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"Chatting with Cameron": An Oral History of Professor Audrey Stanley, Co-Founder of Shakespeare Santa Cruz

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*“Chatting with Cameron”:*

*An Oral History with Professor Audrey Stanley,*

*Co-Founder of Shakespeare Santa Cruz*

**Interviewed and Edited by Cameron Vanderscoff**

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2016

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## **Interview History**

Audrey Stanley is a Professor Emerita of Theater Arts at UC Santa Cruz, and the founding artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz. In this oral history, Stanley addresses her life and career in education and theater, which spans from her youth in England to her ongoing tenure in Santa Cruz. Her narrative begins with her childhood in Whitstable, Kent, and London, where she was first introduced to theater through pantomimes at a young age, and was soon inspired to direct her inaugural production with a cast of local friends. Stanley relates both these experiences and their larger social context, discussing her education during the bombings and defense of England in World War II, and delineating the important role that theater and art played in that time of national trial. She follows this thread of interest through her experience at the University of Bristol, where the United Kingdom's first drama program was founded during her time as a student. As a result, Stanley emerged as one of the very first individuals in the country with a drama degree, and went to work as an educator setting up drama programs in a series of other English universities.

Stanley's engagement with theater persisted and diversified through her work in universities in England and Canada, her UC Berkeley doctoral research on theatrical sites in ancient Greece, and her engagement with UCSC, where she has spent the majority of her career. She details the small-scale, experimental climate at Stevenson College and Cowell College upon her arrival and discusses the ensuing evolution of dramatic performance and theatrical education at the young university. After starting to build a career outside UCSC as a director, working at

the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and the Ashland Shakespeare Festival (where she was the first woman to direct a Shakespeare play), Stanley relates her decision to focus her career on the fledgling vision of a Shakespeare festival in Santa Cruz.

This interview finds its heart in Stanley's ruminations on Shakespeare Santa Cruz, which became nationally renowned for its high-quality productions, marriage of scholarship and performance, generation of opportunities for students, and the unique beauty of its setting amongst the campus redwoods. Stanley relates both the triumphs of the festival—reflecting on individual productions, key collaborators, and its longevity—and its ongoing challenges with budget shortfalls, reflecting in particular on the issues of running a theater company with immediate fiscal needs in the densely layered financial and bureaucratic context of a large university. Indeed, less than one month after last interview session of this oral history the university announced it was shuttering Shakespeare Santa Cruz after thirty-two years due to its ongoing financial problems. However, Stanley's dedicated appeal for the ongoing value of the festival, expressed so consistently and powerfully in these pages, found continuity through a massive community response to this shutdown. A popular campaign to renew the festival was started, outside funding was secured, and soon Shakespeare Santa Cruz was reborn as Santa Cruz Shakespeare. As of this writing the group is preparing to launch its second summer season, with Stanley serving on its board of directors.

So while these pages come to a close with Stanley's hope that the festival she and others have put so much time and work into will persist, the spirit of her dedication, and that of her collaborators, indeed continues in Santa Cruz under a new banner. Personally, Stanley explains the merit of ongoing Shakespeare performance with a meditation on what makes his plays so indispensable, saying "there's an empathy that exists [in his works] that I think we should all be trained in." More broadly, she eloquently defends the role of the arts and theatre in society, arguing that staged performance, at its transcendent best, is a joining experience for all present, one where, simply put, "everybody breathes together." This oral history, itself a narrative performance of a life closely connected to the stage as a director, educator, actress, and supporter, is a record of Stanley's efforts to build, sustain and share these features in her adopted community of Santa Cruz.

These sessions took place over the summer of 2013 in Stanley's house on the UCSC campus. On my end, I'd like to thank Stanley for her willingness to share her time for this project. When I spoke with her associates for background research, she was consistently praised for her persistence and fortitude as a colleague, artist, and friend; her commitment to this project in spite of a period of health issues is one more testament to her generosity of spirit. I'd also like to thank all the individuals who spoke with me in person, via email, and over the phone to share their experience of knowing Stanley—this group includes colleagues and SSC collaborators such as Michael Warren, Michael Donald Edwards, Danny Sheie and Karen Sinsheimer. Great thanks is also due to Patricia Kelly, UCSC Cowell alumna, whose munificent funding made this project

possible in the first place, and to Faye Crosby, Provost of Cowell, who played a key role in facilitating this oral history. As always, I'd like to express my appreciation to Irene Reti, Director of the Regional History Project, for her editorial eye, mentorship, and guidance on this project, and to Elisabeth Remak-Honnef and the kind people at Special Collections for their support.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian Elizabeth Cowell.

—*Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015*



### **Family, Education, and Theater: Early Years in London and Kent**

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Wednesday, June 12, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Dr. Audrey Stanley for part one of her oral history project. We are in her residence on the UCSC campus. To give us some context and a starting point, when and where were you born?

**Stanley:** I was born in a hospital on August 29, 1927 on Black Heath in London—well, it was just outside London, probably, at the time. And brought up both in London and Kent, Whitstable, where Somerset Maugham had a lot of his youth. And that is the Roman port to Canterbury. So it's right on the coast and I spent the Second World War in a very weird situation. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** And when you think of home as a child, what spaces or buildings come to mind?

**Stanley:** Well, in one sense I had two upbringings. One was in London, where my father had his business. He ran a pub called The Crown and Anchor. Its most notable reference was that Daniel Defoe was supposed to have stayed in the hostelry of this inn, pub, before embarking at Woolwich on a boat where he went off on his adventures. How true that is I do not know. But it was a very huge place. It had a meeting room that had a stage at one end. It had a full-sized billiard table in a whole 'nother room and then these various rooms right at the top. And I would look out onto the Thames River, where the boats were incessantly going up and down, because it was a port. The London port was very important. And out of the sooty windows—

When I was born I was a sickly child and the doctor said to my parents, "You'll have to get her out of the London air because she just won't live." So they set about looking for brisk sea air and they bought a place in Whitstable in Kent. And that's where I was brought up. We owned up to mean high tide, which is wonderful. The sound of the sea is home to me. So wherever the sea is, I'm happy.

In London, I had no friends because I just went up there. My mother used to cook Christmas dinner for all the employees and everybody. So there was a vast Christmas tree and jollifications going on. I realize that I spent a lot of my time looking out of the window, or taking the dog for a walk, or just inventing things on the stage in this meeting room.

In London—because I went up at Christmas with my mother and my sister—we went to the pantomimes, the British pantomimes, which were plays like *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Mother Goose*, *Aladdin*. All these were plays I was taken to. My father got a box at the side of the theater and because it was just right at the side, you could see the little children waiting to make their entrances. (laughs) But that sense of make believe and getting the audience to join in the songs, the singing, and taking care of one of the leading characters and warning them when somebody evil came onto the stage, was part of my upbringing. I saw my first play probably at the age of four or five.

Somebody gave me a book that had a play in it, about a princess and a prince who was changed into a cat. I decided I would put this play on. And where we were on the beach—there were beach huts further along, not in front of our

house, but just to the one side. And one of my great friends, my closest friend who I still see today, I decided to do it on there. She was the princess. Another friend who lived close by was the prince. And I was the evil witch. (laughter) I designed the set. I did it—everything all sorted out. To my surprise, people helped, like the sister of the person who was the prince made the cat outfit. We collected money at the end of it and I thought, oh, you know, money! And they donated it to the children's hospital. (laughs) So that taught me early on.

**Vanderscoff:** And given that you had control of the casting, why were you particularly interested, do you think, in playing the witch?

**Stanley:** Oh, because, you know (laughs) it's a nasty character and I wanted everybody else to have the nice characters. My mother said, "It was wonderful, dear, but we couldn't hear you." So I learned a lesson from that: you don't act in a play that you're directing, unless you have somebody else looking on and dealing with how you are performing.

But that was one of the things. (pauses) I was just thinking about my schooling. I went to the little local school with my friends. And then went to a private school—I was about the age of eight to ten—which was an idyllic place in many ways because it was mainly for boys being trained to go to private schools and do entrance exams and things like that. But they had girls in a class, and the youngsters in a class. Everybody was sort of given their own project, and I didn't realize how unusual that was in that day and age. I also studied things like algebra and French at a very young age. And I loved geometry and mathematics, which is also unusual, but it just seemed very natural to me.

**Vanderscoff:** And after that schooling, where did you go next?

**Stanley:** I went to the preparatory school, the grammar school in the next town, because my own town of Whitstable didn't have any grammar schools. You either went to Canterbury by bus, or Faversham by train. And since I was sick in buses, being, as I tell you, a very sickly child, I went to Faversham by train. But this meant I lost close contact with my friends, who mainly went to the other school. But in that school I had one year before the Second World War began, and I was in a play. It was *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I played one of the little fairies, Moth or Mustardseed, something like this. But that was my introduction to acting and I took to it like a duck to water, I mean, after the play that I had directed and acted in, of course. So my predilection was set. And I've noticed quite a lot of directors took to it very early on in their lives. So it's not unusual.

But the war came and we didn't have anything for a month or two while they built the shelters in the schools. And then a very distraught, in a way, but scattered education, to some extent. But one of the things that happened a little later on in the war, we had a very enterprising young English teacher who took us up to London on the milk train at six o'clock in the morning to sit outside the Old Vic Theater and attend performances there. So I saw early Laurence Olivier and Alec Guinness in plays. It just was very natural to me to do that.

My parents were totally supportive of both my sister and myself, of what we wanted to do. We weren't trained for the marriage market (laughs) particularly. And the war superseded everything else. It was important. But they said to me,

"Well, do you want to go to acting school?" I was fifteen, sixteen at the time and I remember sitting on the stairs and thinking, I don't know who I am. And if I start acting all these roles, I might never discover who I am. (laughs) It was a sense of dilemma.

So I took the university route to education. At the time there were no drama departments in any of the universities. They were so superior to the arts. They didn't regard the arts as serious. I had a choice because I did Oxford entrance and passed Oxford entrance. But by that time it was the end of the war, 1945, and all the people in the forces were coming back. And they had their places at these universities, so it was very difficult to get in. But I had a choice of either going there, to Oxford, or Bristol. I was quite interested in Bristol because they did English literature and philosophy and I thought that sounded an interesting combination.

I decided that I would go to Bristol rather than Oxford, which was an amazing choice for two reasons. One is it was probably the only university that was fairly gender neutral, in that the person who ran the student union—there were two people, a man and a woman, and they took turns in doing the meetings. And it wasn't the president and the vice president; they were the two presidents. And because of the war, I think there were probably more women teaching in the university than normally would have happened. So I assumed this was quite a normal procedure and wasn't so unusual. (laughs)

Bristol was particularly exciting because after I'd been there a year and was accepted into that joint program in philosophy and literature, they set up a

drama department. It was the first in the country. There were six of us and I had to get permission to sort of retake my first year, as you might say, because in England then you kind of went through in years rather than freewheeling. So I participated in the first group of students to do that. And we linked up with the West Region BBC for our training in radio drama, which was really quite strong at the time. Remember, there was no television. It was sound radio and we listened to all the news about the war via the radio.

As part of our training, we were taught by professors in different areas. I had the great privilege of studying under H.D.F. Kitto, who was a professor of classics, and learned about my Greek drama and fell in love with the Greek drama. I thought this was absolutely marvelous.

I was very taken with the photograph of Dodona Greek Theater in Greece, and that inspired me to want to investigate ancient Greek theaters, and was the start of my great love and project to film. I've filmed sixty Greek and Roman theaters. When I was in Canada and setting up a drama program at the University of Dalhousie with one other person, I thought, it's a bit cheeky—because the two of us were both British—doing something in Canada when they already had drama departments in universities, without finding out what *they* were doing. So I went across Canada and then down the West Coast of America, because one of my Bristol professors was at Seattle, and I had some friends in San Francisco, and then I was taken to Berkeley. And there was a notice saying: "Six-month study of classical drama in Greece to celebrate the first drama festival—2500 years." And I thought, right! I gave up my job in Canada, went on that. I showed them my

films that I had taken of these sixty Greek and Roman theaters and said, "All the time I'm teaching. I don't have enough time to research this properly. Will you take me on as a graduate student?" They said, "Yes, and we'll send you down to UCLA to do more about filming." Which was wonderful. And that's partly because they had no equipment or anything up in Berkeley at the time, and no film area whatsoever. So that's what happened.

**Vanderscoff:** I have some specific questions about some of the areas that you were just discussing. First, I'd like to ask a question about your family. Through all of this you talked about how your parents were supportive of you. I'm curious about what your family valued, or prioritized, in particular, in their lives and for you and your sister?

**Stanley:** Well, I'm very glad you asked that because I forgot a very important part of my family's history. My father went into the navy the First World War. He was trained as an electrical engineer and had to finish his training before he was accepted. So he only did the last year of World War I. But after that he married my mother and then my sister was born. And he decided to be enterprising and immigrate to Canada. So they went there. But he had been exceedingly well trained and he kept raising safety issues because the firms he was working for were not going by the rules. So he was not regarded very favorably by the establishments there. And they decided to go back to England.

But before they did that they wanted to visit New York. So they came into New York and landed up at the railway station there and caught a local train and my mother said, "Oh, that sounds interesting, Brooklyn Heights." They got out,

walked along the street, somebody was putting up a notice saying "Rooms for Rent." They got rooms and the woman said, "Well, I'll look after (my sister) Joyce, the baby, while you go and look for work." It was Thanksgiving time, and Thanksgiving was celebrated and the woman cooked this wonderful meal.

The contrast with Canada was so extreme, one place where they were resented and were kicked out, basically, for insisting on safety measures. And then a place where they were welcomed with open arms and everything seemed to open.

My parents and my sister lived in America for four years. My father built a house overlooking the Hudson River. And then when I was here [in the United States] I had some friends from the Berkeley program and also from New York. And they went on a trip with me to find this house, see if it still existed. And all I had was this photograph to go on and a vague area. It was raining and pretty miserable but we came across the little house that my father had built himself with his own two hands. But what was so strange was the little bushes that existed in the 1920s photographs were now huge trees. So the landscape was very different.

I've always had that impression of being brought up with both *Punch* and *The New Yorker* because of that experience. I think it gave my parents a sense of the American experience and equality of things, and openness. That I kind of treasure with them. They were such splendid parents. I didn't realize that all parents weren't like mine, until I came here. (laughs) Everybody seemed to have a lot of problems. (laughter) And I had nothing but support. So it was just grand.



When I was at Bristol—I'm just thinking back on that—I was president of the dramatic society. And we had our own building, the Victoria Rooms, which still exists. And I went back there to a reunion, because before I left I was president of the dramatic society for two years, which was unusual: 1948 to 1949 and 1949 to 1950. And then I took an educational program and also studied at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, simultaneously, which was a bit cheeky of me. (laughs)

But I thought as a director—because one of the things I did was to direct plays at the Victoria Room and also in Manor Hall, where I'd starred a student—but in that final year, I decided that the dramatic society should do a West Coast tour of the villages and take a Shakespeare play and one other play. So I directed *The Taming of the Shrew*, which Shakespeare Santa Cruz is doing this summer [2013]. And also we did a Victorian melodrama that had songs and music and ballads. I think it was *Maria Marten, or Murder in the Red Barn*. The villagers could choose which one they wanted.

The organization was partly with all of the people that were concerned with Dram-Soc, as they called the dramatic society, many of whom were scientists. They were there for the longer haul of doing their further degrees as graduate students, and were well organized. So we toured for six weeks through villages in the Southwest of England with these two plays.

I was then asked by a professor of French, I think, who was tapped to see if we had a play suitable for performing in Europe at an international gathering of all of the youth at Lorelei overlooking the [Rhine River]. So we were invited and performed there. They wanted the Shakespeare play, so we did that. And they

said, "Oh, but you have another play." And we said, "Well, we haven't brought anything related to that." "Well, won't you do it for us?" They were thirsty for events. When I said, "Well, we've got a set and so on," they said, "Don't worry. We'll get it built here. Just send us the plans." So the stage designer sent off some plans. And then when we arrived, it wasn't ready. I worked through the night doing the lighting and the arrangements for the production the next day. And they kept saying, "Oh, it's coming. It's coming." And then the audience gathered, all these thousands of young men and women, and the sets still hadn't arrived. It was just about two minutes to eight. And at the back of the tent the set arrived and was passed hand-by-hand by the audience, over their heads, to the stage, where our actors put it together in about two ticks. They'd had all the prior six weeks, plus we'd had two weeks at Cheltenham Festival in England too. So they were veterans. It was rather like Shakespeare Santa Cruz's program Shakespeare to Go: you know, you go tour and you adapt to the circumstance. It was a tremendous peak moment. It was lovely.

**"Everything is Measured Against That":**

**Memories of WWII and the Bombing of Britain**

**Vanderscoff:** And before we discuss your post-university career in some detail, you've mentioned the significant influence that the coming of the Second World War had in your life, personally and then later in terms of the influence of soldiers going to college and so forth. Given that you lived in a seaside town that was on the [English] Channel and then also had your father's pub in London, would you mind speaking to the ways in which the war changed your life?

**Stanley:** Well, it put everything into comparison. I mean, when we had the earthquake here, I just thought, this is nothing. The land was turning up and down. This was in [1989], the big earthquake downtown.

**Vanderscoff:** Loma Prieta.<sup>1</sup>

**Stanley:** Yes, that's right. So it put everything into a totally different perspective. And I always felt very honored, in a way, to have lived through the war and to have grown up through it, because people really cherished the arts. They turned out for concerts. Myra Hess performed in London and she performed Beethoven. It was wonderful. People were thirsty for quality of expression. And Shakespeare was part of that.

I mean, as child the war came and with it came the [1940] defeat at Dunkirk. We knew the fishing boats were going out to collect the British soldiers from Dunkirk. We knew what was happening. The beach was taboo. We couldn't go swimming or anything because they'd built up mines and barbed wire, so you could only just see the sea in the distance. But I had my bows and arrows—it was a proper bow and proper arrows—ready if the Germans came. (laughs)

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<sup>1</sup> In reference to the Loma Prieta Earthquake of October 1989.

We saw dog fights. There was a dog fight right over our garden. There was this German plane and then the Spitfire coming after him. And just skimmed over our garden and then you heard a crash in the distance. I think the German plane—I think he managed to parachute out. I don't know.

It was both special and I felt privileged to have had a sense of a whole nation with one perspective, working together. People talked to each other, unlike the normal British mode, where they don't particularly. It put so many things into a different perspective. And everything is measured, in my mind, against that.

That's why the earthquake—I was teaching at the time. I was teaching about Ben Johnson. I'd just said to the students, "Well, we've been talking for quite some time, so let's just stretch." So everybody was stretching and were very alert and then the earthquake struck. One whole side of the room we were in was windows. We were very fortunate that the angle of the earthquake didn't break those windows, because we would have been a very damaged group, I think. But they dove under the desks and crowded into the doorway. And there were aftershocks. Everything was swaying to and fro. When it got slightly better so that one could just about walk—and it's the feeling you get when you've been in a boat and you come off and you land and you're still with the motion of the sea underneath you. I took them where we were supposed to take them, which was in the meadows just outside Performing Arts. I sat them so that they wouldn't see what I could see, which was that the earth was going in waves. I got them with their backs to that, so they wouldn't see it, and I said, "Well, let's continue." So I continued teaching (laughs) to calm them down. There were two young men

in my class, one was from Australia and the other was from the East Coast, and they hadn't been through an earthquake. They were very white-faced. So I thought, everybody needs quieting down. And only when I saw the earth was quieting down too, I suggested they went to their colleges.

**Vanderscoff:** So you talk about how these other experiences in your life get compared to the perspective that you developed in the war. How much do you recall of the changes in fortune in the war? Because you talk about Dunkirk, which was, of course—

**Stanley:** Well, yes. One simply knew about things. For instance, D-Day, with the great invasion. I mean, we knew it was going to happen. You just sort of sensed it. And everybody was prepared. We were very fortunate, our side, because the foggy weather just favored that landing, however horrific it was. But there was a sense of being in something, everybody together, and pulling together. *Foyle's War*, the program on the BBC, sort of indicates not everybody was pulling in the same direction (laughs). But then, it is dealing with the police and their cases.

But *Foyle's War* gives us, to some extent, a feel of what it was like. You had to carry your gas mask, a ghastly thing that you had to put on. And just—well, you got very phlegmatic about it because it happened, and anything could happen. My father was in the Royal Observer Corps and I had to take him through his exam of recognizing an airplane silhouette. But it was also that you could recognize the sound of the planes. So you knew whether they were German or British, just from the sound. And then towards the end of the war they had this horrifying thing of the—Doodlebugs—these bombs that they would shoot across,

and they would whizz and just explode. But, you know, we were only thirty miles from the French coast. And then another [bomb] that was slow. And you could hear it coming, coming, coming and it would cut off. You knew it was going to fall and you didn't know quite whether you were under it or not. Memories like that.

When I was twelve, I remember the planes bombing London and being turned back. I was home alone. I knew that they had six bombs. And my mother was with the Red Cross. My sister was with Saint John's. She was in London at the time. But my mother was doing her turn at the Red Cross, so she wasn't in the house. And I could hear the bombs: one, two, three, four. Five was very close and shattered all the windows and the doors and everything of the house. I thought, well the sixth one might possibly land on the house. I had a dog and that's when I learned that dogs have fear smells as well as humans have fear smells. I sat us both down behind the sofa, underneath the stairwell, next to the piano, because that would support the upper floor. And it was good because the glass [was] shattering and we didn't get hurt at all. The sixth bomb landed out on the beach flats, on the sand flats, fortunately not on the house. So that's why I'm here to talk about it. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** And given that there was so much change and an element of danger in your life, how did you stay focused on school, on the arts? What sort of relevance did those things have?

