

Elissa:

Be Edward
This is [Lee 00:00:22], and [Harvey Hersell 00:00:22], and another actor, and [Lanor 00:01:40] and myself. And as I said, the whole scene was to be shot right around the dining room table of this plantation in Natchez, Mississippi. That's where we had to go. And there were these huge fans being manipulated by two [~~00:01:05~~], two small colored boys. And they would fan us as we were being interviewed. *talk 1977 children*

The interviewer was never seen, just his voice, asking opinions of these three gentlemen and two ladies. The three gentlemen spoke first, and of course we were rehearsed. Then, when we were pretty sure what we were doing, we were brought to the plantation, made-up, and started shooting about mid-day in the second day that we were there. And we shot all the way through until the next morning. Of course they brought us food and drink, but we remained in our costumes and virtually, without really stopping, we shot this whole scene.

Not only that, but each sequence had to be done at least three times because the film was going to be sold, not only in America but also in Europe. So there were people, interpreters, from our English script and it would be done in German, in English, and in Italian. It would be in all those theaters in that language.

At the time, I did not even know the name of the movie and right now it escapes me, but this was a situation. We started a little after 12, and started the gentlemen, and of course it was a slow process, then we would break a little bit, then we would go on, and finally it came to me. I had one long speech where I fantasized about writing a book about the slavery and calling it Uncle Tom's Captain. That was my speech. And I made it three and four times, around four o'clock, five o'clock in the morning.

To this story start part first Germany
When we were finished, it was early morning, we went back to the motel, packed up, and went back to Baton Rouge. Which was about a five hour drive. I have the movie, the sequel is very amusing. I never saw the movie in it's entirety, but Peter was conducting in [script 00:04:19] art. And he was walking on the street, past a movie house, and suddenly did a double take, because there was a picture of his wife. Seated with Lanor, and Lee, and the other actors. The movie was playing at this particular movie house. So Peter bought a ticket and went in, saw the movie. [inaudible 00:04:53] *more Bonds* when he told me when he came back, I said, "Well? How was the movie?" And he looked at me, he said, "You spoke German very well." Faint praise.

The other story with the little theater is of a longer standing, Lee had done The King and I with Helen and then Helen, as I said, was pregnant and she and David left a little bit later. Lee asked me to take over, which I did. And from that time until I left, in 1976, I was a choreographer for the Baton Rouge little theater. *summer productions*

Also, well we did Fiddler on the Roof, again with Robin's approval. We did Carousel, we did Camelot, we did Oliver. We did quite a few. We did Gypsy and quite a few others. It was a very nice job to do during the summer. And mainly, my dancers, all of whom, like Sharon, many of them that I had as children, were growing up. Sharon was already in high school and almost in college and would marry soon and have three daughters, and

What had happened is Michael was beginning to feel chest pains in the second movement and whispered into his ear, "Take the third movement as fast as you can." Which Peter tried to do. Then when he had finished and went off the stage, backstage he collapsed. Or at least looked very weak, but insisted on going back to Peter and asking Peter to hold his arm. And that's what I saw. And then when they went off the stage, then Michael let go, collapsed. They had called an ambulance and he died en route. This happened maybe a year or so after my episode with Rodney. Devastating and mind blowing, but it's a part of the career. *business*

Meanwhile, my daughter was growing up. She had a typical childhood. Her father adored her, she adored him. I came in second, but I was content. It wasn't easy for a child to grow up in an atmosphere of two careers, which brings me to say that this was difficult. Had our careers not been so lucrative and productive, it probably would have been easier. But so many times Peter's duties and my duties crossed and caused problems. We withstood them, but we went through some very shaky times. Deborah was growing up. As she reached her teens or at least about 12 years old she had shown interest in the flute and as it happened, Peter's boss, Eric [Timms 00-1-5-40] wife ... also around this time Deborah showed a love of the theater. She like to act. She joined ~~teen~~ *teen* town players and did quite well. Got into a nice crowd of people, had a good director, Florence and she enjoyed that until she graduated from high school, and eventually went on to ~~Hester~~ *Hester* and majored in drama. She had some very good parts. One outstanding one was Anne Frank, in The Diary of Anne Frank. *Ernest Timm's wife was a flutist*

