Disclaimer: This interview was conducted in 1995 and concerns memories of 1930s life; as such

there may be opinions expressed or words used that do not meet today's norms and expectations.

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* Cambuslang, Glasgow, 27 January 1995: Valentina Bold interviews Tom and Margaret Walsh

* Transcribed by Joan Simpson/ Standardised by Annette Kuhn

* TW=Tom Walsh/ MW= Margaret Walsh/ VB=Valentina Bold

* Notes: Second of two interviews with Tom and Margaret Walsh; Sound Quality: Fair, but audio

corrupted for second tape; this interview was originally transcribed in a phonetic manner; the

original phonetic version can be accessed through our physical collection - please contact Lancaster

University Library for details.

[Start of Tape One]

[Start of Side A]

[general discussion about tape recorder, batteries and microphone]

VB: If I could ask you to maybe clip this one while we're talking. That would be great.

TW: Aye.

MW: Is that the microphone?

VB: Aye. It's quite a good erm--

MW: Oh very good.

TW: Anywhere at all?

VB: Just anywhere. Aye.
MW: Uhuh.
TW: Right.
VB: Erm, anywhere that feels comfortable.
TW: They use these kind of things on the telly clipped on don't they?
VB: They're very good actually.
TW: Aye.
VB: Because the one I had before you get a lot of background noise as well.
MW: Uhuh.
TW: Aye.
VB: Just picks up voices.
TW: Very good. Very good.
VB: Erm, and the nice thing about it as well is that I can control the level from the machine if it doesn't seem to be, you know if your voice is coming over a bit faint I can turn it up.
TW: You can turn it up. Aye. Do you want a trial? Do you want me to say one, two, three, four?
VB: Erm, yeah. Just say something.
TW: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight nine, ten. A big fat hen!
VB: That's probably about right.

TW: Right.
MW: Why don't you pull over that wee stool and you can lay it on it?
VB: Aye, I'll do that.
TW: Good idea.
MW: Pull the table towards you. It'll be handier.
VB: That's lovely. Right. [laughs] I think that's us set now after that minor technical hitch. Erm, I mean it was interesting what you were saying just now when I just came in.
TW: I was showing her the pictures.
MW: Ah the one you're doing just now.
TW: Aye.
VB: Aye it was absolutely beautiful. I'm really, really pleased that you've done that. It's so kind.
TW: Well, it's par for the, actually it was Maggie's suggestion.
MW: I think you had just phoned.
VB: Right. It'sgreat. 'Cause one of the things we were thinking about we might do at some stage is maybe have a wee exhibition of eh
TW: Aye. Of memorabilia and things. There you are, aye.
VB: That would be absolutely perfect as well.
TW: Aye.

VB: But yeah 'cause you were telling me about the queues and everything. It's a horrible snowy

day today and you were saying that--

TW: Well the beauty of the photograph. The whole point of the photograph was to my way of

thinking that eh, people were prepared in the most inclement and horrible conditions to queue for

hours, you know. I was about to tell you the wee joke. The claim's that, the chief usherette is

reported to have said this. The one that, she was the chief usherette at that period in the Regal. And

she recalled that they had pageboys. And this pageboy eh, was sent down. [pause 2 seconds] The

manager got, was up on the balcony and he said to the pageboy [amused voice] eh, "Send up two

couples for standing." [laughs] And the pageboy comes out and says to the commissionaire at the

door, [laughing] "Send up two cupfuls of sand." [bursts out laughing]

VB: [laughs]

TW: It reminds me, you know the old wartime joke allegedly the First World War. The bad

communications with the telephone. And eh, the order that was given was eh, "Send for

reinforcements, we're going to advance." And what come out the other end was, "Send three and

fourpence, we're going to a dance." [laughs]

VB: [laughs]

MW: You didn't make that one up, did you?

TW: No, no. That's an ancient one. No.

VB: It's a great story that. About the cinema. Erm, what was it we were talking about just now

when I had the technical hitch? You were telling me about, you started to tell me about something

that, erm, we've been talking about the queues and then...

TW: [pause 2 seconds] I can't remember. But I was just pointing out that the queues, they were

prepared to stand.

VB: Aye.

TW: As long. We were discussing the difference in costume.
VB: That's right.
TW: Aye.
VB: Yes.
TW: Aye. And I was saying that the latest one I'd done of Buchanan Street I did from a photograph I took myself. And the difference in
MW: The clothes.
TW: Aye. You see the clothes and that. They're all kind of more formally dressed, the people.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Although eh, could you say that people who went to the <u>Regal</u> were maybe a sort of slight cut above people who came from Bridgeton, I don't know.
MW: We-ell. [in distance; inaudible]
TW: But they were dressed up. And there was a dress up occasion. Aye. Aye.
VB: Mhm!
MW: You used to have to put on your high heels going into town. Now you wouldn't dream of it.
VB: That's interesting.
TW: Aye.
MW: For comfort.

VB: So if you were going to the pictures in town it was more of an occasion that if you-

TW: Aw yes. Very much so. Very much so, aye. Well it was more expensive to start off with. I can't

remember the comparative cost but. By the way, Val, have you been to the, the transport exhibition

in the Kelvin Hall because there's a wee cinema there? It's very good.

VB: That's wonderful.

TW: Aye. That's right. It occurred to me after you'd gone the last time to have reminded you of that.

But you seen it?

VB: Aye. I mean d'you think that's quite a good eh, is it an accurate--

TW: I would say it's very accurate from what I've seen of it. Mind you it's only a wee tiny, it's only

meant to be a kind of eh, shall we say facsimile of a real hall. But it's well done what they've got, you

know.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye, the seats and the decor and everything seems to be just about right, you know. Aye.

MW: If you went to that place in Rutherglen.

VB: That sounds great. Thanks very much.

MW: You know. It's a Sunday afternoon.

VB: Yeah.

MW: I don't know exactly what time.

VB: Yeah.

MW: I intend going myself. 'Cause I think it'll be quite an event. VB: Absolutely. TW: Aye. VB: I'll give them a call and see if I can get any more details. 'Cause it eh--TW: Oh a good idea. I'm sure they'll accommodate you now that they know you're interested in this.

VB: Yes.

TW: You've got an official interest in this sort of thing.

VB: Yes.

TW: Now I don't know, I haven't been in the Odeon eh Rutherglen for God--

MW: [inaudible]

TW: Aye. But it was a magnificent cinema when it was built.

MW: Oh yes.

TW: It was built at the height of the... [pause 2 seconds] I think it was built in 1936. The height of the [pause 1 second] shall we say the attraction of the cinema. You know, if you drew a graph of the talkies it went up, you know, during the war I presume it'd be at its highest--

MW: Help yourself Val.

TW: And then it tailed off. Yes, just help yourself Val. Then it tailed off. But they were cashing in on, obviously the capitalists were cashing in on the fact that this was a, the advent of the talkies was a, how would you describe it? It was like the plague. It swept over the land. Everybody wanted to go to

the pictures. And eh, as a result they built bigger and more fantastic cinemas. I'm just reading, I'm

reading a book just now by Max Bygraves. You know the violinist.

MW: Ye mean Max Jaffa surely?

TW: Sorry. Max Jaffa. Max Bygraves! [laughs]

VB: [laughs] Another talent to add to-- [laughs,

TW: Max Jaffa. Ah Max Bygraves. He's a lousy comedian. Aye. Max Jaffa. Aye. And it's his life story.

He's dead now. Margaret, you saw Max Jaffa in eh--

MW: I saw him in Scarborough.

TW: Scarborough before he--

MW: That's right.

TW: It was smashing. Lovely violinist.

MW: Great violinist.

TW: But he'd a varied life. He did all the rounds. He started in the Guildhall eh School of Music. And

then he played in the cinemas. And then he went to, he graduated. He must've been good 'cause

only the best played in the West End of London. He played in Lyons eh, Corner House.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: And then he moved up to the big time stuff. The Astoria and the Grosvenor. You know, the big

hotels. I've missed the point of what I was going to tell you about Max Jaffa. Relating to what the

hell we were talking about, which I can't remember! [laughs] Aye. Never mind. It'll come back.

VB: One thing that occurred to me was you know how you were telling me about dressing up-

MW: Mhm.
VB: To go to the pictures. Did you ever imitate the film stars in the way
MW: Oh yeah.
TW: You did?
MW: The hairstyles and so forth.
VB: Right!
MW: No I wouldn't say so much myself. But the likes of your Cathy. [inaudible] That's maybe what, eight or nine years older than me.
TW: Would that not be the current hairstyle here though? Besides in the pictures.
MW: No, I wouldn't think so. If you look at old films, you see
TW: Well I was looking at Ginger Rogers the other night.
MW: [beginning inaudible] she had hair that came down here and girls went about with hair that covered one eye.
VB: Right. Right.
TW: Aye.
MW: The pageboy.
TW: Oh I suppose they were bound to, aye.
VB: Mhm.

TW: Aye.

