

**Type**

Sound:. WAV

**Duration**

01:03:07

**Project**

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

**Recording Date**

20 August 2014

**Recording locations**

Sound Studio, Chichester Festival Theatre

**Interviewee(s)**

Leslie Williams (speaker, female)

**Interviewer(s)**

Karen Robinson (speaker, male)

**Abstract**

Leslie Williams[LW] born Aberdare, 1925. Mentions being introduced to theatre by his grandmother, late 1920s.(01:07) Mentions first job as journalist on Welsh local newspaper, reporting on theatre and concert performances.(02:23) Comments on teaching career and interest in drama as teaching method.(03:25) Brief description of appointment as English and Drama teacher at school in Boscombe.(07:31) Mentions formation of after-school drama club and first production, 'Lady Precious Stream'.(12:00) Brief description of development of Bournemouth Drama Centre, early 1960s and Dramascope demonstrations in schools.(13:48) Mentions appointment as Dorset adviser for drama and theatre.(18:32) Brief description of first awareness of Chichester Festival Theatre(CFT) and attending play, 'The Chances'.(19:32) Mentions success of 'Uncle Vanya'.(24:24) Comments on meeting Dame Sybil Thorndike who attended LW's school productions of Shaw's 'Androcles And The Lion' and dance version of Vaughan Williams's 'Job'.(25:39) Mentions first impressions of CFT.(29:42) Anecdotes about productions seen, including 'Hay Fever' with Googie Withers and John McCallum, directed by Tony Britton, 'The Royal Hunt Of The Sun' with Robert Stephens, Michael Gambon, Christopher Timothy, Derek Jacobi and Edward Petherbridge, 'Othello' with Laurence Olivier and Maggie Smith, Shaw's 'St. Joan', starring Joan Plowright.(30:19) Brief description of most memorable performances, including 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' starring Donald Sinden and 'The Philanthropist' with Edward Fox.(36:00)

Remarks on seeing Omar Sharif in 'The Sleeping Prince' and while dining at a Chichester hotel.(40:19) Brief description of disappointing productions, including Lauren Bacall in 'The Visit', Prunella Scales in 'The Matchmaker', Jonathon Morris in 'As You Like It' and Claire Bloom in 'The Cherry Orchard'.(45:38) Comments on further productions, memorable for varied reasons, including 'Much Ado About Nothing' with Gerald Harper, Alan Bates in 'A Patriot For Me', 'Cavalcade', Joan Plowright as Edith Cavell, 'Scott Of The Antarctic' and 'Blithe Spirit'.(50:58) Mentions memories of Dora Bryan.(54:25) Mentions 'Nicholas Nickleby', last production seen with wife, Mary, 2006.(55:41) Mentions return to Chichester, 2014 to see 'Black Comedy', 'Miss Julie', 'Guys And Dolls' and 'Gypsy'.(56:06) Mentions impressions of the Minerva.(57:12) Remarks on impressions of Chichester theatre audiences.(58:18) Mentions opinions of CFT in theatrical world.(59:57)