*Josephine
in N.Y.*

So, a few years before she left for college, something else happened with me. Lee had scheduled The Lion in Winter, as one of the plays for the season. I forget which season, it was around 1972, something like that. He asked me to read for it, so I did and ultimately got the part. A beautiful part, a wonderful part. And the interesting part about it was, of course we had all seen the movie with Peter O'Toole and Katherine Hepburn, and when Lee ordered the costumes from California they came and they were the costumes that the leads wore. So I wore Katherine Hepburn's costumes. They weren't exactly comfortable, and I'll tell you why. She was starting to show signs of Palsy and shaking, and so with some of the costumes came a headdress with a whipple, one that went around the face and hung down so that the shaking that she had wouldn't show. I wore one or two of the whipples, but I prevailed on Lee to let me ~~wear it~~ *act* without. It was very successful, I enjoyed it and hoped that not many people would compare me with Hepburn, she was wonderful.

I would like to backtrack here and insert something that I had left out that I think is very important. Two instances and two very important times in Peter's life. When he got to the United States it was 1938. He had waited two years for his visa, because by that time he and Louise had gone through a hasty marriage. He almost immediately began to work. He is an excellent accompanist, and word got around. He accompanied ballet classes. He accompanied singers for their lessons, vocal lessons. He accompanied instrumentalists like violinists, cellists and did very well. He also got a job accompanying a ballet company and, you're right, the ballet company was headed by our ~~late~~ *late* and *Frederic* The circle goes around. *Carlora*

He loved that job because they traveled in the mid-west, amid America. It was an opportunity for Peter to see his new home. It was a ballet company, principally concentrating on ballet, but he did get a chance to concertize, briefly, between numbers in order to give the dancers time to change costume. Ironically, he met dancers that knew me but of course at that time there was no connection. One of course was Volkova, Lydia Volkova. ~~LEA~~ Volkova, who had been instrumental in getting Peter his job with at the MET. Now, when he got to the United States along with getting a job for himself, he also concentrated on getting his mother and father out of Vienna.

Vienna was close to blowing up under the thumb of Hitler and his father and his mother were living in one room of a seven room apartment. Nazi's had taken over everything, I think that I had mentioned before, taken over his cello, his music, Mrs. [Fuchs's 00:23:27] Jewelry, linen, silver, anything of importance. They were allowed to stay in ^{and father} one room because Dr. Fuchs was a doctor and they could come to him for medical things, medical advice sometimes and medical products. But it was living hand-to-mouth. And Peter worked very hard. It took two years because he had to have all kinds of letters of ~~insurance~~ ^{assurance} that this couple would not be a strain on the economy of the United States. They had to have affidavits and people who knew Dr and Mrs. Fuchs. So as I said, it took two years. Finally he got them out on the last train out of Vienna in 1940.

He did not mention, when we started knowing each other, he never went into details about that trip. But when I met Mrs. Fuchs and got very close to her, she told me it was horrendous. These people were herded into trains, put into little cabinets five and six together, and some of them only held three or four normally. They were allowed only the clothes on their backs, one change of underwear, the equivalent of five dollars, and a toothbrush. Anything else was illegal. The train left Vienna 1940, headed toward Paris, France. France had not fallen yet.

When the ~~boarder~~ ^{order} came, the train was inundated with Gestapo. They would go into the little cars, the little separate compartments and one compartment would be searched, body searched. Their bodies searched for anything illegal. The other one next door would be searched in the luggage. If anything [unrecorded 00:26:22] was found, anything at all, and people tried to take jewelry out even in their teeth or concealed it in other places, Mrs. Fuchs said was horrendous. Because you could hear the screams of people being taken off the train because they had been trying to bring something with them that was illegal.

Forbidden
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Finally the train left, went across the boarder. When Dr. and Mrs. Fuchs got to Paris, Dr. Fuchs knew a professor, met with him and the professor gave him some money to buy clothes to at least feel decent. Then they got on a boat and made for the United States. Mrs. Fuchs told me that when they got into the harbor ~~at the United States~~, the boat literally tilted because everyone rushed to the rail to see the statue of liberty, with outstretched arms and knew that at last they were safe. It brings tears to my eyes to this day.