VB: I mean what about the male stars. I mean did you ever consciously erm--

TW: Well, funny you should mention that. Eh, when I was at Jordanhill College I remember Willie

Glen. Remember Willie Glen?

MW: I do.

TW: This was a student eh, who was a, he started as a teacher but he packed it in and became a lawyer. I think he's been quite successful actually but, I mind [remember] Willie Glen saying to me,

eh, [pause 2 seconds] "Where did you get that coat?" Actually I got it from Philip Barr. It was eh, it

was a drape model suit, a drape model coat. And the only reason I got the coat was 'cause a pal of

mine gave me it! [laughs] He owed me a debt.

MW: Philip was very fashion conscious.

TW: That's right. There was a bit hatch. The, the, what d'you call that film star? Still on the go. What

d'you call that guy?

MW: Aw,

TW: Robert Mitchum. You know the, the, the. What d'you call that? What's the famous eh detective

story writer?

MW: Oh--

TW: Chandler! Raymond Chandler.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye well eh, Raymond Chandler's heroes are, you know, Philip Marlow, that's the hero. Well he

wears the kind of drape model suits and the big hat, the fedora hat. And I mind [remember] Willie

Glen said to me, "Have you been to the States?" This was just at the end of the war. I says, "No." He

says, "Because I'm just back from the States and you're wearing the exact same dress." And I remember just laughing. I says "Well it's a pal of mine from whom I got this clobber." Well he hadn't

been to the States yet but he was very State conscious. So maybe there was an element of--

MW: Oh ave.

VB: Mhm.

TW: Copycat, aye.

MW: You get model suits, surely, a sort of take-off of--

TW: So that was the, aye! The kind of Glen Miller era. The musicians, that's right. The musicians wore those drape model suits. If you went to the Queen Mary Club. That was a wee place in Glasgow

where the band musicians used to congregate on a Sunday night. Sunday night in Calvinist Glasgow

was unheard of for entertainment as such.

MW: You only went to church and that was you.

TW: Aye. But this wee, this wee place opened on a Sunday night you see. And they got round the,

they very cunningly got round the laws by not charging you when you went in. They charged you

when you went out. [laughs] This was to get, the fiction was that you were a, this was a kind of

private party and you had been invited to it you see. It wasn't. It was a wee dance hall. But the, Joe

Loss. All the big bands when they came to Glasgow used to congregate up here on a Sunday night

and they used to play for hours. Jam sessions. It was great fun. Because there was some very good,

very good. Well, they wore the drape model suits.

VB: Right.

TW: Aye.

VB: I mean another thing I was meaning to ask you about the last time was I believe some of the

really big film stars came to Glasgow as well.

TW: Yes.

VB: Erm, did you remember seeing anyone or?

TW: No. I never. The only eh, no, I didn't idolise the, the erm, film stars to the tune of going to the

Empire to see them [referring to the Glasgow Empire]. But there were many. There was Danny Kaye.

There was Bob Hope. I think I mentioned the last time that the Empire Cinema [sic] was the alleged

graveyard of English comedians.

MW: That's right. Ah the Empire Theatre.

TW: But--

MW: Not the cinema.

TW: Sorry. The Empire Cinema [sic]. Yes. but, and I can talk from experience here. They were a very

fair audience and good comedians like Jack Benny came and he was swamped. If a comedian was a

genuine, decent bloke he got a great reception. Bob Hope. They idolised Bob Hope. He came back

several... But some of these tenth-rate English comedians. Whoever eh [laughs] laughed at them

down south, they weren't for laughing at them up here. You know they jeered.

MW: [It's like?] the television programmes there.

TW: Aye.

MW: It's definitely not ours.

TW: There was one occasion, this has got nothing to do with your cinema but it's [laughs] to do with

the Empire. I remember going, I used to go on a Friday afternoon, Friday evening of the first house

you got in for a tanner. Sixpence. Eh, which was very good value. 'Cause I was very fond of the big

bands. Ambrose. Joe Loss. That crowd. Before they started coming to play at the Green's Playhouse

for dancing. That was started during the war. I'm going just prior to the war. About 1939. But I

remember there was character there called Jack Doyle, I don't suppose you've ever heard of him.

Jack Doyle was the most handsome looking Irishman you ever clapped eyes on. He looked like

Tyrone Power. You know that type.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: He was a heavyweight boxer. He'd been heavyweight champion of Britain. But he was a big, a

big flanneller. And he sang. He was a typical Irish tenor. He sang 'The Rose of Tralee' and bring the

house down. You know. Now Jack Doyle was more of a showman. They called him the horizontal

champion because he was always getting knocked flat [laughs] youknow. I remember Jack Doyle

coming. Eh, I remember seeing him and eh, this was the repartee again. And he asked for, he sang

his repertoire. And then he asked for any requests. And somebody shouted, "Give us 'A Sailor's

Farewell to His Horse'!" I can remember [laughing] that! 'A Sailor's Farewell to His Horse!' I

remember some wag shouting that out which didn't nonplus him at all, you know. [laughs] Aye.

VB: I mean it sounds from what you're saying as if the variety of entertainment on offer in the

thirties was quite staggering.

TW: Aye. Yes. There was a, well--

MW: There was plenty of places to go.

TW: Aye. Well I don't know whether I mentioned this the last time. Again we're going off your

cinema Val but it pertains to Glasgow in the thirties. [pause 2 seconds] I'd be a student at the time

and my friend eh, John McLaughlin'd be a student. Aye. Now, I think, [pause 1 second] 1946 I think

it'd be. Or' 47. Round about then. Just at the end of the war. The Carl Rosa Opera Company came to

the Theatre Royal. For a six-week season. They did it every year. Six weeks! That's five shows a night

for six weeks. That's thirty, thirty operas! They practically, well, you would cover the whole

repertoire. That's where I did all my grounding. I saw 'Rigoletto'. 'Il Trovatore'. 'Aida'. Wagner. You

name it. I saw everything there.

MW: Not only the musicals.

TW: [coughs]

MW: The Wilson Barrett Theatre Company came and likewise, they came for about six weeks.

TW: That's right.

MW: Different sets of plays.

TW: Aye.

VB: Aye.

TW: That's very true.

MW: There was no, well there wasn't entertainment in the house. At home.

TW: No.

MW: Television has killed all that.

TW: Television killed everything. That's very true.

VB: That was something else that I meant to ask you about was erm, when you were talking about erm, you know, growing up in Bridgeton. And I wondered I mean, what sort of entertainments were available. Was it mainly going out to the cinema or did you have home entertainments?

TW: No. Maggie came from a slightly more salubrious area so she had more social life. No, we had no social life as such, as parties in the house. Our houses were so cramped and so menial and so poorly fashioned. And [pause 2 seconds] the house was a kind of a working unit where you slept and washed in the morning and went to your work and come back at night. It was a kind of functional place. So I don't remember, I was never invited to parties and we never invited anybody to parties. No there was no parties. Eh, the bike was a great escape for me. When eh, my father bought me a, I remember my first bike. Four pound nineteen and six. A BSA sports model. Lovely bicycle.

MW: That'd be a lot of money in those days.

TW: Well, my father had it aged eighty. He still had the same bike that admittedly with new tyres

and new wheels and things. But Loch Lomond. Every Sunday away to Loch Lomond. We spent. I still

reminisce with, I've got a pal in Vancouver in Canada. [laughs] It's sad. But the only thing you talk

about when you're my age is what happened years ago. Not the present. But we still reminisce on

getting the bike out and getting the tuppence. You got a wee tin of Heinz's beans for tuppence. And

the primus stove. With a clip on it. There was a special clip on it for the primus stove to brew your

tea and heat up your beans you know. Way up to Luss. Summer and winter. We, we actually cycled

in this weather. You know. We were hardy.

MW: That was obviously to get away from home.

TW: Oh it was escape. purely escape. That's right. Nothing at home.

MW: I was more fortunate. Like, we had like we had one room and we had a public room and

another room. So, visitors came regularly. Parties were held. And they had older people in one room

and the younger ones in another.

VB: Oh.

TW: We're making poor, poor inroads into--

VB: When I get listening I--

TW: But keep munching as well. 'Cause--

VB: Right.

TW: Actually they're for you.

VB: 'Cause actually I meant to ask you erm, 'cause obviously when we're talking I asked you to fill

in a form and I was wondering if I could ask you a wee bit about your own background 'cause erm-

TW: Whose? Margaret's or mine?

VB: Margaret's background.
TW: Right.
VB: I mean just really be the same sort of questions that I asked you.
TW: Right.
VB: Erm
TW: Do you want me to change the microphone to Margaret, no?
VB: Erm
TW: Or better still. Margaret change me places. You come over here Margaret.
VB: Okay.
TW: I'll clip this on for you.
VB: Right.
TW: Like, like a BBC technician.
VB: Maybe what we could do is erm
MW: Do you know what you're doing?
VB: If we could clip it on to something that's sort of—
TW: That's equidistant

MW: That's in between. That would be a better idea. Would it not?

