

2nd Pilot Interview

Interview conducted by Sarah Pearson, BAPP student, Middlesex University

Interviewee - Bethan Blakely, 30, Singer with Stage Act Entertainment.

Date - 11 April 2012

Telephone Interview

SP - Bethan please could you tell me a bit about your background in the entertainment business and also the grades you achieved at secondary school

BB - I am currently a singer with Stage Act Entertainment and I am also trained in dance and drama. I gained a National Diploma in Musical Theatre at the Arts Educational School of Musical Theatre. I've worked in the entertainment business now for 9 years. At school I gained 11 GCSEs A*-B grade and 3 A-levels A-C grade.

SP - With the country in the current economic state, cuts need to be made. Former director general at the institute of economic affairs, John Blundell has been quoted saying 'the arts can flourish in the private sector', suggesting that cutting government funding will not damage the arts. Do you think this is a fair prediction?

BB - No, it's all very well saying the arts will flourish in the private sector, but only if you have the money to pay. If children can't access the arts in schools or after school clubs, those with no money will not be able to afford private dance or drama classes and will ultimately lose interest. I understand that by 2020 one quarter of people in Britain will be below the poverty line and will not be able to spend money on what will be luxuries like music or dance lessons. If they can not access a education in the arts at school, they simply won't get it at all.

SP- Is dance education worthwhile in schools?

BB - Yes - it encourages creativity...and general health! If you're not sporty....I didn't enjoy PE in school, but if there had been a dance or movement lesson, I would have enjoyed it. Dance helps kids with expression...and their confidence. I will send my child to dance classes because I think it gives people a good posture.

SP- Is that important?

BB - yes, I think that in can actually help you to achieve more. You're more likely to get ahead than if you hold yourself badly and look introverted. Good posture makes you look engaging - I think more statuesque people get further in life. I used to work as a receptionist and used my past dance training then. I held myself well, smiled and made good eye contact. It teaches you confidence.

SP - Do you think the country actually benefits from the arts? Things like theatre, film,

galleries..?

BB- Yes, I wouldn't like to think of a world without the arts. We all need escapism! The arts educate us..gives us information...

SP- Like what?

BB - Like if you watch documentaries - true life creates interest. And of course a country is nothing without people and what a boring society we would live in. It would be so dull..

SP - maybe not if your interests didn't lie within the arts?

BB - Well the tourists that come to the country come here to see our art, our plays and infamous west end theatre, not a maths museum. I think the obvious love of the arts speaks for itself.

SP- The world of acting and dancing is notoriously hard to sustain as a profitable occupation..

BB - yes..

SP - ..Should we therefore be encouraging secondary school students to pursue areas in academic subjects rather than creative?

BB - (long pause) that's a difficult one...You have to have more than one string to your bow. The theatre industry is much more....My husband's father was an actor back in the 1970s and he toured with rep companies. And the UK film industry was really healthy. Now it's overcrowded and so many actors are out of work, which could stem from the recession or just over population. Even plumbers need to be good at lots of things now. I would say it's advisable to work really hard in school and get something you can fall back on...whatever your chosen career is. All school children need to be good at lots of things.

SP - So does that mean academic people can benefit from the arts?

BB- (pause) It would help them as a person. It would bring them out of their shell.

SP- Do you feel your education or knowledge has improved in any way as a direct link to your dance and drama training?

BB- I think so, it helps me as a person. People who have attended drama classes are usually more outgoing and confident. The teenage years are difficult and I know lots of performers that were bullied for going to dance classes. If everyone did it in schools it would be much more acceptable.

SP - Thank you Bethan