

INTERVIEW WITH MANNIE MANIM PART TWO

MARKET THEATRE

31ST JULY 2014 AT 11AM

Interviewer Vanessa Cooke.

VC: We got as far as just before you and Barney formed the Company.

MM: Okay, so he, he was working at the Arena and he did THE MAIDS first, which was that bit that we spoke about, and then he did, we had a company from Cape Town doing – the company that had done GILGAMESH. Now they were doing TEN BULLS.

VC: Yes.

MM: And then they kind of imploded and they had a five week run. Something imploded by the end of the first week. So I went to Barney and I was sitting in his kitchen bemoaning the fact that, that now I've used these young hippies and now they've messed me up, and everybody's going to say ah it's because I work with all these funny people, and then Barney said, "Well I think I can do something." So I said, "Are you sure? It has to be ready in a week." And he said, "Come here." And then it was a couple of days later and I walked into his lounge and you were sitting there.

VC: Yes.

MM: And then I had to sit here and Barney sat there and you were over there. And he said, "Okay Vanessa." And you did MISS SOUTH AFRICA SIXTH which blew me out of the room and then that was the thing that took the place of...

VC: With Marius. (Weyers)

MM: Ja, ja, ja absolutely, it was a wonderful kind of filling slot.

VC: Now you hadn't done BEGEERTE yet.

MM: No that came next. And then we did BEGEERTE and the wonderful David Goldblatt came into our lives and he (Barney) introduced me to David. I knew that he was a very famous photographer and he said, "Now, David's gonna come and take pictures." And I got excited, I remember.

VC: You know he's lost them.

MM: No! David's lost the pictures.

VC: He's lost the negatives. Marcel's (van Heerden) got some.

MM: Ag.

VC: Ja.

MM: He took these pictures which were nothing like you've ever seen in press call photography.

VC: Ja.

MM: Yes and they were of people's hands nearly touching, and people's shoulders nearly touching, people's mouths and ears nearly, nothing touched. It was about desire. It was about the wanting to touch and we made an exhibition in the back room, which then had another kind of life, kind of thing, of these things. And then, somewhere after that came WOYZEK.

VC: Now WOYZEK and that was with the Company though – remember we rented ...

MM: No WOYZEK wasn't the Company.

VC: Wasn't it?

MM: No, no.

VC: What was the first thing the Company did – SIX...?

MM: SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR.

VC: LYSISTRATA or SIX CHARACTERS.

MM: SIX CHARACTERS was still PACT, but he had this idea that – there's a play in SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR and he wasn't going to do Pirandello's play. That was boring. He was gonna do – "What if we do our own play, Mannie." And then of course this big sales thing with me was – "And then we can perform it every night after the show, as a late night. The people can stay and watch that play." And that's how, that's in a way, that was the first, that was PEOPLE, and we used to make an announcement before the show every night and say, "You're going to see them rehearsing a play and if you want to see that play they're rehearsing then you have to stay afterwards and we'll do that play."

VC: (Laughs)

MM: And I think we chose another ticket, anyway then that got us really starting to think and talk seriously.

VC: But had you been sort of talking about it before?

MM: Yes.

VC: Your visits to...

MM: Yes definitely.

VC: Because he was looking for a place.

MM: Definitely, definitely, the, the lines were coming more and more closer together. He was looking for a place. He was wanting to have some people that we could work with. He was wanting to have a, a like, a home, you know, and he kept talking back to his house in Parktown, with the curtains, you know.

VC: Ja, ja.

MM: You know how Barney always used to go back, elliptical conversations.

VC: Ja.

MM: "No Mannie we can just have a big room."

VC: (Laughs)

MM: "I can just pull the curtain," and that. "Wilma Stockenstrom performed and it was wonderful." Which of course could have been, and is, can always be. You – we had that fantastic company up here – Weekend Theatre Company.

VC: Yes. Yes.

MM: Wherever it was.

VC: In a flat.

MM: ???

VC: Matthew (Krouse) and them.

MM: And so eventually...

VC: Had you wanted to leave PACT(Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal)?

MM: Well, what was happening, like parallel to this, was first of all Barney arriving and us starting to have a sort of cross cultural conversation, and then we used to have open dress rehearsals – I don't know if you remember that.

VC: Yes and Rob McLaren came to that.

MM: And that started Rob McLaren coming.

VC: Told Barney it was wrong.

MM: Yes, yes absolutely.

VC: I remember very clearly.

MM: Ja, and all those actors that couldn't be in those plays, used to come and it was very good, in a way. It was very healthy that they came. They didn't just say, "Okay they can go to hell." They wanted to see what we were doing, and, and they wanted to get heard, and have their voice – big strong debates afterwards. That kind of added to it at the Alex (Alexander Theatre). We did it with the other PACT plays, the main PACT plays.

VC: You started doing the open dress.

MM: The open dress rehearsal. Ekhardt van der Hoven was very funny because he, he used to say to me, "But Mannie, now why have you got three dress rehearsals for this play?"

VC: (Laughs)

MM: I said. "Well no it's very complicated technically. We got, we've got to really rehearse." And we used to have three open performances. I don't know how the – it's extraordinary, grapevine thing works. And then a terrible thing happened. We arrived there one night for, I can't even remember which the show was...

VC: At the Alex...

MM: At the Alex and there were crowds of people outside and we got there Francois (Swart) and me for the dress rehearsal and they were all saying, " They won't let us in." So I went through the Stage Door.

VC: "Who won't let you in? "

MM: Well I went through the Stage Door. John Snelling, the Manager of the...

VC: Smelling!

MM: In the foyer was John Snelling and he said, "This is against the law, what you doing is breaking the law and..."

VC: After letting it happen before?

MM: Ja he hadn't kind of totally realised. Now it was becoming a regular thing and he got freaked out. So he said, "You can't do this." So that was one thing that really kind of closed me down. Then (Charles) Marowitz Macbeth came out. He did it in Pretoria, did it in Joburg, and then we took it on a township tour.

VC: Coz he wanted to.

MM: He wanted that, and I had the wonderful Meshack Mosia who used to organise the township tours. And a lot of stories about that, but the main story, which relates to the Market, is that we were going to play in Lenasia and Cassim Salojee was helping us to do those performances. He introduced me to the Indian business community, and then I think the bookshops in Lenasia and in Laudium and so on, used to help sell the tickets. And he phoned me one day, in Pretoria in my office and said. "Mannie, we got trouble. People don't want to sell the tickets." And I said, 'What the hell's going on?'"

VC: Why?

MM: He said, "I don't know. I can't explain it, but you know..."

VC: And before you'd taken...

MM: Ja we were going there, we'd been going there quite regularly and then Boom. So I said please can we meet with them. And I went to him. We met somewhere in Joburg and we drove. Ian Bernhardt came with me and we drove to a place in...

(Interruption)

MM: We drove to a place in Lenz and I remember sitting in a room full of men that I, I'd never seen before. And in the back were the women, in the kitchen. They were like supplying tea...um...

VC: Muslim?

MM: Yes, and the guys... Then it came out that they had a page. They had The Star of a couple of days ago and on the front page, for some reason, bloody van Niekerk (Sybrandt), the Chairman of the...he was the Chairman of the Board of PACT, but he was the Administrator of the Transvaal.