TW: Aye. What about clipping it on to the tea cosy? No.
VB: Aye that would be perfect actually.
TW: Would it?
VB: Yes.
MW: Well that's the middle of the room more or less isn't it?
TW: How's that?
VB: That's brilliant.
TW: I'll just sit here. Okay.
VB: Right.
MW: Aye you've got a louder voice than I have.
VB: Oh well. [laughs]
TW: More mellifluous.
MW: Well.
VB: Mellifluous is a better way of putting it. Eh, is that your full name Margaret Walsh?
MW: Uhuh.
VB: Right. And can I ask what your date of birth is?
MW: 19, [date redacted] '28.

VB: Right. And were you born in
MW: In Glasgow.
VB: In Glasgow. And what was it your father did?
MW: Eh, he was a civil servant.
VB: Right. Did your mother work?
MW: My mother died when I was five so
VB: Mhm.
MW: So my two aunts, my father's two sisters brought us up.
VB: Right.
MW: One was working and one was in the house.
VB: Yeah.
MW: Doing the housekeeping.
VB: Yeah. Must've been quite a lot of work for them to
MW: Oh well she took on four.
VB: Four of you! [laughs]
MW: My father was lucky.
VB: Yeah. Erm, and can you tell me your educational background? I know you

MW: Eh well I went to, I did my Highers then went to university. Did an MA. I was teaching.
VB: Right. And right so you were a teacher for your whole working life.
MW: Erm, well all my working life, yeah.
VB: Yeah.
MW: 'Specially with having no family. I just kept on.
VB: And have you ever been a member of a political party or strong political
MW: Eh, not really, no.
VB: And were you raised in a particular religion?
MW: Yes. Catholic.
VB: Right. And obviously the places you've lived it would be more or less the same
MW: Uhuh.
VB: Except when you were a child.
MW: Well I was brought up in Cardonald.
VB: Cardonald right.
TW: I'll warm your tea, Val.
VB: That's great. Thanks. And that's it actually 'cause the rest of the questions are obviously the same for both of you.

MW:	That's fine.

VB: And I wonder if I could ask you to sign one of these forms as well.

MW: Uhuh.

VB: It's to do with the tapes. As I explained last time it's really just a, to keep everything--

MW: A formality.

VB: A formality. In case you decide to sue us later! [laughs] It means you can't! [laughs] But erm, I realised after I'd left you know that I should've asked you to fill in one of these as well.

MW: Want me to fill in the date?

VB: Eh yeah, that would be great. Thanks.

TW: Now you keep munching away!

VB: Right. [laughs] I'll do that. I'll do that.

MW: Ah today's the 27th of January already.

VB: Mhm. I know the time passes so fast doesn't it?

TW: Yes. Although I'm glad to see January out. January's a month to get through.

MW: There you are.

VB: Thanks a lot. [pause 4 seconds] And another thing that I wanted to ask is if you could remember the first film that you ever saw.

TW: Oh. You're asking a way back. [pause 2 seconds]

MW: I would think the first one that I can remember is 'Snow White' [referring to <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>].
VB: Right.
TW: Is that so?
MW: I think so.
TW: I saw 'Snow White' of all places in Blackpool. We cycled, my father and I. Dennis Porter.
MW: And then when would that be?
TW: 1938.
MW: Aw.
TW: We cycled down to Blackpool from here.
MW: Uhuh. Well that couldn't have been the first one. Because if that was 1938 I would be ten then.
TW: Aye you must've seen something before ten.
MW: Uhuh.
VB: Yeah. But it's the first one that you can really remember seeing.
MW: Yes. Well I remember <i>Les Misérables</i> and crying terribly when that man stole the loaf.
TW: Aye.
MW: And he was put in jail for the punishment.
TW: Aye.
•

MW: Oh, I remember that.
TW: Aye.
MW: I was horrified.
VB: I mean, did you like 'Snow White'? 'Cause I remember you saying actually that you didn't think it was up to [laughs]
TW: No.
VB: Very much.
MW: Oh I thought it was magic.
TW: Aye.
VB: I suppose I mean
MW: Difference in age group.
VB: Being a different age.
TW: Aye. I mean that's right.
VB: Yeah.
MW: And <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> . I thought was wonderful. That was just before the war I think.

TW: You won't believe this. I've never seen *The Wizard of Oz*. You know the way you get a block about something. There's something that you automatically, first place I always thought Judy Garland was ugly and I didn't like ugly women [laughs] in a picture. Although she's good at putting over, a singer.

MW: Oh she's talented.

TW: She's talented. But I could never thole [put up with] her. When you had Ginger Rogers and Alice

Faye and the more, shall we say, glamorous looking bits of stuff you know. Poor Judy was a bit plain.

Eh, and the idea of the, it was a kind of fairy story, The Wizard of Oz.

MW: Ah it was a child's film.

TW: And I made up my mind I hadn't seen it. And I haven't seen it yet. You see wee bits of it on the

telly. Oh by the way, the other day all my reminiscences of what we were talking about before the

holiday, or before the New Year. Top Hat came back on. It was smashing. I enjoyed it.

VB: It was wonderful.

MW: Did you see it?

VB: Yes I did.

TW: You've spent two hours listening to us.

VB: [laughs]

TW: I'm going t ask you. What do you think of *Top Hat*?

VB: I mean it's just a wonderful movie. What else can I say?

TW: isn't it?

VB: It's amazing.

TW: I mean the plot, the plot is simple. It's elementary. The plot is just a medium. But the grace and

elegance of that pair when they dance. Would you not agree?

VB: Absolutely.
TW: Aye
VB: And the costumes!
TW: Beautiful.
VB: I mean that last number
TW: Oh, the 'Piccolino'.
VB: Where she's wearing the feather dress
MW: Aw yes. Transports you to another world.
VB: Yes. It really does. Amazing.
TW: Yes, it does. Well you see they just don't make films like that any more. They don't have the people with that talent
VB: No.
TW: For starters.
MW: No but any film that's made just now. I was just saying about Sky Television.
TW: They're lousy aren't they?
MW: Absolutely dreadful. The only one I've seen is <i>The Scent of a Woman</i> and that's the only one I would recommend.
TW: Aye.

MW: The rest is rubbish.
TW: Aye. Aye eh, violence. Sex.
MW: Sex. That's all.
TW: Bad language.
MW: Uhuh.
TW: Now that sounds as if we're prudish. We're not prudish but there's only so much you can take of that you know.
VB: Mhm.
TW: Aye.
VB: Whereas a film like that. I mean what are your favourite moments in <i>Top Hat</i> ? Were there bits that you like?
that you like? TW: The nice Irving Berlin songs. I love Irving Berlin's music. Eh, when they're on the bandstand. [sings]. "The weather is frightening, there's thunder and lightning, seem to be having their way."
TW: The nice Irving Berlin songs. I love Irving Berlin's music. Eh, when they're on the bandstand. [sings]. "The weather is frightening, there's thunder and lightning, seem to be having their way." He's a rare singer Fred Astaire. Lovely. Nice light tenor voice. VB: Yes. Yes. And very, as you say, very light and erm, I mean I liked the film. The sort of pace of it.
TW: The nice Irving Berlin songs. I love Irving Berlin's music. Eh, when they're on the bandstand. [sings]. "The weather is frightening, there's thunder and lightning, seem to be having their way." He's a rare singer Fred Astaire. Lovely. Nice light tenor voice. VB: Yes. Yes. And very, as you say, very light and erm, I mean I liked the film. The sort of pace of it. It's really fast and
TW: The nice Irving Berlin songs. I love Irving Berlin's music. Eh, when they're on the bandstand. [sings]. "The weather is frightening, there's thunder and lightning, seem to be having their way." He's a rare singer Fred Astaire. Lovely. Nice light tenor voice. VB: Yes. Yes. And very, as you say, very light and erm, I mean I liked the film. The sort of pace of it. It's really fast and MW: Aw yes.

TW: Aye.
MW: All age groups.
TW: Aye.
MW: I thought that was very good.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Totally artificial. You know they walk about all the time with top hats and tails and they only live in obviously the best hotels. You know. They've got flunkies by the dozen.
MW: Oh aye the wee Italian. That was really a scream!
TW: Oh by the way did you read, Val? I read somewhere about that <i>Top Hat</i> . Mussolini barred <i>Top Hat</i> from Italy, Italian cinemas on the grounds that he, he demeaned the Italians. The bloke who plays
VB: Really!
TW: You know the wee fella that's supposed to marry Ginger and he keeps saying "For the women the kiss and for the man the sword."
MW: [laughs] It really was funny.
TW: Mussolini apparently took eh
MW: Umbrage at that.
TW: Umbrage at the fact that he, he demeaned the Italians.

VB: Aw. He was quite admirable in a sense, the character, wasn't he?

