, a lady I absolutely adore, was the prompt. I remember her because I wanted to throttle her. She was so anxious to do a good job and had never prompted before. This is a girl who belongs on the stage—a wonderful singer, a wonderful performer from the Grantham Operatic Society. She and I had played opposite each other in *Pajama Game* just prior to this. She came down to prompt; everybody was helping in any way they could. But if you had a dramatic pause, she was shouting the line louder than you were projecting. It was like an echo. I was almost terrified to pause. I felt like turning round and saying, "Will you stop prompting me. I know what the line is, give me a

chance to take a breath." In rehearsal I felt like I was doing rap because I daren't leave a gap or she would be shouting the lines.

CALVIN RAND: I took a leading role with Brian. I liked the idea, I knew most of the people except him, and he was a charismatic character by all means. He just carried you along on his enthusiasm. He was amazing, one of those founder types, the classic founder type. I can't say enough for his contagious enthusiasm for something like this. I felt this was great fun to get involved in and very inspiring.

BARBARA RANSOM: I had heard of Brian Doherty before and knew he was a lawyer in Niagara-on-the-Lake, that he was a bachelor and had written a play while still in university, so I went with this wonderful idea of this very handsome young lawyer I was going to meet, and while Brian was charming and wonderful, he wasn't this man that I had in my mind. My husband was a pharmacist and Brian would have liked us to have bought a house down there and bought the little pharmacy that is there and later was taken over by the pharmaceutical association. Maybe he wanted to hand-pick people to come to Niagara to live, people who would be interested in the same things and could help the town.

THOMAS BURROWS *(General Manager, 1971-74)*: On my first trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Calvin Rand could not have been nicer. We went by to see Brian, who had a lovely little cottage right down in the village and the most gorgeous roses I have ever seen. He raised beautiful roses in the back. What a marvellous Irishman; a character. But there wouldn't be a without Brian Doherty. When I got to know him, I loved him.

He's the only adult I ever yelled at or cursed on the phone. He would call me at midnight, 12:30 or whenever he rolled back from the Oban Inn and tell me that I was destroying his Festival. "You don't understand," he would say, and I would never know what it was he was talking about. I would finally say, when these were repeated, "Brian, I'm hanging up now. I'm not going to talk to you, Brian. See you tomorrow." He would come down the next morning. I don't know how he did it. He had an amazing constitution. He was diabetic as well. In spring and summer, he'd come slapping down in a pair of sandals and shorts and a sort of Harry Truman Hawaiian shirt and a little straw hat from the Islands or somewhere, and razor nicks on his face, bright and shiny. He would come into our little storefront office and look at me and the two staff we had at that time time and say, "Tom, you're the salvation of the Shaw Festival." I'd say, "Brian, do you remember talking to me last night?" "Oh," he would say. Brian Doherty was an amazing guy.

RAYMOND WICKENS *(Business Manager, 1964-??)*: Brian, bless his heart, just bubbled along. There are always stories about Brian, that he had too much to drink or that he, you know— I never had a problem with Brian. I took him to I don't know how many press dos.

BETTY TAYLOR *(Seamstress)*: Ray Wickens and I once went to Toronto to a press conference at the university. Brian took us for dinner and we couldn't have had better treatment. I felt like royalty with Brian. Everybody in the club looked up to him and treated him like he was someone very important and very knowledgeable.

RAYMOND WICKENS: Sure he may have had a few to drink at home or when he went out, but that was *his* life. He certainly didn't harm the Festival or do anything. I think towards the end people sort of tried to push him aside and I think that was wrong. It wasn't until he died that suddenly he came back into prominence again. It's sad that it has to be that way, because it if hadn't been for Brian we would have had no festival whatsoever. He got all those local people behind him, all those ladies who would work like crazy. There they were, Betty Taylor and her gang in The Yardstick making costumes.

BETTY TAYLOR: I miss old Brian, I don't care what they say about him. It makes me mad to hear them talk about him.

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: Me too, Betty. They forget how hard it started. I hear people run him down.

