

Emily J Gottlieb

Alumnus BA Hons Drama and Theatre Arts

Year of study 1994

Current position Stage Manager of Opera, Royal Opera House

How have you got where you are today, from your student days?

Since graduating in 1994 I have worked as a Stage Manager and Set Designer for numerous small and mid-scale companies, moving abroad, to Australia, to continue working over there in the same field. On my return I spent a season working as a stage manager at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, following which I went to the Royal Opera House, where I am currently Stage Manager of Opera. I have been at the ROH for seven years. My time at Birmingham gave me a good all-round working knowledge of the theatre and fuelled the love for Opera which has led me to my current profession & workplace.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

I am in a privileged position at the ROH; working with the best singers, conductors, directors, designers, orchestra, chorus and staff, all at the top of their profession. Due to the high turnover of productions per year, there is no chance of getting bored, and I am continually meeting new people and working on new projects.

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

The sense of being part of a small family, in both the music and drama departments. The quality of teaching was so high, and at that time there were few enough of us to have one-to-one tutorials, which were really beneficial. Both departments had a lot going on in terms of performances, giving a good choice of things to be involved in. No chance of not finding something to fall in love with.

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

In every way, Birmingham is a vibrant, cultural city; even more so now than when I was a student, and for music and drama students there is plenty to do, see and even get work experience in. The city itself is great for student life, and the campus provided a great hub for socialising too. The study side was relaxed, yet serious, and there was always someone to go to for advice or encouragement if needed.

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Take advantage of everything on offer. Don't restrict yourself to the idea of what you wanted to do or be when you first started the course - be open to change. University changes you as a person, and you may not want what you wanted when you first went there. There is so much going on, and so much to learn from your tutors; don't close your eyes and ears to any of it. But most of all, remember to have fun and enjoy it!

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