TW: He was!
VB: Wasn't he? I mean when he was
TW: Ah yes, he was.
MW: He was. [laughs]
VB: I liked the erm servant as well.
MW: The butler. Oh. [laughs]
VB: Yes.
TW: Aw those two, Horton and eh, Eric Bo, is it Eric Blore you call him. They were great. Marvellous, aren't they? [referring to Edward Everett Horton]
MW: I'm not sure what he was called.
TW: Aye there's something else I read since I was here last. That Everett, Eric or Edward
MW: Edward something.
TW: Horton. You know the the, he played eh Fred Astaire's boss. The one that got the black eye. Now he spent his whole life in the cinema playing bumbling type Englishmen. He wasn't an Englishman at all. He was a New Yorker.
VB: Ah.
TW: He developed this eh, eh patina of English, Englishism you see. And it's interesting. Aye.
VB: That's amazing.

TW: Aye.

VB: 'Cause as you say I can think of him, I can't think of other films offhand but I've seen him in

that sort of role.

TW: He does the same role all the time.

VB: Yes.

MW: So it must've been profitable to him.

TW: Aye. There was another wee guy I never got to know his name. He used to wander in and out of

films. He was a drunk. A wee bloke with a moustache. And he was a drunk. And there always

somebody batting him down or he would fall over a stool or something. But [laughs] all he was

employed for was as a drunk you know. [laughs]

VB: I mean when you say that there are quite a lot of these stars aren't there?

TW: Yes. Secondary stars.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye that's very true.

MW: And they were essential to the plot.

TW: Absolutely. Aye. [laughs]

VB: I mean someone else that I wanted to ask you about that you mentioned that we didn't have a

chance to talk about really was Alice Faye. 'Cause you were saying you didn't--

TW: Oh yes!

MW: Oh yes.

TW: Alice Faye was a favourite. Always a favourite.

VB: What was it about her that--

TW: Well, she was a good-looking bird to start off with. Eh--

MW: She certainly had appeal.

TW: Aye. She was a lovely singer. She could put a song over. Now this is, Benny Green, eh radio commentaries on Sunday goes on ad lib about this. The putting over of a song, eh, for example

you've got Kiri Te Kanawa singing eh numbers from West Side Story. Now Kiri's a beautiful singer.

Delicious singer. She sings opera. There's nobody sings opera better. But when she tackles some of

these lighter things. Well eh, West Side Story's not so bad. It's more like an opera really. Leonard

Bernstein.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: But she's tackled some of these other kind of jazzy things and she's out of her, out of her,

what's the word? Her metier.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: She can't put it across. She's relying on her golden voice. And there's more to putting over a

song than the golden voice. I'm such a bloody blether I've forgotten what I've, what was the point of

the story?

MW: Well how would I know since I don't--

VB: [laughs]

TW: So, oh Alice Faye!

MW: Back to Alice.

TW: Alice Faye had a very ordinary voice but she was great at putting over a song. Even if you hear

her, you can't see her but you can hear her, eh, her voice captivates. She has a way with the words

you know.

MW: And she suggests an honesty too, just looking at her.

TW: Aye. Aye.

MW: I think. She's so believable. There's no bad in that one.

TW: Aye, that's right. Aye. She portrayed that.

MW: Oh she really was talented.

VB: There's some amazing musical stars aren't there? Did you like Jeanette MacDonald?

TW: I hated her!

VB: Right. [laughs]

MW: [laughs]

TW: [laughs] Oh! We used to hoot her! [laughs] She was in the same category as eh, Jessie

Matthews as far as we were concerned. No.

MW: She and Nelson Eddy.

TW: Oh he was a, he was a chancer, aye.

VB: Aw.

TW: But there was another pair. Before. Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald took over the mantle of a pair that had gone before them who were real stars. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] they were both Metropolitan Opera singers. Lawrence Tibbett. I heard him at Christmas.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: I've got a... He sang a carol at Christmas. Lawrence Tibbett. He was a magnificent baritone. You should hear him singing 'Largo al factotum' from 'The Barber of Seville'. Terrific!

MW: And who was his partner?

TW: Grace Moore. She was killed in an aeroplane crash in 1938. So that's why she--

MW: So is that why--

TW: Aye.

MW: Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy took over?

TW: Aye. That's right. Hollywood took over.

MW: 'Cause I remember those two but I don't remember the previous two.

TW: Aye. Well all the, the numbers eh, New Moon. The one with the bounties, the cowboys.

MW: Rose Marie.

TW: Rose Marie. Jeanette MacDonald eh--

MW: Nelson Eddy.

TW: Lawrence Tibbett and eh, Grace Moore had done those.

MW: Oh I see.

TW: And Jeanette MacDonald and co. They were kind of reruns you know.

MW: Uhuh.

VB: I see.

TW: Aye. So there you are. And I saw another interesting thing about the cinema. You've got me on, you've got me yapping. We saw something the other night and I was a bit diffident as to whether I was going to watch it or not, but Maggie thought she might try it. Lawrence, eh, Marjorie Lawrence.

MW: Oh yes! I enjoyed it thoroughly.

TW: I saw this. You were asking about eh, about entertainment... [tape cuts out]

[End of Side A]

[Start of Side B]

TW: In a wheelchair [still referring to Marjorie Lawrence]. She contracted, we saw the film [referring to Interrupted Melody].

MW: Contracted polio.

TW: She contracted polio when she was in South America, at the height of her power, she was a Metropolitan, New York. Lovely voice.

MW: She was an Australian wasn't she?

TW: She was an Australian. That's right. Eh but she carried on singing from her wheelchair. It's unusual to see a... [pause 2 seconds]

VB: It's amazing really.

TW: A prima donna
VB: Yeah.
TW: Being wheeled out in a wheelchair.
MW: When was that film made?
TW: '55.
MW: '55.
TW: Aye.
VB: It's amazing. You think of a, you know they always say the voice comes from
TW: Aye. From the diaphragm. Down here. Aye.
VB: The diaphragm. That must really affect it
MW: Yes.
VB: If you were in a chair.
TW: Well there you are. There you are.
MW: She was a beautiful singer.
TW: Ah she was.
VB: Yeah.
MW: It was Eleanor eh, Parker that played the part in the film.

TW: Well I didn't know the girl that played, was it?
MW: That's who it was. Uhuh.
TW: Aye.
VB: Right.
MW: And she was a film star of that time.
TW: Aye.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Ah she played it very well didn't she?
MW: Oh I enjoyed that film.
TW: It was very good. Aye.
VB: 'Cause, I mean another one I was going to ask you about when you were talking about
Jeanette MacDonald. She made one or two films with Maurice Chevalier as well didn't she, I think?
TW: Jeanette MacDonald. Yes.
VB: Yeah. I mean did you like him? Did you think he was any good?
TW: Aye no, he was talented, yes.
VB: Yeah.
TW: I was rather coloured by him he was alleged to have consorted with the Nazis during the war.

VB: Really.

TW: Eh, [pause 2 seconds] there was a kind of stink about him just after the war that he'd

collaborated you know. I don't know whether, I don't know if there was much truth in it.

MW: He was supposed to have entertained the Nazis.

TW: Aye. Entertained. Aye. Och well they all entertained the blooming Germans. So did Gigli. Gigli

did in Rome too.

VB: Mhm.

TW: Eh [pause 2 seconds] what was I going to say? There are two, another thing we saw there. 'The

Merry Widow' was one of my favourite operas. Franz Lehar. Eh now as far as I know there are two

versions, Hollywood versions. There might be more but there's two Hollywood versions of eh, The

Merry Widow. One included Jeanette MacDonald and eh, your pal, what d'you call him? Maurice

Chevalier [referring to the 1934 version].

VB: Maurice Chevalier. Yeah.

TW: Eh, now that was, I vaguely remember it. And it was excellent. But they did another rerun of

one and they had eh, Lana--

MW: Lana Turner [referring to the 1952 version].

TW: Turner. As the merry widow. And it stinks. It's lousy! Absolutely rubbish! [laughs]

VB: It's strange bit of casting actually. I wouldn't have thought--

TW: Aye. Aye. Talking of eh, talking of Maurice Chevalier. Do you know that you should be

particularly interested in him because he used to sing a song called [sings] "La la, la la, la la la la la la la!

Va-len-teen-er, Va-len-teen-er!" [referring to 'Valentine', sung by Chevalier in L'homme des Folies

Bergère]

VB: Oh! [laughs]

TW: There you are. Singing your name.

VB: Right enough. [laughs] Oh dear.

TW: Any more?

VB: Erm, well the other ones I was going to ask you about which we have talked to you about a

wee bit were erm, Ginger, Ginger and Fred and--

TW: Oh yes. Oh. They're terrific.

VB: We mentioned Top Hat. I mean did you like all of their films?

TW: All of their films. They're all good.

VB: Aye.

TW: They're all, [laughs] they're all, they came out like sausages. It's the same sort of wisp of a plot. I

don't think you could put it any higher than say it's a wisp of a plot. Eh, all the Alice Faye films are

the same.