VC: Ah, yes, yes.

MM: He came up with a big statement – PACT will not go into the townships unless they're invited. So they said, "So Mr. Manim we're here to tell you – you're not invited. We don't want you here."

(V Laughs)

MM: "You're not coming to this place. We don't want Mr. van Niekerk and all his rubbish. You can go to hell." You know...

VC: ???

MM: "That's our statement, so goodnight."

VC: Ooh!

MM: So I tried this way and that way and that way. And I still don't, it was roundabout nine o'clock. I looked at my watch and just thought fuck it, how do I get out of this now. So I just – I lost it. (Laughs) In a nice way. I just said, "Okay well now..."

VC: What do we do about this?

MM: "I'm going to have to tell you the truth that this whole thing is happening as a cheat."

VC: They didn't know about it.

MM: "No, nobody knows. Mr. van Niekerk's never heard about it. He'd have a heart attack if he knew about this. My boss doesn't know about this, you know. My partner in crime Francois Swart knows about this. But only from us down, and of course the cast knows about it and so on. But nobody understands that we're breaking all the rules. We got Marowitz to write us a letter to say – I demand that my play goes to the townships." I took delivery of the letter, only after we'd opened so that I could take that to the Board to say what do we do now? We have an international incident.

VC: Is that why his bloody article was written?

MM: Which article?

VC: Van Niekerk's article, was that why?

MM: No, no it was out of the blue. It was like scoring some political point- parliament – not parliament then – the provincial parliament or something of the Transvaal. He was making a point about that we weren't doing things for black people. They had to invite us.

VC: We weren't meant to be doing things...

MM: That's correct – it was all this Separate Development. It was like we'll only go there if they want us to go there. All that stuff so, so I just let go and then when I was finished, I remember, I just sat there and thought now what are they going to say. And they said, "Okay, just give us ten minutes. We want to talk amongst each other. Will you just wait outside. And Ian and I stood on the veranda outside that house while they..."

VC: They knew Ian as well of course.

MM: They knew Ian from before, ja. And I was standing with Ian, and probably I was smoking, coz I used to smoke then and I remember saying to Ian, "I can't go on like this, this. We've got to do something else now."

VC: This is not right.

MM: This is not going to do it. Yeah. Got to, I didn't say we gonna go and find another theatre. I just said I can't go on like this, we've got to find another way.

VC: ???

MM: And...er...er...when that tour was finished, I then took, I had a lot of holiday owing to me, coz I never took holidays, so I think I took like three months or something, and I remember going from the north of South Africa, there's a place in, in the Game Reserve where you can see Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and you're in the furthest point north. So I went up there and then I drove all the way down to Cape Agulhas.

VC: Thinking...

MM: Stopping on the way – I saw, visited Athol (Fugard). We went fishing. That's another story, coz he made me read ZEN AND THE ART OF ARCHERY before he would go fishing with me.

VC: (Laughs) The whole book.

MM: Yes, and then he had to question me about it.

VC: No, man.

MM: Yes, he said, "No, no let's discuss it."

VC: How?

MM: The backstory is that he was trying to finish a play and I was wanting to go fishing, and he didn't want to go fishing.

VC: Made you swot...

MM: ...gave me something to do. So, but I had time, so nothing mattered. When we did go fishing we didn't catch any fish, but we had a very nice night watching the sun rise and all that stuff. So when I came back to the office then I'd made up my mind, and I said, "I'm gonna leave." And I gave six months notice. It was about October.

VC: To be fair.

MM: Yes I said, "No hassles. I don't want anyone saying you just left us in the lurch and stuff." And then also I don't know which in what order, but I went to Barney and said, "Okay Barney."

VC: I'm with you.

MM: "We're going to do this now. We're gonna do it. Now I'm gonna resign."

VC: He must have been like Ooh.

(They laugh)

MM: He was, he was wonderful, you know. He was very warm.

MM: Coz that's a big thing for you to have done.

MM: No, absolutely, absolutely.

VC: ???

MM: Sure there was no...

VC: What were you being offered – nothing.

MM: And we were just going – we then phoned up Manfred Hermer and said, "We want to look for premises. Will you help us look." Coz he had done the Arena, done the Alex and he'd done the Civic. So, and he was a friend, and he knew about buildings. So I used to meet him, half past six in the morning, before he started his work and we used to go and look at synagogues.

VC: I remember cinemas.

MM: Yes, old cinemas, nightclubs, all that sort of thing. Go and find...

VC: And Barney?

MM: Premises ja. Barney didn't come to many of those.

VC: Too early.

(They laugh)

MM: We would report back.

VC: Right.

MM: And then, sitting in Pretoria, it could have been the last month I was there. There was a phone call from Maurice Norton, in Joburg City...

VC: Already the, still with PACT then?

MM: I was still with PACT and he needed a theatre expert.

VC: Meanwhile we were at the Blue Fox and all of that?

MM: No.

VC: Mich...

MM: No.

VC: Oh, okay.

MM: This was still before, before we'd left PACT. Before we started. Now...

VC: Looking...

MM: We gonna call this thing the Company – LYSISTRATA – the Company. So Maurice said, "I've had this crazy idea. The Old Market..." He gave me this long story. "The Market's moving to Kazerne."

VC: Yes.

MM: Because there's a, this is too small and there's going to be a new market, and he's got an idea that the Fruit Market at the one end can be a theatre." It might be totally mad but would you please, Mr. Manim." And of course that was the right introduction coz he'd had to go through all the PACT switchboard to get to me. And I came across and we stood there, on the gallery looking down over the, over the space, and in my car had jumped two or three other, I think three of them, all squashed in, ah City engineers and they were standing in the place in amongst the fruit boxes saying, "To be or not to be."

VC: Everyone was terribly confused.

MM: And all the traders going, "What's going on here?" So...

VC: ???

MM: So then the, again I took a chance. I, just with a wing and a prayer, and I said, "Okay...um... I'm going to tell you something now. I've just resigned from PACT where you phoned me, and I'm trying to start a theatre company with a guy called Barney Simon, with some of the best actors in South Africa. Blah, blah, blah and we're looking for a home. So this ..."

VC: Would be perfect.

MM: "In our dreams, could be our home." You know er... and I thought he's either gonna run away, you know, or catch the dream, kind of thing. And he was just, he was just so lovely. He just said, "Ah that's wonderful. Would you think of starting a theatre here?" So I said, "Yes this, no definitely we'd start a theatre." "Oh that's fantastic." So then we started the whole business of...

VC: But that took ages hey.

MM: That took, oh, years because first of all we didn't know any of this stuff. We had to save the building. The building was gonna be...

VC: Torn down...

MM: Torn down, razed to the ground. The bus depot, that's a couple of blocks to the north now, which way is that – east, would be here and there would be no more market and the new market would be at Kazerne, and then we had to find a way to save the market, and we sat with you guys.

VC: Ja.

MM: Saying – what can we say – architectural heritage, historical Johannesburg – blah, blah. He wasn't impressed with any of that. He said no Mannie that's not gonna...

VC: They are not going to be interested.

MM: Management of the Council. They don't listen – rubbish – architectural heritage – nonsense.

VC: What does that mean?

