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START AUDIO

Trevor Hill: This is a history of North Regional Broadcasting. It's interview number eight with Sir Charles Groves.

From day one in the history of North Regional Broadcasting music has been to the fore. Admittedly, the very first programme broadcast from the Metro-Vick's experimental station in May 1922 consisted of gramophone recordings. Fritz Kreisler playing Berceuse on wavelength 400 metres and a Foxtrot played by the Joseph C Smith Orchestra was heard on wavelength 450 metres.

This, I should add, with the mechanical assistance of the new Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph on loan, incidentally, from a Manchester store. When Station 2ZY officially began a regular service of broadcasting on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 1922, Kenneth Wright, the very first station manager, was also the station's pianist. He used a Steinway Baby Grand and that was on loan from the firm's London showroom. One of the first night stars from the Trafford Park Studio was Isobel Bailey and her broadcast recital was live.

0:01:18 Some 22 years later, when a young Charles Grove was appointed the permanent conductor of the BBC Northern Orchestra, I imagine things were just a little more established, were they Charles?

Sir Charles Groves: Well they were. The orchestra had started as you may have mentioned in Trafford Park as a 2ZY orchestra and its first conductor was Dan Godfrey Junior whose exceeded Kenneth Wright as the station manager. Now that's a link with me because I was conductor in Bournemouth for 10 years and his father was my predecessor but one, the famous Dan Godfrey, Sir Dan Godfrey, and so there was a link with the North Region long before I ever imagined it.

He was succeeded by T H Morrison and I remember the old players in the BBC Northern Orchestra, when I joined there. The older ones remembered playing for Morrison. He lasted quite a long time and then in 1934 the name of the orchestra which had been the Northern Wireless Orchestra was changed to the BBC Northern Orchestra and that it was called when I joined. The first conductor of that was Hubert Foster-Clark who was heir to the custard millions.

There was a lovely story going round when I first went, that several of the musicians used to wear green eyeshades because the lighting was very dazzling in the studio in Broadcasting House in Piccadilly. One in particular, Maurice Whittaker of the famous Whittaker woodwind family was a Bassoon player and he used to wear his eyeshade right over his eyes and one-day Foster-Clark was naïve enough to ask him why he wore an eyeshade? "To blot out bloody conductor," said Maurice Whittaker.

That doesn't speak very well for conductors, does it? Anyhow, when I was appointed I followed Julius Harrison who was a very distinguished musician and composer and writer, incidentally, of a very good book on the Four Brahms's Symphonies. He had been got in, really, by Maurice Johnstone the Head of Music at that time because when Gideon Fagan, who succeeded Foster-Clark was a conductor of the orchestra

from 1939. He left in '42 and I think they didn't appoint anybody after that. There'd always been a succession of distinguished guest conductors who came in from time-to-time. I mean one could mention Beecham, Harty, Bolt, Barbirolli and Sergeant, all conducted the orchestra from time-to-time.

Leslie Heward, the famous director of the City of Birmingham Orchestra and Julius Harrison did most of the work between Fagan leaving and my joining in 1944.

0:04:28

Trevor Hill: You once told me a rather nice story about your first meeting with Beecham.

Sir Charles Groves: Well, I was introduced to him by Maurice Johnstone, who as I said was the Head of Music. Maurice had been Beecham's private secretary before he joined the BBC and it was rather a coup for him to get Beecham to come and conduct the Northern Orchestra, and we were all of course excited and terribly delighted by this.

One of the concerts took place in the Milton Hall, I think, in Manchester. It coincided with a Test Match at Old Trafford between England and Australia. I, naturally, turned up and was doing what I could to assist Beecham. He said, "Well one thing you can do, you can take this radio," this little Roberts portable which was quite a unique thing in those days, "...and go into the Green Room and keep an ear open for the latest Test Match score." I was able to tell him that, I think it was Pollard, had bowled Bradman which was rather a good thing.