MW: Aye, that's true. The characters were--

TW: Mistaken identity. You know eh, a simple mistaken identity puts the lovers out of eh, sync with

one another. And then gradually, Top Hat was the same. Gradually eh, somebody blabs the truth

and all is forgiven and they're all back together again.

MW: Rather like the Dick Powell too.

TW: Dick Powell that's right. By the way I don't know whether I told you my all-time favourite or one

of my all-time favourite musicals is a very early one. The Gold Diggers of 1933. Warren and Dubin

were the, the, were the writers, the, the musicians. Harry Warren. I've only got to know about Harry

Warren lately. To me he was just a name up on the screen. Harry Warren wrote a lot of, marvellous

lot of beautiful numbers. I could go through a whole list of the numbers that he wrote but in the

Gold Diggers of 1933. It's so early that Ginger Rogers was only a chorus girl in it. She was only, she

wasn't the star.

MW: Mhm.

TW: The star was Ruby Keeler. Dick Powell. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] Ned Sparks. You ever heard of a

guy called Ned Sparks?

MW: He was good.

TW: A wise guy with a moustache. With a cigar out the side of his mouth. Aye. He was the producer.

Was it Warren William? A kind of good-looking fella.

MW: Was that, that was the fella with the moustache.

TW: Aye.

MW: Warren William.

TW: The other wee baldy man.

MW: Guy--

TW: Guy Kibbee.

MW: Kibbee. That's it.

TW: Kibbee. He died. They were, but eh, beautifully done. Eh, the highlights of course being Busby

Berkeley's famous eh, eh, I think we discussed that with you at length the last time. And my

amazement at how it starts with the orchestra. The orchestra starts up and the curtains part. And

you see this eh, complicated set. And then all of a sudden, what was once a stage becomes an area

the size of Hampden Park!

MW: [laughs]

TW: And I used to wonder as a boy, how could they get all that--

MW: How could they do that?

TW: On that wee stage you know.

MW: Magic.

TW: Aye.

VB: But I mean as you say, I mean do you think that Hollywood system was important? 'Cause

when you say you know Ginger Rogers as a chorus girl and then maybe four five years later she's

the main star--

TW: Aye.

VB: Eh, whereas nowadays you think I mean the stars kind of go straight in. Do you think that that

made a difference, the fact that they served almost like--

TW: Aw I'm sure of it. Aye.

VB: An apprenticeship.

TW: Aye. That's right.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: They did serve apprenticeship in those days. It's like today. There are no apprentices today. I'm

talking about electricians and bricklayers. There are no apprentices. Thus, when you want a bloke to

come and do a job in your house he doesn't know how to do the bloody thing because he hasn't

been trained.

MW: He hasn't been too long,

TW: Aye. He's not apprentice trained. I meet men and that's their common lament. You know there

are no apprentices.

VB: Uhuh.

TW: I don't know what the world's coming to. Things are not getting any less complicated. If

anything they're getting more complicated. So they need these apprenticeships. But getting back to

your film thing. Yes, they did serve apprenticeships. I read for example, Edward G. Robinson, whom I

think I mentioned last time, I always thought Edward G. was a marvellous actor. And the reason he

was a marvellous actor was because he was a stage actor in New York for many, many years. Twenty

years.

MW: Before he went into films.

TW: Before he went near Hollywood you see. So he had all the stagecraft. He was an expert at the

thing you know. [coughs]

VB: Sorry, I was going to ask, was that what you liked about him? Was it his skill as an actor?

TW: His ability to act. Terrific actor. We saw, we saw great acting last night didn't we?

MW: Mhm.

TW: I taped George C. Scott playing Patton. General Patton [referring to The Last Days of Patton].

MW: Aw that was excellent.

TW: In two stages. We watched the whole thing through last night. And he's a great actor. He was

nominated for the Oscar for that and he refused it.

MW: And he wouldn't accept it.

TW: To his eternal credit he refused it! He says, to hell with you, I don't want your Oscar! He refused it!
VB: That's amazing.
TW: But he's, he's another real actor. That's a bloke who can act.
MW: Mhm.
TW: It's great to see somebody who's a good actor you know.
VB: Mhm.
MW: I [said?] I wouldn't have been interested. It was all a war, a man's film really. But his acting really was superb.
TW: Ah, terrific.
VB: Yeah. Yeah. I mean that's interesting what you're saying. I mean are there certain types of films that you eh, you know think that doesn't appeal or?
MW: Well the likes of a war film. There's no, there wasn't a woman in that film last night.
TW: No.
MW: Not one!
TW: Not a one. Not a woman.
MW: When I saw the cast I thought oh, am I going to watch this? [laughs]
TW: Aye. It was well done.

MW: Actually, how long did we watch it for?
TW: Three hours. [coughs]
MW: Three hours.
TW: Mhm. It was good.
MW: You know, it was done in two parts. There was one part one night and one part the next night.
TW: Aye.
MW: And we had taped both of them so.
VB: Mhm.
TW: Aye. Very well done.
MW: Wee cup of tea in between times. [laughs]
VB: Mhm.
MW: It was really good.
VB: That reminds me as well, I noticed next week they're showing, I can't remember what the film is but it's a Ronald Colman film. Which, it was just when you mentioned that film that
TW: Aw he's, he's good.
VB: Did you like Ronald Colman?
TW: He's another great actor. Aye. First class.
MW: Is he not English?

TW: Yes he is an Englishman, aye.

MW: Mhm.

TW: These good actors stand out. Now going back to Edward G. Edward G. played in an awful lot of

films. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] you would describe them run-of-the-mill. Sort of nondescript. But he

stands out. Everything he does is so good. He's so believable.

MW: Ah, if you see, if you see a film that's mentioned with his name on it and it gets a one star you

would watch it.

TW: You would watch it.

MW: Because he's in it.

TW: Aye.

MW: Whereas the normal one star you would--

TW: And his diction. His diction, even when he's doing a gangster and he's talking with a kind of New

York accent. His diction is perfect. Every word is crystal clear you know. That's the mark of a good

actor you know.

VB: Aye.

TW: No mumbling.

MW: You feel as if he lives the part he's in.

TW: Aye.

MW: He really does.

TW: James Cagney's another good actor. He's, he's [chuckles]
MW: A very talented wee actor too.
TW: Was. Yes. Yes.
VB: Again as you say I mean he's a very, I think you're absolutely right. I mean Edward G. Robinson. He has got that sort of conviction and I think that, I mean I see that in Cagney as well
TW: Yes.
VB: When he really, he believes he's the person sort of thing.
TW: That's right. Yes. [inaudible] No doubt about it.
VB: And you say Ronald Colman's another one that you think's like that.
TW: Yes. Yes.
MW: So is he on next week?
VB: He is yes. I can't remember as I say. The film's gone out my mind.
TW: Oh we'll see him if he's on. Aye.
VB: It was one of these ones you know they show these films about two in the morning or something.
TW: Aye. Aye.
VB: 'Cause I remember thinking I'll put the video in for that.
MW: Yes.

TW: There's no doubt about it. From what I've read eh Val, they turned out eh [pause 2 seconds] I

remember eh, what d'you call that wee guy, he died recently? Don Ameche. You remember Don

Ameche?

MW: Uhuh.

TW: He was the leading man, he was the leading man with some of the Alice Faye films. There was

Don Ameche and Alice Faye and Tyrone Power. A trio. It was Don Ameche was on, he was on before

he died. He died there last year. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] he was discussing this eh Hollywood thing

that you were talking about. This churning them out. And he pointed out that they were worked,

they were almost worked to death. They used to turn out about three, three movies a year during

the last thirties. Three movies a year! That's a lot of work for an actor you see.

MW: They were under contract to that.

TW: Aye. I mean they just churned these out one after another. Some of them very good. I mean

Alexander's Ragtime Band's a good--

MW: Oh that was excellent.

TW: Great movie, aye. Aye. [pause 2 seconds] That eh, I've read where that piccolino scene in your

eh Top Hat. That was made with an army of joiners with plywood. The whole thing was done with

plywood.

VB: [gasps] That's amazing.

TW: It was beautiful wasn't it?

MW: Gorgeous.

TW: All with plywood.

VB: 'Cause I mean the sets in that were beautiful.

MW: Uhuh.
TW: Aren't they? So plush. Aye.
VB: And that scene right at the beginning where he tap dances on the roof. It was just
MW: [laughs]
TW: [laughs] Aye.
VB: It's amazing. When he puts the sand down. Lovely.
TW: Yes.
MW: Being considerate.
VB: Yeah. I mean it's interesting that. It's almost like the audience are sort of, as you say the plot's very slight but the audience are kind of in on the joke and they know that
MW: Mmhm.
TW: Aye!
VB: It's the dancing that you're interested in.
TW: That's right. Aye.
MW: Yes.
TW: Yes. It's like opera in many ways.
VB: Yeah.