MM: What's that, ja. So one night late, late, late in my flat in Yeoville still, phone rings – Maurice, "I've got it Mannie! I've got it! I've got..." "Maurice what is it?" (He) said, "It's the longest three pin arch in the Southern Hemisphere. "That and he explained it."

VC: It was engineering of course.

MM: Engineering, and it was the biggest thing of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and I said, "Will that impress them?" He said. "They never gonna tear that down. That makes Joburg important."

VC: Engineers!

MM: Yes, longest three pin arch – done. So we can bring tourists here for the next hundred years and we've got the longest...

VC: Nobody ever talks about it now.

MM: No, no they forget. They don't know. I mean I told Hailey (Kingston) about it yesterday.

VC: Mm.

MM: She was so surprised. You know Barney's panel above the Stage Manager's desk in the small theatre, "Oh so that's why."

VC: Nobody...

MM: Ja, so then we saved the building and then came the terrible moment when they said it's got to be...

VC: Money.

MM: Got to be put out to tender. There's going to be tenders for this building and everybody can tender and – what's kind of difficult for me was we had been talking, Maurice and I, a lot and of course by then we'd all started talking about how – what we'd do with the building.

VC: Yes.

MM: Yes and he put all that in the advert. He put somebody will start a theatre complex with...

VC: Ah.

MM: Three theatres...

VC: Ah.

MM: And an art gallery and a restaurant.

VC: So they used...

MM: So it was all that stuff that we were planning.

VC: Maybe there was method in his madness.

MM: Rodney Grosskopff had already drawn something. But anyway, so he put it all out there and then all sorts of people, as you know, including Des (Lindbergh) and Dawn (Lindbergh) and who was the guy who was the...

VC: I've got their proposal.

MM: Have you? I wish I could find our proposal. Have you got our proposal?

VC: No I don't know where our proposal is.

MM: It's probably in the City Council files.

VC: Ja, probably.

MM: Coz it was a lovely proposal.

VC: It was very nice.

MM: All people's letters saying how good we were and stuff.

VC: I'll try to find it. I'll ask.

MM: Yes, yes it should be part of the archive, definitely. Anyway – so then it went out to tender and then the kerfuffling started. Barney went overseas.

VC: Of course.

MM: I was left with Des and Dawn saying please come and have lunch with us or spend the day with us – that's what it was and we'll talk about a... I remember we couldn't afford those things in those days – I phoned Barney, "I'm only phoning you coz it's bloody serious. What am I going to do?" And he said, "No, no you must go and see them. You must hear what they've got to say. "So I went and we spent the whole day, and they were very charming as they can be.

VC: Oh, ja.

MM: They were very sweet. We had a lovely lunch, beautiful house in Houghton and... what came out of it though was they never stopped telling me what they'd done and how good they were and how wonderful they... Des could do all these things and Dawn could do all the other things. I'm not sure what Barney and I were gonna do.

VC: Did they tell you they were going to tender?

MM: No they had tendered.

VC: Oh they had tendered already.

MM: They wanted me to combine our tenders. That was the point of the lunch.

VC: Oh!

MM: Combine the tenders, "Then we can't lose, Mannie, if we combine the tenders." So I heard them out but I felt, I just felt, you know, here we are. We've gone all this way and now we're really up for the main chance and if we win it, then we win it, and if we lose it because they win it, well then no that's what it is.

VC: Go find somewhere else.

MM: Here another theatre or whatever. But – so I phoned him.

VC: In America.

MM: In America again coz I had to, and I said to Barney, “I’ve had the meeting and please don’t ask me to give you all the detail but – they did nothing wrong. They just told me how fantastic they were and everything and, and I, I just felt myself withdraw and I thought I’d rather we did it and...”

VC: Got to go it alone.

MM: ...”ja however we do it, poor as it’s going to be and ??? it’s going to be ours and we’ll do our stuff, and we’ll and we’ll do it the best we can.” And he was fine and he said, “Okay are you sure about that”.

VC: Got you.

MM: That’s it, that’s the end of that. So then the next day I had to phone Dawn. Don’t know if this should be on this thing, but the next day I phoned Dawn. She was furious. She said, “We’ve heard that you’re going to win, we’ve heard that you’re going to win, that’s why you’re doing this. You’ve got an inside track, you’re going to find out ???” I said, “No Dawn it’s not that.”

VC: They were very, very cross.

MM: Very upset.

VC: For years I think.

MM: Yeah, I said, “No it’s not that. It’s just that we’d rather do it ourselves, in our way, and your way will be different.”

VC: May the best man win.

MM: “It doesn’t say that there’s anything wrong with your way, our way will be different .” Anyway we split and then I was trying to remember the name of that Afrikaans, there was an Afrikaans businessman who ran like Ster Kinekor, or something. Peter or Philip or something, Pretorius, or – anyway got invited to a, his office somewhere in Carlton Centre or somewhere and he’d also tendered.

VC: He also wanted ja, to join us.

MM: He wanted to know about our tender, what did we put in, what did we say, how much are we going to spend and all that kind of thing. And would we consider a partnership and I said, “No.”

VC: No, no, no.

MM: Er... I mean it was much easier to say no to them in the room.

VC: Mm.

MM: Coz he was totally from another planet.

VC: And we gonna have a cinema here and stuff.

MM: Oh he would have had cinemas . He would have combined everything, and God knows, there might have been a casino, for all we know, by now.

VC: Ja.

MM: So it was a totally different kind of, so it wasn’t difficult to say no sorry, to that one. And then

came the big wait. We put in the tender finally in December that year '74 and the tenders were announced on the, like the 4th of April, somewhere round there of '75, April. And lo and behold! Which to this day we've never totally understood how.

VC: How?

MM: Barney always comes up with truth that you know. "It was like a miracle. "A complete miracle that they gave the tender to these two guys with Jewish sounding names."

(Noise disturbance)

MM: But I, I thought we did a good tender, but...

VC: But...

MM: But the other guys had much more money.

VC: Money, ja...

MM: Much more money.

VC: Ja.

MM: Remember we had to sit with, to do part of our tender. I sat with Bonnie (Cohen) in Pretoria, Sam Cohen.

VC: Yes, trying to work out the economics of the whole thing.

MM: The daughter and work out now. And when we said," Okay how much are we gonna spend" We kept saying numbers and we started at like R20,000 and he said, "No that's not enough. "And then R30,000, R40,000. When we got to 100,000 and I said, "No, now you must stop because we're never going to get that money.

VC: ??

MM: We never, it's just too much money.

VC:Mm.

MM:He said, "Okay" then he made it something, 109, 322 or something like that. Sam's business thing. And that's how we came up with the money we were going to spend, didn't have anything to do with anything. Didn't have anything to do with the plans or the...

VC: Nothing, nothing.

MM: No it was just to show that we, we're serious. We're not coming for pennies. We need R100,000.

(He laughs)

MM: And then, then started the thing of finding people with money, how to now...

VC: Fundraise.

MM: Yes all of us sitting together and er... Ben Trisk came up, again I don't know if this should be on there, you can decide when you're typing it up – there was...Okay I won't mention his name. There was another millionaire first, and he took one at us and said, "No thank you. I don't want to know anything about that."And then...er..., what's his name, Murray, Murray Mclean was the second

millionaire came down on a Saturday morning and I don't know if all of us were here but we let him into the theatre and something happened that morning, and then I used that after that, that when people walked into the empty building with the light coming in through those windows up at the top, it was, the space was kind of magic.