0:05:43

Trevor Hill: In the relatively short time I had the pleasure of working with you Charles, I think you told me that as a child you were, 'a ward in chancery', that has a lovely Dickensian ring about it.

Sir Charles Groves: Yes, well, the law doesn't alter very much, does it? Bleak House, if you remember. Anyhow I was a ward in chancery because my mother died when I was 10, my father died as a result of developing tuberculosis in the 1918 war and my mother died when I was 10, intestate. There was then a squabble between my father's relatives and my mother's relatives as to who should look after me, hence I was a ward in chancery.

My mother played the piano for the Sunday school in our church in North London and I joined that church choir at the age of 7½, I think. Did about a year there and then I went in for the voice trial at St Paul's Cathedral, in which I was fortunate to be successful and I joined the Choir of St Paul's in 1924 and sang there until 1930. So music became my life and I never really thought of doing anything else afterwards.

I went to a school in Kent called Sutton Valence when my voice broke and I did a lot of music there. From there I went to the Royal College and almost immediately became involved in the BBC with accompanying and general work of that kind.

0:07:14

Trevor Hill: The piano being your instrument in those days?

Sir Charles Groves: Piano being my instrument and the organ really. All the organists and people at St Paul's always hoped I'd become an organist. I found at the Royal College that I was much more interested in the piano and in coaching in the opera and that sort of thing, so I got involved, very much, with singers and musicians.

0:07:38

Trevor Hill: Now, before you were appointed permanent conductor of the Northern Orchestra in Manchester in '44, you'd been working with the BBC in London?

Sir Charles Groves: Yes, first of all I joined the BBC Theatre Orchestra and Stanford Robertson at the very beginning of the war, 1939. I was just 24 then and we were in Evesham and then in Bedford. The first time I got an opportunity to see an opening as a conductor was with the BBC Review Orchestra which was the old BBC Television Orchestra, was in 1943 and I worked with them for a year. Then I was headhunted, I think, for the BBC Northern Orchestra from there.

0:08:29

Trevor Hill: What were your first impressions of the BBC in Manchester?

Sir Charles Groves: Well it was the first time I'd ever worked as a member. I was a permanent member of the staff. I think I was the last conductor to have a staff contract. Always afterwards, they had programme contracts. I was very thrilled with it really. Very frightened, I must say, because I was thrown into a repertoire

of four or five concerts a week and I had to learn very quick. The orchestra was very experienced. I mean the three trombones, for example, Sam Holt, Ernest Old and Harry Hoyland had been together for 29 years, I think, and I remember the first time I conducted the Fourth Symphony of Brahms and the Trombone Corral in the last movement, in the passacaglia I ventured to suggest something, they were awfully nice but Sam Holt, the Principal Trombone afterwards came to me and said, "We have played together all these years, just leave it to us," as it were.

They were very nice to me. I could've had a much worse orchestra to cut my teeth on, I must say, in the sense of helpfulness.

0:09:51

Trevor Hill: Who were the BBC members of the Music Department at the time you joined?

Sir Charles Groves: Well Maurice Johnstone was the Head of Department and Arthur Spencer was the Principal Assistant, I think he was called.

0:10:04

Trevor Hill: He was a splendid man, wasn't he?

Sir Charles Groves: Yes, good programme man. And Winnifred Roberts was secretary of the orchestra and looked after everything to do

with the orchestra in terms of their contract and their welfare and booking deputies and extras and that sort of thing.

0:10:24

Trevor Hill: Since it was still wartime when you took over the orchestra, was the region doing any special music programmes such as touring service camps and lunchtime recitals?

Sir Charles Groves: Well not service camps, so much. What I remember was the occasional visit to factories in the North West, to give factory concerts at lunchtime. Actually, I'd been present at one when I first joined and Julius Harrison was conducting the orchestra. It was in a very big works and suddenly, in the middle of one of the softest pieces in the Peer Gynt Suite, a hooter went off and the whole audience clumped out and another lot clumped in. Julius Harrison really was apoplectic. I mean he was always inclined to get over-excited. I'm sure he nearly burst every blood vessel in his heart.

