

Part 2.
Listening
Script

You are going to hear an interview with a street performer at festivals, including one called the Hat Fair.

Listen to the interview and mark the statements below (1-10) with “T” if they are true, “F” if they are false and “NS” if the information is not given.

You will hear the recording twice.

You now have 30 seconds to look at the questions. [pause 30 seconds]

Now we are ready to start.

Interviewer: Today South Life visits the Winchester Hat Fair, an extravaganza of processions, fireworks and street theatre with performers from as far away as Australia and Brazil. And we’re talking to a veteran performer at the Hat Fair, Mighty Max, who’s come all the way from Canada once again. Max, why is the Festival called the Hat Fair?

Max: Well, I’ve been told the fair was only started in 1974, as a way of encouraging street performers like myself. It’s not like there was one of those great old English traditions like hat-making here in the 18th century or anything. Lots of people come to the fair wearing funny hats because of the name, but that wasn’t its origins. It was always supposed to be about street theatre, and during the act, a hat’s passed around so that the performers can earn a living. And that, in fact’s where the name comes from.

Interviewer: Now you’ve been coming here for a number of years. Why do you keep coming back?

Max: Oh, I just love performing here. There are artists like myself from all over the world who come here year after year and we get to know each other and stuff. But what makes the fair unique is the people who come to watch. You know, you jump around and do your act and they really let their hair down and love it when they are being made a fool of by other people in the crowd, and that’s really what makes it such fun.

Interviewer: So, how did you get involved in street theatre in the first place?

Max: Well, you know, my big ambition was to be a circus performer. I actually went to quite a famous circus school in Canada as a teenager where I was taught juggling and acrobatics. My dad was dead against it, but he paid for the classes on the condition that I went to university and got myself what he called “a proper education” as well. It was ironic, really, because if I hadn’t gone to university, I might never have got into street theatre. You see every vacation I had time to travel and I found I could pay for my trips by performing in the street and making a collection.

Interviewer: Fantastic! Your act’s been attracting tremendous crowds here in Winchester. How do you explain your popularity?

Max: Well, it’s a combination of a high-class acrobatics, which are performed without any safety equipment at all, and some quite risky stunts. So it gives the audience a thrill – you know, there are plenty of oohs and aahs, but what I think really gets them into it is that I make them laugh. There’s a lot of clowning in my act, which builds a sort of two-way communication with the audience and they love it.

Interviewer: The acts I've seen around town today have been pretty high quality. Why do you think that is?

Max: Well, there is plenty of money around this town, which certainly attracts the best people from around the world, but you know, none of that money's going to go in the hat unless your act is a good one, and so you've got to make sure people have a really great time watching you work.

Interviewer: And what difficulties do street performers come up against?

Max: Good question. In a place like Winchester, not many. We're each given a place and a time to perform. As you've seen, I attract pretty large crowds and I need plenty of space, so narrow streets are no good. Here we're given the main shopping street, which is fine. In other places, if you haven't got permission, you'll get moved on by the police, so I always make sure that I've got the right permits. Actually what's most likely to stop things happening the way you'd like is usually the rain or even just a bit of drizzle. I mean, where's the fun in standing around getting cold and wet?

Interviewer: None at all. But what about Winchester? Has the Hat Fair put the town on the map? I mean does it attract a lot of visitors from outside?

Max: I'm not the best person to answer that question. I get the impression that the people who come here tend to be from the surrounding area rather than tourists. What Winchester gets is an amusing party – something they can do which is just plain fun. They gather in the streets and parks and unwind and forget about the other stuff in their lives.

Interviewer: Mighty Max, thank you, and I hope the rest of the fair goes well for you.

Max: Thank you.

Now you have 15 seconds to check your answers. [pause 15 seconds]

Now listen to the text again. [text repeated.]

Now you have 20 seconds to complete the task and transfer your answers to the answer sheet. [pause 20 seconds]

This is the end of the Listening task.