VC: If they didn't think it was magic, then no point.

MM: No, then they didn't know what we were talking about. And Rodney (Barnett) took a number of lovely pictures of those.

VC: Ja.

MM: Those pictures are gone anyway.

VC: Ah.

MM: Oi and then he came out and said, "Okay can you, Barney and Mannie, can you meet tomorrow morning, my house in Parktown blah, blah, blah." We went home and tried to plan what we were going to say. The next morning, sitting next to his swimming pool, trying not to rattle our cups and our saucers, with a very weak tea made by Scilla (Mclean).

(They laugh)

MM: He told us – Okay you tell us what you've done now, what you've been doing. Where have you been for the last...Coz then, already we were going for two years already.

VC: Ja so we had plays.

MM: So we'd been doing plays and you know – but of course he was interested in the business and I was saying, "Well we all do sit around in a circle. "

VC: We're a co-op.

(They laugh)

VC: We share the money.

MM: Share the money.

VC: What!

MM: He went kind of green at that. But then he told us he, something we didn't know – that after we went home he came back there with Cilla and they climbed through a window on the railway side and they came into the building when nobody was here. "Isn't this exciting, isn't this fantastic, all these guys." And Scilla caught the dream and they were- so when we sat there, next to the pool, there was nothing to say, he was ready, he was...

VC: Ja.

MM: He thought this was totally mad but totally wonderful.

VC: And had he already dropped out of ... what was it Am...

MM: Abercom Investments.

VC: Abercom, had he dropped out already then?

MM: Don't think so yet...

VC: He was on his way.

MM: Was on his way, what Barney called the swashbuckling side of... called him the Swashbuckler. Mr. Mclean he loved that and, you know, he just became this wonderful friend. So he sat next to that swimming pool saying, "Okay so alright, what we need is money."

VC: Got to raise it now.

MM: So we need a Board. Okay I'm the Chairman. Who do you want on the Board?

(They laugh)

MM: So then we said, then we said seven names and it was Raymond Tucker, Cyril Fisher. It was Ben because he'd introduced us. Barney and myself, and, who the hell, there were seven altogether. Breytenbach!(Breytie)

VC: Oh, Breytie.

MM: Breytie and of course Murray. So that's seven.

VC: Ja.

MM: So then we started and Murray said, "Well you've got the plans but have you got a builder and so on." "We've got Gary Zulberg." He was introduced to us by Rodney (Grosskopff). And Murray then said, "Well we've got to sign the builder's contract." "You know I'd had to sign the lease."

VC: That was money.

MM: Money.

VC: Real money, as I know from building.

MM: Yes, I'd signed the lease up at the City Council but we hadn't promised them much money – perhaps R900 a year. I can't remember what we said but...

VC: This was real.

MM: This was real and Murray said, "No, no we must sign it so that when the people come, that we're asking for money, they'll see the builders building and they'll know this is serious. If we don't start the building and then we just keep taking them to this empty shell..."

VC: They're going to...

MM: They'll just say, "Ja, no it's a nice idea." Murray's had a crazy idea, got to be nice to these people. But Murray used to bring them here with the bulldozers going and the bricklayers coming in, and he used to say, you know and they get excited and he'd say, "Well, do you like it? (laughs) Okay well this month's – what's it called – the builders lot".

VC: We can't pay them.

MM: We can't do it. How much is it. Oh it's fifty five thousand. Coz we worked out very quickly that Murray could ask millionaires for money, and we could ask ordinary people for ten Rands, five Rands.

VC: Ja.

MM: And we did that and I think that was part of the early success of the Market was, you know, for me the crumpled one rand notes that used to come from the old age pensioners. Used to say...

VC: Ja Lynne Marais told a nice story. I'll let you read it.

MM: Ah ha, great. So it meant as much to all of us and then we'd get their names on our address list, all that kind of thing. Many of the people who had stalls here when we originally started the building, they used to come in and say, "I had a stall here, and my uncle had this stall over here. Very nice what you're doing. And we gonna come and see, are you going to do shows?" "Come and see the shows." (He laughs). So I mean that was, we were all into a completely different world than this world of the builders, and building a theatre and getting to know Gary and Rodney and...

VC: All that stuff.

MM: Be at the builder's meetings, Friday mornings, or whenever it was.

VC: Did Barney go to those – no.

MM: Sometimes.

VC: You did all of that.

MM: Sometimes. I used to do that but Barney would come like, when we were planning what the, the theatre's shape was going to be, what the, the ?? Barney shape. Barney being very... sat with little blocks and things for days and days at the kitchen table..."How many..."

VC: No, no that doesn't fit.

MM: "How many shapes can we make. No, it should be a square." And then Rodney said, "No, but you can't fit a square into that shape Barney. It's a rectangle." "Then we'll have to take some of the art gallery." "No we can't do that."

VC: So he insisted that the Laager was a square afterwards.

MM: After that, because we knew that we could get this square. The Laager, as I said to Hailey (Winston), coz they very proudly show you what they're rebuilding – and I said, "Hailey you know we built the Laager after we learned so many things out of building the other spaces so in the Laager..."

VC: Why are they not asking anyone?

MM: They not asking anyone. In the Laager was every, every trick that we'd learned.

VC: Yes.

MM: From the other ones.

VC: So you can have any way round.

MM: Absolutely. And not...

VC: High.

MM: Not a dark blue, black space.

VC: No.

MM: But a red brick space that's got life in it. The bench seating so that the people could all rub shoulders. Ah, but anyway...

VC: Reinventing the wheel again.

MM: No, no I don't know what they gonna do. Probably they not going to have any of that.

VC: I don't, I don't really know. I don't want to know, at this point.

MM: Nadya (Cohen) was here yesterday.

VC: Oh, oh.

MM: So her and I had a good weep on each others' shoulders.

VC: She was cross when the columns were taken away.

MM: Yes, yes, no we had a great time with that.

VC: Getting more cross!

MM: No we both said...

VC:???

MM: The minute the pillars went out, lost its centre of gravity.

VC: Ja.

MM: Ja.

VC: And now, hopeless.

MM: So the extraordinary thing about Gary and Rodney was, also that Gary spotted Murray as a swashbuckler and of course Gary started his blinking things by the water. What were they called?

VC: Yes Bruma Lake.

MM: Bruma Lake and that other one in the Northern Suburbs, and Murray helped him to, I don't know whether he helped him financially but he helped to put his plan together, of how to go about doing this and how to set it up.

VC: Then he started a Fleamarket when we had one.

MM: Yes (Laughs) Oh.

VC: Oh dear.

MM: You know Murray was just the best thing that could ever have happened and we used to go to dinners with him at his house, with him and Scilla and Murray used to tell Barney and I how we could become millionaires. He used to tell us. Every night.

VC: But you didn't listen.

MM: Months on end we used to go and we ...

VC: You never listened at all.

MM: We used to sit in the car afterwards and we used to look at each other and say, "Do you remember what he said, did you understand what he was..." And we both used to go – No I didn't really.

VC: Oh God.

