

I was a green, earnest eighteen year old when I first met Doreen at RADA. During three short, difficult years she taught me self-discipline, respect for myself, for the text, for my role, for my fellow actors, for the Art of Acting.

Her voice still rings clearly in my head –

DOREEN : You haven't worked on this, have you?

ME : ....Not really.

DOREEN : It shows!

There was no being clever, no getting away with it. Doreen wanted art not artifice. She knew the minute you were “faking”, or “playing at being”, or being “tricksy”. She had her rules and she would accept only characters that were thoroughly prepared and engaged in the moment –

DOREEN : What are you *doing!* It's like watching moving wallpaper!!

DOREEN : Okay, I'm going to stop you. (beat) Do you have a problem?

ME : (exasperated) No, Doreen!

DOREEN : Well, *get* one!

Doreen required a truth beyond ones own, submersion is someone else's truth, in the truth of the character one was playing, in *their* world with its own specific problems, and dilemmas and honour.

She allowed no facile moralising and would not tolerate one's own comment on the character. Identify! Identify at the profoundest level. The hows, the whys, the whats, the what-ifs, the *coulds* as opposed to the woulds....The infinite possibilities of character were what interested Doreen. And it is that which makes sense to me now...

Doreen opened doors in my imagination which might otherwise have remained closed. She stiffened my courage, encouraged my inventiveness and by her own example, gave me experience of the highest standard of integrity and selflessness which seem too often lacking in the profession.

Those of us who understood her work and loved her as a person, wry, dry, funny, perceptive, caring, will continue to carry her torch. She gave us so much more than she could know...

DOREEN : You want to know the secret?

ME : Oh God! Yes!

DOREEN : You have'to *enjoy* it!

Sophie Stanton