Trevor Hill: Yes, you don't expect knocking-on/knocking-off time in the middle of an orchestral concert, do you?

Sir Charles Groves: No.

0:11:24

Trevor Hill: What other duties were you doing at the time you joined with the orchestra? I mean you did a lot of studio work, presumably, was it from the Milton Hall?

Sir Charles Groves: It wasn't first from the Milton Hall, no, it was from the studio in Broadcasting House in Piccadilly.

Trevor Hill: Yes, Studio One.

Sir Charles Groves: Studio One which was awful for orchestras. I mean it was too small and I think it sounded terrible there. So we were working all the time to get the orchestra out and finally found the Milton Hall, which seemed heaven to us in those days. Of course, then, later on, later generations thought the same about the Milton Hall as we did about the studio but that's the way of the world, isn't it?

0:12:03

Trevor Hill: Yes, yes. Apart from orchestral work, looking after the orchestra, Charles, of course the Music Department in Manchester was doing a very large amount of output for a region. I can remember when I joined in '49, I mean the amount of choral works that were done by a Music Department, the enormous output from brass bands.

Sir Charles Groves: Well of course they were all OB - outside broadcasts - then we would take the Messiah from Huddersfield or a big choral work from Sheffield or Leeds or Blackburn, or wherever it is. Talking about Blackburn, that was one of the choral societies with which the Northern Orchestra used to play for. I have very happy memories of King George's Hall, Blackburn and John

Stirrup who was the chairman of the choir and a very capable one and Horace Tattersall who was the conductor.

0:13:04

Trevor Hill: There you had a lovely acoustic.

Sir Charles Groves: Very good.

Trevor Hill: I remember when the Vienna Boys Choir came over, I went round to announce them for the light programme and they sounded marvellous in that hall. You certainly had not only some very good musicians but some fine people.

Sir Charles Groves: Absolutely, as I said they were very kind to me and I learnt a lot from them. Actually, when I joined Reggie Stead was still in the police force and Fred [Ruff 0:38:29] was leading at that time and Reggie came back later. Well then there was Charles Taylor who later became - and for many years - leader of the orchestra at Covent Garden. Ben Horsfall, Clifford Knowles, Sadie Hardy and Margaret Ward.

Trevor Hill: Sadie married to Jack Hardy, Leader of the [Crosstalk 0:14:00] Orchestra.

Sir Charles Groves: That's right. And Ethel Richmond, Phyllis Taylor, all sorts of stalwart ladies who'd been in the Hallé Orchestra.

Trevor Hill: And our lovely horn player, Sidney Coulson.

Sir Charles Groves: Sidney Coulson. He was still in the RAF when I joined but he came back later, yes. Of course, talking about characters, the Third Horn, Otto Pesh who had taught all the others, I think. He was the son of the famous Pesh whom Richter brought over from Germany for the Hallé Orchestra in the old days. It was quite a lively orchestra. I remember one shameful incident when a clockwork mouse was released by someone in the studio, during a broadcast. I remember another occasion when we always had to have an extra in case the programme under-ran because they were much more keen on timing, in those days.

One of the pieces which we used to play was the Sugar Plum Fairy from the Casse-Noisette and one occasion, without really thinking, we went to this, turned this music over, the announcer announced and we realise there wasn't a Celeste in the studio. So we were stuck with the orchestra going ting, bong, bong, ting, tum and nothing happening at all. It quickly faded out and embarrassment all-round.

0:15:45

Trevor Hill: You mentioned Maurice Johnstone being Head of Music in Manchester when you joined. He was certainly very much to the fore in the story of North Regional Music, when I joined. Maurice was quite a character, wasn't he Charles?

Sir Charles Groves: He was. He was blunt, to put it mildly and he called a spade a spade. I found he was extremely imaginative to work with from the point of view of programme building. He had a

comprehensive knowledge of the repertoire and the keys of the pieces and the timings and all that sort of thing. So making programmes with him was a very great pleasure.