MM: It was so silly, you know. And even sometimes we'd go back and say, "Just say that bit again about when you get the Company and you do this and you do that."

VC: No.

MM: He had it down to a fine art and it was very boring to him. So he didn't like to talk about it all the time, coz it was totally boring.

VC: And it was clearly boring to you guys as well.

(They laugh)

MM: Well we didn't know what he was talking about . Haai. So then when Murray was then starting to really swashbuckle and want to leave South Africa.

VC: Riding his bicycle.

MM: Yes and the black??? Rands were starting to happen and he had this crazy idea of going to France, studying at Sorbonne University and taking Economics and all that kind of stuff he'd always wanted to do. So he dropped everything in South Africa and went to Paris.

VC: It's like he knew he didn't have long to live.

MM: Ja, ja possibly that too.

VC: Hey!

MM: Probably that too.

VC: Strange.

MM: Coz he...

VC: Coz he was very young to drop out.

MM: Oh yes.

VC: In those days.

MM: Yes.

VC: Maybe he felt he had to do things quickly.

MM: It was just so important to us and of course his wife was as important to us. She was really the strength behind the throne, kind of thing. And er... in the famous meeting. There was a meeting the week before we opened the Main Theatre when the Board got cold feet about'open to all people'and she...

VC: Why?

MM: For some reason, and she never always used to do that, but she came to that meeting, and she sat, the meeting was where Grace's (Mokoena) office is now, and she sat in the corner, where the washbasin was, or something.

VC: ... ja.

MM: And they all said, "No,no."And Barney and I were blah.

VC: What!

MM: Hyperventilating but not being very articulate and that. And they were all giving good business reasons why – no we can do it later on, but we can't do it now.

VC: Why? Later on they would never have done it.

MM: And when they'd all had their say and then Scilla said, "I know I'm not part of this meeting but I do think I'd like to put some points that you should consider." Then she just, she said everything we should have said but didn't.

VC: She didn't get upset.

MM: She didn't get upset. She was determined and she said, "You know, this all meant something when you guys were trying to do something that was for everybody. Now you're just trying to open another theatre."

VC: What's the point.

MM: "What are you doing. You're going to try and apply for permits."

VC: ???

MM: "So what are you doing? You know this was something great and you were all part of it."

VC: That was the main reason.

MM: And she was very clever, you know. She said, "You were all, had the courage when you put the thing..."

VC: When you started.

MM: Yes. "Now when you're faced with the final moment, you're wanting to withdraw." And were all humph, humph.

VC: We didn't quite mean it that way.

(They laugh).

MM: So then that was it. I'd love to know though, what was minuted from that meeting. Lorraine (Greenberg) was taking the Minutes.

VC: Was Lorraine already there.

MM: I wonder, I wonder. She might have been.

(Sound disturbance).

MM: She might have been, she might have been. So where we, how we doing.

VC: You've got this Meet and Greet just now.

MM: Ja we might...

VC: We're going to have to do three I think.

MM: Good, good, good. When you come to Cape Town you must bring this machine.

VC: Ja.

MM: Ja.

VC: But let's just get – so Okay so your commitment.

MM: Yes.

VC: At that stage...

(Mannie laughs)

VC: You gave your whole...

MM: Yes, well.

VC: Everything that you got from PACT.

MM: Yes.

VC: Your retirement package.

MM: Yes it's a very simple number to remember. It's R6000 coz that's all I had. That was my pension from six years at PACT. And that was the only money that we had, so it just became a very natural...

VC: You were the only one with money in other words.

MM: It was very simple. I have to find a way to write this in the book, you know. Yes, I was like the manager person and I had the money so...

VC: So that's what...

MM: That's what it was. So it was my, everybody else was acting their heads off and painting...

VC: Did you ever get that R6000 back?

MM: No, no, no, no. I mean, you know, people nowadays when they hear about it they say, "You know what R6000 in 1970 is worth now!" No don't talk rubbish.

VC: ???

MM: No it was just a way to, that was what, that was my contribution to making everything work and there wasn't...

VC: So we could actually have a Lorraine and...

MM: Absolutely, absolutely, I mean it was the way. Remember when we started and we were just a little company. It was Dinah (Eppel)...

VC: Dinah, yes.

MM: Now Dinah lives in Cape Town so we have lots of, you know, coz she's also started to act and stuff.

VC: Can you believe it, hey.

MM: Singing.

VC: Amazing, ja.

MM: And she's done her own piece, did you see that piece?

VC: Yes I did.

MM: Wonderful.

VC: Wonderful.

MM: She did a thing with Mamela (Nyamza) where she sang and spoke Xhosa.

VC: Played the music.

MM: Haai, wonderful, wonderful. She said now, she's, this is Dinah saying, "And now I understand when Barney was doing all those funny, stupid things. Now I understand what he was trying to do."

VC: She never did, hey.

MM: She never did. She used to say, "What's going on? Why is he doing all this stupid..." Coz she was trying to protect David (Eppel).

VC: She's Stage Managing Tossie (van Tonder) at Grahamstown, and she phoned me and she said, "Please tell me what I should do as a Stage Manager."

(Mannie laughs)

VC: And I thought about it, and I thought – No at all costs you have to keep calm – at all costs.

MM: Ja.

VC: And I saw her in Grahamstown and she said, "Thanks for telling me that. Tossie's shouting."

(They laugh)

VC: At her as well.

MM: Sure, I'm sure.

(Sound disturbance)

MM: So it's wonderful that Dinah's done that full circle. So when we started, the office was my flat. We even rehearsed in my flat sometimes. Rehearsed wherever we could and ...er... Dinah was the secretary and then after Dinah...er... Callie Cutts became the secretary. Similarly I think then Dinah went back to Plettenberg Bay.

VC: Corfu.

MM: They went to Corfu.

VC: They weren't there when the Market opened.

MM: And I don't know how Callie came into our lives but she was fantastic.

VC: Through Dale (Cutts) I suppose.

MM: Through Dale probably.

VC: Ja.

MM: But she was just brilliant. She was a proper secretary.

VC: Dinah used to say, "Let's do some more budgets. I like it when we give people some more money."

(They laugh)

MM: We used to sit there and say, "Now if we pay so and so that much and so and so..."

VC: But we can't pay that person this month.

MM: Ja, yes – she'd say, "No can we pay them more, pay them more."

(They laugh)

MM: So Callie was a real secretary and she made it all shipshape and she made it function and she came here. (to the Market)

VC: Callie.

MM: Yes that's right.

VC: Lorraine was a bit later.

MM: Lorraine must have come in after that when we started to need more secretaries.

VC: But Callie and Lorraine were together for some of the time.

MM: Yes they were, very much.

VC: Ja and then there was Jasmine (Abrahams)

MM: Jasmine came that time, ja. Then we started to assemble the Market team.

VC: And then there were too many people.

(Mannie laughs)

VC: There were too many people working here.

MM: There were too many people working.

VC: I think Suzette (le Seuer) got an assistant, and then all sorts of things started to happen.

(Mannie laughs)

VC: No, too many people, too many people now.

(They laugh)

MM: Oh, God, God but I think that time of going round in our cars, our first international tour to Swaziland. I'll never forget that.

VC: TWELFTH NIGHT.

