



Hair, Wigs & Make-Up Apprentice

Case Study

Name: Erin Hills

Where did you see the apprenticeship advertised?

The make-up academy I studied at was made aware of the job & emailed all students about the opportunity.

What made you apply for the apprenticeship?

It was a chance I had to take, I would've been silly not to fill in the application. It takes a small amount of time to fill out an application & that time could & did in fact completely change my life. The opportunities the apprenticeship offers & the first hand work experience, learning from people who are clearly very good at what they do is priceless.

Describe a 'typical day' as an apprentice at the ROH?

My typical working day starts at 10am, well 9.45am counting the cappuccino I get on the way in, from the cafe on -1, it's seriously the best cup of coffee you can get anywhere, I'm sure of it! I get my kit & set up at a free desk in the wig room, I start off by asking either Bridget or Caroline what they would like me to do today, (depending on whether I'm working on Ballet or Opera). There's always plenty to be getting on with during the lead up to shows beginning. If there is a show on, the wigs that need re-doing from the previous performance are brought up & we all get on with our own characters & help each other with the general wigs for the show too. Then we get to work on the show & they are so much fun! The wig room has a really lovely atmosphere, it's normally quite chilled out & everybody is really keen to help me & show me different ways to achieve the look I'm working on if I need it. It's a pleasure working upstairs with the whole department Ballet, Opera & making, we're all in the same room. I've always felt 100% comfortable to be able to ask for any help I may need. I usually finish work around 6pm, of course if there's shows on my shift can vary to do evening performances. I've been at the Opera House for just over 6 months & every time my alarm goes off for work I'm straight out of bed, not many people get to look forward to a day's work as much as I do.

How do you find the workplace/college balance?

It's absolutely fine, I do 2 & a half days at college & 2 full days at work a week. There's lots of college work & homework to be done but I keep on top of it & hand it in as soon as it's set so it doesn't get too much. I've found it really helpful if I'm organised & on top of everything because it means I don't have to stress about anything. Most of the homework set is really creative designing head & face charts, mood boards etc. along with writing so it's not all bad.

What do you enjoy most about your apprenticeship?

Working on the shows. Succeeding & finishing a tricky wig after a few attempts. Getting to know & become part of the team.

Is the apprenticeship what you expected?

It's much more than I expected, I wasn't sure what to expect but it's certainly exceeded. I've never known what I wanted to do in any job until I trained in this industry last year & now I'm doing the apprenticeship at the Opera House I can't imagine ever wanting to work in any other industry.

What are your ambitions for the future?

To work in theatre doing exactly what I'm training to do now. Eventually in the long term I want to be the head of a department or designing.

What advice would you give to someone considering applying for an apprenticeship at the ROH?

Do it! You have nothing to lose, but you could have everything to gain.