**Stanley:** Well, you just got on with it. You jolly well got on with things. The sort of panic station that goes on occasionally when things happen over here—I

mean, I see it under a different lens, inevitably. Everything has a different perspective.

### **Early Theater Work in England, Canada, and California**

**Vanderscoff:** And so, after the war, of course, as we were discussing earlier, you went to Bristol to pursue—was it English and philosophy, is that correct?

**Stanley:** Originally, yes. But I ended up doing English and drama and then either Latin or French. I took French, though my Latin was much better, because it was a living language and I wanted to be able to see plays in French, which I did, too. I went across as part of my studies. My sister had married and after the wedding they toured in France and made friends. And I stayed with two families that they met, one on the French coastline in northern France and the other in Lille. And I visited Paris and saw French plays with the two sons of the household. So that was very interesting.

**Vanderscoff:** So you talk about going into Bristol with a certain intention, a certain interest, and then coming out with this renewed focus in theater. Reflecting back, what do you think it was about theater that captured you so early at a young age and then became such a focus again?

**Stanley:** Well, my father had joined in various organizations, the sort of Harlequins and so on. And there was a sense of both my parents being Londoners. They were entertainers. That was just part of the nature of it. My mother was half Irish, so that was a leavening. (laughter) I found my father would do a sort of tap dance or something. My mother joined the town's

Women's Guild and then became a political person. She put up for the local government via the Town Council. We were in an area that was very, very Tory and my parents weren't. So I was introduced to politics at an early age. I always thought it was a good thing because I was going off to the university.

My mother devoted a lot of her life to bringing me up. And I—they never really defined what it was, but I had these terrible bilious attacks as a child. I sicked up to the bile. And I had a lot of out of body experiences of looking down on myself and things like that, which [were from] simply being so sick. But then the next thing was, you know, one had one's periods and they became terrifying. My mother always declared it was like childbirth pain. So I grew up from one, recovered from that, and went into a whole 'nother series. So I suffered a great deal of pain. (laughs) It didn't quite prepare me for this current lot.<sup>2</sup> But it gets you philosophic, too. (pauses)

But I never thought I couldn't do things. I joined the Youth Hostel Association and my parents encouraged my friend Wendy and myself. We went off youth hosteling at the age of fifteen or so, bicycling around England. And then later on, with my friend Deb from the University at Bristol, cycling down the Rhone

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<sup>2</sup> In the fall prior to these sessions, Stanley was struck by a bicyclist and suffered severe injuries (a broken shoulder and three crushed vertebrae) while visiting England.



Valley and across to Italy to see the Palio di Siena. Never dreamt that I couldn't do things like that, or that there was any problem.

When I look back on it, life is not quite so easy today. You can't do things like that today in the same carefree way that I did it. When I was shooting the [Greek theater] film, two of my students from Canada joined me. And we just slept out on the beaches in Greece. A shepherd had his flock and he kept them very carefully away from us and made quite sure that we weren't disturbed. That was so sweet. I mean, just that situation. And the Kittos, for instance—I took the Kittos by car and we explored a certain part of Greece. I said, "Oh, there looks to be a sort of roadway here." It was kind of over green grass. And they were absolute troopers, the Kittos. They never complained. We took ages and ages to get to where we were supposed to be getting, but we got there. And of course, it's all built up now. So I saw Greece before it was all changed and thick with summer visitors. I'm very lucky to have experienced that.

**Vanderscoff:** So you talk about travel and visiting places in that way. What sort of places did you pursue theater in following your time at Bristol but prior to your time at Canada? Did you work with any theater teaching or theater programs?

**Stanley:** Yes, I did. Well, there were no jobs, really, for drama people. Really very, very few, because it was not an accepted thing. But my first job—because I had said I would teach in the school system for at least one year after my certificate of education, I chose a job going for literature and to be in charge of the school play and so on in Richmond, in Yorkshire. Richmond had a very early

theater—1790—which they had recently discovered. So I thought, ooh, that sounds very interesting. So I went cheerfully up there, at which point the fire department had declared it was too dangerous to put plays on in the theater until it had been made safe. So that was not so good.

My next job was at Guildford School of Art. I was taken on because I was writing plays at the time and the person who was in charge of the whole of the art school was a very remarkable person. He would only take people who were actively engaged and put on exhibitions. He would help put up their paintings and had exhibitions. He got rid of about a third of the faculty because they were dead wood. He took me on because I was writing plays.

I also had joined the London Theatre Artists group and was doing technical work with them, lighting and stuff like that. But it closed after a year, so that didn't go too far. But we did experimental drama work as part of the general education for the younger students at this college of art. So that's why I was taken on. We did a lot of freewheeling improvisation movement work with music—fairly avant-garde teaching things. So I was able to carry out some experimental work. And I acted there. It was exciting, very exciting.

During my last year I had indicated I would be looking for a more direct drama position and unfortunately the head of the art college was killed on his motorbike. It was a shattering experience. In almost no time at all, everything had dwindled. His room had been full of people's work. He was called Dudley, that was his name. That was unusual. His door was always open. When I came

back, the door was closed. Mr. Whatever-it-is was in charge of this school. What a difference one person can make—and they *can* make a difference.

I was privileged to be at Guildford at that time. The discussion was fascinating at lunchtime because most of the faculty who taught there had been in active service through the Second World War. It was just about ten years after the end of the war and they suddenly began talking about it. One of them had been in a concentration camp. They didn't know the war had ended. They had run into the woods. It was very amazing to hear their experiences. So again, I felt very lucky to have that freewheeling experience before trying to set up a drama program in a college of education, which I did.

**Vanderscoff:** And where did you do that?

**Stanley:** It was in a very remote college in the Midlands, which is thick with fog and things like this. I got very bad sciatica and a doctor named Livingston, to my Stanley, said, "Get the hell out of this climate." (laughter) Which is how I came to go first of all Canada and then California.

**Vanderscoff:** And when you reflect on these times, how did you find a balance between an interest in teaching and an interest in directing, acting, being more directly involved with drama that way?

**Stanley:** That was very difficult. When I came here—well, of course when I studied at Berkeley they had this wonderful program which was to train the scholar-director, I showed them my film. I think I told you about the six-month study of classical drama in Greece. This was absolutely up my alley, so I joined

the group that already were here. They'd come because Berkeley was the center of a lot of the dissidents in the sixties. It was very formative. So I was amongst the brightest people who'd been involved with theater, and wanted to do theater and were very committed to it. Three of us set up theaters afterwards. Berkeley Rep was set up by one who'd been with me in Greece. One was set up by another person I had studied with. That was the Magic Theater in San Francisco. And then, I, for my sins, set up Shakespeare Santa Cruz here in Santa Cruz. So three of us set up theaters.

**Vanderscoff:** And I'm very much interested in the fact that you were so involved in the advent of drama departments to the university, in England. Because you talked about how Bristol started one in your second year and that was the first [in the country]. And then only a few years later, you were involved in setting up departments on your own. Given that it was such a new field, in terms of being housed in the academy, how did you go about setting up a drama department without many models to draw upon, at least in England?

**Stanley:** Well, in Canada, I set up the program, but it was with Lionel, who was, again, British, but had studied in America, so he had the benefit of the American experience, the Carnegie-Mellon, which was one of *the* places to be at that time. You know, places are the place to go and then somebody else takes it over and then somebody else takes it over. That's the way it is. But what was interesting was that he and I agreed, absolutely, on a four-year honors program, as to what it should be and what it was. But I checked up going across country and down, as I said. That's how I came to be going on this six-month study of classical

drama in Greece, which was sheer bliss. But I had no money. (laughs) You know, when you have no money, you get kind of, just take it as it comes, and assume that things are going to work out. And they did.

I used up all my Canadian money in the first year of paying out-of-state fees at Berkeley. I never talked to anybody about this, but they kindly contrived so I got scholarships for the next two years. But I was very aware that I was under the gun. And so I had to get through. I got through as quickly as I could and did it probably in record time. And I was their first Ph.D., in actual fact, although the program had been going a year or two before me. But then I wasn't able to earn money because I was on an F-1 visa. I think the people there who were running the department were very sympathetic to me, without making me too aware of it. That was very sweet of them.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you drew on these different sources, and visited different places, what would you structure these drama departments around, in terms of: what were the reading lists? Were you interested in structuring around classical drama, or around drama as literature, or more focused on performance? What were your interests in those places—in Canada, for instance?

**Stanley:** Well, it was a balance, trying to do a balance of those things. And obviously performance tests out everything. I think one of the most valuable things the students have currently in the department is something like Shakespeare to Go, in which they do a forty-five minute version of a Shakespeare play, take it to schools, and are responsible for getting there, for performing, for coping with everything that could go wrong, such as a severe holdup on Route

17. So they performed on top of the pass there, to the waiting cars. (laughter) I don't know how accurate that is, but it's a good story.

I always had sought out, by going to the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School—the training there, which was very technical, very oriented to performance, totally. I thought it would be good to have a balance of performance and academia, because— And this is one reason for setting up Shakespeare Santa Cruz, was to try and combine the best of scholarship, which is reflected in Michael Warren, with the best that you can get in theater, professional theater, and try and link the two together.<sup>3</sup> It is a very difficult task and practically no place has succeeded in doing this, because it's like oil and vinegar. They are two very different modes. Because the way a university works is entirely opposite to the way a theater works. Emergencies arise. You have to have money immediately. You can't do it in triplicate. And the financial ramifications of a big university system mean that there's a lot of paperwork. Also, there're difficulties in how you assess what you're given.

A letter was sent to the chancellor [of UC Santa Cruz] when C.L. Barber died, suggesting that a festival be set up in his honor, and could he arrange to call a

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<sup>3</sup> See Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *Things Past: An Oral History with Professor Michael Warren* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2015). Available in the UCSC Library.

meeting of town and gown to promote this? I kind of sided it, because I was directing at Ashland [Shakespeare Festival], in Oregon and also in Colorado, and at the Berkeley Shakespeare, as it was originally. And so that was beginning to be my career arc, going out and doing these Shakespeare productions. I knew that if I got involved at UCSC that would be it. I wouldn't be doing that again. But I'd so admired C.L. Barber. His book [*Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*] is one of the few that as a theater person I could relate to, because the ideas—one could sort of push them around and translate them back into theater. Whereas a lot of academic work doesn't do those leaps that are very imaginative leaps, that are so essential for performance.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you think of this balance between interest with performance and interest in scholarship, why were you interested originally in pursuing a doctorate at Berkeley?

**Stanley:** Well, I wasn't, particularly. But I had a project, which was to investigate what that original theater was like that the Greeks wrote for, which is in Herodes Atticus, in Greece. So that in Athens, at the theater there, I felt that it had been investigated by academic people working from language or working from archaeology. Nobody in theater had particularly examined the theater or the

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<sup>4</sup> Cesar Lombardi Barber was a literature professor at UCSC, and a widely celebrated Shakespeare critic. He died in 1980.

history of the theater. And I thought there might be something I might discover. So I went into it blithely. (laughs) And I didn't discover too much that had not already been written about, excepting the order of the plays of Aeschylus, because it does illuminate the changeover in theater from a circular space, to having a building at the back of that circle and the choruses being able to come from there. And small things—nothing large, particularly. But golly, I put myself through it, having to learn German and various other things, because the original archaeology had been done. But I checked up on the German with somebody who was bilingual, to make sure I didn't miss anything.

So my first play here [at UCSC] was [Aeschylus'] *Ecclesiazusae*, experimental, with two casts, one all male and one mixed.<sup>5</sup> And they weren't supposed to see what the other was doing. But I gather that the lead and the all-male cast snuck a look at a run-through of the other one. (laughs) Because I wanted to see what the differences might be. And then I was doing the testing of half masks to full masks, and the other testing was whether one entrance or three entrances from the building—which would work and so on. I made some discoveries about the nature of the play. I don't know if you know the *Ecclesiazusae*?

**Vanderscoff:** No, I do not.

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<sup>5</sup> This play is sometimes rendered in English as *Assemblywomen*.



**Stanley:** It's where the women take over the government and say to the men, "Well, you can have free food and free sex. But there have to be conditions about the sex. And the older the woman, the more prerogative they have." So that was quite interesting. One scene in the play is with three hags, as they are listed, obviously pulling the young lover who's come to serenade his sweetie up in the balcony, pulling him by his phony penis. And in the all-male cast, it was a rollicking good fun. But in the mixed cast, it had an element of danger about it, which I can't quite sort out. But it was not so— And what was interesting, the women, the mixed cast got more of the wit coming from the play, and the other cast got a lot of the rollicking humor of the play, locker room humor. (laughs) So there we are.

So I did my final [inaudible]—well, apart from teaching Greek drama for a little stretch of time, before it was taken over by other people.

**Vanderscoff:** And what did you learn in regard to having one entrance, as opposed to three entrances? How did that shift the action on the stage?

**Stanley:** Well, it opened it out, having three rather than just one. But then if it was one, it was a general entrance and not a specific entrance. Whereas if it was three, then it was a specific house they were coming out of. So the placement was made more precise, as a result of that.

### **Before and After the 1967 Revolution:**

#### **Doctoral Work On Ancient Greek Theatrical Sites**

**Vanderscoff:** Hmm. Now, your doctoral work was anchored in part by a film that you did on ancient theatrical sites. So I'm curious about your investigation of space in ancient Greek theater, and its evolution. What interested you about those ancient theatrical sites, in terms of understanding theater and staging, coming from the 1960s and going back to the fifth century B.C.?

**Stanley:** Well, you know, we were at Delphi for six months. Just imagine putting a group of Berkeley students from the sixties into a little village which is remote from everywhere, pretty remote, because only one person had a car. We were taught by the head of the Greek national theater, who directed a play that he wanted to direct, because it was the one Greek play he had not directed. It was called *Rhesus* and some people had vaguely thought it was Euripidean, but it wasn't Euripides. It was a later play. We performed it in that smaller theater, in that wonderful site at Delphi. It was such a privilege to be there. Mind you, there was no electricity. There were no visitors. This is 1966. There was one army, Greek, drawn up on one side of the border and the Turkish army on the other. There was supposed to be a great international influx of people to come to Delphi and to perform plays there. But they didn't arrive. They didn't come. We were the only group that were there, really. But we performed in front of royalty, the last year of royalty, 1966? It's very steep, very steep. I went back there and I'd forgotten how steep it was. It was really right up into the mountains. It's a relatively small theater, intimate, as regards Greek theaters. Although you get

this great sense of intimacy even in the major one, in the middle of the Peloponnese, because you can see everybody—because they're three quarters in the round. But at some point, Rhesus, the leading protagonist—and he was the person who set up Berkeley Rep—suddenly realizes he's caught and lets out a cry of realization. When he did that, if the pitch of the performer and the emotional impetus behind it work, an echo comes back. Now, most people wouldn't know that.

I was teaching in Canada and although the year is short, I still arrived a week late. So the play had been cast and the only thing for me to do was to be stage manager. So I had the great privilege of ushering in the Greek army, because one of the things about Greek national service in the army is that you have to perform in the plays. At the great national theater, the army are the soldiers; that's why the discipline is very good. But I had to tell them when to come in. So that was fun.

**Vanderscoff:** And was that before or after the revolution?

**Stanley:** Just before. The revolution happened. I had to go back to re-film for my dissertation, because what I'd made was simply a record without any— As part of my research I made a film. But I had to go back with the colonels in charge. And believe me, it was so changed. That was eerie. Because whereas before, every single Greek had a particular idea of what the government should be like and what should happen, and so on, afterwards they would not talk politics. They did not talk. It was very eerie, very strange. Somebody had run a bookshop

in Delphi. His record collection—he was raided and he sought refuge over here. The head of the drama department in Berkeley put him up, so he was okay.

But it was very different. I was shooting in a remote area and the only thing were some slabs in the grass. I sort of pushed the grass out of the place. Then somebody was breathing down my neck with a gun and I was questioned about what I was doing. So I explained about this, and then I pointed to my camera, which was a very unusual camera. It was 16mm, but you could take single shots. And I said, look, shots. Just single shots. I had a letter with hieroglyphics on it which said, you know, "This person can—" I gave it to him and I realized he couldn't read. So I explained what was in the letter, which gave me the authority to research. But it was eerie. And I think it's because there was some place where the soldiers were, an encampment fairly close by and they thought I was taking shots of that. I think that's what it was. But I didn't know it existed. But it was very eerie to go back and see such a change. It was sad.

**Vanderscoff:** Were you involved in putting on any productions, or did you attend any productions at any place after the revolution on that visit?

**Stanley:** Yes. And I have a very strange story. Two things. One was the Aeschylus play in which Xerxes returns, and in his return he's welcomed back. What they did in the production, they did Dervish dances. So there were a group of six men, another six, and another six—doing these Dervish dances. And you're sitting on stone seating on the ground. What I hadn't realized was that the rhythm from the stage, the stamping of the feet, came up through your rear, through your bottom, into your body. (laughs) There's a whole different

experience. The dancing would have a physical effect, the rhythm of the dancing. This has not been explored since. We have sound, 3-D, sound and things like that these days, but not that physical stamping of the feet getting you into the rhythm of the dance form.

And what was the other one? The other one was the one where the bringer of fire, Prometheus, was being done that year that the colonels' [coup d'état] took place. And, of course, in that theater, the leaders of society—or what used to be the royalty—would sit in the very front row. Well, now it was the [military] leaders. And because this is such a tradition, they had to do it. But the black limousines drove up right to the theater so that they were not exposed.

The whole section behind the leaders were men in white uniform, the military, in other words. And the rest of it was the hoi polloi and the people who were still visiting Greece at the time, foreigners. The actors and the director strained to be as neutral as they could, but those words ringing out about bringing freedom to mankind—the audience rose up and cheered and clapped. And the soldiers in white uniforms sat there in the front rows, sat there rigid. There was an expression of the freedom of speech that Prometheus represented. You couldn't deny the language. That was an experience I treasure.

### **Reflections on Family and Upbringing**

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Monday, June 17, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Audrey Stanley for the second part of her oral history project, conducted, like the first session, in the living room of her house on the UCSC campus. Dr.

Stanley would like to start out today talking about her parents and some facts about them.

**Stanley:** Well, I remembered—perhaps one of the formative features of my parents was my father was a King Scout, which is the highest statehood of scouting you could get. I think it very much influenced the way we were brought up. It was one of the few things at the time that cut across the class system, and also set ideas of training and helping people, which was very important. My mother was also a Girl Guide. I don't know if that's how they met, but I like to imagine that. I never did ask.

One of the great features of my father's family was his mother, who was a wit. She was repartee—give her a line and she would come back with something quite brilliant. My father inherited quite a bit of that. And I'm afraid neither my sister nor I have carried it on too much. (laughs) But still. Her first marriage was to a man named Bee. And as I recall the family history, he was a foreman at a paint factory in Norfolk and mixed the colors for the factory. So he was there. But he died. And so she married somebody called Stanley, who formally adopted all the children. So that's (laughs)—from Bee to Stanley. Times were rough at the turn of the century, and in the 1900s. There was one time when—probably her first husband died—she had to farm out the family. She had three boys and a girl, and so to different relations. They spent a year or so while she was able to go to work and also then married again. And when she got married for the second time, that's when she collected the family up together. So that's all in the past, that sense of family being very strong.

She also really enjoyed life, I think, because one of the things she did, and I don't know how this came about, but she bought a bungalow on the River Thames. And they would escape from London and go to the bungalow to enjoy the river and the boats and things like this. I came later to stay with an aunt, who also did the same thing, the bungalow near the original one that my grandmother [had]—she refused to be called "grandmother." She called herself Nana and that was it. I would see her once a year at Christmas time when the whole family would gather there. And she had little turns. I don't know what her health was. But she died in her sleep eventually. Of the three sons she had, one died in the First World War. And my father, when he finished his formal training as an electrical engineer, joined the navy. That was the last year of the war, the First World War, in 1918. He married my mother soon after that.

My mother would go down with my grandmother and they would have a rollicking time. My mother was obviously a very important person for buying the food and helping with the arrangements. So my parents got married. And then they decided to immigrate to Canada.

**Vanderscoff:** Well, I'm curious—when you consider this family background which had a strong basis in terms of holding the family together and then in terms of your father's involvement in the Scouts—how do you think that those influenced you as a child and going forward in your life, those family values and community outreach that your father had been engaged in?

**Stanley:** Well, I think that it made me adventuresome. Looking back on it, my father probably brought us up as he might have brought up two boys. He trained

us in sports. My sister was a long distance swimmer and she won many cups. I remember feeling so proud of the cups that she had won. And I was being trained as a runner. Then the Second World War opened and that was the end of everything. All that disappeared.

It's partly as a result of that that my sister developed a very early diabetes. When the war began, she was working in London, living at the Crown and Anchor, and she was in charge of the underground shelters. She was a St. John's volunteer and was in charge of a shelter. I think she had a man die in her arms. It must have been awful. And she had been training just before the war for swimming, so she had a lot of meat and stuff. And suddenly the water was suspect, so she drank sweet waters and my mother noticed and suspected it might be diabetes and alerted the doctors. Indeed, she did have it. She was probably one of the few diabetics at the time, because she got this when she was twenty. She lived until seventy-two, so that's fifty-two years, injecting herself twice a day. They've so improved the way of looking after diabetes now, it's hard to imagine. She never complained once. Never.