0:16:29

Trevor Hill: You worked, Charles, not just, I mean, with the orchestra. I remember the work you did with some of the artists. I mean, particularly, the Children's Hour artists, Violet Carson, Doris Gamble.

Sir Charles Groves: Yes.

0:16:43

Trevor Hill: You did a lot of work with them, you did a lot of concerts with Violet, didn't you?

Sir Charles Groves: Yes, quite a lot of concerts for Nan MacDonald who was the Head of Children's Hour. I think the Children's Hour concerts were unique of their kind, really, because we didn't just play tiddly-wink music. I remember doing Sibelius' Seventh Symphony, Don Juan of Strauss, all sorts of things.

0:17:14

Trevor Hill: You took part with Nan in announcing the concerts themselves.

Sir Charles Groves: That's right. Well I used to do a pre-concert, what we call nowadays a pre-concert talk with the scores in front of me on the piano. I did little excerpts and that sort of thing. We used to get some extraordinarily bright children at those concerts. I remember doing a Haydn symphony or two Movements from and one little boy came up to me with a miniature score afterwards and he said, "By what authority did you omit the exposition repeat of the First Movement of this symphony?" A bit overpowering, really, from a 9 or 10-year-old.

Trevor Hill: I remember another... Well he was a 14 or 15-year-old, he had sent in a composition, Charles, to me in Children's Hour, for your own ideas which were poems, stories, compositions by young people and I showed it to Violet Carson and I showed it to you. Your comment was, "This young man is either brilliant or slightly mad, I'd get him in."

0:18:21 Max Davis, of course in later years you were to do a lot together musically, weren't you?

Sir Charles Groves: Yes, I've done a lot of his music.

0:18:30

Trevor Hill: You seemed to have concentrated, after you left the BBC, Charles, in helping a lot of young musicians and bringing their music to the fore and making sure that it was performed publicly.

Sir Charles Groves: Well, I'd always gone on the assumption, over the years, really, that if English or British conductors, excuse me, British

conductors don't do British composers music, well it's a bad thing. I've always been interested, in any case, not just from, as it were a duty, but I've always been interested in new music and I still am.

I find that it's greatly stimulating to me to have to work at scores again. Although one always works at the scores one knows very well but that's a different kind of working. It's to find out even more about the things you think you know very well. Actually, to learn new scores is very stimulating to the mind.

0:19:39

Trevor Hill: You did, as I recall, the midday promenade concerts at the Town Hall, those that were held in the winter. I remember Maurice saying, "If it hadn't been for Charles Groves, we wouldn't have started and embarked upon these particular broadcast concerts. Were they a particular source of pleasure to you as a conductor?"

Sir Charles Groves: Well they were because I think it's accepted nowadays that BBC Orchestras have to get out of the studio. I mean they all do public work. They go abroad and do concert tours and that sort of thing. In my day, we were absolutely in the studio and it seemed a very good idea to get the orchestra out and do these midday proms. It's surprising the number of people that come up to me now when I conduct all over the place and they say, "I remember you conducting the prom concerts," or, "...the Children's Hour concerts."

I was very proud of those concerts, actually. People used to drop-in, you know, if they couldn't even stay for the whole hour or whatever it was, the broadcast at lunchtime, they used to

come in and listen to one piece and then go out again. It was a lovely atmosphere.

0:20:50

Trevor Hill: You were never interrupted by a factory hooter in the middle of Manchester?

Sir Charles Groves: No.

0:20:55

Trevor Hill: I remember the feelings of genuine sadness amongst the regional staff, Charles, when it was announced that you were leaving us to become Principal Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Did you leave because you felt there were horizons beyond the BBC or was there another reason?

Sir Charles Groves: Well I was very happy in the BBC. Actually, just before I left, a year before I left, I was seconded to the orchestras in Australia and Joseph Post came over to the Northern. I had an experience there of conducting in public more. I decided that the time had come when I ought to try and further my career and the Bournemouth's Orchestra was advertised when Rudolph Schwarz went to Birmingham. I put in for it and got it.