Peter had arranged for them to stay modestly in a rooming house. Dr. Fuchs had had a

reoccurrence of Tuberculosis that had plagued him many years before. When he had had to go to Switzerland, Davos, for the cure. So he was unable, really, to resume his practice as a doctor. He could only assist friends that were doctors. Immediately Mrs. Fuchs saw the handwriting on the wall, went out and almost instantly got herself a job teaching piano at a music school in New York. She stayed there from 1940 to mid 1950 teaching piano and eventually becoming assistant manager at the music school. A feisty little lady. And she stayed in New York until things got very bad in New York, she was mugged. That was the middle of 1950. She came to Baton Rouge, got herself an apartment, rented a piano, taught lessons, and made quite a few friends. Especially one lady, Mrs. Goodman, who loved Mrs. Fuchs. Mrs. Goodman was a German refugee who had married a soldier, and her daughter was one of my very fine pupils. So this is the insert that I would like to put in before I go any further.

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Fullbright

the situation was so bad in New York that we had to leave and go to Germany

In 1955, Peter took his first sabbatical. It was because he had been given a full-time grant to study in post-war Germany the effects on music in general and opera in particular, and how the performances started again. So he went to New York, Deborah was about a year and a half, and we set sail on the Queen Elizabeth. We took her crib with us, and she literally kicked her way across the Atlantic. By the time we got to Germany, the port of Germany, the crib was in shambles. But we took it to a carpenter, and the German carpenters are miracle workers. They put it back together again and it never fell apart after that. We also rented a Volkswagen and we put the crib in the back of the Volkswagen, and Deborah was very happy, and we started our crusade through Germany.

We ~~had~~ first went to places in Northern Germany, and then middle Germany, and then finally, as the year went ~~down~~ ^{on}, down to the Southern part of Germany, Munich. By that time, Peter was making noises about going back to Vienne, but just to visit. Of course there were no relatives left, no friends that he knew about. But he did want to see Vienna again. So we left Deborah in a kinderheim, a children's home very well taken care of, and spent a few days in Vienna. The only person we saw there from Peter's past was his nanny, Lizzie.

Lizzie was a farm girl who, when Peter was just a baby, in 1916, during the end of the first world war, Lizzie came to the Fuchs family as a nanny and a maid and stayed there until 1936 or '37. With the advent of Hitler she went back into the farm land and lived there during the war and survived. Peter found her and asked her to come to Vienna, which she did. We were staying in the hotel, I think it was the Queen Elizabeth Hotel or Elizabeth Hotel, and she came, knocked on the door, and I'll never forget the look on her face when she saw Peter after all those years. She barely looked at me. Her eyes followed him where ever he went.

She also recalled, it was in German and I could follow it, that during the war and at the end of the first world war, she was with ~~the~~ family, Peter was just a baby, and Dr. Fuchs would go into the countryside and treat the farmers and their wives and children. Of course there was no money to pay him, but they paid him in eggs, and milk, and fruits, and vegetables, and meat that could not be bought ~~at~~ the end of the first world war in Austria and after it. Austria was devastated. But because of this, Peter was a fat, happy

little baby. And Lizzie recalled all that. It was a very poignant visit and we enjoyed it immensely. Peter then went back to LSU, resumed his duties. But his mind was not only on his duties, which were vast, but he began to get the writing bug. There was a book he wanted to write.

He finally got down to it, and that was another sabbatical. But that sabbatical was in San Francisco. We brought Peter's mother from New York to San Francisco, Deborah was growing up, and we had very good friends in San Francisco. One was an agent and we just had a wonderful time in San Francisco. Peter's book was to be the psychology of conducting and he was putting it together, not only with his own views but he would go and interview well-known conductors all over the United States mostly, and get their ideas on how they handled, psychologically handles, musicians and the art of conducting.

