

Clip 12– Minister for the Arts 2

Clip:gb2315jl5221_clip2

From: Jennie Lee programme regarding music and the arts

In: 00:20:08

Out: 00:22:01

Dur: 00:01:53

Jennie Lee: And of course, I had the great privilege for six years, from 1964 to 1970, to be the Minister responsible for the Arts in Great Britain. This was an experiment, the first time it had ever been done and I'm bound to say, I was overwhelmed by the gratitude which artists of every kind – musicians, painters, sculptors – showed. We did do more than any previous government, but I never felt we did quite so much that we deserved the warmth of their appreciation, and I might say, their affection. And of course, one of the sweets of the job was that I saw a great deal of Covent Garden. Covent Garden, the Opera House, in the heart of the West End of London was a long way from the Arcade Hotel in the heart of the Scottish coalfields but again it was opera. It wasn't the old Carl Rosa Company, the D'Oyley Carte Company, it was the most superb singers, the most superb music in the world. I was so fortunate because on most of the great occasions, I had the privilege, if I could find the time, of being present. How difficult to choose from all this wealth, and how little we sometimes appreciate the discipline of the artist. I've said sometimes that the artist is the modern saint. They've got to discipline their lives, they've got to give up so much. You do not reach perfection in any field of life without immense effort. So, during the six years while I was the Minister for the Arts I not only had unique opportunities but also I was educated to a much more vivid understanding of how much we owe to the artist.