

STUDENT WORKSHEET 9

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PERFORMER

Being a performer is an aspirational and exciting job. But have you ever wondered what it takes to stay mentally and physically healthy enough to ‘wow’ audiences day after day? We were lucky enough to speak to two of the incredibly talented members of the original London cast of **BACK TO THE FUTURE: The Musical** to get their personal insights, top tips, and to take a deep dive into a day in the life of a professional performer.



ENSEMBLE MEMBER **RHIANNE ALLEYNE** OPENED UP ABOUT THE REALITIES OF WORKING A TWO-SHOW DAY AND TALKED ABOUT HOW SHE FOCUSES ON HER WELL-BEING SO THAT SHE CAN PERFORM TO THE BEST OF HER ABILITY.

7.30AM – 8AM GET UP & EAT BREAKFAST

“I always make sure I have a really good breakfast. I try and have my biggest meal in the morning because it sets you up. It fuels you. You’re ready to go!” And Rhianne’s right, a good breakfast boosts your energy levels and alertness, while also providing other essential nutrients required for a healthy mind and body.

8.30AM – 11.00 AM – LEISURE TIME

After having breakfast, Rhianne stresses the importance of doing non-work-related activities to keep a healthy work / life balance. (I know singing and dancing every day may not seem like work but it takes a huge amount of physical and mental energy!) Rhianne told me that she finds taking her dog out for a walk, watching a film, or simply doing tasks around the house helps her to stay grounded before a long day of performances.

11AM – THE COMMUTE BEGINS

Rhianne told me that her day starts a little earlier than some of her other fellow cast members as she lives outside of London, giving her a commute of almost two hours! That’s dedication.

12.30PM – ARRIVE AT THE THEATRE

In the half an hour before the warm-up, Rhianne takes the time to settle herself into her dressing room which she shares with four other members of the cast, telling me, “we have a lovely, friendly atmosphere.”

1PM – PHYSICAL WARM UP

This takes place on stage and is led by the company dance captain. It’s important for the performers to maintain a high level of fitness as their day-to-day work is so physically demanding. Warm-ups not only prepare your body for the task ahead, but they also help to prevent the risk of injury and muscle soreness.

1.10PM – VOCAL WARM UP

Just like the physical warm up, vocal warm ups are an essential part of a performer’s day. Vocal warm ups help with breath support, range and vocal stamina whilst preventing the risk of any future damage.

1.20PM – CAST AND CREW CIRCLE

An hour before curtain up the entire cast and crew will gather to check in. This happens every day but Rhianne tells me about a special practice that the cast and crew engage in on weekly check ins which is always sure to keep morale high: “We like to do a ‘company member of the week’: you can nominate someone throughout the week if you feel like they’ve done a great job... There’s something really special about the company of **BACK TO THE FUTURE: The Musical**. We all have this love for each other, respect for each other and we all really enjoy each other’s company.”

1.25PM – FIGHT CALL

Rhianne tells me, “Because there’s a fight sequence in our show, a fight call has to be done every single warm up.” A fight call gives the performers a chance to practise any fight sequences that occur in the show so that they are well prepared when it comes to doing the fight in front of a live audience.

1.35PM – HEAD BACK TO DRESSING ROOMS

During this time performers can continue to get ready for the upcoming show. Rhianne told me how taking pride in her hair and make-up as she prepares for a show is a fun way to take care of her mental wellbeing. “One of my ballet teachers at college told me that if you feel like you look good, it makes you feel good.”

1.55PM – HALF HOUR CALL

This is the call given to the actors and company half an hour before they will be called for the beginning of a performance. Contrary to its name it’s actually given not 30 but 35 minutes before curtain up! The half is the performers’ last chance to get show-ready. Microphones are left outside the performers’ dressing rooms ready to be collected, costumes are put on, make-up finished, and any other final touches are carried out. After this the performers get their quarter hour call at 2.10pm and their five minute call at 2.20pm.

FUN FACT – EACH PERFORMER IS GIVEN A SPECIFIC TIME SLOT TO HEAD TO THE WIG ROOM WHERE THEY WILL BE ASSISTED WITH PUTTING ON THEIR ELABORATE WIGS!

2.25PM – BEGINNERS’ CALL

This is the call for all performers and crew who are involved in the opening of the show to make their way to their starting positions. Curtain will soon be up!

2.30PM – CURTAIN UP SHOW NUMBER 1 BEGINS!

With show number 1 finishing after five o’clock, Rhianne and her fellow cast mates must then get ready to do it all again at 7.30pm – talk about stamina! As Rhianne says, “You do live a perpetual groundhog day. It’s a groundhog day you’ve chosen to live through so it’s okay because it’s amazing and I love my job. I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

6.30PM – GET READY FOR EVENING SHOW

“After we’ve had a short break, we start to get into costume, to do it all over again!”

7.30PM – CURTAIN UP FOR EVENING SHOW

10.30PM – LEAVE THE THEATRE AND TRAVEL HOME.