**Vanderscoff:** (long pause) And before we move forward to pick up the thread where we left last time, are there any other stories from your family that you've been reflecting on, that come to mind as important?

**Stanley:** Well, my mother went into politics. When I went to the university, she put up for the local council and was elected and did her four years, or whatever it was, and then put up again. But the second time she put up politically for the Labor Party, which was very opposite to the whole area, which was somewhat



Tory. And they put up a very high-powered person against her, so she didn't get elected a second time. But she did some very good work as a local councilor. I was very pleased that she had that, because she had to look after my sister and I in Whitstable, because of my health and so on. And when I went off to university, then she had an occupation, which was politics. (laughs) Because, after all, I had been a full-time job, I think. Because I once asked her, "What diseases did I have?"—because I thought I'd better know what they are—and she said, "Oh, you had every childhood disease." I'm not sure that's true. (laughs) I do remember chicken pox but that's about all, apart from the fact I was in great pain a great deal of the time. But I don't remember—the pain is not strong in my mind. But I was used to inventing—I had a farm that I would put out and invent stories about this farm and all the little animals and play with that in my bed. So I was used to both pain and inventing my own stories from an early time.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you reflect on these factors in your childhood, the illness, and then the pain that that caused you, and then this strong family feeling, and then this imaginative impulse that you said you had—how do you think that that relates, or does it, to your eventual passion and interest in theater and performance and the stage?

**Stanley:** Well, performance was part of our education, because I did one year before the Second World War began, at the grammar school and they performed *Midsummer Night's Dream*—I think I told you—and I was one of the fairies. So that was part of the training in the school. And although there was a disruption with the beginning of the war, the sense of performance continued. Because

while I was at school I did scenes from *The Merchant of Venice*. I played Shylock. (laughs) At an all-girls' school you get to play other roles. I also directed, I think I directed a couple of things for my house. I was in Abbey House.

At school, performance and presenting plays were all part of the training that we got. And also there was one I think I might have mentioned, a very young and enterprising literature teacher, who took us up to London the milk express. And we lined up at the Old Vic and saw some of the great performances towards the end of the war, with Laurence Olivier and all the great actors of the time. So going up there and going to the theater was all part of it, apart from that every Christmas I'd spent in London we always went to the pantomime. So all those influences—theater was part of my background. And I've mentioned the play I put on the beach.

**Vanderscoff:** Yes. Well, wonderful.

### **Political Climate and Film Work at Berkeley in the 1960s**

**Vanderscoff:** Picking up that thread of theater and moving to discuss your time at Berkeley, we stopped off last time talking about your time in Greece, both before and after the revolution, seeing productions there and doing research and filming for your thesis. Before we get too far into your thesis, I'd like to ask a few questions about your time at Berkeley. In particular, as an Englishwoman studying in California, what sort of take or involvement did you have in regards to the political climate and all the protest that was going on in Berkeley at that time?

**Stanley:** Well, you know that, being a foreigner, I was on an F-1 visa and couldn't work. So I had no means of supplementing my rather meager Canadian dollars, which were paying for my first year. But I did manage to cope with that. Thereafter, the Berkeley people were very generous and I got scholarships for the other two years I spent there.

I was not supposed, presumably, to take part in political things. But I remember marching on Sacramento to talk to the governor, Ronald Reagan. We had a whole list of questions. And that's when I realized politics as a whole mode of existence. Because here he was presented with a list of questions, which he totally ignored and took advantage of the fact that the cameras were on him to speak about what he wanted to speak about, not what we were there for. So I was promptly disillusioned about the political processes going on. (laughs)

But People's Park emerged and that was an extraordinary occasion. I was living in International House, which was really on the Berkeley campus, because I didn't have a car and I couldn't afford a car. And the People's Park—I knew it was sort of being used politically on both sides. But on the other hand, the idea of the People's Park, the idea of community, of communal effort—which was kind of born in Berkeley in many respects and spread rapidly throughout the country, I think was very important.

I did visit the park. It was a magical thought, in the middle of an urban landscape, to insist that this was a park and planting things and growing things. Then they brought the army in. I went on the People's Park march, and made my will beforehand because there had been shootings. And the army was in with

fixed bayonets. (laughs) It was a crazy time. I said to various people I ate lunch with at International House, "Are you going on the march?" Most of them said "No," but there were a couple that I often ate with. And I said, "Well, can I march with you?" Because I certainly didn't know the outcome. They were two male friends. We've kept in touch ever since. We were cemented by that. I danced most of the way, because there was music.

It was unnerving. And I thought, I haven't survived World War II to be surrounded by barbed wire and guns and the army. I mean, this isn't right. So I felt rather strongly about it, which sustained me, I think, for doing that. There were no incidents that I can recall coming from that. Just two pals. We were kind of cemented by that experience and have kept in touch, which is very nice.

**Vanderscoff:** As a student then, what do you think the value is, or was for you, in engaging in that sort of political protest, particularly as a foreigner, as an Englishwoman coming here?

**Stanley:** Well, both England and America are democracies. And my family had engaged in politics, so it wasn't so remote from my knowledge. It was something I thought I should support. It was the artistic expression of life that was being presented by the People's Park, a new way of looking at life which was being presented to the whole country, in many respects, and was something that I felt was very positive and should be supported. So I went.

**Vanderscoff:** And if something like that is indeed passing or ephemeral like People's Park proved to be—in the sense of the physical space, in the sense that it

was suppressed in that way—what sort of a value do you think there was for you in walking in that way, where you clearly felt there was an element of personal risk. You did up your will.

**Stanley:** (laughs) Yeah, considering that I had almost no money because I was using up my Canadian dollars to pay for that first year. But—you know, it was at a time when it was only outside students that paid anything, because being at Berkeley was free for California [resident] students. I'd been brought up in a country where you were expected to go to college and again, that was free, I think, at the time, which was very splendid.

Well, the value of People's Park—because as you say, it was ended—but it was the symbolism of it and also the commitment that every single person that went on that march. And there were a lot of people who went on that march to the park and back. It generated a lot of the communal activities that people set up. One of the two people I was with went to live in a commune in the borders of California and Oregon. I visited him and his girlfriend, as it was at the time, and saw the way in which they had built their own homes. They were living communally, cooking, and enjoying natural food—and the whole of that movement got going. Many things were generated as a result of all of that activity. The park may have died, but the way in which the society, the young, under-thirties group took the lessons of that and carried them out in their lives all over the country—it spread out, I think, very much.

I remember being sent down to UCLA while I was at Berkeley, to do the filmmaking. And when I got to that campus, I was astounded to see female

students in high heels, these high coiffured hairstyles, makeup and dresses. And, oh my goodness! It looked like another era. (laughs) That changed fairly quickly at UCLA, too, and they got caught up in the political things. But I think it generated, throughout the whole country it resonated with the universities and college populations, the young populations who decided to explore different ways of living: more communal, more creative, back to the earth. It generated many things. On this [UCSC] campus, the Farm and Garden—well, the Garden part operated right from the beginning because of this ex-English actor who ran it, with this stentorian voice.<sup>6</sup>

**Vanderscoff:** So we've discussed the political change, the cultural change that was going on there at Berkeley, and your involvement with that. Including this, but also beyond this, what set apart your American education and theater involvement in California, compared to the Canadian and the English context that you'd worked and learned in?

**Stanley:** I felt so pleased I had never got into Yale. Because if I had gone to the east part of this country—they were so riddled with parts of the European experience, and were not progressive at the time. (laughs) It would have been absolutely hellish. Because I had tried getting into a program, and I was before a

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<sup>6</sup> In reference to Alan Chadwick, who lead the effort to create UCSC's garden in the late 1960s. For more on this movement in the greater Central Coast area, see *Cultivating A Movement: An Oral History on Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Farming on California's Central Coast* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2010). <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/cultiv/home>

committee and they said, "Well, what do you intend to do with your education?" I said, "I want to explore theater in various forms." But that wasn't good enough. (laughs) So I didn't get in.

I feel very pleased that eventually I came to do my graduate work at Berkeley, with all this other stuff that was happening. Because the acceptance of women in this area was so much stronger than it would have been in the Eastern part of the United States. I just thought, this is a normal mode of existence in America. (laughs) And it's only later that I realized how lucky I was that I came here and I had such good support from the Berkeley people and people in general.

**Vanderscoff:** And what did you hope that your education at Berkeley would provide you, as a teacher, as someone who's interested in theater, that you hadn't yet gotten in your previous education or work experience?

**Stanley:** Oh, I misled you in that case, because I had set up two programs of drama in colleges in England, one in the Midlands and the other in Birmingham—well, the Birmingham one was set up. I simply took over a larger department instead of setting it up from scratch. And that was very hard work because the teaching element was expansive—and looking after the students in the schools. That was the time when I got sciatica very badly. I think I mentioned that to you.

**Vanderscoff:** You mentioned the sciatica last time but I'd appreciate any detail about setting up either that program or the other.

**Stanley:** Well, the Birmingham one, I was very pleased with some of the work I managed to achieve in the three or four years I was there. One was making appointments. And we did an experiment, which we invited one or two people to see, of Greek plays, the plays of Oedipus. The youngest member of the department did the one with the daughter [*Antigone*]. And *Oedipus Rex* was done by a more experienced man who directed it. And I did the final one, *Oedipus at Colonus*. And we presented that in a circle and invited people to see it. I think that was a good project and quite a large one, and expressed my interest in Greek drama, which I'd gotten from H.D.F. Kitto. I think I mentioned him before. So that was carried on and was part of the six-month study I had already done in Greece itself. So I felt that was an extension of my studies that was carried out. The first play I did here [in Santa Cruz] was, as I mentioned, was *Ecclesiastuzae*.

**Vanderscoff:** Yes.

**Stanley:** So that was the final element to those particular studies. But I've always allowed some project or other to take me over. And this one of Greek theaters, in which I filmed these sixty Greek and Roman theaters and then did my dissertation on this, and then made a film about it, which you've seen.

**Vanderscoff:** Mm hmm. Now, I'm curious about the film aspect, because this was a time before most film studies programs were set up. How did your dissertation committee react to your decision to use a film? What led you to think that that would be a useful aspect of your study?



**Stanley:** Well, I had shown them my films when I was in Greece. The head of the department was running that program in Greece. He said they didn't have the equipment and stuff so I would be sent down to UCLA to do more about filmmaking, learn that. So I had to do the eight-millimeter process.

And of all things, what I chose was the missions of California. I didn't have a car, still. (laughs) I inveigled companions to drive me to these places. So I made a film on the missions. UCLA has great [collections] of all of the films that have been made, and one after the other these films are shown, whether they are eight-millimeter, sixteen, or thirty-five, whether you are a beginning student doing the eight-millimeter film, or the graduate student who is going into the film industry.

So I made this film on these missions. It was about twenty minutes long. I got the priest at [the mission of] Santa Barbara to tell me about it. I recorded him. I asked him about the history and he said, "Well, uh— The, uh— beginnings of the uh...uh." I thought, God, this is terrible. He had obviously sort of mugged up some stuff to present to me and it wasn't any good. So I stood up but left my machine was still running. I said, "Well, my friend was with you and she said she had a most interesting conversation with you about God." And he said, "Well, you know, I don't believe in God," and explained what that was and so on. You know, the concept of God as God. I mean, it's quite complicated. But that stuck in my mind. And when I made this film, which was exceedingly boring, kind of the history of the [missions], and I looked at it with the assistant— because the beginning class of filmmaking you divided in groups of six and then

there was an assistant who helped you—we looked at my twenty-minute film and I said, "That's awful, isn't it?" It was one week before the film was due and everybody was going frantic. I was sort of glad I'd got the stuff done as much as I had. I said, "I have to redo it." So I redid it and I remembered that recording of the priest saying "I don't believe in God." And against that I put a fountain in which there was a dove that flew up from the fountain. So at the moment the man said, "I don't believe in God," there was this white dove going up. And I cut it down to six minutes.

When the films were shown, there was a brilliant filmmaker from Australia, I think, who had done this wonderful, very powerful film. And I thought, the poor person who has to come after that one. And it was my film. So I thought to myself, well, it will be interesting to see if it stands out because I really had cut it to pieces and made a totally different film out of it. And when I went up—because you had to defend your film at the end of it—and I went up and somebody said, "Was the humor intentional?" I said, "Oh, yes." (laughs) And I thought, they don't understand irony. But now, of course, people understand irony. But at the time, in the sixties, we hadn't learnt the lesson of irony.

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) And as someone who has spent so much time working with the stage, where do you chart your interest in filming coming from?

**Stanley:** Well, when I came to this campus, I was a joint appointment of Stevenson College and the campus and they were setting up a drama department. There was a group of us and a couple of other people from Berkeley,

too. And we were all going to set up. Michael Warren, from literature, was kind of secretary, a wonderful person.

I was assigned Stevenson College. I thought, well I better do something which is allied with its interest in the social sciences. So I taught filmmaking as one of the college courses, because we didn't have anybody in film. And having made the film and gone through the experience of UCLA, I thought, I'll do something. So I found a cupboard (laughs) that had no windows, a space that was almost the space of an office and I set up planks around there, so people could edit in this dark space. And we did group filmmaking. I got them to write out what project they would like to work on as a film. I read all these, because the class was really quite large. And I put similar themes together. So I put a group of four or five people together and I made them responsible for coming up with a film and to divide the job of the camera work, the directing of it, the sound. So each person had a task. And then at the end of the quarter we showed the films to Stevenson. That was the first filmmaking going on in this campus at the time. But when we appointed somebody in film, I didn't teach that anymore. Because I also realized that some of my examples were ten years old, and in film you have to be up to date. (laughs) So I thought it was time I gracefully withdrew from teaching and left it to other people.

**Vanderscoff:** And you talked a lot about how when you were young, the pantomimes and theater were very important things to you. Were movies also something that were interesting to you?

**Stanley:** Oh, yes. My father—because my mother was looking after my sister and myself at this seaside place and he would come down from London and spend a couple of days there, we would always go to see a film. There were three cinemas in my hometown, but also cinemas in Canterbury itself. So we would go there and do that. So that sense of going out and seeing things, seeing a film, pre-war films. I used to like *The Thin Man* series. Those were enjoyable. They represented, also, women being on equal terms with the men, those films. They got as good as they got.

### **Coming to UC Santa Cruz:**

#### **Thoughts on the College System as a Site for Theater and Education**

**Vanderscoff:** So we've been discussing your thesis here, your interests in terms of stage and screen. I'd like to turn towards UCSC, which we were just discussing. In your time at Berkeley, how did you first hear of UC Santa Cruz, which, of course, had only started in '65.

**Stanley:** Well, there was a presentation at Berkeley of a Shakespeare play by this upstart campus at Santa Cruz. I went along with the superiority that Berkeley people have (laughs) and was totally charmed by the presentation. The costumes had been borrowed from the Canadian Shakespeare festival that they have, which are of great quality. And the students had been trained to wear the costumes well. They wore them with great grace and they had a sort of charm about the whole presentation, which completely won me over. (laughs)

So when I came to look for—coming toward the end of my dissertation I should get a job—I applied to various places. Well, the only places that understood my vitae, really and truly, were Stanford and UCSC. Other colleges didn't know how to read my life. (laughs) But I got a job offer at Stanford, which had a graduate program and an established thing. Here at UCSC, it was going to start from scratch. Many departments of drama at the time were very conflicted. Then it was more strongly operational. And it split departments so that they were not working together very well. I witnessed this, actually, because I had been asked to go down to support somebody who had a meeting with graduate students at Stanford. I looked at this room of very superior people and thought, I don't think I want to teach them. (laughter) My inclination was to go for an open public, not a private establishment.

And also this [campus] had written evaluations instead of grades. Most of my time in teaching drama I taught by evaluations rather than grades. I'd been very lucky so I didn't have to do this sort of stupid—in the arts a stupid assessment of A, B, C, or D. In the sciences, where you have to have a whole set of particular knowledge, it's probably much easier to do it that way. But, as somebody said who went from this campus to Stanford, "The questions we were asking the professor about the course in the first session, I discovered that I was asking 'What is this course about? What does it contain?' And the other people were asking, 'How do I get an A grade?'" She suddenly realized the benefit of having studied at UCSC. I passed that on to the chancellor because I thought he would be pleased to hear that.

**Vanderscoff:** When you first arrived, the original college-centric UC structure was still very much intact. You spoke a little bit about your involvement with Stevenson College. Would you speak at greater length to the professional, social, academic climate that you found at Stevenson when you came?

**Stanley:** Well, Stevenson was rather jolly. (laughs) It had—what was it called—a sort of special hour when everybody would tuck into the booze. (laughter) I didn't particularly drink, so it wasn't my kind of thing, but there was a tremendous feeling of cooperation between peoples. The provost of Stevenson College was Glenn Willson, who was an ex-Brit who'd done work all over the world, really, in Australia and many places.<sup>7</sup> He got me to do a presentation which involved faculty and students and staff, a reading or a play. And I would do this, *A Child's Christmas in Wales* being one of them. And *A Christmas Carol*, which I adapted from the Dickens novel. And things like that.

So that was a good background, because when I did the bicentennial production of *The Birds* I had a faculty-staff cast and a student cast and the chorus was the students in both productions. But I asked the chancellor and he was quite pleased to be part of it. And Norman O. Brown was part of it. The campus engineer was part of it, and people in theater arts, obviously the faculty in theater

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<sup>7</sup> For Glenn Willson's oral history, see Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor., *F.M. Glenn Willson: Early UCSC History and the Founding of Stevenson College*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1989). Available at <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/willson>

arts. So it led to something rather special, the feeling of being all together and not just separate faculty and separate students and separate staff. There was a feeling of companionship, which was very good.

**Vanderscoff:** You worked and studied in a variety of different contexts prior to coming to UC Santa Cruz. I think you've already been speaking to this to some extent, but I'd like to ask specifically, what distinguished UCSC—how is it similar, how is it different from the type of places that you'd been prior?

**Stanley:** Well, there was a sense of excitement, of experimentation, of combining with other people, like doing the film course. And to some extent, one set one's own timetable. The theater arts program was being discussed and set up but it didn't totally exist. But it was people who were here. They had people brought in as [gadflies], people particularly engaged with a college to do a college production, because that was a good way of getting people together and working together. But that was a deceptive thing, because it was a kind of not giving the subject its due respect in some way. It was, oh, "This is for a purpose of binding the college together," rather than "This is a subject that really needs to be delved into and examined and experimented, and all that excitement that comes from a departmental look at a subject."

It was wonderful at the start. There were certain things that were derived from getting people to work together, the interdisciplinary aspect of things, which was very fine. But it was crazy to have to go through the process of saying whether somebody in the social sciences should get [tenure]. How can one judge outside one's own area of emphasis, the real work of a person in that? And we were

asked to do a double whammy of investigations: whether this person should be advanced or not, things like that. It was a bit distressful. And a double labor because it was being done by the people in the subject area, as well as by the college. So there was a double report on each person and this meant an awful lot of time, if you were at all conscientious, to catch up on the research of such a person.

But I was excited that one could work with somebody in a different discipline, evolve a new class. And there were lovely things like that graduate program, the history of consciousness, and a sense of being at the forefront of trying out new ideas, which this campus represented.\* And a lot of them were tremendously exciting and I think the students were astounding. And what was interesting was each quarter when we came back, the faculty would say, "Where are they? What are they up to? What are they doing?" The students were keeping the faculty absolutely on their toes because they were at the forefront of the political thinking, the new ideas coming up, the interdisciplinary mode of things, doing things differently. It was an exciting time. The students made it exciting. For instance, the production I did, we had to vote on whether we would continue with it or whether the students would go and support something across the

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\* For oral histories of history of consciousness, see Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/hayden-white-frontiers-of-consciousness-at-ucsc> and James Clifford: *Tradition and Transformation at UCSC*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013): <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/clifford>



country they were interested in supporting. (laughs) And I said, "Well, you're supporting it by doing this play." (laughs) I did persuade them that we should complete the play. Because that's when the women take over the government, *Ecclesiazusae*. So I thought, this is a good idea. Might lead to some good changes, (laughter) not those envisioned by Aristophanes, who was being very satirical, very satirical. Again, satire and irony were not hard-bitten into the core as they are appreciated now.

**Vanderscoff:** In living and working in this context, what do you think that did for you personally as a thinker, as a teacher?

**Stanley:** I felt liberated. I felt free to explore and experiment and carry out ideas. Total freedom to do that. It was wonderful. It was like a cork coming out of a bottle. It was exciting. And the faculty were exciting. People were buzzing with ideas and things. It was wonderful, and non-conformative. Because theater—you can't sort of roll on the floor with students and have them say, "Dr. Stanley." You said Audrey.<sup>9</sup> (laughs) I mean, it's true, but one does not hide behind it. I think that's so important. There was a quality of *exchange* that was genuine. You could try out things and you'd find students would support that. It was a two-way stream. It wasn't just one way. It was all that I'd been able to teach, without the

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<sup>9</sup> In reference to the introduction at the beginning of the session. Audrey made a face when I did this, and we soon adopted a first-name basis—Editor.

grading system and in a freer atmosphere. That's because of the subject matter that I teach. Theater slid very well in place when I came. It was lovely.