BETTY TAYLOR: He had a lot of very fine points. I knew Brian quite well. He was a fine man, a very bright man. I think he was his own worst enemy in a way because of his lifestyle. He came from a very well known family. He was very pleasant always to me. He and Jean Marsh were really a working team. She was very involved. I would think it was Calvin, Brian and Jean who were the three, and Dorothy

Middleditch; they are the ones who stand out most in my mind as being the most involved.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: Jean Marsh worked very hard for Brian. She was really his personal assistant. I only took minutes at the meetings, but Jean went around with a pencil and pad and took down all the notes from him about what he said had to be done and she would follow up. Until we got the office established the chain of command went down that way.

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: You have to be smart enough to overlook what is unimportant to us and look at the things that were really important—the fact that he started the theatre. If it hadn't been for him selling his pictures or whatever he did, there wouldn't have been a Shaw Festival. Who cares about all the other things?

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: I didn't see it but they put on something here that some people said sort of made an ass of Brian.

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: It was at the Court House and it was the opening and he came in and they had him drunk. I didn't think that was in good taste. It was at the opening Court House dinner and it was very upsetting. Most people I know, when they talk about his drinking, do so in an affectionate, funny way. They were very fond of him.

SANDY WEBSTER: When I found Brian and I were office mates in this building that the *Spectator* owned in Hamilton, we got to know each other better, although we were more concerned at that time about the problems of FM radio and television respectively. Neither of us knew very much about television. The *Spectator*, which owned CJSH, was interested in developing a television franchise and Brian was doing something with that. Somehow I associate his name with a touring company that a fellow named John Pratt was involved with. The McGill students did a production called *My Fur Lady*, a revue type of thing which sort of picked up on *My Fair Lady*, and they toured that and I think Brian must have assisted them in that. Anyway, I associated him with a touring company out of Montreal. It did things like *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and sent them up in such a way that they would not offend totally the sensibilities of those who thought they were really going to see *Ten Nights in a Barroom*. He showed a certain genius for meeting the needs of all levels of the public.

MARGHERITA HOWE *(Volunteer)*: I don't know how much you would ever want to say in a retrospective about the feelings early on, which were not always positive, and certainly there was a lot of, what should I say, there were a lot of niggling feelings between particularly Brian, for instance, and the rest of us who were doing, you know, the joe jobs, and I think that caused a few problems. I think those of us who were working our hearts out early on were doing it not so much for Shaw, the theatre, as for the town and I think maybe we found some merit that there would be something good for the town come out of this. It wasn't that we were Shaw or even theatre enthusiasts but it was the town I think that made us do it. And we really did work terribly hard.

UNIDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER: Margherita Howe said she didn't have a dining-room table all one summer. Dorothy Middleditch lent them a quilt and they painted it yellow. Dorothy was so wrapped up in the thing she didn't say a word.

MARGHERITA HOWE: I think the one person who really at no time had any negative feelings was Dorothy Middleditch and Dorothy is such an enthusiast of the theatre, was much more positive. Whatever Shaw wanted—

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: It was all hurry-scurry. The main thing was keeping Brian at bay. Brian would call up at 11 at night. He'd say, "I want this; I want that; I want the other. We're going to do that—the other," and everybody had to run around and pick up things. My poor husband was very forbearing because we would be in bed and the phone would ring. It would be Brian wanting something done immediately the next day. My husband would say, "Why doesn't he pay you? He has you on the end of a string." I would say, "I hate to say no to Brian."

JOAN DRAPER *(Volunteer)*: Local women would lend one of their party dresses to the actress involved, pick it up at the end of the performance, take it home to be sponged and pressed, and return it the next night. As sets were needed, a great deal of the carpets, furniture and props came from local homes. This actually went on for quite some time

until the theatre could finally afford its own. There were many local people involved in cleaning, painting, selling tickets and generally pitching in where needed.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: I collected props for the sets. Brian would call up people like Mary Walsh and Betty Rigg because he knew them so well and he'd say, "We need a desk, we need a chair, we need lamps." I know we had a bit of an argument because he had a lamp but it was an oil one. Gertrude Gordon, who lived in the little house that was torn down for the Prince of Wales Hotel, took care of elderly people and lent us a lot of old things. She had lovely old oil lamps and I remember carrying one oil lamp back and forth. Brian insisted on having oil-burning lamps, not electrified, on the stage with all this flimsy stuff, and we were very worried about fire at that time, but he said it lent authenticity and he wanted it to be authentic. We didn't have a fire, thank goodness; nobody knocked it over.

