

Interview Transcript: Jill Stanford



Hi I'm Jill Stanford. I'm the daughter of Jack Stanford the Dancing Fool and Marjorie Volonoff, one of the Volonoff twins. I'm an actor and my father was 50 years old when I was born.

Now, he was an eccentric tap dancer mime artist. He was famous in the 1930s and 40s, did a 18 months stint I think it was at the Folly Berger Paris with Josephine Baker in *Cabaret*. He was in *And So We Go On* and his career really spanned up till he was 67.

I have wonderful memories of going to the Streatham Hill Theatre and walking down Streatham Hill with my nan to see my father in a production of the *Arcadians*, and he played the jockey which is a part full of pathos and it was actually brilliant to see him doing that because it is was really a straight actor role which I think he'd always wanted to do. I can remember as a child sitting in the stalls and watching and seeing that theatre and I can still see myself in my mind's eye now.

But I must confess to something, which some of you who are trying to save the theatre like I am, will probably think is awful but about 20 so years ago I did go and play Bingo there but the reason I went is because I wanted to see it inside and I sat on the stage area where they had the tables and thought yes this is this is it and this is where my father would have looked out and that's a wonderful feeling.

But I do remember also as a child, as a teenager let's say, coming here to go to the Locarno, The Cat's Whiskers, the Ice Rink and the ballroom. Streatham was the place to come.

That's why it's so sad really if we can't do something to bring this wonderful big theatre back to life. You can't save every theatre but with the right people behind us we should be able to save this one.

One thing I forgot to mention are my father's mascots and these would have been in his dressing room at the Streatham Hill Theatre in 1956, and if he was ever there before they would have been there, because these were with him his whole life. And as far as I remembered they were always as old looking as this. Maybe one of them's lost a foot. Maybe not quite as old as that, but he loved these. They are so special and I have thought about having them restored, but I think they're nice as they are, and I don't think he'd want me to touch them.