**Sophie Shaw**

IN 1979 WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE PRODUCTIONS WERE THEN?

**Karl Meier**

Yes, it’s funny you always remember your first years. Um, Devil’s Disciple was the first show I ever did here er with Ian, Ian Ogilvy in it, um who we nearly hung. There was a barrel on stage, which had um, which was fine and it was er all checked and reinforced and everyone jumped up and down and it was fine and of course, he had at one point in it he had to put a noose around his neck which was a breakaway noose so it was like if something went wrong it would be fine, but er, um unfortunately the barrel being on stage for several shows then starts drying out and he stood on it and then fell through it [laughter] just as the noose was about to be put round his neck and of course it all made the papers and what have you. So that was quite an interesting start and I thought “Oh, my God, this is exciting” and maybe we should put a breakaway each side of the noose because that you know, and you start realising actually this is, is quite dangerous this, this thing as well and you really got to start thinking about what you’re doing. Although it was nothing to do with me, I add. Um, and then the next show was um The Eagle Has Two Heads, I think it was, which was um, massive show and that’s when I suddenly realised God this is, you know, I mean quite impressive actually. And of course we, we changed sets er between shows in those days which was er interesting on a matinee, um you know a Saturday matinee turnaround um, which is incredible and the crews were big then um, but it, that was the amazing thing and and everyone really, Bill was again, Bill Green was very good at that. He choreographed the changes you know really, really quite well, I mean there were changes not only in, there were big changes within the shows which he would choreograph but there, actually the changes between the two, he would sort of work out different ways or the best way to do it. Yeah. Um, but as I say, I mean turning a show around in sort of an hour and half, two hours is incredible and if it’s a long show you know, obviously you know, you reduce the amount of time you’ve got.

**Sophie Shaw**

CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT? DESCRIBE THE SCENE CHANGE.

**Karl Meier**

Er, it was literally, you would as, as the last, as the audience were clapping you were, you were starting to break down the back of the set and you know trying to make sure that you know, to get the stage management to guide the actors off a certain way, so as you, literally it was coming down as, as the audience were, were clapping. Um and it would just be absolutely full on. I mean the adrenaline rush was incredible, um it really was um, and I think, I think one of the biggest crews we had then was about 20 crew er to be able to turn, and then you had the dayman as well so I mean to be able to turn the set, these massive sets um, but the, the sense of achievement was incredible when you actually got it there and literally you’d, you’d get it there with sort of minutes to spare and then the doors would open, the pub, you know, the public would come in and then of course you’d, you’d set up and have to do the show as well. So it was just you know...

**Sophie Shaw**

SO YOU’D BE BREAKING THE SETS DOWN AS THE AUDIENCE WERE LEAVING THEN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

**Karl Meier**

Um, literally then, then you would go into the full, the full turn round and then as soon as, because as soon as the audience had, had gone then you could start going on stage and you could start stripping down the main set and all the flats would come down and then the floors would come up and then you’d...

**Sophie Shaw**

AND WHERE WOULD THAT GO?

**Karl Meier**

That would all, it depends, depending on how big the set was you’d either lay that off on seats um, which we still do nowadays when, on turnarounds because the dock, dock wasn’t big enough then. Um, and then you’d, you’d er, sort of get the other set up and always leave a way through and then you’d bring the rest of the set through and put it into the dock, if they were big sets. Um, if you could um, if the sets weren’t massive then you would, you would lay, have one laid off against one wall and then you’d break the other one down and lay it off against the other wall and then bring the other one out. But er, sometimes it just wasn’t possible as they were so big.