MM: TWELFTH NIGHT you know. And meeting the young Richard.

VC: E. Grant.

MM: E. Grant coming to help us set up. Danny (Keogh) and I tried to bust the Casino, Swaziland and losing all our money.

(They laugh)

MM: "I've got another scheme. Tonight we'll try this scheme." Nothing worked.

(They laugh)

VC: Do you think we were very naïve. Do you think somewhere we knew what we were doing? Coz I thought we all knew.

MM: I thought we knew what we were doing.

VC: I think we did.

MM: I think we were up for the main chance, and I thought that we, there was a lot of courage in the air, and definitely people were saying, "Well let's do it, rather than not do it." And the best reason for doing it, is coz we here. And there was that whole side of things.

VC: We must do it now.

MM: Let's do it now. And then once we'd really started working in the Market a new thing started to happen – is all the black people into the Company, to the staff, and to the theatre and that made us aware of a world we'd been aware of but not totally. Then when the holidays and the holydays, all these kind of things started happening where, for solidarity, we had to say – No today is Sharpeville Day we can't.

VC: We can't perform.

MM: We're not performing.

VC: I remember June 16th.

MM: Ja June 16.

VC: We're just opening ourselves. SEAGULL !

MM: Yes absolutely. So to totally understand that those were no go – those were kind of very important building blocks in, I think, getting the theatre centred in where it should be, you know, and making us feel good about what we were trying to do as well, and not just, like in for the main chance.

VC: And also not doing it for expedience sake.

MM: No, no not at all.

VC: Because often it wasn't, people were...

MM: No, no that's the point.

(He laughs)

VC: Horrified sometimes.

MM: Ja, no totally. So it started to change, the whole way we looked at the ???- it was what we'd always wanted.

VC: What we were dreaming about.

MM: That's right and then it was happening, you know. So...

VC: And you could say, "We're not doing that." Or "We're doing that."

MM: Correct, correct.

VC: And we don't care.

MM: Ja. (Laughs)

MM: That was the nicest thing for me and there are still some journalists in Cape Town that haven't forgiven me because I used to say, "We don't play the Nico Malan." You know they used to phone me here and say, "Why aren't you bringing that to Cape Town and I'd say, "Well the Baxter's busy, we can't come."

VC: We don't play.

MM: "The Nico's free. I phoned them now. They're free, exactly these dates." And I'd say, "No we don't play the Nico." "Why don't you play the Nico?" They were absolutely...

VC: There's still some people who say, "PACT were doing good things."

(Mannie laughs)

VC: I just go – Oh Okay, not going to argue with you, but my face is not going to change because it was the truth.

MM: It's a very important point that – as small as it was, you know, eh – it was a time when those little victories were very, very, very important and there was a , there was a camaraderie here, there was a wonderful feeling of mutual understanding and respect and all that sort of thing. There was also that fear in those early days, right through the first...my time at the Market, worrying when new people came in – were they in, a bad way to say it probably, were they one of us or were they...

VC: Sent here. Now they say, and I think we can talk about it Mannie, I don't know what's happened to him – but Eugene(surname?), do you remember Eugene.

MM: Eugene.

VC: He ran Eugene's Crush Bar. He was the Front of House Manager.

MM: Yes, yes, yes. Now he's come back on Facebook.

VC: They said he was a spy.

MM: He's a Facebook friend of mine now.

VC: Is he?

MM: Lots of, lots of stories of the bad old days, you know when people send me a photograph of, I don't know, somebody in 1960 or something. He's always saying – Oh I remember that.

VC: I wonder if it's true.

MM: You know he was one. There were others too.

VC: Someone said he was sent here to check.

MM: Whew, it was so hard to...

VC: How did we know. We didn't know. He'd probably be horrified if he heard that.

MM: Ja, who knows. I mean weren't they anti- gay as well. Wasn't he openly gay. I don't know, I don't know. (Laughs) Whew, whew, whew.

VC: Eugene's Crush Bar.

MM: Wow I mean those early days. When we opened the bloody Coffee Bar in what became the Gramadoelas, whatever. But when we would go and buy the cheapest coffee. I never forget that.

VC: Oh, terrible stuff, cheaper than Frisco .

MM: Pantry Pride or whatever. It was awful, awful, awful.

VC: Ja we weren't too good at spending a little bit to make it nice.

MM: No, to make, no none of that. "No can't buy more expensive coffee, then we don't make..."

VC: No, no, no, come and have coffee at me Barney.

(They laugh)

MM: Hey, hey.

VC: And then the early days, just to finish the early days.

MM: Okay.

VC: A little bit...um... The Market Café.

MM: Ah well Dave Marks and Big Mac in many ways, and Dave's wonderful wife (Fran) they were in Rosebank when we discovered the Blue Fox. They were running their little place next door and...

VC: What was it a record bar or...

MM: No they had like a folk club.

VC: A folk club.

MM: They didn't move north like, like so many things were starting to do then.

VC: From Hillbrow they'd gone there.

MM: Remember what was the one in Hillbrow?

VC: Was it the Troubadour? There was the Mojo. There were quite a few.

MM: Yeah there was , Dave's place was the...

VC: What was Dave's place called. I can't remember.

MM: It was lovely. Wasn't it in Claim, Claim came up.

VC: As you came up the hill.

MM: On the side. I mean Dave, I don't know how – had we gone to some of his live music things or something. But he had...

VC: Probably.

MM: Somewhere we were talking and he said, "You know there's this Blue Fox Restaurant and he introduced us to the Manager.

VC: To make a little theatre there.

MM: To make our little theatre. That Manager again.

VC: I didn't know.

MM: Crazy as ever. He allowed us to come in and close down his fancy restaurant and put up egg boxes and funny dressing rooms, behind curtains and...

VC: And it always smelled of food.

(Mannie laughs)

VC: That's the one thing I remember very clearly.

MM: Food, well the restaurant of the hotel...

VC: Extractor fans.

MM: The dining room of the hotel was next door.

VC: Ja, I'll never forget that smell.

MM: Ai, ai, ai.

VC: I remember one time when Frank (Neuhoff) was taking the tickets – pass out – the person passed out and we couldn't move him from the door.

(They laugh)

VC: Coz we had to have Pass Outs – otherwise people from the restaurant could come in.

MM: And the Bar, those crazy...

VC: The bar!

MM: Drunk kids from the bar. We used to stand with your back to the door and hold them out. Friday nights ai, ai, ai. And then...

VC: And Barney had to do things like ANTIGONE at the Blue Fox.

MM: Absolutely, yes.

VC: Ja.

MM: Ja, no the noise from the dining room of the hotel, "Excuse me waiter, waiter." And then Barney and I would run (laughs) run from the foyer, lean over this poor man, sitting, having his dry fish or whatever it was.

VC: Horrible food.

MM: Looking up at us and we'd say, (whispers) 'What, what is it.'

VC: "We can help you."

(They laugh)

MM: "What you want? We're trying to do a play next door."

(They laugh)

VC: It was mad, it was mad there.

MM: Oh God, Barney as an usher.

VC: Then Donald Howarth did that other play.

MM: Did Donald do something at the Blue Fox?

VC: MAMA IS TERRY HOME FOR GOOD – and all of us in Blackface.

MM: Yes, yes.