One very amusing item was we were in Baton Rouge, Peter was in the throws of writing his book, Psychology of Conducting, and the phone rang. Peter was in the shower. So I answered the phone, and a very ostentatious voice said, "I would like to speak to Dr. Fuchs please." Peter was a doctor by then. "This is George Szell." George Szell was an internationally known conductor, had been with the MET, and then was making history with the Cleveland Orchestra. And a very commanding and forbidding person as I heard over the phone. I nearly dropped the phone, said, "Wait a minute please." Pounded on the bathroom door, Peter came out dripping wet in a towel. I told him who was on the phone, he grabbed the phone and talked to Szell. Told him he wanted to interview him for his book, The Psychology of Conducting. Eventually it would not happen because Szell would not be recorded and there was no other way that Peter could do anything except by recordings. But it was quite an experience for both of us.

One of the conductors that he did nail, who was in New York of course, at the time was Leonard Bernstein. Now I remember he had worked closely with Leonard Bernstein in 1946 and he was very friendly with Bernstein, in fact told me that every time he met Bernstein he'd get a big hug and he'd get a kiss on the cheek. I did not ever see that because in all the time that Peter knew Leonard Bernstein I, or later Deborah much to her disgust, never met the great man. But Peter interviewed him in New York. And then when I met him at the plane, brought him back home. He put a recorder on the table and played the interview with Leonard Bernstein, which was wonderful interview. Bernstein of course had the magic of the tongue as well [inaudible 00:39:40]. Listening to him speak over this inexpensive recorder, there was still the charisma that came over even under these circumstances. It was quite illuminating.

The other soiree into writing was later. As I had said earlier on, Peter had met Walter Felsenstein, the impresario from East Germany, the director that had changed the look of opera because he was so interested in not only opera itself but the staging and the acting. And Peter had gotten to know him quite well from having been his translator in Boston for Sarah Caldwell. So after the success of Peter's initial book, The Psychology of Conducting, which now is required reading for many orchestral students and conductors, as well as being in the [Ho-li-da 00:41:31] library, and it is still in existence today. I even a few years back got some royalties. It was a very successful book and

as his vast
musical
talents

it's a word

served its purpose very well. The second book was The Music Theater of Walter Felsenstein.

Now by this time the Cold War was going on. Berlin was separated by Checkpoint Charlie and communist on one side, freedom on the other. Peter started going into East Germany, crossing over, staying in West Germany, West Berlin and crossing over Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin, to interview and watch Walter Felsenstein at work. Many times I went with him. As the years went on, Deborah was in college and I could go with him. Many times we would be stopped by Checkpoint Charlie and our Volkswagen, or whatever car we were driving, thoroughly searched with mirrors running under the car and under the seats, et cetera et cetera. Of course we lived to see ~~Paris peace~~ *the end of the occupation* [Dorcha 00:42:15], but that's another story.

This was the interview with Walter Felsenstein, which Peter cherished very much, and which opened the doors to the Komische Oper after Felsenstein passed away. The meetings that he had in the Komische Oper and the people that he met resulted in, when he had written one of his operas, resulted in performances there. But I'm getting ahead of my story. I'll get to that later.

Barett Short Using hindsight, the decision that we reluctantly made in 1950 in Los Angeles, after the phone call with Dr. [Barrackstout 00:44:37], when we decided that taking the job at LSU was probably at least a bridge to our future, well it proved to be, though at the time we didn't think so, it proved to be absolutely the right decision. It was now coming on to 1970s, into '73, '74, and Peter was thinking very seriously around that time of quitting LSU, retiring, and perhaps writing more and I think he was still in the throws of writing The Music Theater of Walter Felsenstein, which was later published and made quite a success.

Propose University But at this time our daughter was in ~~Hoster~~ *Hoster* and we had been several times to Europe where Peter had tried to get some of his music published, not with great success. But he still had the liaison with the Komische Oper. Around this time, as I said, he was making noises of retiring, and also I thought that he, despite his "success", it was not the success he had dreamed of. But of course sometimes you dream of things that are just beyond your reach. Peter had dreamed of being perhaps a very successful conductor, either in Opera, symphony or both, of a large orchestra. That's what dreams are made of. But these dreams were not fully realized, but so many others were. First ~~passed~~ *passed* [00:47:56] began to make a very good living and could afford to pay Louise and the two boys, ~~1958 the~~ ...