

Guide to the Shirley Allen oral history interview

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**University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special
Collections and Archives.**

Box 457010

4505 S. Maryland Parkway

Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-7010

special.collections@unlv.edu

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Allen, Shirley
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Title:	Shirley Allen oral history interview
ID:	OH-03305
Date:	2003 June 21
Physical Description:	3 Digital Files (0.101 GB) MP3, PDF/A
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Oral history interview with Shirley Allen conducted by Nancy Hardy on June 21, 2003 for the Las Vegas Oral History Project. In this interview, Allen discusses moving to Las Vegas, Nevada with her family and starting dancing professionally while attending university. Her first job was at the Riviera in 1964, working as a showgirl. She explains that the work was not difficult and they were not asked to do anything inappropriate, but they did have to pay for their own cocktail dresses and accessories. She also explains that she was a "covered dancer" in the beginning but by the late 1960s she had to "uncover" (work topless) to be employed. She then talks about working in <i>Pzazz! '68</i> at the Stardust Resort Hotel and Casino, after auditioning for Fluff LeCoque, Donn Arden's company captain. She also talks about her impression of Miss Bluebell and Donn Arden. She spends some time talking about what life was like backstage, relations between the girls, and meeting celebrities, her first experience with topless dancing in <i>Lido de Paris</i> , and how the backstage dressing areas were assigned and the difficulty of fast changes between sets. Later, she talks about things that can go wrong, from forgetting choreography to the more serious issue of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that swept through the shows in the 1980s.

Preferred Citation

Shirley Allen oral history interview, 2003 June 21. OH-03305. [Cite format consulted: Audio recording or Transcript.] Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada

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Scope and Contents Note

Oral history interview with Shirley Allen conducted by Nancy Hardy on June 21, 2003 for the Las Vegas Oral History Project. In this interview, Allen discusses moving to Las Vegas, Nevada with her family and starting dancing professionally while attending university. Her first job was at the Riviera in 1964, working as a showgirl. She explains that the work was not difficult and they were not asked to do anything inappropriate, but they did have to pay for their own cocktail dresses and accessories. She also explains that she was a "covered dancer" in the beginning but by the late 1960s she had to "uncover" (work topless) to be employed. She then talks about working in *Pzazz! '68* at the Stardust Resort Hotel and Casino, after auditioning for Fluff LeCoque, Donn Arden's company captain. She also talks about her impression of Miss Bluebell and Donn Arden. She spends some time talking about what life was like backstage, relations between the girls, and meeting celebrities, her first experience with topless dancing in *Lido de Paris*, and how the backstage dressing areas were assigned and the difficulty of fast changes between sets. Later, she talks about things that can go wrong, from forgetting choreography to the more serious issue of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that swept through the shows in the 1980s. Finally, she discusses individual performers, interviews she gave for television personalities, and shows she did in South Africa and Japan. Digital audio available; printed transcript available.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

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Acquisition Note

This interview was conducted and transcribed by the Oral History Research Center (OHRC) which is part of the UNLV University Libraries Special Collections and Archives Division.

Processing Note

Interview materials were processed by UNLV Libraries Special Collections and Archives in 2018 and 2023. Melise Leech wrote the collection description. Access copies were created for born-digital audio and/or transcript files. The audio has been minimally reviewed and all readily available information has been included in the description.

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Names and Subjects

- Oral histories (document genres)
- Dancers
- Entertainment -- Nevada -- Las Vegas