**Vanderscoff:** Something that's become increasingly important in the academy, and central in a lot of ways, is publication and research, in the model of the research university. In those initial years that you were here, what were your thoughts about the climate in regards to supporting or deemphasizing faculty publication and research?

**Stanley:** (pauses) Well, you know, I suppose I have always gone, really, my own way. And for theater, to direct outside is a publication.

#### **Directing at Ashland Shakespeare Festival and in Santa Cruz in the 1970s**

**Stanley:** I directed at Ashland, Oregon—I think I've mentioned this?

**Vanderscoff:** Very briefly.

**Stanley:** I was invited to direct a play. They offered me *Winter's Tale*. It was a play I had really long been wanting to do. I took a leave in order to prepare for it. It was a very special production with some extraordinary fine actors at Ashland, le Clanché du Rand playing the leading woman's role, and Jimmy Edmondson, who is still acting at Ashland, played Leontes. It was very special. What was interesting, and I failed to say to you, was one of the early things—I don't know if I've mentioned this or not. The first class back here on campus after the six-month [Greco-Roman theater] study—which was both a semester and a quarter, because Berkeley went from the semester system into the quarter system that

year, in 1966—the first graduate course at Berkeley was to engage in some research that made you use all the facilities that were available. And I was given something called "Ashland." I said to my neighbor, "What is Ashland?" He relieved my mind by saying, "Shakespeare festival." So I said, "Where is Ashland?" He said, "In Oregon." I didn't dare ask the third question. (laughs) So I looked up the states of America when I got back, to discover it was next to California. (laughs)

So I researched and I wrote an extended essay. I wrote to Angus Bowmer, who had founded the Ashland Festival. They just closed for the summer. There was no indoor theater there at the time. This was 1966. But I said, "Well, could I come up and see the site and so on?" Having researched it I knew it was in the old [inaudible], which was a circular sort of wall, really. And Angus Bowmer very sweetly met me and gave me the key to all the prompt books, which were scattered at the top of the old Elizabethan theater. Have you been there?

**Vanderscoff:** Yes.

**Stanley:** And gathering dust. So I worked pretty well through the night and found some relating back to the thirties and forties and so on. I collected about fifteen prompt scripts and said, "Could I borrow them and return them?"

I had researched the festival very thoroughly and saw people like Richard Hay, who'd been a young designer at Stanford who was taken on at Ashland and became their chief designer, and designed *Winter's Tale* for me. It was so weird in one sense, because I'd been asked to do this production. So I went up there. It

was like déjà vu, in a way, having researched all this background and the growth of that festival. I hadn't realized that, though they had two women there before me, quite notable women, they hadn't directed Shakespeare. They'd directed other plays. So I think I was the first one to direct Shakespeare there. And it was also one that was performed in the indoor theater, and continued into the summer season. The Angus Bowmer Theater had been built by then. So that I experienced that.

And when I went back later on to do *As You Like It* there, four or five years later, the organization had got so big the company couldn't assemble all in one place in quite the same way as it had done originally. And so I experienced that sense of getting so large that it became a whole different object. It became almost like an industry. It was a whole different atmosphere.

And I also learnt the limitations because with *As You Like It*, I had wanted a married couple from the audience, either a couple who just got married or renewing their vows or something, to be sitting on two thrones towards the back of the audience, but elevated. And then with the acknowledgement of the four couples on stage there would be this spotlight on this one couple. I thought that would bring the stage and the audience in a special arrangement. They refused to let me do it. I thought, well, they're missing a wonderful opportunity here. Angus Bowmer said he thought I had the right to do that. But he wasn't running it. They pointed out that you would have to find the people, you would have to do the tickets. I hadn't thought about how much it would actually cost to do this.

I didn't think it would cost that much but it was there. And I thought, well, some things then get so large that the nature to experiment disappears.

And when we set up the Shakespeare Festival here I hoped that that nature to experiment wouldn't disappear. And the outdoor space—we had a different part of the glen we performed in in those early years. And we moved the audience, too, from the glen up to the tree, when we did the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. It wasn't an oak tree but it was a wonderful big tree that's cut down now, but existed then.

When things get to a certain size, you lose the capacity to experiment, sometimes. That's sad. You gain other things. Size brings in greater opportunities and greater opportunities for different faculty to work together.

But you mentioned something about the hiring process. When I came to UCSC, it was when the chancellor interviewed everybody who was appointed and had his say about who should be appointed or not. But then it later became too large, too much, too many people. So I was interviewed by Dean McHenry. And it was very interesting.

**Vanderscoff:** And so, when you reflect on these experiences of outside directing, in terms of the Santa Cruz context, how supportive or not, do you think the climate was in regards to outside endeavors, outside publications in that sort of a way. Particularly some of the early people, like Page Smith famously, were opposed to the idea of these things being important in tenure cases and so on.

How would you characterize the climate at UCSC in regards to faculty projects like that in those early years?

**Stanley:** Well, I tended to never think about where I was working in terms of how do you get promoted, or things like that. I just got on with the work. And I did this because I wanted to direct the Shakespeare and do that.

Our building—when I came, the plans for the indoor theater were based on Shakespearean theater. It was not a good design. We took out—by “we” I mean Theater Arts—took out rows of seats to enlarge the actual stage, make it more usable. The first play I did in the theater was *Much Ado about Nothing*. It was the first production done in there and it was a Shakespeare play. This was honoring the people who’d set it up. And this was because there was an actor who’d acted at [the Shakespeare festival in] Stratford, Ontario. He was a British actor originally, Eric Christmas, and then left this campus to go and work at UC San Diego.

But that sense of connection with the professional theater existed. And my production there was counted as publication, which it jolly well should be. (laughs) But it wasn’t something I bothered about. It wasn’t something I anguished about. I just did what I felt needed to be done. Actually, I could have probably negotiated far more time off than I did. I took time off from my own pay in order to achieve what I wanted to achieve. But that was just the way I did it.

### **The Evolution of UCSC Theater in the 1970s**

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Saturday, June 22, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Audrey Stanley for the third part of her oral history interview. Today I'd like to start off by asking what personalities, interests, and debates characterized the literature board in your early time here?

**Stanley:** I had nothing to do with the literature board.

**Vanderscoff:** What board were you brought in under?

**Stanley:** Well, it was going to be theater arts.

**Vanderscoff:** Had theater arts emerged from literature at that time?

**Stanley:** No. Michael Warren was spearheading that. And that's why he was secretary of the group of us that were brought in to evolve the four-year program. Dean McHenry was insistent that we called it 'theater'—T-H-E-A-T-E-R. Because UCLA, where he came from, they insisted on calling it R-E. (laughs) I, being new to this country, accepted the fact that it had to be the E-R, even though the Greek is more R-E. But the E-R is German; I think it came from Germany. However, they're still arguing about it. (laughter) I understand, you know.

**Vanderscoff:** So, when you arrived, then, what sort of autonomy did theater arts have, relative to the lit board that it had emerged from originally?

**Stanley:** It did emerge, I suppose, from the lit board, in that Michael Warren, who was teaching Shakespeare and theater and literature, amongst other things,

was the secretary of this group of faculty who were brought in to evolve this four-year program. Porter College [College Five at that time] was being built and so there were appointments there. I was appointed to Stevenson. Michael had moved over from Stevenson into Cowell.

We evolved the four-year program and it was taken over by Glenn Willson, who was provost of Stevenson. What had existed before that were theater faculty who were assigned to colleges as "gadflies." I think I mentioned this to you before. But now the group brought in were faculty who wanted to teach the four-year program. So some of the gadflies sort of left. Well, there were only one or two.

**Vanderscoff:** So you mentioned, I think in our first session, that when Shakespeare Santa Cruz was founded you were interested in striking a balance between performance and scholarship. When you were setting up that four-year program in theater, when you consider those two factors—focusing on teaching acting and performance, and focusing on teaching scholarship and the text and so forth—what was your priority? What sort of emphasis emerged?

**Stanley:** Oh, I think a balance between those two areas. Several of us came from the Berkeley program, which trained the director-scholar and had this lovely sense of doing the two sides on the aspect of drama and theater. And that training at Berkeley, since about three of us were from that program—somebody was already here teaching dance. Then somebody else was appointed to Porter and I was appointed to Stevenson. We discussed the program so that there would be a balance between them. Because the program we'd come from,



training the scholar-director, had that balance of research and history, as well as performance.

**Vanderscoff:** And were there particular focuses or pathways within the major, that were set up relative to different time periods of theater, or relative to focusing more on the literature aspect of it, or things like that?

**Stanley:** Well, one of the things that emerged was that there were a group of people interested in studying the literature. And an independent dramatic literature major was set up in Cowell, which was when I reagggregated to Cowell because Michael Warren was there and a couple of other people.<sup>10</sup> It flourished very well for quite a few years and served a purpose, and then disappeared, as these things do. But it wasn't a whole department. It was just an emphasis there.

**Vanderscoff:** And you've mentioned the atmosphere at Stevenson being convivial. Would you mind discussing the atmosphere, the professional social climate of Cowell, in contrast to Stevenson?

**Stanley:** Well, I will quote Michael Warren, in a way, because he says it's due in part to the architecture. He says the corridors in Stevenson were conducive to conversations in the corridors, being wider, I think—and the ones in Cowell not being so conducive. (laughs) Also, Glenn Willson, who was the second provost

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<sup>10</sup> Reaggregation was a process that started at UCSC in early 1970s, in which faculty were clustered at college by discipline, as opposed to the earlier interdisciplinary dispersment.

of Stevenson, believed very firmly in doing group things. So as faculty appointed, I still served the function, in his mind, of gadfly. So I was expected every quarter to produce a play or something that involved staff, faculty, and students, just as a presentation. It [was] meant for a good interaction, I think. As a collegiate person, I could approve of that. I disapproved of the fact that I had to arrange it so that I would do maximum rehearsal with minimal people, because their time was caught up with teaching other courses. We did *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. I think I've mentioned this to you.

**Vanderscoff:** Just briefly, yes.

**Stanley:** So you have that information.

**Vanderscoff:** So you've talked about Glenn Wilson and Michael Warren. Were there any other collaborators in theater with you?

**Stanley:** Well, at Stevenson they also had a convivial hour in which they had a drink. I don't drink particularly, but I went along in the spirit of the college and sort of joined in. But having been already established, the few people that came along a little later were not in quite such happy circumstances as other people, in that they already knew each other and had been through a couple of early years. I came in in about the third year or so. I moved over to Cowell in order to do the dramatic literature major. That's where Michael Warren had gone and there were other people there too.

**Vanderscoff:** So you mentioned the gadfly model and then, with reaggregation, you being part of a critical mass of faculty in some way.

**Stanley:** Yes, that's right. I wanted to do a proper production, not just simply something that was collegiate and very effective in that respect. But I wanted to do some serious theater.

And the theater having been built, I then embarked upon a series of—Because it was built to be an Elizabethan playhouse with a thrust stage and an audience three-quarters around. And so I opened the space with *Much Ado About Nothing* and then followed it with—and I can't remember quite the order—*Romeo and Juliet* the next year, *Twelfth Night* the next year, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was experimentally outside. But *Romeo and Juliet* had experimental elements—because I had the first part of the play take place in the foyer of the theater arts main building, and the fight take place in the midst of the audience. And I think about it, we'd never have been allowed to do it if we had equity actors (laughs) because it's quite dangerous. But anyhow. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs)

**Stanley:** And then the duke stands at the top of the balcony that goes around just above where the box office is—you know that space, that's supposed to be the foyer—and rebukes everybody. And all the actors kneel like this, and the audience looks up and he says, "Return." There's a drum beat—bom-bom-bom—and the actors move in slow motion to go into the stage. And the audience then sort of take up the seats they'd already occupied—but they had been invited outside to see the beginning of the play. And then the actors come on also slowly moving into the indoor stage and redo the drumbeat—bom-bom-bom, slow motion. They kneel and the duke now on stage finishes off reprimanding them

and issuing foul edicts to them. So that was one experiment in the variable use of space.

With *Midsummer Night's Dream* we started the play outside the theater and then the fairies, I think, took the whole audience to where we had put a parachute. It was in the meadow just before the library. This was a big, one of those huge parachutes. The audience sat facing wherever they faced. And then the actors were sitting already with their backs to the center of the parachute, and the audience had to sit in the center section. What happened was the actors would stand up and do their scene, so the audience would shuffle around and watch that scene. Then the next scene would take place at their backs. So they would shunt around again and do that, and all over the place outside the audience circle. But this meant that the scenes could follow one another so quickly. And it was a surprise, because when you're sitting down, you don't see the actors. You just see the backs of their heads. So it was, again, a different use of space. Some people chose to sit in the shade further up. But totally it was an experiment of space and performance, which I was carrying out.

We did a tour with that *Midsummer Night's Dream* and went to Berkeley and Santa Clara University, UC Santa Barbara, amongst other places. And the people who got that going, it was the same group of actors, of students, who formed the basis for Shakespeare Santa Cruz. So the organization had already begun. And a student who was responsible for arranging the tour was our first paid person for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, in 1980.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you think about these productions prior to the establishment of Shakespeare Santa Cruz, how had theater changed from your arrival at Stevenson College to these events that you were talking about in the 1970s?

**Stanley:** How had—

**Vanderscoff:** How had theater changed on campus in terms of the funding for it, in terms of the seriousness of the productions, the course offerings—

**Stanley:** Oh, I should have said that the gadfly people also presented. And this was because this actor from Stratford, Ontario taught here, and got Shakespeare going, and was greatly supported by the campus faculty, I think. And toured the other UC campuses. Because here was I, a Berkeley graduate student, when this upstart campus brought in a lovely production of *Twelfth Night* to Berkeley. I think I told you they borrowed costumes from Stratford and wore them beautifully. So I was very impressed. And they had done another Shakespeare play, and Michael Warren probably will talk to you about that.<sup>11</sup>

So they set up the designs of the theater arts program by arranging that the stage should be a reflection of an Elizabethan stage. So that's why I embarked upon all

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<sup>11</sup> For Michael Warren's take on UCSC theater and other topics, see his oral history with the Regional History Project.

those Shakespeare productions. And then I was busy directing Shakespeare at Ashland and Colorado and Berkeley Shakespeare festivals.

**Vanderscoff:** So with that in mind, how do you think, or do you think that theater and theater education at UCSC grew or evolved in your first five or ten years there, prior to the advent of Shakespeare Santa Cruz?

**Stanley:** Oh, yes. It existed directly when we arrived. It was set up for the next year. I think it only took one year. The [UCSC] catalogs probably will give you that information.<sup>12</sup> The point is we were all agreed upon the kind of classes and the balance and the things like this. The dance person was finishing her Ph.D. at Berkeley and needed to concentrate on that. So there was a dance position open and Ruth Solomon was appointed to that.<sup>13</sup> So I don't think it was more than a year before the program was set up. But I could be wrong. It may have taken two years. My recollection was we simply discussed it and then had it printed up and the courses passed through the Academic Senate.

**Vanderscoff:** Now, we've discussed that you'd been involved in a series of theater programs prior to coming to Santa Cruz, both as a student and as helping

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<sup>12</sup> For specific curricular information, UCSC catalogs are archived for review at the McHenry Library Special Collections Department.

<sup>13</sup> See Tandy Beal, Interviewer; Irene Reti, Editor, *"Everything was a Stage": An Oral History with Ruth Solomon, Founding UCSC Professor of Theater Arts and Dance* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014) <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/solomon>

set them up. Would you mind comparing the program that was set up here, relative to those experiences that you had earlier, in terms of its emphasis or in any other terms.

**Stanley:** Well, two of them were in colleges of education. They were geared to the teaching of drama to high school students. The ones in Canada were university-type, four year programs, and that's where I had gone across Canada and down the West Coast looking at the programs that were happening and at Berkeley saw this six-month study of classical drama in Greece. So I'd already got that background, and the other people brought in their training and background knowledge. We all agreed pretty well. There wasn't any problem about doing it. And then, as people were brought in, classes were added. Like the dance program and the film program were all part of theater arts [at UCSC]. Then the film eventually separated. But that wasn't the chancellor's notion. The chancellor's idea was that we should all collaborate together. But I think the material just got too large to encompass just under one grouping.

**Vanderscoff:** I'd like to ask you a question about the students that you found at Santa Cruz studying theater. Would you mind talking about the students in terms of their interests or their approach to the material, and how they were similar or different from students that you had in say, Canada or in England?

**Stanley:** Well, they were far more politically conscious. (laughter) And could take off at a moment's notice to go and join in some political march or things like this. But they were lively and it was wonderful. Each quarter the faculty would come back and say, "Where are they? Where are they?"

Everybody wanted to know what were the dominant features of the students. In one sense, the students were so alert as to the fact that they wanted to make social change, basically. And they did. They set up communes and things like this. I'm not thinking necessarily of communes here, but the whole mode of existence being different, and trying, experimenting, and collaborating. That's very much a feature of Santa Cruz, that we were brought in and we were all mixed up as faculty in order to cross-fertilize. There was quite a lot of that that went on. That was quite exciting educationally and it responded to a need that the students felt. I think UC Santa Cruz probably fulfilled that much more quickly than either Berkeley or UCLA, that had been longer established. So I think there was a reflection in the faculty, a desire to experiment, to try out totally new forms of courses. So one felt very free coming here, which of course works with the arts tremendously well. So I felt very at home in this atmosphere. The students were exciting in those early days because they were bright, they were intelligent, and they were wanting to do things and set to it. It was just glorious.

But it also was a system that probably worked better with smaller numbers. And this was designed as a campus that was supposed to be, I was told when I arrived, the number 23,000. Well, I thought, golly, that's rather huge, but then came crunches and the development was delayed. They did the first five colleges and then took a year's leave from setting up a college, which was very important, I think, to consolidate where it started. In the early days that cross-fertilization and experimentation and exploration with the students was absolutely terrific. But I'd done most of my teaching without grades, as I said, and in the arts that



was very helpful because it allowed one to concentrate on the growth of the individual student rather than just an abstract letter grade.

**Vanderscoff:** So you've been discussing this original UCSC climate. Would you mind giving some instances or examples in terms of how that impacted you as a teacher, what that freedom that you were just talking about sparked in you somehow?

**Stanley:** Well, I mean like my first production [*Ecclesiazusae*], where I had two separate casts, one all-male and the other a mixed cast and experimented with masks and things like this in the two different plays. The students were all very much part of that. And that was exciting. Collaboration has to take place in any theater arts program, really, between students and faculty, because it's just all part of the game.

**Vanderscoff:** So you've been discussing this original UCSC climate, and historically a significant moment for that experiment, for that structure, was reorganization under Chancellor [Robert] Sinsheimer, where hiring and firing power was devolved from the colleges to the boards and the colleges were deemphasized as academic centers, to some degree.<sup>14</sup> Would you mind discussing

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<sup>14</sup> For Robert Sinsheimer's rationale for this change, and other topics, see Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Robert L. Sinsheimer: The University of California, Santa Cruz, During a Critical Decade, 1977-1987* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1996): <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/sinsheimer>

your thoughts on how this impacted you as a teacher and the nature of that UCSC experiment that you were just discussing?

**Stanley:** As I say, I think the nature of the original experiment took a huge amount of organizing time. Just having to do a college assessment of people in other disciplines when you didn't know the discipline, I felt was a waste of time, in that how could one know the work of a person in that discipline? It was a duplication that didn't really quite work. Again, with smaller numbers you could just about make it work, but directly it began to grow larger, it wasn't so successful. But providing there were evaluations rather than grades it didn't make any difference to what I was teaching, except I was able to concentrate more on the work, Greek drama and Shakespeare and all that stuff.

### **Thoughts on Directing Outside of Santa Cruz**

**Vanderscoff:** And on that note of Shakespeare, I'd like to shift into discussing Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Before we get there, I know that you were the first woman to direct a Shakespeare play at the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, as we were discussing. Would you mind speaking about, at some greater length, about the experience that you had outside of UCSC, directing in the seventies prior to the startup of Shakespeare Santa Cruz?

**Stanley:** Well, I think I told you that I had researched Ashland, Oregon at Berkeley, so that I knew about that organization and how that came about. Most of those original people were there when I went to direct there, so it was *déjà vu*, in some respects. So that was fairly comfortable. At Colorado, it was much more

closely connected with the university and there were fewer professional actors available. My Falstaff was a faculty person who found it impossible to learn his lines until the actual opening, which meant real rehearsal was very difficult to take place.

If you're doing educational theater, it's a whole different thing from professional theater. That's why setting up the Shakespeare festival would give students during the summer, if they were interns in the program, a wonderful opportunity of seeing professional actors really get into their parts and how they pace themselves, and the evolution of the creative talents that go to work for final performance. And not the kind of mollycoddling that goes on (laughs) in—sometimes—educational theater. This is why Shakespeare to Go, where the students under our director do a 45-minute version of a Shakespeare play and then takes it on tour—and they're totally responsible for organizing under a stage manager and general manager. They have to move into one space and another space, and obviously setting is at a minimal, costuming is of a minimal. There are only about ten to twelve students acting. So they have to do all the roles and they change hats literally, as one means of enabling the audience to realize that they are different characters of different sexes (laughs) and having fun with that.

Have you seen any of those productions?

