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| **Interview data sheet:** Behind the Scenes Project | |
| **Ref no:** THM/258    **WAV files ref:** | |
| **Collection title:** Behind the scenes: saving and sharing Cambridge Arts Theatre’s Archive  **Interviewee’s surname:** Goddard  **Title:** Ms  **Interviewee’s forename(s):** Liza  **Gender:** Female  **Occupation:** Actress | |
| **Date(s) of recording, tracks (from-to):** 14/03/22  **Location of interview:** Norfolk  **Name of interviewer:** Katherine Moar  **Type of recorder:** Zoom H4N **Recording format:** WAV  **Total no. of tracks:** 1 **Total duration (HH:MM:SS):** 00:23:36  **Mono/Stereo:** Stereo | |
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| **Abstract:** | ‘…You very much feel like a family.’ Liza Goddard recalls performing in Cambridge’s Arts Theatre’s annual Panto three times, discusses the touring circuit and her favourite regional theatres, and emphasises the fundamental importance of the arts. |
| **Key words:** | Cambridge Arts Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, *Arms and the Man,* George Bernard Shaw, *The Importance of Being Ernest,* Oscar Wilde, Ayckbourn, Evensong, King’s College, *If I Were You,* Terrence Booth, Saskia Butler, Richard Stacey, Dominic Hecht, Matt Crosby, Kevan Allen, *Cinderella, Aladdin, Jack and the Beanstalk,* Cambridge, Malvern, Guildford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness, Plymouth, Truro, Wales, Cardiff, Swansea, Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne, Jessie Matthews, *Pygmalion,* Frank Matcham, Aldershot Rep, Theatre Royal Aldershot, BBC, David Attenborough, *Jesus of Nazareth,* Cornwall, Wayne Sleep |
| **File** |  |
| **00.00** | Liza Goddard introduces herself. |
| **00.10** | **What is your earliest memory of Cambridge Arts Theatre?** |
|  | Goddard believes she first came to Cambridge Arts Theatre with a touring production from Bristol Old Vic in 1970. The production was a split week of *Arms and the Man* [George Bernard Shaw] and *The Importance of Being Ernest* [Oscar Wilde]. It was Goddard’s first experience of touring, but she can’t be certain if they did come to the Arts Theatre then. For the last twenty years, Goddard thinks she has performed at Cambridge Arts Theatre at least once a year if not twice. |
| **01:03** | **Could you talk about the different roles you have played when performing at Cambridge Arts Theatre?** |
|  | Goddard says that regional theatre is ‘wonderful’ as it is good value for money and that audiences see productions that are ‘totally ignored by London’. She recalls being in ‘some marvellous productions… new plays, classics, Oscar Wilde, Shaw, new Ayckbourns’. Goddard describes reading an article in the paper recently that said, ‘there are no older actors’. ‘We’re all working,’ Goddard says, ‘we’re all touring in regional theatre, filling theatres as we go round the country’. Goddard describes herself as ‘a great believer and supporter of regional theatre’. |
| **02:07** | **What’s special about Cambridge Arts Theatre as a regional theatre?** |
|  | Goddard says that a lot of plays tour to Cambridge Arts Theatre because it’s near to London which means that a lot of actors can live at home and commute to the Theatre. ‘It’s very handy for everywhere, it’s a lovely little Theatre. It’s not too big, it’s just perfect, and, of course, in the middle of that beautiful city’. Goddard describes performing at Cambridge Arts Theatre as ‘a fantastic week’: the cast goes to Evensong at King’s College and to all the museums. The abundance of cafes is also great for actors. |
| **03:02** | **What is your favourite show that you performed in at Cambridge Arts Theatre?** |
|  | A new Ayckbourn play Goddard performed in approximately 10-12 years ago called *If I Were You*: ‘my favourite play of all time’. Goddard describes the plot: ‘It’s about a couple with a terrible relationship… and just before the interval, they wake up in the morning, and he’s in her body, and she is in his body… they become each other’. Goddard says it was a difficult part to play because ‘I had to become him, and he had to become me’. Goddard says the second half especially was a ‘laugh a minute’. Cambridge Arts Theatre was the last stop on the tour. ‘It was riotous.’ Goddard recalls the ‘lovely, cosy bar’ at the Arts Theatre at that time and ‘the marvellous barman’. Goddard appreciates that Cambridge Arts Theatre gives everyone a drink after the first night, something not all theatres do. The barman – ‘let’s call him Trevor’ – would keep the bar open after the show and on the last night he let the cast have a party. Terrence Booth played Goddard’s husband, Saskia Butler and Richard Stacey played Goddard’s daughter and son-in-law respectively. Dominic Hecht played Goddard’s son. Hecht did ‘close-up magic’. Goddard remembers how the cast all dressed up, Hecht performed close-up magic, and Stacey and Butler did an interpretive dance based on their characters in the play. Goddard says they were ‘laughing incontinently’: ‘it was the best end of play party ever’. |
| **06:38** | **Could you talk about your involvement with Cambridge Arts Theatre’s annual Pantomime?** |
