

Bernie Katz . Born 1931

(So what was the first film you remember seeing in Brighton?)

It's very difficult for me unfortunately because my memory is not very good but I remember going to all of the cinemas, the Academy, and the Odeon in West Street and the Savoy in East Street before it became another... was renamed and renamed as it were.

(What about jaws, you said you remember seeing jaws?)

Yes well, I went with my mother. And I had heard it was quite frightening. So I asked the woman sitting on the right, I said "Look after her and hold her hand if anything..." I remember that, and I loved the film. It was quite wonderful. The last film I saw which was yesterday 'Focus' which I thought was vastly underpraised, I though it's a wonderful gangster film. I hadn't seen Will Smith for ages because he goes in for these bloody films which I don't particularly like, I can handle blood if it's done very well. I can handle violence when it's good violence.

(Can you describe any of the cinemas to me?)

Yes, well the Princes cinema, which is now the hamburger joint, as you go down to the gents that's where the actual cinema was. The Regent of course which is now, Boots that was beautifully, huge sort of, medieval, art-deco decor, which was quite extraordinary.

(Of the cinemas which one was your favourite?)

Well the Regent is, as I said, because you could go there for 1s9d or 2s9d. Now 1s9d is what's, now that's about 20 pence and people just went in, in the middle of the film. You sat down, if you were a couple and sometimes it was singles only. You queued, not queued really, you stood at the side of the cinema waiting for the odd seat to appear, to become vacant as it were. That was the sign of a very good film. If people were standing and couldn't get a seat.

(Which film proved to be the most memorable?)

That French film, that was a wonderful film. And when I saw it a few years later when it was revived. I thought what on earth did I see in it? It seemed insignificant! But at the time it was very, very good, I think that was a French medieval film just as this film was medieval, but it was a talkie. She was a wonderful actor and at the time that was my most memorable film at the one in Kemp Town, The Contientale.

(But when you saw it a second time it didn't seem so good?)

Yes... It was like when you go back to your old school and see the assembly hall

seems smaller than you remember it. So this film seemed far less significant, to me.

(Was there a particular film that you remember anyone clamouring to see?)

Well, 'Gone with the Wind' but I enjoyed it more on television many years later. I couldn't handle the politics of it, as it were. But when it was restored and I saw it again, I enjoyed it far more. Never got on with 'The Wizard of Oz'. Never liked that very much, although it's very popular.

(So did you have a regular person you would go to the cinema with?)

My Father went too. On his own, with me. And I remember at the Academy I wanted to have a pee and he held out his hat and I accepted his invitation. That was my Academy story.

(So would you say it was a treat? the cinema?)

No, not necessarily no. It was a regular occurrence. Because there were so many cinemas. Both my parents and myself, everyone in Brighton, heavily into films and even cinemas in Hove

(So it was the thing to do?)

Well, just as one went to the Hippodrome, it was the thing to do. On a Saturday night, people still like to go either on the first night on a Monday or Tuesday or on a Saturday night to the Theatre Royal. It was the thing.

(So how has the cinema changed in Brighton? has the attitude changed?)

Oh the attitude. I mean, I would have a bit of chocolate or something in the cinema, not heavily into pounds of popcorn and of course before the film starts you can hear the popcorn. You can't hear it so much during the film. So that's good. I'm still so into cinema that I'm a member of the Duke of York's and I'm a member of Cineworld and it's my second or third year so I now get 25% off my coffee or tea.

(Did you see anything risqué at the cinema?)

Oh, 'Danish Dentist on the Job' beautifully risqué.

(Did anything unusual ever happen in or outside the cinema)

Oh yes, well peeing in my father's hat! that was inside the cinema. On the gangway.