**Vanderscoff:** No, the To Go's, no.

**Stanley:** Oh, my goodness. You've missed a great experience. They are extraordinary, particularly when Danny Scheie directs them, because he did a *Henry V*, which he took as a baseball match, and suddenly the baseballs become instruments of war.<sup>15</sup> But about eight of the ten-member cast played instruments. So there was a lot of singing background or music going on, which reflected on what was happening in the scenes, because Danny is very clever on catching up on the latest popular music that would reflect that.

### **Genesis of Shakespeare Santa Cruz: Development and Early Seasons**

**Vanderscoff:** So you've been talking about the difference between working with these professional productions, more in line with Ashland, and interacting more with educational theater at Colorado. With that as our grounding, would you mind discussing the genesis of Shakespeare Santa Cruz? Where did that idea come from and how did that idea become action?

**Stanley:** C.L. Barber was one of our three Shakespearean professors on campus and was also dean of humanities and arts. When he died, somewhat unexpectedly, Dane Archer from the social sciences wrote a letter to the chancellor to say, would we not honor C.L. Barber by setting up a Shakespeare festival, with town and gown meetings to see if this was a possibility? With

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<sup>15</sup> Danny Scheie is a professor of theater at UCSC and a former artistic director of Shakespeare Santa Cruz—Editor.

Silicon Valley, which was not quite existing but just beginning, surely there would be money available. (Ha-ha-ha-ha! What a laugh). He said in the letter, "I've not yet talked with Audrey Stanley but obviously she should be involved."

So I sighed heavily, in a way, when this came up, because I knew the rest of my existence here would be involved with this festival, and I'd been sort of merrily doing Shakespeare at other places. But when I look back on it, what is more marvelous than being able to live here and have your Shakespeare festival here, you know, when you look back on it. But at the time I wasn't necessarily—(laughs) I didn't set it up. It wasn't my original idea. I knew what work it would take. And it did. It took a huge amount of work.

We set up the original meetings, which were highly attended, in May, the faculty and townspeople, and they were very enthusiastic. And I said, "Why don't we join forces with the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival [BSF]?" I was directing *The Tempest* for BSF. They said, "Oh, well, let's explore that." So I explored that with the Berkeley people and initially the financial person was quite enthusiastic. But when he went into it he said he's not going to touch it with a barge pole. (laughs) That's my interpretation, anyway.

And that's when the townspeople said, "Well, let's have our own festival." It was the townspeople who in one sense pushed this, and the townspeople who provided the board of directors to set it up. So it was set up and originally—because it was the townspeople doing this—it was set up with separate banking and everything else. Well, it became very complicated financially, and at some point the university insisted that everything was done through the university,

which was so archaic at the time in its financial arrangements. So that anything over twenty-five dollars you had to apply for in triplicate and wait a week or so. Theater is immediate. Emergencies come up and have to be dealt with that day, that very hour. It's a whole different mode of existence.

So it was very difficult sorting that out. Inevitably, there were problems. And in the university system and the way things get paid, which is slow delay, means that you can never find out financially where you are while the festival is going on. And this has led to a muddle. We were not billed for certain things and then we were told we owed this money. And I think that was taken over and the arts division admitted the fact that they had not done this, so therefore we shouldn't have to be charged for what hadn't been asked for.

But it still goes on today and I think with the new managing director that we have coming in, a new era can perhaps exist, whereby the tracking of the finances can be done much more securely. But it does set up problems, because it is overspent; the audiences haven't supplied the revenue that was hoped for. And, of course, with the current climate there are not so many outside agencies you can apply to for money. So it is in a serious way at the moment.

**Vanderscoff:** So given that you knew how much work would be involved in embarking on that labor why did you agree to do it, given that you were starting this career directing outside and so forth?

**Stanley:** Well, of course a Shakespeare festival here would be wonderful. And then I was also part of ACTER, which was a funding of theater and education at

UC Santa Barbara. I was part of that and through that they organized, through Dr. [Homer] Swander there, a five professional actor presentation of a complete Shakespeare play, touring the United States, going to colleges and universities and teaching classes and then presenting this play that they would direct themselves. And people like Patrick Stewart and Tony Church, to name just a couple, did this and came here to this campus. And I organized where they would go, whose classes they would go to, literature or history or theater classes here. And got to know Tony, who was part of the original group of five, and Patrick too, Patrick Stewart.

So in 1980, when they came over in the fall, we had a gathering in Bargetto's Winery, and the Royal Shakespeare Company actors I think read some sonnets and things at that group thing. It was the first event of Shakespeare Santa Cruz. The name had been evolved. We applied for money from the chancellor, Chancellor Sinsheimer, who donated ten thousand dollars. And we paid for our first paid person, who was the general manager, and who was a student who had organized the tour of *Midsummer Night's Dream* I mentioned.

**Vanderscoff:** So in this climate, what sort of hopes did you have for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, in that conceptual phase, in terms of how large it would grow or how many productions it would be putting on?

**Stanley:** Well, the first thing that we did with that was to—at somebody's suggestion, we brought in the Theatricum Botanicum, because they went around touring Shakespeare and would perform in open spaces anywhere, but were highly professional actors. So the suggestion was to bring in Will Geer's

Theatricum Botanicum, where they would perform in botanical gardens and parks anywhere, and perform Shakespeare. And his family, they were very highly professional actors and also quite modern. They did *The Taming of the Shrew* and had a truck as part of the staging, and leather and chains, and all kinds of modern attributes (laughs) to that play. So it was a modern version of it. It was put on in the outdoor Quarry Theater, because the indoor theater had not yet been built. The Theatricum Botanicum was brought in to see if there was an audience. And there appeared to be an audience. They gathered in the Quarry Theater.

And that was when the chancellor had married somebody who had worked in Twentieth Century Fox, in the organization of that. So I invited myself to tea and asked if she would organize a board of directors for the Shakespeare Festival. And Karen Sinsheimer very graciously agreed it would be one of two projects she would take on board.<sup>16</sup> The other was in the arts in general. She was absolutely splendid in setting this up. I always declared that we were like two war horses taking a chariot that was a runaway chariot, or the runaway horses, and each of us were one of the two horses running side by side, we were so busy trying to set up this festival. (laughs) It was great fun in the early days. So that happened.

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<sup>16</sup> See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Irene Reti, Editor, *Karen Sinsheimer, Life at UCSC, 1981-1987* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012). <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7mc2p594> The longtime venue for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the glen, was ultimately named the Sinsheimer-Stanley Festival Glen.



And, as I say, the ACTER people were Patrick Stewart and Tony Church. And I said to Tony at the Bargetto's gathering, I said, "Would you like to come and do a leading role for us and teach summer session?" He said he'd be very interested. He wanted to do *Lear*. He'd already done *Lear* once so he knew the play quite well. I knew that. And as it happened, Michael Warren's research was on the different texts of *King Lear*, and "The Division of the Kingdoms"—a book—was part of that. So it was to try and help research from a university perspective, as well as other things. And what I decided to do as a result of Michael working on it was to do the folio version complete, uncut, with all the stage directions, one of which was "Enter Lear and Cordelia at the head of *their* army." And Tony Church thought this had never, ever been done. It was "their army" not just *his* army but *their* army. So that was set up for our first season.

I knew that Ashland in 1935 had set up with just one play but I thought, we have to have two. You can't just have one to have a festival. And so we did *Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as *King Lear*. Three people engaged in that. The designer and the director and co-director, as it turned out, a student who had worked with me on *Midsummer Night's Dream*, found the glen. It's a discovered place. It was covered with ferns and a few twiggy trees, but basically it was the space that you see. It had a tree that had crashed down in the glen that was part of the setting for *Midsummer Night's Dream*. So *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was done outside and *King Lear* inside. And that was our first season.

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Wednesday, July 10, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Audrey Stanley for the fourth part of her oral history project. As

always, we are at her house at the base of the UCSC campus. So last time we stopped off talking about that first season, *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And I'm curious, given that this was the first season, what sort of reception did you find for these plays? What sort of reaction did you get?

**Stanley:** It seemed to be a very positive reaction. People said, "if this is what can be done in the first year, then we look forward to a very brilliant future." The general reception was good. The two Royal Shakespeare actors left after two weeks of performance and then we put in local actors in those two roles and they took over. That was an interesting part of the festival, too.

**Vanderscoff:** And has that been typical for the festival in any way, professional actors from outside coming and then swapping off roles like that?

**Stanley:** No, that was just simply the arrangement for the first year. The second year we had only one Royal Shakespeare actor and he stayed for the whole time. So that was good.

**Vanderscoff:** So what sort of lessons did you draw from the first season, in putting together the second season in terms of the plays you were picking and how you went about artistic directing?

**Stanley:** Well, the second season we had a new faculty person in theater arts, Michael Edwards, who had been very highly esteemed as a director, even though he was just coming from UCLA. And I asked him if he was interested in doing *Merry Wives of Windsor*, which we would put with *Macbeth*. And he did that as a

production of the Pilgrim Fathers set up on the East Coast. The period was not that long after, or similar in time. That went very well.

What they did there was something that we've been doing as part of theater arts productions, I think, at least the ones I was concerned with, which was occupying different spaces as well as the theater. And so for the finale of *Merry Wives of Windsor*, it's Falstaff at the great oak. Well, there was this magnificent tree just outside the main theater itself and the play had been done in the glen. And the audience came up and surrounded this great big tree and the last scene was enacted around it. So it was magnificent. A faculty member who'd been part of the theater scene in San Francisco and a poet, George Hitchcock, who did a lovely performance as Falstaff in love—Queen Elizabeth having demanded of Shakespeare that he write a play showing Falstaff in love, so the rumor goes.

**Vanderscoff:** So I'd like to ask you about a play that you directed that year, *Macbeth*, which I've heard a little bit about, in terms of that it had no intermissions and so on. Would you mind speaking about that and your efforts with that particular play, as a way of discussing your directing style and your ideas about theater at that time?

**Stanley:** Well, I was very engrossed with the fact that the plays were generally cut when they were performed and I felt quite strongly that directors should work harder and incorporate everything into their productions, not cut the play to fit their viewpoint. I've weakened my stance on that area since then a little bit.

But also, I was quite adamant that Shakespeare's plays were done without intermission, as far as we know, so I thought we should do them without intermission. But that's very tough on people. (laughs)

Also I believed in pace, in presenting the plays at quite a strong pace. There's a certain vitality that comes from that. I think one loses an aspect of certain refinements in performance that indulging in a slower pace can sometimes allow actors to bring out. An example would be *Henry IV Part 2*, where the scenes with the old men in the countryside turned into pure Chekhov, and it was very exciting to see that and very moving. It certainly wouldn't have fitted into my sense of doing the performances at pace. But they were beautiful. They were excellent. So one must always keep an open mind, or open one's mind so that it receives different ideas.

**Vanderscoff:** So for an audience member, what do you think the difference is between seeing an uncut *Macbeth* without intermissions and a *Macbeth* that perhaps has been cut in some way, or at least has an intermission?

**Stanley:** Well, intermissions I concede to. The uncut means that perspectives of the play that might not occur to you if that particular scene hadn't been in. People tend to cut sometimes the opening scene because it's setting the whole background but Shakespeare generally puts one or two very salient ideas about the whole play into that first scene that he presents, so I think it's dangerous to cut certain elements.

## **Reflections on the Board of Directors, Artistic Directors, and Stages of Shakespeare Santa Cruz**

**Vanderscoff:** Something else we were talking about toward the end of the last session was the board of directors and Karen Sinsheimer. You mentioned this idea of you and her and the horses and the chariot trying to (laughs) keep on going. Would you mind speaking—

**Stanley:** Oh, they were roaring ahead! They were just going. We didn't have time for trivial chit-chat or anything else. We were both going at it hard. I was just so thankful she was there and carrying on creating this board of directors. That was wonderful.

**Vanderscoff:** And what sort of responsibilities or obligations did Karen Sinsheimer and the board of directors fill relative to your own niche of work within Shakespeare Santa Cruz?

**Stanley:** I don't quite understand your question.

**Vanderscoff:** What sort of role did they play in terms of running the program or fundraising?

**Stanley:** Well, they had to raise the money for the productions. And they set to with great gusto and enthusiasm. It's always been touch and go because Shakespeare's plays have such large casts. In some sense, there is no way in which they can make profit because there're just too many expenses—costumes, the whole business of sets and all that. We wanted to encourage as much

creativity, so we would have live musicians and new music and all that. And again, that takes money. It's very difficult in a small town to raise money that quickly. It's befogged the festival ever since. I think the year that I left being artistic director I was informed that we had actually broken even. So I didn't hand it over in the red, but in the black, as I thought. So there are inherent difficulties written into the association of magnificent institutions such as the University of California, as a whole big entity, and a theater company, which has totally different approaches to finance. And also, it's just something more expensive than can be paid for by tickets. And the audience has been pretty good and faithful and exciting, because they are knowledgeable.

Each of the artistic directors that we've had have contributed a great deal to the festival in quite different ways. Somebody like Danny Scheie, for instance, really appealed to a young audience, and was provocative, setting one's mind sort of reeling around old chestnuts, to some extent. But that was very exciting. And somebody like Paul Whitworth set a standard in his own acting and directing and translation of a Spanish Golden Age play, *The Rape of Tamar*, which I thought was exciting, because here we are as a theater group with a new translation coming up of a theater that is rich and was going on at the same time as Shakespeare's theater. But unlike Shakespeare's theater, some of the plays are shorter. And roles were played by women, I think, so that made a difference. Those were exciting times.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you consider, in comparison to the artistic directors who followed you, what do you think characterized your style, or your interests, or your approaches, as the founding artistic director for those first years?

**Stanley:** Well, I was very rigorous on the text. I would have the text complete. I had to give way to intermission, and that's very understandable too. I was followed by Michael Donald Edwards—he has to put the Donald in because there are several Michael Edwards—and he's now in charge of the Asolo [Repertory] Theaters in Florida, three wonderful theater spaces. He'd been working as an assistant at the opera house in New York. He loved opera and above all he loved American musicals. So he tried to introduce that. But a musical has the cost of the music and the orchestra and adds a great deal there. But each of our directors, as I said, introduced new elements.

I said, "An artistic director does three years, renewable at a second three years. And then take a leave or depart." When somebody like Paul Whitworth took a leave of two years and Risa Brainin came in and valiantly filled in for him. I did that because I felt we needed to have fresh input, new perspectives. A danger in a Shakespeare festival is that they can get fuddy-duddy, and that the original artistic director stays on and the thing goes a bit dead. So I retired after six years, basically, and got four years of actual seasons. And other people did different things.

**Vanderscoff:** So we've been discussing the role of artistic director and different artistic directors. Before we go any further into that, I'd like to ask you about

what your routine was, what your responsibilities were, as founding artistic director of the program, to give us some more detail on this.

**Stanley:** Well, in the beginning we had to do so many jobs. I did an awful lot of PR and came up with the idea of having Shakespeare arrive in [Jack] O'Neill's wonderful yacht.<sup>17</sup> He was rowed ashore at the Beach Boardwalk, and the press was lined up, and the waves threw him into the water so he came out a shivering Shakespeare. He was a young student but he performed Shakespeare brilliantly, quipping jokes at the Boardwalk, and that was very exciting. The newspapers had wonderful shots of him falling into the waves. So that was a good start to the publicity. It was Karen Sinsheimer who persuaded O'Neill to loan his boat for the occasion, so that was a joint effort there.

The next year I had him riding on a horse to be met by the mayor at the post office. And a dedication to the festival ensued from the local council, not that any money came with that. It isn't the nature of America to support the arts by means of their public institutions, unlike Europe, where the arts are very highly supported and can exist and create a lot of new works.

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<sup>17</sup> See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Ocean Odysseys: Jack O'Neill, Dan Haifley, and the Monterey National Marine Sanctuary* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012), for O'Neill's environmental and oceanographic work in the Santa Cruz area. <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ocean-odysseys-jack-o%E2%80%99neill-dan-haifley-and-the-monterey-bay-national-marine-sanctuary>



One of the things that I was looking for was to train or set up so that Michael Edwards would take over from me, because he was a brilliant young director and full of good ideas. So he did take over, but I had to do a year more than—because I still taught a full load of teaching at the same time, and in fact I had to take a quarter off, which I did at my own expense, in order to sort out all that the artistic director has to do, which is find the cast and sort out actors and designers and composers and everything that goes towards making a production.

One of the great things about Michael Donald Edwards is that he's from Australia, and therefore inherently dislikes the British. (laughter) He wanted to introduce American musicals and at the same time got rid of the British Royal Shakespeare Company actors, I suppose, except for Paul Whitworth, who's now associated with the university. He and Paul have done, I think, almost thirty splendid productions together. It was a very special relationship of director and leading actor, so people who saw those productions got a very special quality, I think, coming out of those productions, which was very exciting.

**Vanderscoff:** So, speaking of your subsequent artistic directors, you talked about Danny Scheie as being provocative.

**Stanley:** Oh, yes. And a wonderful sense of today's music, which would comment on the play. He had no hesitation into interweaving scenes together,

which made for some very exciting exchanges. I think his *Cymbeline* was brilliant and his *Midsummer Night's Dream* had me in as Puck flying from the trees.<sup>18</sup> This was quite exciting, particularly when the six strong men who were pulling on the ropes to carry me across the heads of the audience towards the stage, and I got lower and lower and lower one time and had to crawl onto the stage from the ground. (laughs) So that was fun, that was fun.

**Vanderscoff:** So do you have any further comments on how the festival has changed or evolved under the guidance of subsequent artistic directors, from Michael Edwards up to the present?

**Stanley:** Well, each has a special flavor. Marco Barricelli came from ten years as a leading actor at Ashland, Oregon and a leading actor at ACT. He had done a lot of work on the educational side of ACT and brought in by his sheer reputation and obvious pleasure that people got in working with him, the quality of actors that normally we couldn't afford, but came because he was here. It's not something we can expect with the next six years. And also, he because he expects professional quality productions, we have overrun our budget quite severely. So there will have to be changes. But that's all part of fresh thinking, fresh growth. I mean, there can be a positive side to that.

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<sup>18</sup> A video of this production is (as of 2014) available in the McHenry Library media center.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you reflect on productions that were being put on during your tenure as artistic director, and productions that are being put on now under Marco Barricelli, how do you think things have stayed the same, or how do you think that they've changed or grown?

**Stanley:** Well, I think the sheer level of professionalism that Marco Barricelli has brought in extends to all the areas, in particular the sound. And what has happened, just this last year the outdoor stage has been rebuilt and now incorporates the redwood trees into the set. I don't know if you've seen it.

**Vanderscoff:** No, but I'm looking forward to it because all the plays are in the glen this summer.

**Stanley:** Yes, you can go to the glen and take a look and walk around. So the stage has been moved further back, which has given more space for the groundlings. (laughs) We're interrupted by a cat that wants to drink out of our water glasses. And a great fun it is.<sup>19</sup>

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) So speaking about changes in the festival.

**Stanley:** It needed to be rebuilt. The original structure on top of which a stage is created was supposed to last four years. It lasted eight years and had become

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<sup>19</sup> Audrey's cats would pay visits to us throughout our sessions, and can be heard occasionally on the audio.

dangerous. So it had to be rebuilt. But I think out of that 'had to be' has created an even finer and more splendid stage, which incorporates the glen in a way that only Danny Scheie's productions had. In his *Midsummer Night's Dream* we acted amongst the tree trunks too. So that was very good. It is lovely and much better for the actors, because they can have a little more space below. For coming off the set with great hordes of armies, instead of having to make a sharp right turn (laughs), they now have a little bit of space to contain them backstage.

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) So you talk about how some of the recent productions have cost quite a lot. During your tenure as artistic director, how did you find a balance between financial budget constraints and artistic aspirations, or artistic goals, in putting on a production?

**Stanley:** Well, in the early days we had to skimp on some things. And now I think, particularly this season, where the concentration is totally on the glen, audiences are going to see a wonderful standard of acting and production and artistic ideas carried out. And gradually, over the years, the lighting—you see, we didn't have lighting originally because the glen needed to be sorted out. And that has improved so that lighting now becomes part of a special magic of showing off the glen in some cases, or showing off the play. I think it gives a very special aura to the productions. I'll never forget watching a *Macbeth* with the fog creeping in (laughs) and it seemed so appropriate to the play. It was lovely.

And then a lovely production of *Titus Andronicus*, in which Lavinia's being taken into the woods and cruelly dealt with there. It was eerie and the fact that the trees were there made it even darker as a play, more ominous, because of the

reality of the trees. And then, just simply the whole glen itself, with the references to the sun and the moon. And there it is—you can have the sun in the afternoon matinees and you have the moon sometimes in the evening shows.

[cat meows and drinks water, both Vanderscoff and Stanley laugh]

### **Theater and Empathy:**

#### **Thoughts on Shakespearean Language and Performance**

**Vanderscoff:** So, continuing with the subject of artistic aspirations and the budget, you've directed productions of *Lear* and *Macbeth*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Waiting for Godot*. And of course we've spoken about *Macbeth*. But would you mind speaking in some detail as to how you approached any or all of these plays as a director?

**Stanley:** [pauses] Well, how many hours have you got? (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** As many as you like.

