

Type

Sound:. WAV

Duration

01:45:39

Project

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

Recording Date

20 June 2014

Recording location(s)

Interviewee's Home

Interviewee(s)

Eileen Norris (speaker, female)

Interviewer(s)

Rib Davis (speaker, male)

Abstract

Eileen Norris[EN] born Canewdon, Essex, 1927. Mentions first sight of Chichester Festival Theatre(CFT), 1961.(01:14) Remarks on first role as Assistant to Front of House Manager including talking to public about CFT and giving lectures to famous visitors including French theatre director, Roger Planchon.(03:00) Mentions early fundraising for CFT.(05:03) Remarks on regular fainting of audience members during play, 'The Broken Heart'.(10:00) Remarks on problems obtaining CFT's Fire Certificate before first performance.(11:25) Mentions first impressions of CFT.(12:55) Remarks on early work at Ravenscourt /Corona Theatre.(14:13) Remarks on observing Laurence Olivier's[LO] technique as director.(15:45) Mentions techniques of working on thrust stages.(17:32) Description of her impressions of CFT General Manager, Pieter Rogers[PR].(19:43) Description of first CFT season, including plays, 'The Chances', 'The Broken Heart', 'Uncle Vanya'.(28:25) Comments on early backstage areas at CFT.(36:38) Mentions visit from Ontario Theatre Company.(42:35) Mentions LO's intention to make CFT into National Theatre's summer venue.(46:11) Remarks on opinions about CFT amongst Chichester residents.(48:08) Remarks on early years at CFT.(51:31) Anecdote on changes at CFT after PR left.(54:20) Mentions her feelings about power of theatre.(59:59) Brief description of working at Theatre Royal, Stratford East.(01:01:20) Mentions appointment as Stage Director at Queens Theatre, Hornchurch.(01:06:00) Mentions award of Arts Council bursary to train as director.(01:06:33) Brief description of varied teaching career and setting up own drama company.(01:08:27) Brief description of attitudes towards women in theatrical management roles

during EN's career.(01:13:05) Comments on working as Promotions Manager at CFT, role at Sheffield Playhouse Theatre and lecturing to promote theatre.(01:17:20) Remarks on opinions of CFT productions, including 'Valmouth', 'The Master and Margarita', 'Dr. Faustus'.(01:21:06) Description of Peter Shaffer, Roger Allam and memorable productions including plays, 'The Royal Hunt of the Sun' and 'A Month in the Country'.(01:23:15) Comments on successful early production of 'Uncle Vanya'.(01:38:19) Comments on contrasting acting techniques in theatre and film.(01:41:29)