



Cambridge Arts Theatre

Interview data sheet: Behind the Scenes Project

Ref no: THM/258

Collection title: Behind the scenes: saving and sharing Cambridge Arts Theatre's Archive

Interviewee's surname: Mander

Title: Mr

Interviewee's forename(s): Roger

Gender: Male

Occupation: Stage Door Keeper

Date(s) of recording, tracks (from-to): 17/02/2020

Location of interview: Cambridge Arts Theatre, Meeting Room

Name of interviewer: Beth Aitken

Type of recorder: Zoom H4N

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Interviewer's comments: None

Abstract: Stage Door Keeper at Cambridge Arts Theatre for 14 years, Roger Mander reflects on a life dedicated to the arts. He remembers the various eras of his theatrical career; amateur

	performance, drama teaching and Arts Theatre employee, and discusses the details of Stage Door Keeping over the years.
Key words:	Stage door keeping, Boards, Cambridge Actors, Steven Sidhall, acting, Sir Ian McKellen, Shakespeare plays, musicals
File	Mander.wav
00.00	How he came to work at the Theatre. Mander came to Cambridge 30 years ago and knew of the theatre so came to see several shows. When he came to age of retirement (2006), he didn't want to retire so got a part time job at the Theatre through Cambridge evening news. He worked in the bar, ushering and stage door keeping.
2.35	Mander has always had an interest in theatre. The main reason for acting is being sent to a school where one of his teachers who was on The Archers radio show got him an audition in BBC radio, so he did children's radio. Mander started part time at the Birmingham Theatre School and has had an interest in acting ever since. He then worked at Birmingham Theatre. Mander became a drama teacher to have a steady job and stayed as a drama teacher whilst still being involved in acting for a while.
5.50	After moving to this area, Mander knew of the Theatre and so when he retired, wanted to come to the Theatre for part time job. Says he was in luck to have some acting at the Theatre. Mander started acting with two amateur companies in Cambridge, Boards and Cambridge Actors who did a Shakespeare every year at the Theatre. He was cast as Othello after an audition. Steven Sidhall, director of Cambridge actors, saw his performance and invited him to do Shakespeare at Cambridge Arts. Mander got a part in the Shakespeare play and played Achilles. They wanted him back the next year for another Shakespeare play.
10.05	Since coming to the Arts Theatre Mander has done musicals after having done many serious performances and tragedies. He had never done a musical before. He did three musicals (Anything Goes, My Fair Lady, and Guys and Dolls) and had to sing solos in two of them which was new to him. His favourite of the three was Guys and Dolls. Mander enjoyed doing something different to previous performances and says he was lucky to get the part.
13.00	He says the time from start of rehearsals to the performance was short, so he balanced working as stage door keeper and rehearsing at the same time. Mander recalls working on getting to know the character and working with the director. He worked with several directors who were all good in different ways.
15.50	Mander notes that being a stage door keeper is not a job people particularly want to have and it is seen as a low position

	<p>to have, but personally thinks it's a vital part of theatre life. He believes the job doesn't seem appealing to onlookers and there is no advancement in the role. Mander does enjoy door keeping as due to his age he doesn't act anymore. He recalls that having done technical things with theatre in the past, as well as acting and directing, drama has been his whole life. Mander notes that it isn't a longstanding job but involves being a good communicator.</p>
17.48	<p>He says acting can be a lonely job, moving around theatres, away from families, and thinks he can relate with this due to his past and acts as a friendly face to the actors who come to the Cambridge Arts and help them in anyway he can. Mander feels his main job is towards incoming actors, directors and plays more so than to front of house. He notes that at Cambridge Arts the stage door is very near to the box office, meaning he has to deal with the public often. Mander says his main job is to make the actors feel at home, be friendly and listen to gossip. He gets great satisfaction from meeting people who haven't been to the Cambridge Arts in years yet still remember him. He says the actors welcome the closeness in the time they are at the Theatre.</p>
20.03	<p>Mander says the job also involves rotas, taxes and doing the actors bidding to keep them happy. He gets satisfaction from receiving a 'thank you' at the end of the week. Mander notes that no two days are alike. He sees different people every week, different actors. He thinks past experience has helped him in the job, and the reputation he has.</p>
21.05	<p>He enjoys interacting with the actors. Mander says that he knows how they feel as he has been a part of it, making it easier for him to talk to them. He says he cannot be starstruck in his role. Mander is able to talk about his experiences with them and enjoys making them happy. He recalls there has been fantastic people at the Arts, and expresses that the Arts is a very good theatre, which is why he has been here so long. Mander mentions the variety of shows and people. He finds the job satisfying.</p>
22.49	<p>Mander loves the job. He says that everyone is equal regardless of their job at the Theatre. He says they are all here for one purpose: the theatre; the love of the theatre and the success of the theatre.</p>
23.22	<p>As stage door keeper he has met people he never thought he'd meet. He recalls being at the Birmingham Rep. and his involvement in the theatre there. Mander mentions meeting Sir Ian McKellen at the Cambridge Arts, and recalls his love of this theatre. He says they were able to relate as both of them started their interest in the theatre at the Palace Theatre.</p>