**Stanley:** No, you haven't. (laughter) Well, I'm a great believer in the language of Shakespeare, and I observe that so many other festivals or plays where Shakespeare plays are put on not only are tremendously cut, but the language is actually altered. There's something about the sound of Shakespeare that goes into you as an actor, that the actor then can convey in the way of speaking the text, that links up with the emotional center in every member of the audience. So it becomes a heightened experience that I think you only get with that language. Maybe in opera—there are moments in opera where the music combines with

the emotion and sometimes the language. That's absolutely tremendous. Well, Shakespeare has that same thing. And I think we're losing a lot in our lack of good use of language and our lack of enjoyment of words, that obviously they had in the Elizabethan age and the [King] James version of the Bible, for instance. Which has trained a great many people, and particularly the black population, who have an appreciation, I think, of the power of words and the sound of words and the rhythm of words, that I think we're in danger of losing entirely, so that language becomes very abbreviated with our little machines and toys that we play with, and just abolish language almost altogether. Language is the way in which the emotional parts of ourselves are expressed. And if we don't have language in which to invest it, I think our emotional lives are going to be very, very limited, and the creativity of things limited.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you think about language and the importance of listening and paying mind to the full body of language, how did you go about instilling that in these productions that you put on, like *Much Ado about Nothing*, or *King Lear*, or even *Waiting for Godot*?

**Stanley:** Well, one of the things that the actors really love when they come here to act—and I'm talking about equity actors—is the fact that our audiences really listen. They don't go there saying, "Entertain me." They go there for a perception of values of life, and of people, and of situations, and a recognition that other people have felt what they are feeling and going through today, but expressed in the most wonderful language. And so it's a treasure trove.

I persist with this, first of all because I think people have grown up with it and it has made a lot of difference, I think, if I understand them rightly, of their perception of people and of life. Shakespeare is extraordinary because here he is, presenting all kinds of situations that you might find or experience, and yet he doesn't say, "This is my perspective; this is what I think." He presents everybody's perspective that are participating in that particular situation. So there's an empathy that exists that I think we should all be trained in. And so, that's why I think Shakespeare is so very relevant to living our lives, and it encourages us to do that, and to take risks and to try things. I think these plays take us into places that perhaps we might not experience.

**Vanderscoff:** And, of course, even just looking at this list of plays that you've directed, you see *Much Ado about Nothing*, a comedy, and *Lear*, a tragedy. When you think about the lessons in empathy and in other things that can be drawn from Shakespeare, what do you think are the relative lessons that can be drawn from a tragedy like *Lear* and a comedy like *Much Ado*?

**Stanley:** Well, one of the most moving moments in *Lear* is when the mad Lear meets the blind Gloucester and they exchange thoughts about life: the perspective of age, and of battering, and still the spirit comes through. I think that should encourage everybody to fight through situations that they may be going through and coming out the other end.

**Vanderscoff:** Okay. And then what about *Much Ado about Nothing*, a comedy?

**Stanley:** Well, there it shows how your whole attitude towards life can be changed around in a moment. (laughs) I mean, here's Benedick saying, "I'm not going to marry," (laughs) and then falls in love and completely contradicts himself. And then is asked by the woman he's in love with, Beatrice, to kill one of his best friends, or challenge him to a duel. He suddenly has to sort of grow up. I think the growing up element that he introduces in his young characters, and then the observation that the older characters make about life is so very tender and perceptive. It opens our eyes. He's not just writing for a teenage audience. He's writing for an audience of all ages.

**Vanderscoff:** Now, the festival has featured other playwrights besides Shakespeare. Would you mind speaking about directing *Waiting for Godot* and what the relevance authors besides Shakespeare have had in Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and in terms of these lessons of empathy that you've been discussing?

**Stanley:** Well, Samuel Beckett is probably the greatest playwright coming out of the twentieth century. *Waiting for Godot* is a kind of metaphor for existence, relationships between couples of whatever gender, and just attitudes towards life. But it is so poetic. Its silences, its profundity, with the simplest, in a way, of language, but language shorn so it is totally poetic, and shows that plays can be written that make us think more deeply about relationships and existence and how to handle ourselves.

**Vanderscoff:** And some of these other plays that we've been discussing, like *King Lear* and *Macbeth* you directed while you were the artistic director. Did your



experience of directing change when you were working, as you were with *Waiting for Godot*, under a different artistic director?

**Stanley:** No, because artistic directors appoint directors and try to help them with their vision of the play. So I think there is freedom for an artistic director to encourage individual directors to fulfill their vision.

### **Staging, Acting, and Education in Shakespeare Santa Cruz**

**Vanderscoff:** I looked at a *San Francisco Chronicle* article published in 1995 and it refers to Shakespeare Santa Cruz as having a history of "applying new directorial concepts." Perhaps in relation to this, it seems to be that the festival is known for staging modern interpretations of Shakespeare's plays. What are your thoughts on those assertions, the idea that Shakespeare Santa Cruz had modern interpretations of Shakespeare?

**Stanley:** Well, that relates to particular directors such as Danny Scheie, who is a fairly unique and highly talented artistic person, with his own strong ideas and gender-related—and these were put forward in his productions. For instance, in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* he had Titania and Oberon exchange roles, in a way.

**Vanderscoff:** I'd like to ask, in line with this line of questioning about modern interpretations of Shakespeare, how does staging Shakespeare in period, say circa 1600 clothing, or staging Shakespeare in more modernistic clothing impact the play and the audience's relationship with it?

**Stanley:** Well, a certain period will reveal different things about a play, and if it's set in nineteenth century clothing, or in the 1920s, it sets off a different background, a different world, and it gives you a different perspective of the same play. This is why it is possible to go back and see the same play but a totally different production and get a completely different perspective on what the production reveals about life today, coming against that different background of setting, and so on. And in Shakespeare's day and age, of course, the clothing was all modern. And setting—we have one drawing in which aspects of togas and historical things are intermixed into Elizabethan quite cheerfully.

I think we have been very lucky in having B. Modern do the costume designs of a lot of our Shakespeares, because she has a particular flair of being able to accommodate opposite ideas of periods. So everything flows. It doesn't just stick out. She is able to create a harmony amongst her designs, which very few, I think, costume designers achieve. So we have a particular local talent that has been, in one sense, given a lot of freedom by designing for Shakespeare Santa Cruz. You'll see her designs this summer are exquisite, absolutely exquisite. And again, it costs a lot of money to carry out some of these things. So come and see the plays this year. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** So you're discussing how different costumings and different stagings of plays can transform or make you see the play in different lights. Can you think of any examples in your own experience, where you've seen two

different productions of a play perhaps set in different eras that have, in their own way, changed your sense of the play as a whole or your relationship to it?

**Stanley:** Well, there's a *Richard III* made into a film set amongst derelict factories and chimneys, a modern piece that says the megalomania of people who use power to express themselves at the expense of other people's lives, and dictatorships that still go on and on and on—but can be shown as relating very much to our own period, when set in our own period settings and costumes. And so the lesson comes home even more sharply as a result of that.

**Vanderscoff:** So speaking more particularly about the staging of the plays at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, would you mind speaking to the blend of professional equity actors and student actors that the program has had, and how you've found a balance between these two different sources of actors, and how that's impacted the productions.

**Stanley:** One of the great things about the festival is that it's evolved. We were asked very early on by local schoolteachers to bring some scenes into the schools during the school year of the plays we were doing. And this turned into our 45-minute version of a complete play, over the years, and I think it's highly popular. It's called Shakespeare to Go and that is one aspect of this. These are performed entirely by students here. They are responsible for taking a version of the play into about forty different venues. They become a separate little company and learn the exigencies and the problems of facing traveling and putting up and doing stuff in different spaces. It's a magnificent background.

But the whole balance of equity actors and non-equity actors and students—because there are three groups. And Marco [Barricelli] was talking about it just the other night at the Book Café in Capitola, that he would love to be able to have more professional actors because they bring years of experience and training. Then his next group are younger professionals who are on their way up the ladder and capable of presenting well, but also of learning a great deal from the generally older equity people.

Then the student interns bring a vitality of energy. And it has been evolved over the years with various artistic directors, and particularly well brought out by Marco, that the students produce their own play. And that's given two performances, public performances in the glen, on whatever set is available. They work incredibly hard because they are in two productions doing minor roles; they understudy major roles and they have to be prepared to come on with that; and then they have their own production. So you can imagine, they work from 9:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night and they learn an incredible amount. And then when all that energy is released in their own productions, they respond to it brilliantly. And they have a very special audience that cheer them on. It is one of the very great positive contributions to the training of younger actors, I think, that the festival embarks on. Because most places have interns, but I don't know the history to know if they have their own production in the way that ours do. This year they're doing a version, a very exciting, new version of Fielding's novel, *Tom Jones*. I watched a bit of the first rehearsal of that, and it's going to be as lively as all of them are, and as frenetic and exciting—and witty this one is, very witty. The director, Patty Gallagher, certainly knows how

to get the best out of students and direct them. She has a great sense of movement and awareness of the clown and other aspects of theater. I think it's brilliant.

**Vanderscoff:** So, going a little further with the opportunities with the opportunities that these student interns have, would you mind speaking in greater detail about how Shakespeare Santa Cruz has impacted theater education and theater opportunities for UCSC students?

**Stanley:** Well, I know that some of the students in theater arts have come here in theater arts because the festival exists and they have to be interns and work on it. And the theater arts department has Shakespeare To Go as one of its classes. And I think when they do the performance, the students then get paid for performance. But I think it's certainly had a very positive effect on the quality of students coming into the theater program here.

### **Scholarship and Selection of Plays in Shakespeare Santa Cruz**

**Vanderscoff:** And I'd like to ask a question about the sort of plays that have been picked, in the sense of, has the program ever avoided a particular Shakespeare play for a particular reason? Has there ever been a sense that there are some Shakespeare plays that won't be put on, or shouldn't be put on, or anything like that?

**Stanley:** There are some plays. For instance, *Antony and Cleopatra* is a vast play and a very expensive one to put on. So it's only been done once, as part of the Roman system. And that's when we had four plays, I think. *Titus Andronicus* was

that year, and *Julius Caesar*, and then *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *The Comedy of Errors*. A brilliant season. A Roman season with special things.

One of the things that I am very disappointed in, but that may change because of new faculty brought in, is the lack of connection between the academic and the performance. Michael Warren bridges that for the theater company. But we've had to abandon [it], because of costs, which is ridiculous, A Weekend with Shakespeare, where we brought in scholars sometimes to talk about the plays and productions. I'm very disappointed that more hasn't been done. That was funded by the humanities, who no longer fund anything for us. I would hope that in the future something could be done about that, because I think an examination of the plays by outside people can be very jolting, interesting and lively. There's enough of the community—because we have the Noon at Nick, where we take down the director and the cast to answer questions for the general public.<sup>20</sup> Those have been very exciting events. That's good because it goes downtown and is in the town setting. And I think the interaction of town and university is only to be applauded.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you think about the role that visiting scholars had with this Weekend with Shakespeare program, can you recall any ways in which

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<sup>20</sup> In reference to an event at the Nickelodeon movie theater.

scholarship, or scholarly talks, or a scholarly book has impacted you as a director, or in acting?

**Stanley:** Well, yes. C.L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedies* was one of the few academic scholarly books that set out ideas. I took some of the ideas from there and put them into my productions at Ashland. From his book and his work I incorporated into my production at Ashland this business of the dances, the country dances not being sort of pretty little things, but quite dangerous.

**Vanderscoff:** This was in your *Winter's Tale* at Ashland?

**Stanley:** Yes. There's a certain element of that. And the seasonal things had their impact in my *As You Like It* there as well. I had the god descending from above at Ashland, because I was able to do that.

But I think that one could do that here because of the freedom that the space, the glen space, gives to directors, of using different entrances—coming from behind the audience, at the side of the audience, as well as in front of the audience. And the easy relationship between actors on the stage and audience members. And with the new theater space that we have, there are more spaces for the groundlings. Their space has been dwindling. And I think it keeps slightly informal the audience. Instead of being a dressed-up audience, it is an audience that's gathered there to enjoy themselves with the play. And that's a whole different element.

**Vanderscoff:** And as a closing question for our session today, following through on what we were discussing a few minutes ago, beyond *Antony and Cleopatra*,

have there been any plays that the festival has generally avoided doing, due to scope or any other reason? And similarly, have there been productions that have been done several times, for some other reason? Would you mind speaking to that?

**Stanley:** Well, the comedies are heavily drawn upon, because people do enjoy coming to comedies more than anything else. And so they get used up, as you might say. And there are some plays, such as *Merchant of Venice*—when I talked to Patrick Stewart, who wanted to come here and direct that for us, I realized that I would have to do a lot of preliminary work with the local audience over this. We had meetings and Patrick himself came and talked about Shylock the alien, before he got into the series. He got into the series [*Star Trek: The Next Generation*] almost immediately after doing that. It was his sense of who Shylock was and what he represented being so much bigger than a more local issue. I did an experiment as a teacher here of a class in which we changed all the references to Jews and the names to other names. And suddenly it became one silly little religious group squabbling with another silly little religious group, and very funny.<sup>21</sup> It became partly satirical, but much more just simply comic. And because of Shylock's depth of language, it's very difficult to portray that, because it speaks so feelingly. And because of that, I feel it's a play that should be done.

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<sup>21</sup> See Nanci Rosenberg, "Merchant Poses Problems for Jews in Santa Cruz," *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California* [San Francisco] 27 May 1994:35.



But I also did not realize that Santa Cruz wasn't as free from prejudice as I had thought it was. Indeed, they could not put these signs up without them being attacked. I was appalled to discover the amount of prejudice that still existed in this area.

**Vanderscoff:** The signs for—

**Stanley:** I discovered, for instance, that the Jewish community could not put out the Star of David but that it was attacked during the night and destroyed. I hadn't realized the effect that the name of Shylock had. I did this experiment with a class on campus where we altered all the names, 'Uplock' or something for Shylock, which revealed that it could be a totally comic play about two different sects of people, but that so much association comes with the name Shylock. It is used in schools, I believe, had been and still is, no doubt. And there's much more prejudice around than we like to think. So there's all the more reason, really, why these plays should be done, so that the stuff can be brought out into the open and discussed, which is what I feel should happen. Part of the function of theater is to allow such things to happen and encourage them to happen, the discussion element.

**Vanderscoff:** So when you talk about a play that has this controversial element, like the character Shylock of the *Merchant of Venice*, how does one go about putting on a play and starting a discussion around it that makes it somehow educational or informative working through these issues, rather than just putting them up on the stage in an unquestioning way?

**Stanley:** Well, I began doing it by visiting groups of people and suggesting that discussions could happen and making the general public aware of what was going on, because it hadn't been expressed in the newspapers at all. The times have changed since the eighties, to a large extent, but there's still an awful lot of prejudice that exists and needs to be aired so it can be dealt with. I think this is a function that theater can perhaps help promote in a healthy community. So there's a function beyond just the staging of the plays that can be done.

**Vanderscoff:** And just to clarify, has *Merchant* ever been put on by Shakespeare Santa Cruz?

**Stanley:** Oh yes. Danny Scheie did it. Danny Scheie did a production and we had also a group coming out, really, of the humanities, an organized research group that discussed the play with the director, who was Danny Scheie. And Danny Scheie said, "I don't know why the fifth act is there." And I got very indignant (laughs) and said, "What do you mean? It's all the business of the rings, the rings, the circle! And the plight of women." I was very indignant, but that's a good thing that Danny Scheie rustles one's feathers. So consequently, he then made the discovery that the women were as ostracized as other people. They had less— And so, he then portrayed women as being stronger. So it added an element to his production. But that came out of discussion, which is what I think we should be having at the university. But nobody's been prepared to take it on. I did it for quite a few years and set up the organized research unit. But it takes work.

**Vanderscoff:** So what we've been discussing about in terms of bringing out the educational aspect of a play and the role that discussion and understanding of scholarly debate, the role that that can play in that. Would you mind talking about that moment right now in Santa Cruz in Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and your hopes going forward for that more scholarly, educational dimension to return?

**Stanley:** Well, when I arrived on campus we had two or three people who were teaching Shakespeare. Michael Warren was one. Harry Berger was another.<sup>22</sup> And C.L. Barber became a third. But after Michael's retirement there was nobody officially teaching Shakespeare. They made appointments, temporary appointments of people to teach some Shakespeare. But now there's been an appointment and that appointment person is making plans to have a discussion group going. And that cheers me a great deal and I'm very hopeful that there will be a new re-creation. So out of the ashes comes the phoenix. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** Wonderful. Well, I think this would be a good point to leave off for right now. Thank you, as always, for talking with me. And we'll pick up the thread next time.

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<sup>22</sup> See Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *The Critical World of Harry Berger, Jr.: An Oral History*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2015). <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/berger> Berger continues to write on Shakespeare (most recently on *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*).

### **The Profile of Shakespeare Santa Cruz Locally, Nationally, and Personally**

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Friday, July 19<sup>th</sup> [2013]. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Audrey Stanley for her oral history project. As usual, we are at her residence on the UCSC campus. Continuing with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, I'd like to ask you what sort of a role do you think the festival has played in regards to town-gown relations?

**Stanley:** Well, I think it's one of the best, in that it really brings a lot of the people onto the campus. The Long Marine Lab has probably an even more active role, but it's right on the coast and not on the campus itself. And so, this is the one thing that really brings a lot of people to explore the campus and enjoy what it has to offer.

**Vanderscoff:** And you've spoken about this a little bit, but what role have people from the Santa Cruz area, Santa Cruz citizens, as opposed to people affiliated with the university or actors coming from outside, what sort of a role have they played in the festival?

**Stanley:** Well, they've played an absolutely vital role of being the board of directors. It is the townspeople who filled the board and helped to raise the money to help pay for the festival. Unfortunately, Shakespeare has large casts. It doesn't come cheaply, and the whole business of putting theater on means you have a long rehearsal process. People have to be housed for a long time. It's not like any other art form. Other art forms can be done quite quickly, relatively quickly, like music. People come for the Cabrillo Music Festival. They arrive two

or three days before the concert and they have a couple of rehearsals and then perform. People can house them much more easily, than for eight or nine weeks at a time when the town is filled with visitors anyway.

And this is the only time that we normally have use of the theater. This year we're not using the indoor theater. We're only using the outdoor, for a very special reason, which is a brand-new, wonderful space is now incorporating the trees into the set in the glen. So it has this lovely sense of the whole glen, and the stage is part of the glen instead of being imposed on it. We're really looking forward to seeing the audience, much more space for the groundlings. They've been a little squashed out in more recent years and we're hoping that this brings back a lot of the audience.

**Vanderscoff:** So are actors with Shakespeare Santa Cruz usually housed with people in the community, or are they in hotels or things like that, or how does that work?

**Stanley:** People often have little granny units or guesthouses. We have somebody full time looking for housing for them. It's been built up. People have housed the actors year after year after year. But it's not easy—a very large company of people. Because it's also designers, directors, costume people, props people, experts in stage fighting, music people. There are large numbers. We are a company of almost 150, if you count every single person working towards putting these plays on.

**Vanderscoff:** And how do you characterize the profile of Shakespeare Santa Cruz, I guess in a wider lens, in terms of the regional, national theater scene?

**Stanley:** Well, it is very highly esteemed, I know, in North America, in that when the artistic director goes and interviews actors they know about it. It has a high reputation, partly because the audiences are so receptive and intelligent and supportive. It makes a special pleasure for performers to come and do that here.

The current artistic director, Marco Barricelli, reckons it's one of the most beautiful sites in North America to perform Shakespeare. Certainly it's both intimate and vast, because the trees are so tall and the glen appears to go on for a long stretch, which it does, but at the same time, the audience itself is a unit that is concentrated and presents a splendid audience for the actors.

**Vanderscoff:** So, when it comes to thinking about Shakespeare Santa Cruz's reputation more broadly, outside of the Santa Cruz community, what do you think characterizes it in terms of its reputation for productions or professionalism, or anything in that vein?

**Stanley:** It is a professional theater company, and under Marco Barricelli certainly the number of equity actors has increased, which has improved very much the overall performance of the plays. It had already achieved mention amongst the top ten most influential Shakespeare festivals in the country. And I cannot but think Marco Barricelli has brought in all his own achievements in the theater and managed to persuade friends to come here, even though the pay is absolutely at the lowest level of the equity rates. They come out of respect for

Marco and because they want to do good work in a very special place. And they know they get that here.

**Vanderscoff:** And what has Shakespeare Santa Cruz meant for you personally? How has it impacted you or challenged you as a teacher and as a lover of theater?

**Stanley:** Well, when I was inveigled, in a way, take this on I knew that I was giving up what I was beginning to do, which is [directing] Shakespeare in other festivals and around the country. So I gave a great sigh, because I knew what a task it would be, and it has been a huge task. But it's been, probably, one of the most rewarding things one could think of doing, because it's been going for thirty-two years. As somebody who was age thirty said, "I've been brought up with Shakespeare Santa Cruz." (laughs) It has given, I think, for local people a sense of something that is at their doorstep, that is of great quality, and is getting exceedingly rarer these days, which is a real looking at the text beyond just superficial entertainment and trying to find out with somebody like Michael Warren as textual consultant and also dramaturg, looking at the plays at a depth that doesn't always happen because they get so changed and altered, and the difficult parts cut out.

