**Susan Mulkern**

YOU’VE WORKED HERE A LONG TIME – YOU STARTED OUT I THINK BACK IN 1978 - DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR MEMORIES OF WHEN YOU FIRST WORKED AT CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE – WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

**Janet Bakose**

Er, yes, I do. Er my first year I worked in the box office, er as a summer season assistant for the Festival and I do remember I absolutely adored it. The moment I walked in um, I knew it was the place I wanted to work. It was, it was the sort of job you didn’t want to leave in the evening, so when we finished at 8 o’clock everybody would end up staying and then we would all socialise so it was a very different experience to anything I’d done before.

**Susan Mulkern**

AND YOU SAY YOU ENJOYED IT AND IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE. WHAT WAS IT – WAS IT THE PEOPLE? WAS IT THE.....?

**Janet Bakose**

It was the people, it was the people you met, the people you worked with, the way that at the time everybody was treated as part of a family. The General Manager was Paul Rogerson who in my life has been hugely influential. He is an extraordinary character um and he, he I think impressed upon me that if you wanted a career in theatre you could learn so much from box office. You weren’t just selling tickets, you should be looking at understanding your customer, understanding how to market and how to, to up-sell. So I learnt an awful lot - I don’t know if it’s because we weren’t computerised then, so there was slightly more individual skill involved rather than just the computer telling you what the best tickets were. It gave you the opportunity to sell manually and my greatest achievement was I adored selling out the houses. I would sell, sell, sell, sell taking the house in and I would always, if I could, oversell by selling the wall either side of the stage. People would queue every Saturday or whatever, um so that always gave me quite a buzz, I’ve got quite a business brain and I loved achieving that and achieving you know, as many bookings or dealing with as many problems and resolving the problems as I could.

**Susan Mulkern**

SO OVER A CAREER OF SORT OF 20-30 YEARS, ANY HIGHLIGHTS?

**Janet Bakose**

Errrr, oooh, well I suppose um yeh, in the very first season I was House Managing the very first production was Coriolanus, Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench and a royal visit, Prince Charles, so all of that, everything that was involved in that, er the amount of security, the um intensity of it, but it was, it was fantastic, and we had a, a birthday cake on stage because it was actually to celebrate the second year of the Renaissance company um and then everyone was in the line-up to say goodbye to Prince Charles. It was very glamorous, it was very exciting.

**Susan Mulkern**

SO WHAT WAS THE SHOW?

**Janet Bakose**

Coriolanus.

**Susan Mulkern**

SO JUST TO GIVE US AN IDEA. A ROYAL VISIT LIKE THAT, WHAT WOULD THAT INVOLVE YOU IN?

**Janet Bakose**

Oh, there was so much planning and then a meeting with the police. At that time they would do things like lift the drains, all the drains would be checked, we would have sniffer dogs going round the entire building. I always remember that particular day one of the dogs cut its foot when it was going round the restaurant, managed to leave blood on every single, all round the window sill, that afternoon, at this time we didn’t have a very elaborate fire alarm system, and in the afternoon show somebody set off the fire alarm that set me off into a bit of a panic thinking oh my word what’s going on now, and so literally in those days you had to run round the building and there were only about 3 or 4 points you had to run round and check which one had been um set off, and we discovered it was one of the ones in the dock and one of the actors who was carrying a spear for Coriolanus set it off, er but it did sort of heighten the whole [laughs] excitement of the day. But, but as I say, it was, it was brilliant and it was a very special day. Pickwick was a very special production, er, underneath the Arches was a very special production with Chesney Allen coming on. The staff adored it and I can just remember where every night all the staff would go up and stand behind Row L so they could just watch that moment when the revolve went round and Christopher Timothy had disappeared and Chesney Allen came round. Errr, you know, things like that they, they do stick in your mind.