MARY COLTART *(Seamstress)*: You'd be sitting in the theatre and say, "Look, there's my chair. And that's my sofa over there. I hope they don't damage it." Everything was lent to them. Just the same, when they had opening night parties, nothing like what we have now, everybody made something. Margherita Howe was involved at that end of it, and Audrey Wooll. Was it Brian who said, "I want more silver, Go home and get more silver." Nobody had silver in their house. It was all at the theatre.

CALVIN RAND: We all used to lend furniture. We lent everything—sometimes furniture, sometimes clothing; for sets, costumes, props, all sorts of stuff. I remember Maurice Strike, who was the resident designer under Paxton for years, coming up to our big house and picking out things that he thought would be suitable. That house was sort of Victorian with lots of Victorian stuff in there and these were Victorian times. He liked that sofa, he liked this—We had a bunch of white wicker furniture on our front porch and he thought that was terrific. He said, "I want this. I want this." So we lent him about four pieces from our porch, which were gone for about a month. I guess we didn't notice them on stage but when he brought them back they were all blue. They had all been spray-painted blue because he wanted blue, not the white. That's why we didn't recognize them in the play. I don't know what happened, whether the Shaw took them back and resprayed them white; I think for a while they stayed blue. There were cases of people who didn't get back some stuff they lent, or there was some breakage occasionally.

DOROTHY MIDDLEDITCH: They wanted a carpet one year. When we bought our house the lady left us certain things and there was an old brown carpet rolled up in the basement. I trotted the carpet out and had them come and pick it up. I'll never forget, we went to the show and my husband said, "That's our carpet," in a loud voice. I had to shush him. He said, "Don't ever lend anything again without my permission." He was very English. I said, "Yes, dear; yes, dear." Then in 1971 they had *War, Women and Other Trivia*, and by that time the theatre had enough money that it would rent the furniture from Toronto. When the curtain went up my husband said, "You've lent them our chairs." I said, "I did not. That's not our chair." We went through the whole show arguing in whispers whether that was our chair or not our chair. When he came home, the first thing he did was count the chairs to see that there wasn't one missing. I said, "You see, I told you it wasn't our chair."

BETTY TAYLOR: I never loaned any furniture. My husband would never have lent anything to the theatre.

MARGHERITA HOWE: We have a big Dutch oven, very heavy metal, and they couldn't find a bell and for some reason I must have known when I had dropped this pot lid that it resounded and they used the top of this metal pot. I can remember our dining room furniture being used for one of the plays. It meant scavenging from people's homes, and then we became very apprehensive because they weren't looked after and that caused problems. I can remember one settee that somebody had lent and it turned out that they had painted the damn frame and they covered the settee and all these crazy things. The settee was practically destroyed and there was a big brouhaha about that. So you became apprehensive about asking anybody for anything. This was a problem and it not only started a feeling between the people who were involved in the props but the whole organization, because we sensed that there was a sort of laissez-faire attitude about the

whole thing.

INTERVIEWER *(to Calvin Rand)*: The programs for 1962 list you as stage manager.

CALVIN RAND: Well, I probably did everything. I became associate producer at one point, I became vice-president at one point, I was probably stage manager during that first bit. We all did everything in those first years. In the second year it became a professional theatre with Andrew Allan as artistic director. Things changed then, but the first year we did everything. We swept the floors, painted, stage-managed.

BARBARA RANSOM: There was a reception the next year in the summer and I was not able to go. That's when Andrew Allan came, I think, and it was an opportunity to go and meet them and I didn't go, so that was the end of it. I don't know if any of the rest from that group went.

TIM DEVLIN: I think a lot of new people came in the next year and I'm not aware that any of the people from that first development year, as hard as we worked and as much as we sacrificed and put in of our own expense and time and money, I'm not aware that any of us were ever invited back the next year to participate in any way, shape or form. It was suddenly, "Okay, you've shown it will work, get out." It's not that it's sour grapes or anything because if that had been the only year and that had been the only time it ever happened, it would still be a wonderful memory and it would have been great to have been a part of that.