In spite of the fact that I had a lot of trouble there with the orchestra being disbanded and forming the new Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and all that, it was a wonderful time for me and I had two young children and the third one was born

when we were in Bournemouth. To spend seven years in Bournemouth was very good for us all as a family too.

0:22:07

Trevor Hill: Within a relatively short time of your taking over the orchestra, the Bournemouth for the first time were at the proms, weren't they?

Sir Charles Groves: In 1955 I think, yes. Then when the orchestra got on to the stage, all the audience started singing, 'I do like to be beside the seaside'.

0:22:29

Trevor Hill: BBC musicians are sometimes, I think, put in a rather difficult position, they're members of the staff and yet outside, of course, there is the all-powerful Musicians Union. I think we both remember the orchestral strike, was it the late 1970s, Charles, when many of our colleagues were standing outside New Broadcasting House, Manchester while the rest of it, staff, people were going into the building to work.

Could that sort of situation arise again, do you think?

Sir Charles Groves: Well this was really because of the re-organisation, wasn't it? The regional organisation and I think the one I was involved in more was a little later, wasn't it, when the BBC Scottish Orchestra was under threat and Geraint Evans and Evelyn Barbirolli and I stood on the picket line outside Broadcasting House in London. Thankfully the BBC Scottish Symphony

Orchestra was saved and has gone from strength-to-strength. Also, like the other orchestras now, goes out and tours abroad and so-on.

So that's a good end to that. Could it happen again? Well I think such things can always happen when men belong, or men and women belong to a union and see their jobs threatened. If rationalisation, as our political friends are pleased to call it, goes to the point where sections of broadcasting staff see their livelihood going, I think it could happen again anywhere.

0:24:14

Trevor Hill:

Do you remember a 1948 Manchester BBC Publication, it was entitled, 'This is the North of England'. In fact, on the one page there's a photo of Charles Groves, in the days before your CBE with a small photograph of yourself inserted. On the facing page, there's an article written especially for the publication by Sir Thomas Beecham who writes, he says, as 'a candid friend'. It begins, 'There's a general idea that I am what may be described as the Public Enemy Number One of the British Broadcasting Corporation...'

He was referring to his original opposition to the BBC being granted a monopoly and to the fact that too many economic considerations were exercised by London, being the headquarters as it were. Musically he writes, 'The North should have its powers and chances doubled, if not trebled, to serve so large a region'. Well now we're in the 1990s, the BBC Philharmonic is second-only to the BBC Symphony Orchestra but had their initially been an alternative broadcasting system Charles, do you think each would've employed its own house

orchestras? I mean would it of improved the musical broadcast output or wouldn't it have been quite as good as it has been?

Sir Charles Groves: I think it's difficult to say whether, if there had been several broadcasting organisations they'd of all run an orchestra. I think that's been one of the strengths of the BBC that they have inherited the arethian tradition of the BBC being a service and not a commercial organisation.

They've always maintained the house orchestras and, indeed, I should think nowadays they spend more money than ever on the house orchestras. That is, really, the only worry in the near future when the broadcast is reorganised that they will still think there will be still enough opinion and a strong enough opinion to justify the expense. I think from a musical point of view, the BBC has done more than any other organisation and, indeed, in a way more than the gramophone to stimulate musical intelligence and appreciation in this country and they still go on doing so. I mean the BBC Philharmonic concerts, for example, in the Free Trade Hall and the BBC Symphony Orchestra concerts in the Festival Hall play, generally speaking, a repertoire which the commercial orchestras cannot afford to do.

That again is a question of how long are they ever going to be able to afford to do that?

0:27:25

Trevor Hill: In asking you to be 'a candid friend', what in the BBC system do you think have been the weaknesses in the business of music making? Are there areas that you feel a little more attention should've been paid to or...?