TW: Operatic stories are so ridiculous. But you accept the ridiculosity of them if there's such a word.

Eh, because the entertainment value is so high. Aye. I mean is there anything more ridiculous than 'Il

Trovatore'? If, you know, if I were to sit down and tell somebody who hadn't been to the opera the

story of 'Il Trovatore' they'd laugh their head off and say, "Who could go and watch that?!"

VB: [laughs]

TW: You know, the old gypsy steals--

MW: Steals one baby.

TW: Steals the count, she steals one baby and she's going to burn the baby in the fire. But by

mistake she burns her own baby! She puts her own baby in instead of the other baby! So, but she

doesn't let on. And she brings up the other baby as her own. So the hero Manrico is really the

brother of the Count de Luna who is the villain. [bursts out laughing]

VB: Aw. I see what you mean.

TW: [laughing]. How Verdi could countenance--

MW: But his music carried it on.

TW: His music is so sublime that you don't bother about the plot you know.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Ah well Top Hat to me's a very good Hollywood example of who bother's about the plot you

know.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Get the dancers on.

VB: Yeah.

TW: And Irving Berlin's eh, five numbers I noted, five great numbers. Every one a hit. Smashing numbers.
VB: Yeah.
TW: And so witty and
MW: Yeah.
VB: Numbers that you really enjoy listening to.
TW: Aye. And I play them over and over again.
MW: Do you go to films yourself?
VB: Erm, I do. Yes.
MW: Mhm.
VB: Actually I was just saying that. I was just seeing Annette, you know the Project Director. And we were just saying, there don't seem to be an awful lot of great films out at the moment really.
MW: Mhm.
VB: Erm that we could think of.
TW: No. I meant to ask you, I was talking about a blockage. I was talking about Judy Garland.
VB: Yeah.
TW: There's another guy I'm not very fond of. Eh, Orson Welles. Now, every time he comes back on
the telly he always gets five stars and he's always spoken of respectfully. You know, great director, great this and a great that.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: I never fancied him. Remember we were in Vienna and the courier was going on about The

Third Man.

MW: Oh aye.

TW: You remember The Third Man. I had to tell her, much to her annoyance I think at the time that I

never liked the bloody Third Man. I never fancied it much at all. And I think Orson Welles has been

overrated. That's my opinion. Eh his Citizen Kane I've watched at least twice through and couldn't

just see the point of it. You know,

MW: Mmhuh.

TW: Couldn't see just what all the furore was about.

MW: Mhm.

TW: What do you think? Are you an Orson Welles fan?

VB: I'm not a huge Orson Welles fan actually. I quite like The Third Man, mainly because of the

music in it.

TW: Aye.

VB: I liked the way they used that wee tune.

TW: The Harry Lime theme. Yeah.

MW: Mhm.

VB: But I agree about erm, I do think that eh Citizen Kane is quite overrated I must say.

TW: I think it's overrated. All these fancy shots.

VB: Yeah.

TW: These angular shots eh, eh--

MW: Kind of gimmicky isn't it?

VB: Yes. That's it.

TW: Aye. Actually I was more, when I took the trouble to read about what it was all about it was

based on the life of Hearst the newspaper tycoon.

MW: That's right. Aye.

VB: Yeah.

TW: And his fancy woman was Marion Davies the film star who he put into this San Simeon.

MW: Mmhuh.

TW: This grand eh, mansion house that he built. Yet the real story's more interesting than the Orson

Welles version.

VB: Yeah. I think you're right. I mean gimmicky that's the word, that's the word to describe it.

TW: Aye. Aye. Aye.

VB: Erm, yeah. I mean the other thing I was going to ask you about. It sounds from what you're

saying. I wanted to check if I was right or not, but the sort of glamorous aspect of the film was

something that was, that you found attractive.

TW: Oh yes!

VB: Is that right?

TW: Well of course I think I mentioned the last time Val, it was escape.

VB: Yes.

TW: I mean if you live in a single end in Bridgeton as I did in the thirties and you escape into the local

cinema to see *Top Hat* and see the piccolino and see all that beautiful, you're away in another world.

VB: Yes.

TW: Of course it's transport. Oh, without any doubt.

VB: Yes. Yes.

TW: But then there wasn't the amusement in any house then really that there is now. It's not only your background that was like that. I would say, like my aunt's now, she went to the cinema every time it changed.

TW: Aye. Aye. So did my mother.

MW: You know it was something to do.

TW: Twice a week.

MW: To take you out.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye. Aye.

VB: Another thing I was going to ask was, I mean did you choose what pictures you went to or did you more or less go to everything or...?

TW: No I chose as carefully as I could because--

MW: Uhuh.

TW: Eh, gangster films I loved as a boy. James Cagney. Humphrey Bogart. That sort of thing. Eh. [pause 2 seconds] Horror films. Children have a strange fascination for horror films. They're afraid of them but they like them. I remember the first time I saw *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* with Fredric March. The Fredric March version.

MW: Mhm.

TW: Which I think it's agreed was the best version of the lot. It was really horrific.

MW: Oh I remember hiding under the seats. [laughs]

VB: Yes. I agree. That's a wonderful version of it.

TW: Aye. Terribly, very well done.

VB: Yeah.

MW: He was a marvellous actor.

TW: Yes. He was a great actor.

MW: Fredric March. Terrific actor.

TW: Aye. Aye. I remember being strangely comforted. Here's a funny thing. In the middle of that. I can remember, I used to hurry home at eh four o'clock, whenever I got out of school. And if my mother didn't need me for something she would give me enough money to go to the pictures till tea-time. Tea-time would be, my father wouldn't come in till about six o'clock. So I would eh, [pause 2 seconds] I would go to the pi... and I saw this Dr Jekyll and I was terrified by it. And I remember saying to a man in desperation beside me, a grown-up man, "Is he going to turn again?" You know he used to turn into the monster. "Is he going to turn again, mister?" I was terrified.

MW: Uhuh.
TW: I was grabbing this man's arm. And he said something to me, you know typical laconic Glasgow way which comforted me. He said, "I don't know son, you'd better go and ask him", you know.
MW: [laughs]
VB: [laughs]
TW: He was being funny. But that was a comfort to me you know.
VB: Yeah.
TW: That somebody could make a joke about this horrifying
VB: Yeah.
TW: Portrayal. [laughs]
VB: As you say, it must've been terrifying to see as a child.
TW: Oh aye it was.
VB: It's frightening to watch as an adult you know but
TW: Aye. Aye.
VB: Aw dear. Did you ever have nightmares or anything after seeing a, a
TW: No. Not really.
VB: No.

TW: No. No I just, I remember being terrified. By the time I got out the pictures it was dark and I'd to
run up the stairs.
VB: Yeah.
MW: Back to reality.
TW: Aye. Aye.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Eh, [pause 2 seconds] Frankenstein was eh, was Boris Karloff.
MW: That's right.
TW: And he had a strange way. For a monster he had a kind of human face. He had a kind of
gentleness about him. Which eh, maybe detracted from the horror of the film.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Bela Lugosi in <i>Dracula</i> . Did I tell you the story about <i>Dracula</i> the last time you were here?
VB: I don't think you did actually, no.
TW: Bela Lugosi, the famous Hungarian. He looked evil, didn't he?
MW: Oh he did. Yeah. Those eyes.
TW: Aye.
MW: Oh my!
TW: Eh, Bela Lugosi must have been hard up. I'm going back to, would be about 1960s, fifties, sixties Margaret?

MW: No, it would be fifty.

TW: Fifty. Margaret's brother invited us out to the King's Theatre in Glasgow.

MW: Oh aye he came up from England one Christmas, that's right.

TW: Aye. And it's the sort of thing I would never do off my own bat. But because somebody bought

me a ticket for a theatre, the least I can do is go. And it was Bela Lugosi in 'Dracula', in the flesh! In

the play! The King's Theatre in Glasgow. I discovered later, he was an old man now and he'd seen

better days. He was probably earning a few bob. Before he kicked out you know. And [laughs] we

were about the fourth row of the stalls and here comes Bela Lugosi. Now I can remember him as a

wee boy being terrified by these evil eyes he had. And here he comes out. Rather, rather eh, war

aware as they say.

VB: Aye.

TW: You know he'd seen better days. But he still had the immaculate eh, cloak and top hat. And he

comes out and he leers at the audience. He says, you heard the noises of dogs howling. He says, "I

hear the dogs ahowling." And some joker behind me said, "Aye. Shawfield. Carntyne and White

City." Those are the three dog tracks in Glasgow.

MW: [bursts out laughing]

TW: How's that for repartee? And of course the audience roared with laughter.

MW: Aw yes.

TW: Ruined the thing! [laughs]

VB: Ah. [laughs]

TW: Is there any wonder why English comedians were afraid to come up here?