In the past, at any rate, the plays have been done much more faithfully to the text than is generally performed these days. I mean, I've heard that a lot of companies actually change the words into the modern equivalent. We've changed a few words when the sound of the modern word is almost the same as the past. But it's appalling to me to think that Shakespeare has to be translated. We lose a lot

of our music of the English language if the plays aren't part of the consciousness, I think, of people. Whenever anything serious happens, there are always quotations coming from Shakespeare. You'll notice the politicians are very, very apt to use this, because they know that here's something that people, because there are so many Shakespeare festivals, to some extent have in common. During the Second World War, "We few, we happy few," which comes from *Henry V*, resonated for the British. It was part of steeling the backbone for an invasion.

**Vanderscoff:** And in what ways have you been involved with Shakespeare Santa Cruz since first stepping down as artistic director, and then directing *Waiting for Godot* in '91?

**Stanley:** And also *Much Ado about Nothing*, and acting in plays such as *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear* and *Richard II*. Well, I handed the festival over to Michael Donald Edwards. He'd been directing for the festival. And also, at the same time, he'd been spending time in New York with the opera, assisting there. He was ready to take over and so he did. I said that an artistic director should do three years, renewable for a second three years, and then either take a leave or just disappear. So that there would always be fresh ideas, fresh blood, new blood, new energy coming in. Because my observation of some festivals, is that the original artistic director hung on beyond his or her capacity to find fresh blood and fresh ideas. And some festivals have a group of actors that they're kind of committed to, instead of having free choice to choose according to the plays that are being put on.



**Vanderscoff:** And when you reflect more recently, within the last couple of years, I know that in between these sessions you've been attending festivals. So what sort of engagement do you have with the festival today?

**Stanley:** Oh, I'm very lucky in that I attend rehearsals and I bring a spirit of cheer and joy, I hope, (laughs) to everybody. Actors like to have audience, because there's a sense of playing to somebody, and if that's a smiling person who really supports them and understands their work, it's a little added gift. It's a very small one. But it enables me to feel very much part of each season as it happens.

I also have addressed several groups, like the Friday Shakespeare Club and another Shakespeare organization. I give those kind of talks or activities, because I make them sometimes do scenes, which puts them much more securely in the picture of performance and not just viewers.

I also, to some extent, represent a continuum, in that I know the people who worked at the start of the festival, who still are coming to the performances. And as new people come in to be staff, or be concerned with the festival, they don't have that background; they don't have that historic awareness of some of the people. Generally the person like Ann Gibb, who's concerned with raising money for the festival, is pretty sharp on all the current people who are doing this, but doesn't necessarily have maybe such good records of people in the past who've done that. So sometimes I can perform a function there.

### **Hopes Going Forward: The Financial Hardships of the Festival**

**Vanderscoff:** We've discussed this to some degree already, but would you mind speaking in greater detail about the budget ebb and flow of the festival?

**Stanley:** Well, the festival—unfortunately the cost of tickets doesn't cover the cost of the expenses. In the past, we've had support from the university to help this. And they've taken also the losses, which amount to quite a lot over the thirty-two years, as you can imagine. But they don't have the money to do that anymore, so that we really have to try and raise more money in order to get the festival going, or make somewhat hefty changes. Some have gone into effect this year because we're not using the indoor theater, but just the outdoor, the brand-new theater.

This year we are just doing the two Shakespeare plays plus the intern production, but all outside in the glen, which is lovely. But one of the aims of the festival from the start had been to introduce other plays, and in particular plays by living playwrights, some of which would be first-time performances, to encourage living playwrights, not just rehashing, in a way, past playwrights. I think the festival should form that function, and the best way to do is in the indoor stage, in many ways. I hope that that will happen again. We'll see how it goes this year with just the Shakespeare plays outside, because we then don't have to pay for the theater inside. A lot of people assume that the university allows us to perform these plays freely but we do pay for rental of rehearsal and performance space.

**Vanderscoff:** So you've mentioned how ticket prices don't quite cover the expenses. What sort of measures can be taken to make up that distance? You've talked about some of the debt being taken on.

**Stanley:** Well, again, people often come to the rescue of certain areas of the campus, and I think maybe there's somebody out there who perhaps would do this for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, but I don't know how far that appeal has really got out. I know the [UCSC] Farm and Garden have just recently had a wonderful backing by a marvelous couple who thoroughly support that organization, which I do too. I think it's a great one. So there are people who do have money, who might be persuaded to do this. Again, such people tend to be very quiet. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** And with all of that said, what are your hopes for the festival, going forward?<sup>23</sup>

**Stanley:** Well, it's always touch and go. It has been touch and go from the start. People don't realize how close to being closed we *have* been. There will have to be changes, because we've got to conform to our budget. We've conformed to

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<sup>23</sup> On August 26, 2013, within a month of this session, UCSC abruptly closed Shakespeare Santa Cruz, citing long-term financial issues. After a successful public and private fundraising campaign, the festival was reinvented independently from the university as Santa Cruz Shakespeare. The 2014 and 2015 seasons were held in the Glen at UCSC. In 2016 Santa Cruz Shakespeare lost the use of the Glen at UCSC and built a new site at a grove in DeLaveaga Park in Santa Cruz. Audrey Stanley serves on the board of directors. See: <https://www.santacruzshakespeare.org/s>

our budget but the ticket sales haven't covered the rest of it. So the summer is particularly lively, with the Cabrillo Music Festival, and Cabrillo [College] Stage, who do the musicals. These are great events and make Santa Cruz sort of a mecca, really, for the arts in the summer. But it also cuts across the audiences. Cabrillo Music Festival last year had their fiftieth year celebration, so I think they had three weeks, which was much longer than they normally have. I think that took away quite a lot of our audience, in actual fact, last year.

We have also this year appointed a new managing director who has very interesting and good ideas and comes in from having been working at UC San Diego and the playhouse there. So an interesting balance of background, awareness, both of the UC system and of the difficulty of a live theater company working within a university structure.

**Vanderscoff:** And as a way of taking us a little bit further into the current moment in Shakespeare Santa Cruz, could you name something that you're looking forward to this summer about one of the productions, some aspect of the staging, or a particular feature of one of the plays that you've been sitting in rehearsal for?

**Stanley:** *The Taming of the Shrew*, I think, has an interesting setting. It's being set in the northwest part of Spain, Galicia. Galicia contained the Celts, who pushed into the mountainous western-northwestern regions, Ireland, and Scotland, and Wales, and Brittany, and the northwest of Spain. I hadn't realized how much of that civilization is still current, in both the music and the dances and the costumes, too. So it's being set there and you may see a kilt or two. (laughs) But

it's being set in period, because the nature of the play, which for feminists can be a difficult play to take—but if it's seen within a period which *was* very male chauvinistic, then the understanding of the play can come through. And I think the director is taking it as a real love story, and that isn't often done. It's done as a sort of fight between two people. (laughs) I'm looking forward to seeing that.

And in *Henry V*—of course it's great to have after *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Henry IV, Part 2*. It's seldom done, but brilliantly done last year. And now *Henry V*, with some of the same actors, such as Prince Hal becoming King Henry and some of the actors the audience would have seen in the other two plays reforming themselves into other roles. I look forward to that. It's a fascinating play, because with the chorus being spoken by Marco Barricelli, who speaks the verse of course brilliantly and fills the stage wonderfully, evoking what the chorus has to evoke for an audience. So it should be extra special, I think. And also, just as a minor point, his wife, Beatrice Basso is playing Princess Catherine. So there's a Kate in both plays. And that I find fascinating. One wonders who Shakespeare knew who was called Kate? (laughs) Because he didn't call his children Kate.

**Vanderscoff:** And is there anything else that you'd like to say about Shakespeare Santa Cruz, for anytime in its history or the current moment, what it's meant for you?

**Stanley:** Well, I think the way the intern program has developed, with the various artistic directors, particularly Marco Barricelli recently following in Paul Whitworth's footsteps, but that sense of having their own play and performing in that, is something that interns normally don't have. I think the intern program,

having to understudy the leading roles in the other plays, being part of watching that and doing that and being trained in that—because they might have to, and have, had to take over at a moment's notice—is one of the best educations that young student actors could have in introduction to the professional theater world. And that they're given here. Unfortunately, we aren't able to pay them as most others, but we do offer extra incentives that some of them are wise enough to take up.

**Vanderscoff:** What do you mean by that, by incentives? What sort of opportunities do you think exist for interns?

**Stanley:** Well, that they have their own production, that they have their own audience. They are doing *Noon at the Nick*—at the Nickelodeon Theater, the cinema downtown, we have each cast and director come and answer questions of the general public. And the level of discussion and the ideas and enthusiasm that comes from those are part of the town and gown mix that's very special. And they're completely free. We used to have a *Weekend with Shakespeare* and I'm very sad indeed that that has been dropped. It used to be funded from the humanities. And the humanities now do nothing whatsoever for Shakespeare Santa Cruz. And it's a sad loss, because I thought *Weekend with Shakespeare*—people have very much regretted that it doesn't happen because some people are brought in, sometimes from outside, to discuss the plays and give a different perspective, fresh thought, and also to meet with each other. And the community of people with that kind of extra delight in both the scholarly and artistic

production of the plays was, I think, a tremendous gift. I'm very, very sad that that's had to be let go by. We just haven't been able to afford that. It's ridiculous.

**Vanderscoff:** I have a few questions about theater performance and plays, I guess a bit more broadly, but before we leave Shakespeare Santa Cruz behind for the time being, is there anything else you'd like to say in closing for this segment?

**Stanley:** Well, some of the plays have such large casts and vast arenas—to some extent *Antony and Cleopatra*, which we have done. We did that in the Roman season. And that was very successful. [Classics professor] Mary Kay Gamel was in part responsible for that, with Michael Warren. I think that was a very interesting season, but we did, of course, four Shakespeares. It would be marvelous to have another such thing, perhaps the Greek element. (laughs) And Marco has, in one sense, tried to resuscitate that with the playing of the *Henriad*. He didn't do *Richard II*, which starts everything off. But he did the three *Henry* plays. The plays we haven't tackled, such as *Henry VI*, would need possibly a more secure audience base before we could do those, unless we got special funding for putting those on.

**Vanderscoff:** You're concerned that a play like *Henry VI* would have less of an audience or less of an appeal, in some way, you think?

**Stanley:** Not *Henry V*, necessarily. But the *VI*, yes, certainly. They're the early plays and they're not so well known. They represent greater difficulties in trying to present them, I think, which generally costs money. (laughs)

## Thoughts on Playwriting

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) Like I said a few questions ago, I'd like to shift gears into talking a little bit about your career in greater detail and some more general thoughts about acting and playwriting. For example, I know that in 2005 your play, *Call Me Vincent*, received an award in the New Works of Playwriting merit contest. Would you mind speaking about your playwriting and this play and where it stands now?

**Stanley:** Well, I got the idea to do a play on Van Gogh (laughs) after one of the exhibitions, probably in 1984. But when I retired, one of the things I wanted to do was to get back to playwriting. I had tried writing plays; unfortunately, the Suez Canal debacle happened and money halved in value in England, so I was living off my savings trying to write. And that was the end of that and I had to get a job, which I did, which was so full time I put aside the playwriting.

One of the things in retiring, I thought I could get back to playwriting and I found it fascinating because I suddenly realized that by doing that and learning what works, what doesn't work, I began listening to Shakespeare's plays entirely differently. I had been well aware that as an actor you work off of a certain brain set, and as a director you work off an entirely different brain set. Now as a budding playwright, I was looking at the plays from yet a third aspect. So that has been a delight, to discover these different worlds that exist within examining one particular playwright. That has been really very exciting for me.



And one thing that was very happy for me was that as I wrote this trilogy of plays on Van Gogh and Gauguin, they were stage read, which meant quite a bit to me, and I was able to get audience reaction, some of which was very surprising to me. One scene is when Gauguin is in exile in these islands with three other marine sailors. And you can imagine their language is probably fairly spicy. So I put in a few spicy comments. And at the end when I asked the audience for any comments, somebody said they objected to the language. So I said, "How many of you found that difficult?" And over half the audience raised their hands. I was so surprised because I had thought somehow that Santa Cruz was sort of readier to accept that change that has happened very strongly in radio, and films, and in plays like David Mamet. Notably he begins one play with, "Fuck it. Fuck it. Fuck it!" (laughter)

I was very surprised at the reaction of the audience. But it was an older audience that were there, giving me feedback, which I was very pleased to get, including this reaction. I hadn't expected it of Santa Cruz, that I always had thought was fairly enlightened and with current mores that go on across the country and across the world, to some extent. So that was really an amazing moment for me.

**Vanderscoff:** Hmm. And since 2005, since around then, have you continued writing?

**Stanley:** No, I reached—you know, I've been revising and cutting. I had highly researched this, and I had too much research in the plays. After all, it's not a lecture. (laughs) I've learned a lot and I'm very grateful for that experience. And

as I say, I look at Shakespeare's plays in a totally different way, as a result. And that's exciting.

**Vanderscoff:** So asking one quick follow-up question on that, how do you think—having written plays, how exactly does that change your relationship, if you're directing a play or acting in a play, when it comes to thinking about that text and that playwright?

**Stanley:** No, it doesn't affect that because each has their own mindset and approach to the plays. I remember when I was acting Puck, Danny Scheie was a bit anxious casting me. He said, "You won't start directing, will you?" (laughs) I said, "No! I'm an actor in this play, and rather thankful just to be an actor in one role, not having to have fifty eyes all over the place and fifty ears all over the place at the same time, but just to sink myself into one small portrayal." It's a relief, in a way, to be an actor because the responsibility is somebody else's.

### **"Everybody Breathes Together":**

#### **Thoughts on Directing and Excellence in Theater**

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) Well, we've been talking about the writing mindset and I'd like to ask some questions about the directing mindset. And I have a question with a little bit of an introduction here. I listened to an audio recording of a talk

you gave in the seventies called "The Whirligig of Time," at Stevenson [College] where you talk about the idea that, "Directors have to be profane as well as sacred."<sup>24</sup> And I was speaking with Michael Edwards on the phone just yesterday and he talked about working with you and working with Shakespeare Santa Cruz, and how he learned the difference between respect and reverence for a text. Would you mind talking about these statements, the idea that as a director you must be profane as well sacred, and perhaps also commenting in that on the difference between respect and reverence for a play?

**Stanley:** Yes, well I think I came from the area of reverence for a play, in that I felt every play should be done complete and uncut and that directors should work harder at those scenes that they find difficult to include, and therefore they cut them. But, over the years, watching different directors work at Shakespeare Santa Cruz, I can see that the work they're doing cutting helps the flow of the play, the main trend of the play. But I worry because sometimes they will cut out, for instance, scenes where it's the lower class that are able to make comments on the other classes. And Shakespeare nearly always has some reference, some base in which he makes those references. And so you see not just one class represented, but all the classes. And a wider view even than that, because it was the Renaissance period and exploration and excitement was in the

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<sup>24</sup> Audio of this talk, as of 2014, is available for listening at the Special Collections of McHenry Library.

air. That's all caught up in the plays and conveyed by the plays. That's why I think it would be a great sin if we lost that part of our heritage coming from the English spoken language. And just simply the invention, or the local words that he uses in the plays are so powerful, such as last year in *Twelfth Night*, Sir Toby Belch says to Malvolio at some point, [affects British working class accent] "Sneck up. Sneck up." And just you know, when you say that it's much more powerful than "Shut up," (laughs) which is, in effect, what it means. Sneck meaning a latch or a lock of some kind. And still used in the northern part of England.

And then, this year there's a lovely phrase, one of the followers of Falstaff: "Shog off." "Get out," whatever. (laughs) "Shog off." There are so many uses of words that lift the spirit. And the blank verse is such a tool for an actor because you get into the magic of it. It helps remember all those lines and it goes right inside the body. What an actor can convey to an audience is that. You get to a point, when if the acting is right, the text is right, and the audience is right, everybody breathes together. It's a magical moment, and it's something that only live theater can do. I think probably at the highest moments in opera, when music and story and a peak timing must produce a similar effect. But because the music is so loud, you don't get to feel that breathing with the actors, of breathing with the moment as it happens.

It's part of living, that as we get more and more isolated with our tools and our things that we speak to each other in, but without using the vocal voice, we might become derelict entirely of being able to speak. (laughs) But to speak from

the emotional center, to speak from the spiritual center, to speak from the intellectual center—all these are different centers in the body that Shakespeare addresses. And in order to act it and in order to be receptive to it, it enlarges your capacity to receive and to understand and to reach out. So this is what I think Shakespeare has to offer. No other playwright quite has that capacity. New plays are exciting because they will catch up something, the Pinter plays and the Beckett plays. Beckett, of course, is the nearest, possibly, in power to Shakespeare, because he's a poet. And Pinter likewise.

**Vanderscoff:** Can you think of any particular plays or particular scenes, either something you've been directing or acting in or been an audience for, where you felt that experience of everyone sort of falling into that cadence or coming together, breathing together in that way?

**Stanley:** Well, I remember here, Tony Church came back and played Lear again and I had bronchitis at the time and I was performing, so I was in bed most of the day, got up just to do my performance, and went back to bed again. But I remember one night as I came along towards my place to make an entrance, I heard Tony, and Tony had found just that special cadence. It was as if everything was new minted. It must have been the most rewarding performance for him. I never talked to him about it because of the bronchitis and stuff.

There are peak moments. I remember Alec Guinness playing *Richard II*, and suddenly he became all the arts in one person. He represented the beleaguered place the arts have in society. He represented them as the king who was sensitive to this. That's a performance that's lingered in my mind for a long time.

### **Reflections on Gender Bias and Theatrical Career**

**Vanderscoff:** Today is Thursday, August 1, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with Audrey Stanley for part six of her oral history project. I'd like to start today and ask a question about your career as a whole, by drawing on something you mentioned in our first session. You talked about how your university experience at Bristol was unique for the time, in that it was "fairly gender neutral." And the example you gave is its openness to female students in co-leading the student union. How did that gender dynamic, that openness that you found there as a female student, compare or conflict with the dynamic that you found in your different positions in theater and in education?

**Stanley:** Well, after I left Bristol University, I think I discovered the difficulty of getting a job when you have a drama degree, and the fact that men were much more favored in the job industry. I hadn't realized how much this was part of British culture until I came to America, where I found, particularly in California, a tremendous openness and a welcoming. And when I went back, I was a bit horrified with the plays that I saw that seemed to have such anger against women in the writings. That had never struck me before. It was only the observation that comes from being in a different country, a different mode of existence, and different mores and customs. For instance, getting a house here was not a heavy problem. One just had to have money (laughs), which I didn't have at the time. But just the ease with which that could be done, which is far more complicated, I expect, today. But I was lucky in the time that I came here.

And also the generosity of the university at Berkeley in giving me scholarships, so that, although I had no money, I could survive.

And I had been brought up by parents who said, "What is it you want to do?" rather than, "When do you want to get married?" (laughs) I hadn't realized what a different aspect of reality that was. As I say, during the war one didn't come across babies because there was a war on and all of the youngsters, the young men and women, were off and engaged in the war in some form or the other. So it never dawned on me (laughs) that I was expected to marry as a normal way of life. But to have something interesting that you believed in to do has operated in most of my life. And when I had that equal job offer of Stanford and UC Santa Cruz, we were about to begin setting up a program here. That appealed to me because we could start from scratch and avoid some of the problems that are inherent in some departments, which is a split between the more academic side and the practical side of theater.

**Vanderscoff:** And so, when you consider these situations that you discuss, either back in England or here, where did you think there were barriers set up to you, not only because of your theater degree, but because you were a woman—how did you work through and persevere and assert yourself through those situations?

**Stanley:** Well, the job situation was difficult. I tried desperately to get a job near London, which is where my sister and her husband were and friends were, but the jobs weren't there. The jobs were in colleges. So I set up a department of drama in a college of education in Nottinghamshire, and then moved from that

to one in Birmingham, which was more enterprising and a mixed college, and had more openness and availability of talent, really. Again, I went into a department that had been set up but I enlarged it and we did some interesting projects. I don't know if I talked to you about doing the Oedipus plays?

**Vanderscoff:** Yes.

**Stanley:** Yes, that's right. So we were able to do things like that, which was exciting. But the toll of all that, I ended up with sciatica, which was very, very painful. And they didn't seem to have any help, except to put me on codeine, which was a ridiculous drug. So I just was chucking everything up and then this job arrived of teaching or helping to set up a program of drama in Canada. I took that, even though six months of snow wasn't the best for a sciatica person. But there was a lot of sunshine too, which helped a bit. But seeing that wonderful notice that said "Six months of study of classical drama in Greece." I always kept going by having projects. And the project that took me over in England was this ancient Greek theater. I made a film and wanted to research that and they took me on at Berkeley. So I felt very supported in that respect, even though I had no money. (laughs) I couldn't work here because I was on a J-1 visa. But I could work in Canada, which I was able to do for a quarter, and raise money to make my film.

**Vanderscoff:** So as you were saying earlier, you mentioned that you found the climate here, in terms of housing and in terms of work, perhaps more receptive to you with your degree, as a woman coming out of England with this degree, than you had found in England. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the



change that you found here in that regard, or any similarities there might have been?