Sir Charles Groves: Well it's difficult to say whether it could've been improved by paying more attention. I think the areas which, the two which occurred to me immediately, the first is the sense of frustration that many players feel in being in the studio. That's why I say, why I try to get the BBC Northern Orchestra in the old days out of the studio and that has been done more and more now, as I say the orchestras go abroad and tour and goodness knows what.

That's the one thing which can be detrimental to morale. That's why it's important. The other thing is that from the other side, from the conductors side and the administration side, it's very difficult to maintain a sort of exuberant enthusiasm. I remember - talking about Maurice Johnstone - the only time he ever disappointed me was when he took me aside and took me out to lunch once and complained because I was being too rigorous with the orchestra. "You can't expect to make a Philharmonia out of the BBC Northern Orchestra," he said to me and I said, "Why not?"

I think that's the thing which is bad about studio work. It leads to a certain amount of complacency unless one is really ambitious. I was thinking I conduct a lot of Haydn symphonies, always have done, but nowadays when I conduct one or two chamber orchestras, I love doing Haydn and Mozart. Haydn once wrote that Prince Esterházy had kept him a prisoner at Esterházy for 29 years, hardly letting him out to do any other sort of work.

He said, "I had no one to criticise me and I had to be original." It's a marvellous remark for a composer to make.

Trevor Hill: Well you have, at least, two musical children and, indeed, a musical grandson beside an ex-BBC musical wife. What, I wonder, were Hilary Barchard, as Lady Groves was, what were Hilary's first impressions back in 1944 of the new conductor of the North Regions Music Department's staff?

Lady Hilary Groves: Well I'm afraid Trevor I didn't know anything about Charles Groves. I had worked with him once, a long time before that on opera, but my very best friend, in the BBC Northern Orchestra is a second oboe. She was called Rosemary Wells and she'd known Charles from Royal College days and they'd gone to parties together when they were children. She said to me, she said, "Charles Groves is the most wonderful young musician in the country and you'll love him Hilary," she said. So there you are, she knew.

0:30:54

Trevor Hill: Now, like myself you were a junior programme engineer. We sort of did the effects, didn't we?

Lady Hilary Groves: Yes, rather.

0:31:02

Trevor Hill: Those who were really good were allowed to set the microphones and do the balance and control on important things like orchestras. Did the new chap with the baton congratulate you on your musical balances when you were working the other side of the glass?

Lady Hilary Groves: Yes, I left the effects on the records and things after about four thrilling years and I went full-time into the music. I used to leave the controls very, very much alone and he used to like this, he said, "Yes, you leave those knobs alone." I used to get a very good balance, I thought I used to do nearly all the broadcasts of the Northern Orchestra and all the other music that went out in the North, all over from Leeds, Newcastle - brass bands, choirs, all sorts of things.

0:31:51

Trevor Hill: You joined originally Hilary in London?

Lady Hilary Groves: Yes, I did. Yes, I remember the day when they said, "Well we're sending you up, just temporarily to Manchester because somebody's been called up and you can take their place." I remonstrated, I said, "No, I wanted to stay where I was. I got some very nice digs and I didn't want to move at all." That morning, the morning I was going to go I did a programme which used to go out every morning early called Programme Parade and it told you about all the day's broadcasts. I was doing it with Wilfred Pickles who was reading the news that morning.

We were chatting while the records were going on and I was moaning, saying, I was going to Manchester. "Oh, how lucky you are. I wish I was going back there. You'll be so happy there." And of course, I was, I stayed for 10 years.

0:32:45

Trevor Hill: When you arrived in Manchester, who was in the department, in programme engineering?

Lady Hilary Groves: Well Hugh Middlemiss was the Head of the Department. Norman Fulton was just going and I took his place, eventually. At the beginning, there weren't many people in the department, we did everything. We worked terribly long hours, Alan Brundret, I can remember.

0:33:11

Trevor Hill: Those were the days when you had the Watts discs, long before the tape recorder.

Lady Hilary Groves: The room where we used to play all the records we used to call Watts Room. That was next-door to Children's Hour office and I used to spend hours there. I remember I used to write home to my mother for the first few months, always from Watts Room. Eventually she wrote back and said, "Who is this Mr Watts?"