VB: That's true. That's true. But I mean as you say, Bela Lugosi. I was down in London
at the beginning of the year and I saw in the Museum of the Moving Image there I was
MW: Mmhuh.
VB: And I saw they had Bela Lugosi's erm, outfit from 'Frankenstein' [possibly referring to Son of Frankenstein]
TW: Oh, had they really?
VB: It was really interesting to see you know.
MW: Uhuh.
VB: And the suit and the
TW: Yes.
VB: They had erm, a model that they used to use when they were setting up the shots and
everything so that Bela Lugosi didn't have to
TW: Appear in all these
VB: Stand round.
TW: Oh that's interesting.
VB: And they used this model just for getting the lighting right.
TW: Ah.
MW: Is this part of your course to visit this?

VB: Erm, well yes, I went to see what they had there. But that was, that was one of the best bits
for me was seeing this outfit
TW: Very good.
VB: That he'd worn.
TW: Very good. There you are.
VB: In 'Frankenstein'. He seemed to be quite a, I've always thought of Bela Lugosi as being quite a small man but in fact he was very big.
TW: I didn't think he was all that big.
MW: No but the cloak I think tends to make somebody look taller.
VB: Yeah. Yeah.
TW: Aye.
VB: That's interesting. I didn't know that he'd been in Glasgow.
TW: Ah there you are.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Aye. [laughs] "I hear the dogs howling."
MW: Poor man.
TW: [laughs]
VB: Aw. That's the probably the last. [laughs] sort of the crowning insult in his career.

MW: That'd be his swansong.

VB: Aw dear. Put him right off. Aye. I mean another thing I was going to ask you about was

obviously you know you read a lot about the movies now, erm, from what you're saying.

TW: Yes.

VB: And eh, I mean I wondered if you find that your tastes now are different from what they were

in the thirties? I mean are there films that you look back on that you enjoyed say, and you don't

enjoy so much now. Or other ones that you find--

TW: No it's strange. That's an interesting question. And the answer to that as far as I can gather is

strangely no.

VB: Oh.

TW: If anything I'm more conservative maybe than I was even then. Eh, eh, is that a, is that a case of

growing old? You get more set in your ways.

MW: Well I would think possibly.

TW: Eh, I've never lost my love of the musicals. The Hollywood musicals. The Gold Diggers films. The

Fred Astaire films. The Alice Faye films. Erm later, later on Gene Ke, he's a marvellous act, dancer

Gene Kelly wasn't he?

MW: Uhuh. Very pleasant personality too.

TW: Maggie and I have argued as to who's the better dancer and the answer is that they're two

different dancers.

MW: Different types.

VB: Yes.

TW: Aye.

MW: Mhm.

TW: Fred Astaire's so graceful and Gene Kelly's so, what's the word? Athletic. Aye.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye. An American in Paris to me's a marvellous film. Great film!

MW: Ah Gene Kelly's a super actor too.

TW: Aye.

MW: Remember him with the children and that in Paris.

TW: Aye. 'I've got rhythm'.

MW: Oh aye. It was marvellous.

TW: Yes. So, going back to your question. Eh, no, if anything I'm more set in my ways. Here's an interesting parallel. I don't know whether I told you. I am a devotee of eh, the British dance bands of the thirties. The eh Ambrose eh Carl Gibbons era. Erm, [pause 2 seconds] now when I was a boy I used to adore these. I used to hurry home from school to hear the five o'clo, there used to be an hour, five o'clock the wireless to six o'clock. The big bands used to play for an hour and I used to hear it. And [pause 2 seconds] when I grew up then I wondered to myself was this just a boyish infatuation. But no, I still like them. And I like them even more. And I still, I play all these old, in fact only this morning I was in and bought a CD of eh just post-war eh dance band days called 'The Bands Play Again'.

MW: Mhm.

TW: Dancing again after the war. That's right. Aye. Eh no you eh, your opinions seem to set and they don't change.

MW: Is that not symptomatic of the fact that just now they're not producing what appeals to older

people?

VB: That's interesting.

MW: What is being produced.

TW: Aye.

VB: Yeah.

MW: I would say. You don't tend to want to buy what's being produced.

TW: Did I make this quote to you the last time? Just on that point Margaret. Eh did I make that

quote to you the last time Val, I'm asking you a question. Did I make the following quote that I heard

on the Gay Byrne show--

MW: Uhuh.

TW: An actor called Joss Ackland, an Irishman made the remark. They were talking about something

a bit like this. And he said... [pause 2 seconds] Somebody asked the question, like the question you

asked. "Why are they not making decent films any more?" And he said, from experience, and he was

just back from Hollywood. He said films are no longer made by competent directors. They're made

by clerks, he said.

MW: Mmhuh.

TW: And accountants, that was the word he used. Accountants who prophesy what [pause 2

seconds] a pair of young squirts in their motor car in a--

MW: A movie drive-in.

TW: A movie drive-in in Texas wants. And that's the kind of films they make. I mean he says the films

consist of eh, violence, sex and bad language. And he was quite outspoken about it. He said that's

why they're not making decent films any more. Now as a moderner against me an ancient, do you

find modern films, do you find anything good in modern films?

VB: Well I think em, I agree with that erm what he was saying. It does seem that a lot of films now

are being aimed at you know sixteen, seventeen-year-olds--

TW: Aye.

MW: Mmhuh.

VB: That, you know, get excited by a bit of violence or something.

TW: Aye. Aye.

MW: Uhuh.

VB: A find a lot of films that are being made now are a bit--

TW: Pure rubbish.

VB: Yeah. Although, I mean you see, you do see the odd one's that--

TW: You see the odd one. Aye.

VB: That's really good you know.

TW: Aye.

VB: But erm--

TW: But this business of cars.

VB: Yeah.

TW: On fire. Tumbling down a 40-foot cliff.

VB: Yeah. Well I mean to give you an example, as I say I was down in London and I was looking at cinemas there in fact. And one of the ones I saw was an old Odeon. Erm, on the outskirts of London. Beautiful cinema. And the manager was very nice and said would you like to just stay in and have a look at a film and see what it's like an action. And the one they were showing was erm Sylvester Stallone's *The Specialist*. And it's--

TW: Aye. Well he's a good example of what I mean.

VB: Just dreadful! Pumping guns and erm--

TW: Aye.

VB: Bombs going off. And you thought, it wasn't entertaining.

TW: No.

MW: No.

VB: Nothing like, to use that example *Top Hat* that we've been talking about.

MW: Uhuh.

VB: You finish watching it and you feel really happy and--

MW: Uplifted.

VB: Relaxed. Uplifted.

MW: Yes.

VB: Something like that, you come out of and you just sort of oh!
TW: Well do the kids enjoy it? Do the sixteen-year-olds enjoy it?
VB: I don't know if they do even you know. That cinema was empty.
TW: Well they wouldn't make them if they didn't enjoy it.
VB: I'm sure some people must.
MW: Well how many times have you been at the cinema recently and it's been empty?
VB: Yeah.
TW: Aye.
MW: Remember last time we were there. What was it? There were nine people there.
TW: Ah it was Schindler's List. That was a good film.
MW: That was a very good film.
TW: Aye.
VB: Yeah.
TW: Aye.
MW: I don't think you'd see queues for the cinema now. [laughs]
VB: No. No. That's right.
TW: No unless it was except, oh by the way! Eh, I meant to tell you. We, we got an exceptional cinematic experience during the holidays from of all places. a German-

MW: Oh yes.

TW: On the satellite. A German eh, eh, a German channel. The Strauss Dynasty. Now here's a strange thing. [pause 3 seconds] The actor who played Johann Strauss the Second, the Waltz King, was, is it Paul McGann you call him [referring to Stephen McGann]?

MW: Mmhuh.

TW: British TV actor. Good actor. His wife was played by a Lisa Harrow. Another--

MW: Yes.

TW: She's on English TV. You see her on the, she was on the other night. She's the wife of eh, Kavanagh QC.

MW: She's the wife of Kavanagh QC.

TW: She's an English TV actress. John Gielgud was Metternich, wasn't he?

MW: Uhuh.

VB: Ah.

MW: It was all English--

TW: Fox. [Edward] Fox. No Fox was Metternich.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: And John Gielgud was some other joker. Some other. And it lasted ten hours. They showed you an hour and a half each day for five days.

MW: During the Christmas holiday wasn't it?

TW: Aye. Aye. The Strauss. Now here's the strange thing. They were all English actors. [pause 2

seconds]

VB: [laughs]

MW: [laughs]

TW: But it was dubbed into German. So the only reason I, I can't speak a word of German.

MW: Oh we learned a few bits.

TW: Aye.

VB: [laughs]

TW: Aye. I know the story of the Strauss dynasty because I've read about them and I've studied

them. And I was able to sort of guess what they were doing and who was coming on. You know

Brother Joseph.

MW: But the music was there anyway.

TW: The music was aye. Absolutely marvellous. I wrote to the BBC, the ITV and the erm-

MW: Sky.

TW: The Sky. Making enquiries. I got a charming letter from the BBC yesterday morning. Sadly

saying, I wanted to know were they showing it in English? Since it was obviously made originally in

English. And to have it dubbed into German. You know when all the actors are English. It was great.