**Stanley:** I think it was very good that I ended up in California and not on the East Coast because I found East Coast people very influenced by Europe, unduly so, and mixed up about it. I always had projects and things to do and I guess Shakespeare Santa Cruz was something that came up, not of my instigation, but suggested by other people seeing the work that I did, both at Ashland and elsewhere, and thinking that, oh, it's easy (laughs) to set up a Shakespeare festival. But it isn't. It's very difficult. It's always a struggle and I feel very pleased with the work that's gone on. Each year, each artistic director—because I said over the festival that an artistic director should do three years renewable at a second three years, and then take a leave or go. This brings fresh blood, fresh ideas, new thoughts. It has the risk of people not knowing quite what's going to happen next. But Santa Cruz and California has always been a place that welcomes new ideas and new approaches and rather likes having that kind of change, I think. So I think it suits the climate of the town we live in and the area we live in very well.

### **"For the Arts, It's Killing": Thoughts on Teaching and Grading the Arts**

**Vanderscoff:** Thank you for those reflections. I'd like to focus a little bit on UCSC, as we come towards a conclusion. And first of all, just to ground us, when did you retire from UCSC?

**Stanley:** In 1991. The first VERIP [Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program] was instigated, which gave you five more years. I taught for twenty-two years. And the VERIP offered five more years of teaching [service credit]. I was going to go on to part-time teaching for seven years. And this came up. They gave me about a week to make up my mind. So I made up my mind to do that. And I'm glad, I did because part time for me never would be part time. It would be full time. So I was saved from my worst enemy: myself. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs) And since retirement—you've talked about your involvement in Shakespeare Santa Cruz—how have you been involved with UCSC since retirement? You mentioned to me off the record, for instance, that you taught at least one class just within the last several years. So, I'm curious about involvements of that nature?

**Stanley:** No, that was the Dickson [emeriti] award, which was quite recent. I wasn't asked to teach. And indeed I discovered so many things to do and discover. I attended classes, a philosophy class on campus and several other classes. And Tai Chi. And so many things to do that I don't know how I existed without all those things before. (laughs) It was a very joyous time, early retirement, because I had my health and I traveled a great deal, and took the opportunity, while I was healthy, to travel, including China and Europe and Fiji and New Zealand, Australia. Those were wonderful opportunities, before everything got so expensive.

The Dickson award allowed me to teach a class, any size and anything that I wanted. So I said that I wanted to teach an acting studio and to do it with six

men and six women. I interviewed I suppose about forty or fifty students, and selected those that I thought had talent, even though some of them were second year, third year, as well as fourth year and graduate students, which was a strange mixture.

They asked me when I was in the class, "Why did you choose us? Did you choose us because you thought we would get on well with each other?" And I said, "No, I chose you because you all had talent." (laughs) They were so surprised. But it meant the stupidity of grades in the arts was revealed completely for me when I had to come to grade them. Because obviously a second-year student who has only had maybe one class in acting is not going to compare with a student who has graduated and has had Shakespeare to Go and experience and many other performances. So I thought, how on earth do I grade these people? I wanted to grade them by the way in which they had progressed themselves. All had worked very hard during the course. At the end of the quarter, of course, they got tied up with many other productions. So their final project was, frankly, disappointing, because they hadn't had enough time to rehearse it as well as they should have done. But when I looked at how they had progressed and what they had learnt, I thought they all deserved an A grade. So I decided I would give A-minus, A, and one A-plus. Which was differentiation enough, but it represented, for me, the chaos of trying to assess creative work alongside factual work. A lot of the sciences is based, obviously, on facts and it's much easier, and for them very important, I think, to have their grading, although philosophically I don't agree with it.

I don't know if I told you the story about one of my students who went to Stanford and suddenly realized the benefit of the education she had received at UCSC. At the first class meeting she found everybody else was asking, "How do I get an A grade?" And she was asking, "What is the content of this class? What aspects of this subject does it cover?" And she realized her questioning was entirely different from the way graded students from other institutions regarded a class. The class wasn't so much for content as getting through and getting an A grade. That's abysmal. That's abysmal! What a comment. And, of course, as I say, it does alter with different subjects, but for the arts it's killing.

**Vanderscoff:** Hmm. And I have a quick question on teaching. I watched—there were a series of interviews done with faculty in the nineties—and you mentioned in that film interview that you were interested in addressing the question of how to teach "the less gifted as well as the exceptionally gifted."<sup>25</sup> How do you address this question of varied abilities and interests and engagements in the classroom? I think it relates to the grading you were talking about.

**Stanley:** Well, you just look at where the person is and encourage them to explore areas that they could flourish in, characters that would challenge them but not be beyond where they were. And I encourage them to work with each

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<sup>25</sup> In reference to, 'UCSC Early Faculty,' a series of video interviews with a range of faculty, available for access in Special Collections at McHenry Library, UCSC.

other, which is essentially what acting is: a give and take between actors on the stage. This is something that's important.

I also had them looking at—with a class on acting with Shakespeare—the Royal Shakespeare Company did a series of classes, in a way, amongst their actors. And what I did [with my students] was to get them to do the scenes that the actors were going to be showing. I made them just rehearse those in class before they sat and looked at these films. So that when they looked at it, they had some sense of where it was going, what was happening with it and what the subject matter was.

And at the same time, by hearing the verse spoken you get into the rhythm of the iambic verse. Shakespeare's language gets addictive. All of us working at the Shakespeare festival for any length of time find that is so. It's something that sort of creates a family of people that are aware of this addiction (laughs) with the language. It is language spoken and written at a time when it had a direct connection with the emotional center. So often people speak up here [speaks in high, thin, head voice] and it comes out here and a little voice comes, it's nothing to do [switching to deeper, more assertive voice] with what I'm feeling inside. To connect up with the emotional center means that the flow of language goes in through the body and out through the body and it leads to a healthier, whole person, an existence. It's something I believe in very firmly. It's not a fuddy-duddy thing to study Shakespeare. It's to be in touch with the experience of living when people lived very wholeheartedly and completely and expressed it in language.

**Vanderscoff:** Is there anything else you'd like to say about the role of teaching students about acting, or helping students engage with the role? How do you help a beginning student take their first step?

**Stanley:** By separating out the sounds and the words. It's very simple. If you sound out, "Sneck Up," [sounding out word] s-na-eh-ek-sneck, sneck, sneck—and you take a look in the mirror and see your face, it's much different from "shut up," which is, in effect, what it means. So that the words, by separating the sound and the words, and exploring the words and giving the words their due—also to look at the folio and quarto punctuation and capitalization, to some extent, and other things, not as a sort of complete rule, but as a guide to the rhythm of the speaking. Because the punctuation at that time wasn't so fixed as grammatical punctuation, so much as spoken punctuation. So that there may be less commas, and the periods may be completely different, because a period meant a complete change of topic. So vocally, they can lift the voice. And it's bringing more variety into the range of tone. A good actor can cover two or three octaves. But the American voice mainly does two or three notes. You just listen in to some people. They're just fixed. And it's very comforting, very comforting. Because they go down at the end of the sentence [dropping in pitch]. Well, there's no good Welsh lift up, inquiring as to what's going on. So, all these things can help a beginning actor discover whole new continents. It's just releasing for people and it's easy. But they have to work at it.

**Vanderscoff:** And just briefly, how do you encourage students to connect that with physicality and motion across the stage, with hands—

**Stanley:** Well, there are various different exercises you can do. You can do an exercise where you can walk with your weight backwards, with your weight forwards, saying your lines and hearing the difference that the different postures bring to your voice. And there are whole modes of dancing to the words, or moving and then suddenly stopping and speaking the words out of having had the movement. There are many exercises that can help sort that out.

### **Thoughts on Change in UC Santa Cruz,**

#### **And Cowell College Today**

**Vanderscoff:** Thank you. That's fascinating. And as sort of a wide-frame question on UCSC in general, considering this just recent involvement that you had, when you look at the campus around you today and in more recent years, how do you think UCSC has changed, in terms of its students and its character, from when you first arrived?

**Stanley:** Well, when I arrived there were about 3000 students. So there was a sense of knowing all of them. I don't know that one did, but in a way it was both more leisurely and deeper investigation into the nature of what was being taught. And the students in the early days—I mean, these were the late sixties, early seventies—and they were very demanding and needy. Each quarter the faculty would turn up and say, "Where are they? What are they up to?" Because these students almost led the faculty in investigating and being there. It was very lively and exciting. It was an adventure you took with the students and hoped (laughs) to end up where you wanted to end up. Which generally happened, yes.

But you see, the size. It's the whole business of size. You can't have—what is the size now?

**Vanderscoff:** Oh, goodness. It's 16,000, 17,000—very roughly.<sup>26</sup>

**Stanley:** Yes. Well, I think it's even more than that. For 3000 or even 6000, is a different thing. The idea of the colleges—which was in theory an excellent thing, and I still think is very viable—is changing under people like the [current] provost of Cowell and others, exploring new modes for the colleges, new functions for the colleges, and leading ideas. This is excellent.

But in the early days we were doing double work as faculty, having to assess people in the different subject areas, writing letters for their promotions. Well, this is ridiculous. What did one know about certain areas of social science or even the sciences, to be able to cast a verdict on things like that? It just was a heavy burden.

It was very rewarding, just simply the adventurousness of the students and the trying out of experiments that was encouraged, the cross-fertilization from one subject with another, which happened in the early days, people co-teaching together in different subject areas. It was exciting for the faculty and lively for the faculty. And then, the business of really watching students' progress, not from

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<sup>26</sup> The official 2012-2013 figure was 16,753, including graduate students.



just purely, "Can they answer exams well?"—but had they grown in themselves and in an extension of the subject area, and were they adventurous in it? The early students were exceptional, and we were top heavy with those exceptional students, which was a wonderful—they challenged us and we challenged them. It was a blissful time in many ways, even though burdensome.

Today, there is a greater admixture of students. That is a good thing. But it also means that if you're doing a seminar and you have one person who's not really concerned with the seminar, it drags the whole seminar down, because it's a small group of people. I took over a course because of a death. I found that to be a situation that was not very good at all for the rest of the students.

I think, again, grades in the arts is ridiculous. [It encourages you to] play it safe, which is an attitude you don't do in theater. You play it as dangerously as you can to make as many discoveries as you can. You blow your top in order to find out where is the point where you shouldn't blow it—in acting, and directing, and doing the creative side of theater.

**Vanderscoff:** I just have two or three more questions, to bring us to a wrap here. Before we go there, is anything else you'd like to say about UC Santa Cruz, or the colleges, or your involvement here?

**Stanley:** Well, the early idea was to mix faculty up as much as possible, to get this cross-currency going. But also, I lost a sense of—because I was the one theater person in Stevenson, first of all, I certainly felt a bit beleaguered and

overused. But when I moved to Cowell, there were people involved, like Michael Warren and others.

But that sense of a college welcoming you and what you had to offer, and the sociability of a college, and the fact that a provost could make a great deal of difference in an existence. And particularly if, like me, you didn't have a family, then the college was in a sense one's larger family. That was a very fine thing. I think the students and faculty both enjoyed that aspect.

**Vanderscoff:** And of that sense of family, how much of that do you feel now? I know, for instance, just a couple of months ago we were at the same College Night dinner back up at Cowell.<sup>27</sup>

**Stanley:** Well, as I say, I think the Cowell provost, Faye Crosby, is very enterprising and has lots of ideas and she follows up on them, and she doesn't stop following up on them (laughs), for which I take my cap off to her. And she has the right idea, because as a provost she can lead a college and do adventurous things, which she has done and is doing. And it does, I think, make a difference to the students in the college. That sort of mixing of people up at tables at a formal dinner is one of the things that the colleges had right from the

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<sup>27</sup> In reference to a February 2013 College Night featuring a series of readings, Stanley and other early faculty were invited to attend and sit at tables and speak with current students. While it used to be the norm, it has grown more unusual to have a strong faculty presence at College Nights. This event was intended to bring back some of that approach -Editor.

start, and is an aspect that leads to a sort of more civilized existence for students. (laughs) I think that's important, because it is so easily possible to take a meal on a run and you don't have any sociability. This encourages a little more of that and takes a moment to pause to take a look at people's work that they present to you in some form or the other in a College Night. That's, I think, a civilizing aspect to college existence.

**Vanderscoff:** So I think that's a good way of closing talking about UCSC.

### **"Living with What One is Given":**

#### **Closing Reflections on Theater, Health and Shakespeare Santa Cruz**

**Vanderscoff:** And as a way of bringing theater to a closing, would you mind reflecting on your involvement with the stage, and what roles, be they on or off the stage, directing, acting, however, stand out for you now? Just an example or two.

**Stanley:** Well, once the theater was built, and it was a thrust stage theater, I did a series of four Shakespeare plays. I think I've mentioned that to you.

**Vanderscoff:** Yes, you mentioned *Macbeth*, for instance.

**Stanley:** No, I'm talking about UCSC before the festival. The festival didn't come into existence until 1982, with its own program of plays, preparations starting in 1980. But in the seventies I did four Shakespeare plays on that stage, or off the stage, because one, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, went touring and was performed with the audience sitting on a huge silk parachute on the ground, and

the actors sitting on the outside ring of this, and just standing up and doing their scene where they were and moving around the circle, so that people sitting had to sort of shuffle around also and follow it. And it was kind of magical, part of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. That we took on tour for Berkeley and Santa Barbara, and Santa Clara, amongst other places. And the people from that, who organized and helped run that, were the people who helped run the Shakespeare Santa Cruz festival in the early days, so that one thing flowed into another, into another.

I found that I didn't believe in cutting plays, and the professional theater believes very rigorously in cutting plays of Shakespeare. Certainly, the plot of the plays can be expressed more clearly by not having some scenes. But I always say that the director should work harder and find a way of making those scenes work within the compass of the whole play itself. That is not a professional theater attitude towards the text of Shakespeare. But when you look back and see the cuts, and the fact that *Lear*, for instance, had a happy ending (laughs) in some periods—

**Vanderscoff:** (laughs)

**Stanley:** Well, it's true. This is what the period demanded. It was a superficial period, to some extent, and it wanted to have a happy ending. The natural nature of people is to want happy endings. You have to fight it. (laughter) Because life ain't always like that. (laughter) In one sense, going to a theater can open up lives to you that explore aspects you may have to face yourself.

So this is one aspect of modern theater and somebody like Shakespeare, who does the whole gamut between the extremes of tragedy and the absolute joyousness of comedy, he does cover so much. But with a very positive attitude towards people. He really respected people. And he created these— I mean occasionally you come across an Iago who cannot be explained just for the sake of being nasty in life and upsetting people. And these people do exist. Things do happen in that way. Nevertheless, there's always some mitigating aspect to even Iago, who was bypassed for his promotion, amongst other things, and was exceedingly jealous about his wife, which is his own paranoia. But it's a sense of tolerance, of living with what one is given, in a way, of enjoying aspects of people and not just belittling them. And taking the time for that enjoyment. Life gets so busy and so object-in-the-hand occupation, which it's going through at the moment. And it will be very interesting to see where that ends.

**Vanderscoff:** Thank you. And I'd like to just talk about your current moment. So when you reflect on your years of retirement, what *has* been the focus of your time? You've talked about traveling; you've talked about your continued involvement with UCSC, with Shakespeare Santa Cruz. So what has been the focus of your time and what has been learned or reaffirmed for you in this time?

**Stanley:** Well, I always like to get taken over by projects, and this project was Van Gogh and Gauguin's story. I researched that. I went to all the exhibitions I could. I'd already been to Holland. I went there again. And France. They took over my life for quite a long stretch of time. I wrote a trilogy.

**Vanderscoff:** Yes, I remember we spoke a little bit about that—[phone rings]

**Stanley:** I spent at least ten years or more, fifteen, maybe twenty now, working on these plays in the trilogy. Because seeing them staged, some scenes certainly worked beautifully. And I realized the problem can be that you research too much and you have to cut out the research because people just don't want a list of facts when they're presented with a play, but action and vibration and inspiration.

But what it did, it made me realize that I work with different minds. And I think everybody does this, and indeed all the sessions that Charlie Rose has done on the brain support this—that you use different parts of the brain for the function you're working with. If I'm directing, I have to see the whole picture. I have to have fifty eyes seeing everybody all at the same time. I have to choreograph it. I have to hear it and everything else. If I'm acting, I have to immerse myself in the role and I couldn't care less in a way about anybody else's role, except the person I'm acting with and the interaction I'm doing there. So it's another brain absorption. And I realized that writing—suddenly when I was looking at plays, I was looking at them differently. I wasn't looking at them as a director, or necessarily as an actor, but as a writer of what was going on. And I rediscovered a new delight in Shakespeare, because I could see where (laughs) he was stumbling along too. And I've become less intolerant of cuts than I might have been, because an audience presented with so many aspects can get lost very quickly. It was another delight, in a way, to take a look at Shakespeare's plays. But it amazes me how many people will cut opening scenes in Shakespeare because something very important is always set out in those scenes, and on your peril do you lose it.

So it gave me a whole extra interest in examining Shakespeare's plays, with a different mindset and a different hearing of the plays, and not just a performing of the plays or a directing of the plays. It's been very invigorating for me to have worked on that. I realize that it has given me a different ability and quality of looking and hearing and seeing. So that's just been a delight. (laughs)

**Vanderscoff:** And so, going with this thread of being oriented around projects and using different parts of your mind or your brain for them, I'd like to ask about the current moment for you and looking forward. What sort of projects, hopes, endeavors occupy you at this moment, and any other future plans that you might have?

**Stanley:** It's a bit difficult for me to talk about this because I had this very bad accident, and in effect it's taken eight months out of my life.<sup>28</sup> I've ended up very much a physically weaker person. I still want to do the things I did before, but I have to be very thoughtful about how I go about that and to pace myself differently. Well, that's a whole different aspect to life. It's an aspect of growing older that I hadn't met until this serious accident. I've been very lucky in health and not everybody has such luck. Also, because I'm a single person I've had to keep healthy. I always went to the gym and have done physical exercises, partly as my job and partly to keep healthy. A lot of people haven't done that and I

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<sup>28</sup> In reference to being struck by a bicyclist in Fall 2012.

realize that you can't always do that. Even with my illness, I still try to keep up a regimen of exercises and to do that. I feel I've had eight months of complete waste of existence, excepting the revelation of how good other people have been to me, and I appreciate that.

**Vanderscoff:** And is there anything you'd like to say, as these eight months come to a close and looking ahead, what sort of things you hope to return to, or what sort of focuses you hope to gain?

**Stanley:** Well, Shakespeare Santa Cruz has been dear to my heart and I have been on the board of directors and I attend the board meetings. I withdrew from actually directly fundraising, but I always fundraise anyway. I promote the festival as much as I can because I believe in it so firmly. It's going through an interesting phase of having closer links with the university, which had been rejected by the theater arts faculty originally. It will be interesting to see where that finishes. It is something that I embark on with a sense of curiosity and openness and see where things go.

What worries me about my stipulation of changing the artistic director every six or so years is that new ones come in and they want to make a clean sweep. They take no notice, no sensibility, really, of what has gone before. I suppose this is a lack of the sense of history. Coming from Europe with that longer stretch of history, one knows that you can learn lessons and build on—and I'm a person who likes to build on things, not just cut away and do entirely fresh things—[I like to] allow other people to do things like that so that the directing can be free to explore different modes.



So I hope to very much continue my association with the festival. I know it might have gone by the board several times during its existence if I hadn't been there. It does cost a lot of money and I just worry that we haven't really tapped into areas of money that we should be able to tap into. The presence of the university doesn't always help because they are tapping into the same sources of money, naturally enough. So that will be interesting, to see how that works out. Enough to keep me going.

**Vanderscoff:** And before we turn off the recorder and end these oral history sessions, is there anything you'd like to say in closing before I do so?

**Stanley:** I think I've been very lucky. At the same time, when I look back and consider how many situations I've just launched myself into—over to Canada, knowing nobody there; over to Berkeley, knowing a couple of people from the Greek project, but basically nobody; then finding real friends here in Santa Cruz—I feel tremendously more supported now than I was in the early days of my career. I've always had to go out and find jobs that took me away from friends and everybody else. The job has always involved me so much that I hadn't known how much I missed that. But looking back, I think I must have been a tough cookie! (laughs) Because I survived. I think you should always go where your interest is. I agree with that philosophy and just trust things will happen. And also take advantage of things when they arise.

**Vanderscoff:** Well, by way of closing on my end, I'd like to thank you so much for all the time that you've put into this. I know, as you've just discussed, with

your illness and your recovery I especially appreciate in that way, and for all of the attention and the time that you've given in this process.

**Stanley:** Well, you've given a lot of time to your project, a lot of care to your project, and a thoroughness to your project too. So I thank you.

**Vanderscoff:** Well, it's been a pleasure.

**Stanley:** Thank you.

### **About the Interviewer and Co-Editor:**

Cameron Vanderscoff is a freelance oral historian and writer based in New York City. His work with the Regional History Project includes a series of published oral histories, such as *Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC, 1978-1994* and *James Clifford: Tradition and Transformation at UCSC*, and *Look'n M' Face and Hear M' Story: An Oral History with Professor J. Herman Blake*. In addition to his ongoing collaboration with the Project, he has a range of public and family clients in California and New York, including a partnership with Columbia University on the Phoenix House Oral History Project.

Cameron earned his MA in oral history at Columbia University focusing on applied ethics in the field. He graduated magna cum laude from UC Santa Cruz with BAs in history and literature (focus in creative writing). For him, all of these threads come together in oral history, where individuals become authors through life storytelling, and historical experience becomes literary narrative. The opportunity to elicit and revisit these stories is an ongoing education and a privilege. He likes to do other things too, like writing fiction, playing the blues, and traveling with a notebook.