

When I am asked who my acting teacher was at RADA, I answer “Doreen” with swagger and a little air of conceit...I know it gives me greater credibility - proves that I AM an actor - because I was taught by the best.

She was rigorous, dedicated, brutal, tough as hell, terrifying, and when she shone on you - which occasionally she did - perhaps more often than people recall - you felt that all was well with the world, you were going to be okay and life was good!

She was a dazzlingly brilliant teacher, I remember her lessons as though they happened last week, so vivid were her classes.

She gave me a process, a way of working that I did not know existed for the intangible “art” of acting. I use it for every part I tackle.

She instilled in me a rigour, an inability to “settle” for anything, to always keep searching, asking questions and “digging”.

She is responsible for my bravery and my love of taking risks, and for a large part of my respect for the CRAFT of acting.

She was the real thing - nothing phony, no pretensions, a warm and witty and devoted teacher who cared deeply for every one of her students and for our profession.

I am so lucky she was “mine”.

I will always be proud and smug to answer “Doreen”.

Rachel Pickup