BARBARA RANSOM: I think we could have gone down and got bit parts because there were local people who did make it. Obviously we didn't want it very much. We'd been the best, we weren't going to be—. I remember the opportunity came to go down and there were some family obligations and I couldn't go. I regretted it but I couldn't do anything about it.

ALICE CRAWLEY: They were getting into really professional theatre, I guess, and thought they should get professionals. And I think the Niagara-on-the-Lake people wanted to keep it as their own at first. I had that feeling that they did. I think even we St Catharines people were felt to be outsiders.

BARBARA RANSOM: I never felt like that. Certainly Brian was just anxious to get us and was very kind and very nice about everything, and very appreciative that we did come and do everything. Maynard Burgess did come back and I think he was in one of the plays the next year. But he was a professional. He later was directing in Buffalo and called me to do *Pygmalion*. It was in the winter and it meant my husband staying home to babysit, which he objected to, so I didn't go. So I guess I wasn't meant to be on the stage. I just kept missing those opportunities.

TIM DEVLIN: I have a great pride, with hindsight, and I'm very, very glad I participated in the Shaw Festival and that I didn't play a walk-on or an extra that would have ended up on the cutting-room floor in that Disney movie rather than do this. You don't deserve any more recognition than the fact that you were there, period. But I do know that if we had blown it, if we had goofed that year, it probably wouldn't—in fact, we were told emphatically it simply wouldn't happen the next year. That was constantly hammered into our heads that, "We gotta get it right, we gotta do a super production; we can't have any more readings." You could do *that* in your living room. We had to do a set production and we had to prove it and prove ourselves, and subsequently it would open the door for the Festival the next year. It was a test, a test to see whether it would work, and it was a test so that, if it did work, these grandes dames who lived there were going to come onside and make it continue to happen.

BARBARA RANSOM: I went back to see *Candida* when Frances Hyland did it. It was amazing how the lines came back. I thought, "Yes, I did it like that. Yes, I said it like that." I know I compared myself favourably with her; and it's not an age, because she could be any age and do that. That person had said, "You're old enough to do it." I probably wasn't mature enough to do it. It takes a mature actress to feel the things that are in a part. It's very easy to say the words but it takes maturity. I think Frances Hyland could do a very young person or a very old person. She has the experience. It's probably good it wasn't caught on film because it would be very difficult to watch, and yet it's too bad that it wasn't.

TIM DEVLIN: I remember Maynard saying to me, and I'm not saying this because of the fact that I ended up playing Marchbanks, but Maynard told me

he had directed *Candida* twice in New York and he said after the opening of *Candida* at the Shaw Festival that I was the best Marchbanks he'd ever had. I guess it might be because I wasn't aware of the fact that there is a lot of controversy about the part, supposedly because at the end he says, "I have a secret and I know the answer to the secret," or words to that effect. To me they were just a lot of lines I had to learn as rapidly as possible, so I just sort of dove in and wasn't able to research the history of the part or anything. So he felt that, in my innocence, I had captured the character better than some professionals he had directed, simply because they had looked for too much in it and had subsequently added things about Marchbanks which were too adult, maybe too mature.

TONY VAN BRIDGE *(Actor)*: When I first came to Canada [in 1954] there wasn't a great deal of professional theatre in the general sense, and I think there's no doubt that the amateur theatre of the time was of great importance because it kept the theatre floating in a country that didn't have too much. The Dominion Drama Festival was big and strong, which is great, and I think everything has grown out of that, so it is a very important connection to have. I'm sure some people think a pro forgets where it's all come from but I don't think that's really so. I think most people are aware that that is where it all started.

I think its connection with the Shaw Festival—that's the way it started—shouldn't be forgotten, and isn't forgotten. It was very necessary to have it there to get things off the ground and get public interest going in something of that nature. I always like to think of the two things connected. I don't believe that one should feel that the amateur gets lost; it's just changed, as much as anything. Many people who were amateurs also became professionals. Those who didn't, didn't want to, I guess, or had something they preferred to do as their life work. So we're all in this mess together, that's really what it amounts to.

CALVIN RAND: If it hadn't been for these local towns and their theatres and newspapers, it never would have gotten going. It started in just the opposite way from Stratford, which was a big thing. This started as small as you can get—amateur theatre. I was even stage manager; I had forgotten that.