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## **INTERVIEW: Performance graduate and Wolfblood star, Rachel Teate**

Since leaving Northumbria in 2009, Rachel Teate has starred in popular CBBC children's programmes 'The Dumping Ground' and 'Wolfblood' as well as working on a number of theatre productions with Live Theatre – one of Northumbria's key cultural partners. In 2016, Rachel will star as Anne Bronte in a new film about the Bronte sisters. Northumbria journalism graduate, Rosie Willan, caught up with Rachel to find out more about her experiences as an actress and why Newcastle is a place which is close to her heart.

You graduated from Northumbria in 2009 with first-class honours in

Performing Arts. Why did you initially choose to study here? I have always loved Newcastle and when I came for the open day I really enjoyed the feel of Northumbria – the tutors had all been professionals in the industry so I could learn from their experiences. I found the course content extremely interesting and similar to some of the more expensive drama schools I had also looked at.

Newcastle is known as being one of the UK's top student cities, alongside London. How did you enjoy living here as a student? It was unreal, best city, such amazing experiences. I loved being in the city and experiencing all it had to offer.

What was the highlight of your time at Northumbria University? During my course, it was our 3<sup>rd</sup> year performance of *Into The Woods* which was directed by Elaine Tyler Hall from the English National Opera. The advice she gave was invaluable. I still have her name on my CV and it often gets mentioned in auditions. In my personal life, I would say joining the Cheerleading Squad was a massive highlight. We won the National Cheerleading Championships and I made such amazing friends who I'm still best friends with today.

How did your course prepare you for a professional career in acting? The main focus of my course was how to look at texts, interpret them and devise my own work. This prepared me well for work in the theatre. I also learnt different methodologies from varying practitioners, which I can use when preparing for a role.

You are currently playing Anne Bronte in a film about the Bronte sisters. Could you tell us a little more about this? I can't say too much about the Bronte film at the moment, but the job came about after I worked for the director on his student film years ago. This just shows that working hard and being professional at every stage can be really beneficial for your career.

I haven't ever played a character that is so well known – which means that every person will have an idea of who Anne Bronte was and how she should look and act but it will be down to the director's vision along with my input to see what we create. I have done lots of research to try and make her as accurate as possible. Now I can't wait to get onto set and get started!

Prior to this, you've starred in CBBC's hugely successful *The Dumping Ground* and *Wolfblood*, both of which are filmed in the North East. What is it like to

star in such popular programmes? It is brilliant! I am very lucky that I absolutely love my job and have such a passion for it. The rush of adrenaline I get when I see my shows on TV is best feeling in the world.

What sort of acting opportunities are there in the region? There are lots of opportunities in the region, especially for theatre, and there is a huge rise for fringe theatre. The support for devising your own work is very strong in the North East. Film and TV work round here is less frequent but the work that the region produces is of such a good standard that there will always be something going on here. You just have to find the opportunities and go after them.

Previously, you've worked with Live Theatre in Newcastle, one of Northumbria's key cultural partners. Could you tell us a little about your experiences there? Live Theatre is excellent and so supportive of actors – the directors they use are so giving and really help bring the best out of the person and the text. It's such a great venue with a supportive audience and directors often ask about Live during auditions – it's almost like a seal of approval on your CV having worked there.

What advice would you give to other Performing Arts students today? Take every opportunity you can! Alongside my course, I worked as an extra in films and TV shows, went to Dance City for dance classes and took singing lessons. I appeared in tons of student films in the region and devised my own work to perform whenever I could. I visited the theatre every week to see other actors performing. University is the time when you can enjoy doing as much work as possible and learning from it – you never know where it can lead.

To find out more about Performing Arts at Northumbria please visit the course page [here](#).

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