VC: In carnival make up.

MM: He thought it was a good idea to do this black play with white actors in blackface, making a statement. That was our statements that we used to make – Haai.

VC: Mad.

MM: Well I'm so glad Donald did something.

VC: He was wonderful.

MM: TERRY IS MAMA HOME FOR GOOD. (sic)

VC: Yes.

MM: Yes, we've still got a photograph of the poster of DRY DREAMS.

VC: Yes.

MM: From it, up in the foyer.

VC: Have you got it.

MM: Yes, Lesley's (Nott) got a picture. It's a black and white picture of the...

VC: Oh I must ask her if I can take it and...

MM: You could have it. It's lovely, lovely, coz it's all- everybody's names.

VC: Marcel (van Heerden), Danny (Keogh).

MM: Yes, yes, ah he was very important in those days coz he understood everything we were doing.

VC: Didn't have to explain anything.

MM: Didn't have to explain, that's always been my thing. If I had to explain something to somebody it meant...

VC: It meant they weren't really...

MM: Especially like – it was one of the reasons why Suzette got her job, because I never had to explain to her what we were doing.

VC: Doing.

(They laugh)

MM: Coz most of the other publicists...

VC: Publicity people, ja.

MM: They used to say...

VC: Hazel (Feldman) you remember Hazel. She used to do our publicity.

MM: Ja she was sweet. (Laughs)

VC: Ja.

MM: She did it for nothing, you know. I mean she was just helping.

VC: And that's when Lynne Marais came here, she told me.

MM: Yes, yes.

VC: She worked for Hazel and then...

MM: Is that how it was.

VC: Ja, yes.

MM: I thought it was because she was the girlfriend of ...

VC: She left PACT.(Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal)

MM: She had a relationship with one of our first Production Managers, or Stage Managers.

VC: She did. She won't talk about him.

MM: She won't talk about him, okay.

VC: She was working for Hazel and then...

MM: Ha.

VC: Then I think you said to her, "We need a Box Office lady."

MM: Yes, yes.

VC: Probably Graham...(Rook)

MM: Yes, yes she was great in the box office.

VC: Two jobs, she was working day and at night.

MM: Is that how...

VC: Ja.

MM: Then there are so many stories of people that threaded through. And Lynne was very much part of those early days. I still remember.

VC: Ja.

MM: But okay so Dave Marks, Blue Fox.

VC: Let's just finish there.

MM: Running his place there. Then Barney does HELLO AND GOODBYE.

VC: Yes.

MM: And now Barney...

VC: At the Blue Fox!

MM: What are we doing with the... Yes (laughs) HELLO AND GOODBYE in the Blue Fox.

VC: Ooh.

MM: Marius (Weyers) and Janice (Honeyman)

VC: Yes.

MM: Janice had to go to Joubert Park and stuff.

VC: Yes I used to go with her on the quiet.

MM: Yes, hey.

VC: I wasn't allowed to.

MM: Hey? And then I'm saying, the actors are slowly feeding through to me-what are we doing out there. There's two people in this play. What are we doing? So then I went to Barney.

VC: We had a company.

MM: And said, "Barney the rest of the people feel that you don't love them. What are we going to do?"(laughs)

MM: So then we had to find another theatre and then Dave Marks...

VC: Dave was at Orange Grove.

MM: Dave Marks was...

VC: It was called The Village.

MM: The Village in Orange Grove, and he said, "Mannie there's a place. So we did er..."

VC: STORYTIME.

MM: We did it for Evelyn Levison and her husband.

(They laugh)

VC: The only people that night in the audience.

MM: Theatre in a railway carriage.

VC: She loved it though.

MM: It was a great show, fantastic show.

VC: Wilson (Dunster).

MM: Wilson, Wilson! His trip to London, and then there were those nights when people got up and told their stories.

VC: Ja, beautiful that play actually.

MM: Ha.

VC: And John Oakley Smith.

MM: John Oakley, rubbing his elbows raw from playing in the... pushed up against the wall and I remember being the air conditioner, standing at the door, when the cars stopped at the traffic light – open the door.

(V laughs)

MM: Soon as the traffic light turned green – close the door. Brrr.(makes the sound of the door creaking.)

They laugh)

MM: So then when we came to the Market it seemed like a natural – and we discovered the Café. I don't know how that happened. We...

VC: I think they were going through a wall or something and...

MM: Yes, yes.

VC: It was on the other side.

MM: Yes.

VC: Where the Museum is now.

MM: Yes that's right.

VC: Ja and we suddenly saw it.

MM: We saw the Café and said, “Hey...

VC: “There’s a Café here.”

MM: Yes that’s right . Then Rodney went to somebody and said...

VC: We have to enter???

MM: Incorporate, make the entrance down there so that where the stairs go up we have to still have another little cubbyhole to go into the Café.

VC: And it was not part of the main...

MM: Ja.

VC: Ja.

MM: And then Dave said no he’ll run this music thing. And I mean they did – again you didn’t have to...

VC: Explain anything.

MM: Never had to explain anything. Dave understood totally what it was all about. In fact he’d been doing it in his music world for years and years, anyway.

VC: He was discovering everybody new.

MM: Yes, absolutely and still has like the best archives of those times in, you know, in South African history.

VC: I have to go and see him you know because I don’t know what he wants to do with them when he’s gone.

MM: Well he’s now sent them down somewhere else. Haven’t they gone to Stellenbosch now.

VC: Somewhere.

MM: They were somewhere and now they’re somewhere else.

VC: Ja I can’t keep up with...

MM: I think the French government is involved, and he, his whole idea for the Café was wonderful.

VC: We used to make sandwiches.

MM: Yes, yes but those sandwiches...

VC: Avocado.

MM: Yes they were very, very lovely. They were brilliant, but what went into the sandwiches used to cost more than what you sold them for.

VC: And there was a nice banana shake, with about three bananas in.

MM: Ja, yes we were the best fed crowd in...

VC: The best sandwiches in the world. (She laughs)

MM: I mean they were better than what we could buy. I remember there was a Spar across the road.

VC: Yes they made nice tuna mayonnaise rolls.

MM: Yes, yes.

VC: But they were better – Estoril, ja.

MM: Yes.

VC: Ja I loved their... that's when we were building we used to eat there. The rolls.

MM: Before the...

VC: Before the Café.

MM: Before the Café, hey, hey. But the Café was a very special place and should have continued somehow. I still don't know why it finished. I don't really know.

VC: It became the Laager.

MM: Became the Laager. Why did it become the Laager?

VC: Because of Pieter Dirk Uys.

MM: Pieter Dirk Uys wanted a theatre, wouldn't play in the Café?

VC: He wanted to do DIE VAN AARDES (VAN GROOTOOR) in town and he didn't want to do it...

MM: And it went on and on.

VC: ...at PACT or anything so...

MM: Right but you know...but what did I do, did I just go and tell David – no well we're going to change it to a theatre.

VC: Maybe I must ask David.

MM: He's going to give you what for!

VC: He'll give it to me.

MM: Ja.

VC: He'll tell me, coz ja, and he went on living – Fran (Marks) – I shouldn't say it here – Fran kicked him out and he lived in a caravan out here for a while.

MM: Where, here at the back, on the railway line.

VC: Ja.

