

Type

Sound:, WAV

Duration

01:05:55

Project

Pass it On – Oral History Project for the Chichester Festival Theatre

Recording Date

22 October 2014

Recording locations

Interviewee's home

Interviewees

Pamela Howard (speaker, female)

Interviewers

Fay Wilson (speaker, female)

Abstract

Pamela Howard [PH] born 5th January 1939 in Birmingham. Mentions childhood in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and studying art in Birmingham and London. Brief description of forming a company with other art graduates making props and costumes for theatre designers. Anecdote about meeting Roger Furze, a designer of early Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) productions. Description of PH being commissioned to produce items for the first season, staying in Selsey. (06:00) Description of a drawing made by PH showing her impressions of opening night of the first season. (09:00) Comment about working backstage on opening night. Mentions Laurence Olivier [LO], Sybil Thorndyke, Lewis Casson. Anecdote about Sean Kenny [SK] designing the original set for 'Uncle Vanya'. (12:00) Description of line drawing, now owned by PH, made by SK of the set. Brief description of SK's career and PH's admiration for him. (15:00). Comment on SK's ability to use innovative materials and work with a thrust stage. Anecdote about Tyrone Guthrie [TG] visiting CFT and explaining the nature of the thrust stage as a democratic space. (18.00) Description of how CFT architecture affects the experience of attending the theatre. (21.00) Anecdote about chaotic atmosphere of working backstage on opening night. (24.00) Comment on local production of props and costumes in early days of CFT. Mentions Ivan Alderman, costume designer, LO, Bill Green [BG], production manager, Patrick Garland. Description of BG's role and skills. (27.00) Brief description of use of art in theatre design, mentions Tanya Moiseiwitsch. Mentions book by PH 'What is Scenography'. (30.00) Description of role of the visual artist in theatre. (33.00) Description of Stratford Ontario Theatre and

how it inspired design of CFT. Mentions TG, Leslie Evershed-Martin, Timothy West. (36.00) Remark about local reaction to proposal to build a theatre. Remarks on other theatres built in the round. Brief description of PH's current work in Canadian theatre. (39.00) Description of how thrust stage has been used in different ways since CFT's construction and comparison with proscenium arch. Mentions SK (42.00) Description of PH's involvement in production 'Terra Nova' and anecdote about the inspiration for the design. Mentions Peter Dews. (48.00) Description of effect on audience of staging play about the Antarctic in summer. Mentions study of piano in her youth and interest in music. (51.00) Describes recent (past 10 years) involvement in opera production including 'Carmen' in Ljubljana. (54.00) Description of how PH's Russian Jewish heritage influences her international work. (57.00) Description of using artistic skills to assist police following a break-in at her home. Mentions Chekhov. Remark about Jonathan (Church) and his impact on CFT. (60.00) Comment on development of all theatre and need for inclusivity. Mentions Zoe Wannamaker in 'Stevie', Nicholas Hyntner at the National Theatre. (63.00) Recalls overall experience of working at CFT over the years. Mentions Alec Guinness. (65.00)