It was done in Vienna and done in Paris.

MW: Oh it was marvellous.

TW: And done in London.

VB: Aye.

TW: Eh, ten hours. It was great. Marvellous. Beautiful. Beautifully acted. Magnificently done. They

had the Vienna Philharmonic doing some of the big scenes. Eh, they had scenes of Vienna.

MW: They had scenes of Vienna.

TW: Vienna's a lovely city.

MW: Rome. Paris.

TW: Aye.

MW: Beautiful.

TW: Aye. Now, the BBC are not doing it because it's not their production, the lady from the BBC said.

I'm awaiting information from the other two channels. But this would be something worth seeing

you know.

VB: It sounds great. I mean just even the cast list makes it sound good.

TW: Beautifully done.

MW: Oh it was.

TW: Now, eh, oh we're back onto this music again. But relating to your subject, Hollywood to the

best of my knowledge have only done one famous Johann Strauss thing called The Great Waltz. And

it was lousy! [tape cuts out]

[End of Side B]

[End of Tape One]

[[Start of Tape Two]

[Start of Side A]

[audio for this section as tape corrupted]

TW: The other one was the life of Verdi. I don't know why nobody's tackled the life of Verdi.

MW: Uhuh. That would be interesting.

TW: Verdi was such a marvellous man. He'd such a marvellous long life. Interesting life. I don't know why some of the Italian companies haven't had a go at--

MW: Uhuh.

TW: The life of Verdi.

VB: I mean you're raising an interesting point there as well. Do you think there are certain types of films that Hollywood does particularly well, and other types that they don't?

TW: Aye. [laughs]

VB: Right. [laughs]

TW: They do musicals. The pre-war musicals. The Warner, the Warner Brothers musicals to me were, were the best. They did them best. But they had the right cast and yet I read that musicals saved them from extinction. They were on their uppers time after time. And they would produce yet another Gold Diggers and it would save them for another year. But they had the right eh combination. They had the best stars. They employed the best eh composers. They employed Irving Berlin.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: Cole Porter. The Gerchswin Brothers. Etcetera. Eh, [pause 2 seconds] and Warner Brothers musicals to me were the best. And they were all in black and white. There's not a coloured one among them.

VB: Aye.

TW: But that's another thing you can go on to. Black-and-white films. Black-and-white films have a, a

peculiar charm of their own. Very often colour intrudes upon. Would you not agree?

VB: I think that's right. Yes.

TW: Aye!

VB: I've not thought about it before but when you say that.

TW: Ah there's a nice graininess. There's a comforting graininess about a black-and-white film. If you

saw an old Cagney film or an old eh Humphrey Bogart film in black and white. To me they're, they're

eh there's something nice about them. Colour does not necessarily enhance them.

MW: No.

VB: I mean do you think there are certain types of film then, you know from what you're saying

that are, should be black-and-white films?

TW: Should be what?

VB: Black, done in black and white.

TW: Ah I think so.

VB: Yeah.

TW: I think the sort of eh Philip Marlowe, Raymond Chandler-type films. The, the mean dark streets.

They're better in my opinion done in black and white. They're more grim.

MW: More believable you mean.

$\textbf{TW:} \ \textbf{Aye.} \ \textbf{The shadow.} \ \textbf{They cast more shadows.} \ \textbf{Eh, colour can sort of eh diffuse the, the diffusion of a shadow.} \ \textbf{They cast more shadows.} \ \textbf{Shadow.} \ \textbf{They cast more shadows.} \ \textbf{Shadow.} \ Sh$
the colour to me takes away from the drama somehow or another.
MW: Mhm.
TW: I think some of these films should be stark.
VB: Yes.
TW: And plain.
VB: Yes.
TW: It heightens the drama.
VB: I think that's right. Actually someone was saying to me that they thought that eh things like skies looked better in black and white.
TW: Aye.
VB: You know when you get a western and you get a sort of a scene where a
TW: Yes!
VB: Great big sunset.
MW: Uhuh.
VB: And actually look better in black and white.
TW: Yes. A would agree with that. Yes.
VB: Yeah.

TW: I'm not a western fan but some of these, they're, they're, to me the classic western is the John Wayne one. The first one. *Stagecoach*.

VB: Yeah.

TW: And yet again our illusions are shattered. That was based on Guy de Maupassant story eh 'Ball of Fire'.

MW: 'Boule de Suif'.

TW: 'Boule de Suif'.

VB: Really!

TW: Aye. Stagecoach was based on--

VB: Unrecognisable! [laughs]

TW: Well you read 'Boule de Suif' and it's during the Franco-Prussian War. And it concerns a stagecoach--

MW: That's right. Aye.

TW: Of people fleeing from Paris to...

VB: Yes.

TW: I think it was Orleans. Which isn't very far away from Paris.

MW: Uhuh.

TW: About sixty miles. And all the things. Guy de Maupassant described in detail what happens to these. The goodies become the baddies and the baddies become the goodies.

MW: Uhuh.
TW: And here John Ford cottoned onto this.
MW: [laughs]
TW: Made a smashing movie out of it.
VB: That's amazing.
TW: A western out of it. Aye.
VB: I mean do you like erm films that use a book? That, you know, use a story like that? Or do you think, are you one of these people that thinks aw the film's never up to the book?
TW: Eh, oh, that's a hornet's nest Val.
VB: Yes.
MW: Mhm.
TW: The answer I would say is like the curate's egg. Some are good and some
MW: Some. Yes.
TW: I think I mentioned before the best [voice becomes gurgly; fault in recording], a film that lived up to the story and yet it shouldn't have was eh, <i>Papillon</i> .
MW: Yes.
TW: You remember the Devil's Island bloke.
MW: Mhm.

TW: Now the story of Papillon's a knockout. It's a marvellous story. How, how, and apparently it's true. This bloke who was sent to Devil's Island and he, he escaped twice didn't he? MW: That's right. Uhuh. TW: He was brought back. Now eh who was the bloke who--? MW: Steve McQueen played the part. TW: And who played the part of the wee man? The other wee man? The wee fella? MW: Oh-h... Oh I can't remember. **TW:** Good wee Hollywood actor. What d'you call him? Modern actor. MW: Can't remember at all. TW: He played a part the other, he played a part. He dressed up as a woman. D'you know the actor I mean? **VB: Dustin Hoffman.** TW: Dustin Hoffman. That's right. MW: That's right. TW: Well those two played, they played Papillon, and to me that was, that, we went to the La Scala to see it didn't we? MW: Yes.

TW: That was as good as the book. That was--

MW: Oh that was an excellent production. Really.

TW: It can work the opposite way. And I'll tell you one that in my opinion works the opposite way.

We went to see *Psycho* and it's this [laughs] terrifying bloody film. You know, [laughing], that eh,

that shower scene. Hitchcock, he excelled himself. It really is a terrifying film. I read the book of

Psycho and it's poor.

VB: Really!

TW: Aye. Aye.

VB: Surprising actually.

TW: Hitchcock to me eh--

MW: Of course Hitchcock's a master.

TW: Ah but you could go on about this.

MW: Really he is.

TW: 'Macbeth' is a good Shakespeare play. And if t hadn't been by Shakespeare to me it'd be sort of

run-of -the-mill. It's got all the marvellous Shakespeare witticisms and the allusions to this that and

the next thing. But it's by no means one of Shakespeare's better plays, 'Macbeth'. In my opinion.

VB: Mhm.

TW: I'm not a Shakespeare scholar so, I wouldn't know or not. But, Verdi's 'Macbeth'. Verdi has to

me enhanced. [sound quality of voice deteriorates]. You go and see Verdi's 'Maceth'. Eh eh I think

you'll find the original is rather poor. It's like, it's like dining off pâté de fois gras and then going back

to mutton you know. Eh so it can work the opposite way.

VB: Yeah.

TW: Aye.

VB: That's interesting. Yeah.
TW: Aye. Verdi [barely audible; fault in recording].
MW: [says something about music], obviously.
TW: Eh?
MW: He was [nearer?] his music obviously.
TW: Aw of course he was. Aye but his music, he heightens the drama tremendously you see.
MW: Yes.
TW: There you are. [pause 2 seconds] But you're not here to discuss opera.
VB: No. No, it's interesting. 'Cause I mean I'm interested in knowing your tastes in all art really.
MW: Are you interviewing many people?
VB: Erm, we're interviewing about [inaudible] altogether in Glasgow.
MW: Uhuh.
TW: That's interesting. What background do they have?
VB: There are people from erm, a couple of ladies that came from the Gorbals. And erm, there's a couple that came from the sort of West End area. [Rest inaudible].
TW: Yes. And do you find their opinions clash? I mean in the geographical sense.
VB: Erm

TW: In other words, do the West End people have different opinions from the East End people?
VB: They might do actually. They tended to go to a different type of cinema.
TW: Aye.
[End of Interview]