MM: Now that...

VC: I don't know.

MM: The Market Café.

VC: It was a phase or something.

MM: It just did wonderful things, I mean, obviously, in terms of Oakley releasing his new latest records and you know having him, his kind of musician.

VC: Malombo.

MM: Yes, no that's the thing.

VC: Tananas, it was everybody.

MM: All those guys came here and played here.

VC: Johnny Clegg, all of them.

MM: Definitely, definitely.

VC: Ja Dave was amazing. He had, they had to play there. There was no question.

(Mannie laughs)

VC: Or where they must play.

MM: Yes.

VC: Play here.

MM: Yes.

VC: Alan Kwela.

MM: Ja, Malombo, hey. Wonderful, wonderful. And then the other thing from the early days. So what worries me is how those things finished. Now why, why did I ...

VC: I don't...

MM: ...just fall in love with Pieter and now David must give Pieter a chance. And then did Pieter take it in both hands and change the whole bladdy space, coz...

VC: I don't know.

MM: Coz little Dawid (Malan). My memory of Pieter taking over the thing was walking into the space one day and saying, "Dawid, Dawid." And I couldn't find him and then – "Aargh" and he was under the stage. (He laughs) You know and they had this little stage.

VC: And it was still small.

MM: Tiny, it was tiny.

VC: It wasn't made bigger for a long time. I don't know what happened with Dave. I must write to Beverley (Melnick) she'll know.

MM: Yes he'll probably say these theatre people went off us.

VC: They hated me.

MM: That's not true.

VC: No.

MM: It's not true. I don't know how it happened, but maybe in our crazy way of thinking – then we thought well Dave can come back after Pieter. We all thought that thing was going to run for three weeks.

VC: Only just for one show.

MM: Ja we thought that thing was going to run for three weeks.

VC: And then it ran and ran and ran.

MM: For six months.

VC: And ran...

MM: Never stopped.

VC: But then why did it become the Laager – because Pieter would have called it the Laager.

MM: He called it the Laager, but did he call it the Laager from the beginning? But did he...

VC: No there's some people who say they performed in the Market Café.

MM: Before it was a theatre and before it was the Laager. No he called it the Laager somewhere along the line.

VC: And then the Fleamarket.

MM: The Fleamarket, the wonderful Fleamarket.. So I used to have endless meetings – well first of all the Art Gallery.

VC: The Art Gallery and the Photo Gallery.

MM: And the Photo Gallery.

VC: They were there from the beginning.

MM: They were, the spaces were there from the beginning.

VC: Ja.

MM: The first person to run the Art Gallery was Suzette's brother, eldest brother.

VC: Louis?

MM: Now somewhere on a mountain in the desert. In Nevada.

VC: Ja.

MM: And Louis ran the Art Gallery. I don't know anything about art. I still don't know anything about...I just know that they are very perfectionist, that everything has to be just so.

VC: Ja.

MM: The lighting has to be the best, the frames have to be perfect, the hanging has to be beautiful, ja and Louis, after a time, I think it was natural. He went overseas, that's what happened, he went away. And I think we might have had an exhibition or two, while he was away. Why do I remember Malcolm Payne doing something? But anyway...

VC: I remember that.

MM: But maybe Wolf (Weinek) and the gang had already started.

VC: And Paul Stopford.

MM: Yes so one day I walk into the theatre and Wolf Weinek's sitting on the stairs outside my office and he says, "I want to have a meeting with you." "Sure." He says he knows a bit about art and he wants to be, because we've got our art gallery and we want people to run it, and I don't know how it happened but again three lines came together. Paul was around saying he'd like to help, Michael (Goldberg) was around and Wolf. And they kind of knew about each other and we put them together and they got on like a house on fire. They loved it and they became this fantastic Art Gallery Committee. But of course they were always wanting more things – lighting, the way they hang, endless hours we would discuss about that. And I think there were always monthly meetings in Wolf's house and they were great because of his cooking. So we had delicious food.

VC: Best.

MM: Best and a wonderful view of Joburg from the deck. And I was on at them about money, "Hey you guys man. You keep asking me about money. You know you're the Art Gallery. I'm trying to keep the actors going and its three venues."

VC: Then they showed you about money, didn't they.

MM: They said, "Now we've got this idea." Wolf said, "We've got this idea."

VC: Was it Graham (Lindop) or somebody said, "You cannot take all the money anymore."

MM: Yes.

VC: Remember.

(They laugh)

MM: So they started the Fleamarket which started as a small thing then just...

VC: What year was that?

MM: Nowadays we'd say it went viral. But it did whatever that version was in those days. What year would that have been? So we started in '76 so it must have been about '78.

VC: Ja it was early. It wasn't...

MM: Must have been about '78.

VC: Ja.

MM: And then it became this riotous...

VC: Major...

MM: Success. We had to have a Fleamarket Manager. (He laughs)

VC: That's right. That's where it all started going wrong!

MM: Ja and then we were watching their income and they were earning more than the whole Market put together.

VC: Ja.

MM: So then...

VC: Except for the Art Gallery and the Photo Gallery.

MM: Yes.

VC: So they had huge amounts of money.

MM: Huge amounts of money. So then I had to go and sit. I had, that was the meeting – also in a nice atmosphere – Wolf's house- but I had to explain – Guys this is the Market, and this is our needs and this is your... and this is your needs, and this is our money.

VC: You can have gold doors if you want.

MM: And they were fine, I mean, I think they probably had had a meeting before or something. But they listened carefully and then we apportioned it. I don't know whether it was a third or...

VC: Something ja...

MM: They got a portion which was a real portion.

VC: It was enough for them.

MM: Ja they were making so much money. And then of course that saved the Market. So in those days, I mean maybe we would have found the money somewhere else, who knows, but with that Fleamarket we didn't have to go begging.

VC: For all those costs.

MM: The Fleamarket made us a going concern. Made us a going concern and at Wolf's funeral here I spoke a bit about that. When I wasn't getting too emotional...um...

VC: It was lovely. I was there.

MM: Were you.

VC: Ja I was very upset.

MM: Yes when...they did it beautifully.

VC: Beautiful.

MM: Having Robert (Weinek) there, Gundi (Weinek) and I think if it wasn't for Gundi I wouldn't have got through that bladdy speech.

VC: I remember you were so... But we all were a bit...

MM: Yes.

VC: Ja.

MM; She was wonderful. Also the daughter was there- what's her name? Lovely blonde. Anyway...um... so the Fleamarket also was something that grew kind of organically, naturally and we never had to make it do anything. It did, it was everything to everyone so people...

VC: Came.

MM: But maybe it -think about this before we realised – Oh I can bring my things and come and sell them here. So it a had a tremendous, sort of, feeling.

VC: Now there are fleamarkets everywhere.

MM: All over the place. And did old Zulberg start that one in Bruma Lake, the bugger!

VC: Ja he did.

MM: Coz he said, "The Jews and the Germans, they still..."

VC: No,no.

(They laugh)

MM: They still getting at each other.

VC: Mannie I don't want you to get too...

MM: How we doing.

VC: Oh I think it's time.

MM: Oh okay good.

VC: We will continue.

End Part Two

Collection Number: AG3406

Collection Name: Market Theatre Oral History Project, 2014-2015

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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