|  | Goddard has performed in the Cambridge Arts Theatre Panto three times. ‘I loved doing Pantomime anyway, and I particularly love doing it there because, I suppose, it’s small and its family-orientated, and… you very much feel like a family’. Goddard says that Matt Crosby, who plays the Dame, is the leader of the company and mentions the ‘fantastic choreographer’ [Kevan Allen]. She says that the Pantomimes are cast very well and the Ensemble is always made up of professional dancers. ‘It’s incredibly hard work’. Goddard describes how the company sometimes do three shows a day: ‘You come to the Theatre at 8 o’clock in the morning and you leave at 11 at night… You don’t see daylight at all’. Goddard says that the Theatre still makes it a nice experience: if you’re doing a three-show day, for example, they will provide food between the shows. ‘They look after you very well’. |
| **08:05** | **What are the three Pantos you have performed in, and do you have a favourite?** |
|  | *Cinderella* is probably Goddard’s favourite. She has also performed in *Aladdin* and *Jack and the Beanstalk.* Goddard describes having ‘terrible trouble with the beanstalk’, which would fall down. ‘Things go wrong in Panto all the time’: however, Goddard says, the audience usually knows when something has gone wrong and they enjoy it (unlike in a straight play). Goddard talks about the benefit of having relaxed performances with the light’s up and without loud music for children and families with additional needs: ‘children can run about if they want to, they don’t have to sit still’. |
| **10:00** | **What is it like being in touring show and travelling the country?** |
|  | ‘When you get the tour list, the first thing I do is book digs… and I’ve got particularly good digs in Cambridge’. Goddard describes how you always have your favourite venues to visit on tour: ‘…Cambridge, Malvern, Guildford…Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness… Plymouth, Truro…Wales, Cardiff, Swansea’. Goddard enjoys ‘being in the lovely towns’ and ‘seeing them change’: ‘I’ve been in every city and town in the country’. |
| **12:08** | **Has the touring circuit remained the same throughout your career?** |
|  | ‘The same theatres are still on the touring circuit’. Goddard has a photograph of herself at eighteen months old outside Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne with her father. Just after World War II, her father had taken his family on tour with Jessie Matthews in *Pygmalion.* Devonshire Park Theatre looks the same then as it does now, Goddard says. Goddard’s favourite theatres are those designed by Frank Matcham because of the acoustics: ‘you can whisper and be heard’. |
| **13:32** | **Was your father an actor?** |
|  | After World War II, Goddard’s father went to work in Aldershot Rep [Theatre Royal Aldershot] and in 1952 went to work for the BBC, at the same time as David Attenborough. |
| **14:26** | **Did his experience in theatre inspire you to become an actress?** |
|  | Goddard’s first experience of performing was as a child in a live televised production of *Jesus of Nazareth.* She recalls ‘trott[ing] out on cue’, age 6, and thinking ‘this is what I want to do, this is it’. Goddard always used to write plays and recruit her sister to perform in them. Goddard remembers that her grandparents had a house in Cornwall with a dividing door between the dining room and the sitting room where they would stage their plays. ‘There was no doubt that that was what I wanted to do’. Goddard believes that, growing up in the theatre, nobody is looked down upon: ‘There’s no racism or sexism or religious intolerance’, you are just judged on your talent. |
| **16:25** | **How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the industry?** |
|  | ‘It’s terrible, theatre’s have lost so much money, they’ve lost their audience.’ Although, Goddard thinks, audiences are coming back, especially to the regional theatres. Goddard says the need for theatre will always be there: ‘it goes right from the times we were living in caves and telling stories round a fire’. Goddard thinks theatre will recover slowly, but that some small venues might not make it. ‘The arts are so vitally important’. ‘In a small town, [the local theatre] can really be the make or break of that town’. Goddard mentions that she was supposed to perform in a tour this year, but it was cancelled because of COVID-19. The tour has potentially been rescheduled for the autumn [of 2022], but Goddard is unsure if it will go ahead. Goddard dismisses the idea that those working in the arts can ‘just get another job’ if the industry is suffering: ‘these are people who have trained and trained’. ‘Do something else? As though the arts is nothing?’ |
| **20:20** | **Is there anything else?** |
|  | Goddard recalls working with Wayne Sleep: ‘never a dull moment’. ‘I remember laughing a tremendous amount’. She concludes by saying that the joy of Panto is the people you work with: ‘It’s so hard, but everyone is determined to enjoy themselves’. |
| **21:50** | **Is Panto harder work that touring?** |
|  | Goddard says that Panto is more hardwork because it’s so concentrated. There are an enormous number of shows – two shows every day, and sometimes three. ‘You literally don’t know what day it is’. |
|  | ‘It’s always lovely when I get a tour to see Cambridge Arts Theatre on the tour list’. |
| **END.** |  |