

Sonya Cassidy

I'd heard a lot about Dee throughout my time at RADA before I actually had the pleasure to work with her. When I did it was an experience that I've never forgotten and have learnt so much from that it now forms part of my 'actors tool box' to this day....

It was our final second year show before we embarked on our next chapter into the exciting third year. I had just 4 weeks of (sporadic) rehearsal to bring to life Felicity in Noel Coward's *Relative Values*. As a quiet, 20 year old student, tapping into the mindset of this wonderful, upper middle class, middle aged matriarch and protective mother of one in rural 50's England was particularly challenging and totally unlike anything I'd done before (hence, of course, why Dee cast me in the role). I can't lie, the first 2 and a half weeks were extremely difficult, spent desperately trying to grasp the role but feeling that no matter how much work I did that something wasn't quite there yet and worryingly...might never be. But Dee's strong, unerring ability as a director to understand each individual that she works with, knew just how to push me 'to be brave. Trust what you're doing, your ability and go beyond your comfort zone and what you think you can do because you can do this...'. From the moment I braved her advice it all fell into place and, whilst still challenging, was nothing but enjoyable and confidence building as an actor, bringing about possibly one of the best things I'd done throughout my training. I look back on that production and smile. In fact I think we all wished that this had been performed to the public as part of the 3rd year, purely because of the quality and standard of all of us involved through Dee's care and attention to detail as a director.