0:33:37

Trevor Hill: Reading the BBC Year Book for the year 1933, that's a little before our time, it states the BBC was the first broadcasting organisation to replace engineers by musicians for controlling music and quite right too. It helps to read a score to know when the loud bits are coming.

Lady Hilary Groves: Well I'm afraid this was a very big point. I can't imagine how they could do it otherwise. You see we weren't technical. We didn't have to do anything technical at all and there were always great arguments going on, whether we should be called engineers, in fact, at all because we were all trained musicians.

We had to read a score and apart from reading the score, listening to the works. We had to have a large repertoire, I mean I knew a tremendous lot about music. The engineering side was completely unnecessary. We knew how a microphone worked, of course, it was important to know that but apart from that, we did everything. We used to time the programmes, we decided where the microphone should be put and looked after the whole thing. Nowadays, the BBC have a host of people doing a broadcast, in those days it was just, literally, one person, ourselves.

0:34:47

Trevor Hill: It was exciting though, wasn't it?

Lady Hilary Groves: Very exciting, yes.

0:34:52

Trevor Hill: I can see the gleam in your eyes now as you're talking.

Lady Hilary Groves: Oh, I loved it, I loved it. I loved both the drama days and the music days, very, very much. I would say I was happy then as any time in my life. I loved the BBC and really, I don't think I

ever met anybody in the BBC who didn't love the BBC, we certainly never counted the hours or the effort or anything else that we put into it.

0:35:17

Trevor Hill: When you married, did you have to then leave the BBC?

Lady Hilary Groves: There's no rule but actually I did leave the BBC and then worked for Nan MacDonald. I came back and did a little bit of freelance work until Sally, our first baby was born about 18 months later or something, yes. No, there was no rule like that at all in my day, none at all, no.

0:35:39

Trevor Hill: Now you've mentioned your first-born, Sally, one of your two very gifted musical children.

Lady Hilary Groves: Well she is very gifted, yes. She's now Head of Contemporary Music for [Shots 0:35:48], the publishers. She's like her father. I don't say that lightly, she really is a very, very fine musician and she was born more than trained because... Although all three children had a very good musical training, it was apparent from the beginning like her father, she would be a really fine musician.

0:36:12

Trevor Hill: And your son?

Lady Hilary Groves: Jonathan, he's the youngest. We had Mary in-between who's a very good Viola player, not to be forgotten at all but she produced three children so she had to give up her music. Jonathan, he is a concert agent. He was a chorister at King's Cambridge and like his father before him, he was at St Paul's-

Trevor Hill: Following in his father's footsteps.

Lady Hilary Groves: That's right. So he became a musician at a very young age and now, as I say, he works in a big concert agency in London, he's a director within Ben & Williams.

0:36:44

Trevor Hill: The Children's Hour days, which you've just mentioned Hilary, in the North they were very exciting weren't they?

Lady Hilary Groves: Well they were unforgettable. Why are they so vivid in our memories now? I can almost hear the sounds of the studio, Nan's voice coming over the loudspeaker to us all, inspiring us and cajoling us and the imagination of it all. Everybody hanging on her word and the varied programmes that we had. Everything from symphony concerts to Romany. I mean I won't repeat all the programmes because I'm quite sure other people have done so but I took part either by, from the music presentation or the sound effects. Everything from the little pad of animals footsteps to tremendous, exciting battles that took place all over the North of England.

I mean the history, children learnt it so painlessly and excitingly and also the industrial part of it too. She explored every part of life in the North of England and the Isle of Man and right up to the border, with some of the finest writers and musicians of the time. I mean she got them all to work for her. I'd of done anything for her.

Trevor Hill: I think we all would, yes. Well my thanks to Sir Charles Groves and to Lady Hilary Groves for contributing to a History of North Regional Broadcasting.

[Break in conversation 0:38:15 - 0:38:29]

END AUDIO

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