Rachel Oyawale – From Head Girl to Cambridge via ENO

Now at Caius College Cambridge reading English, Rachel threw herself into everything offered at Woldingham and now is committed to giving back in return.

Rachel has a bright future. Not only does she excel in English, she is a talented and committed singer, who spent part of her gap year between Woldingham and University of Cambridge singing with the English National Opera, along the way winning the Lilian Bayliss Award for outstanding potential in opera.

As one of four children, including two siblings with disabilities, Rachel was only able to attend Woldingham with the support of a bursary. Rachel joined in Year 7 and stayed through to Upper Sixth, when she became Head Girl, leaving in 2018.

Rachel thrived at Woldingham leaving with an impressive set of A Levels and many wonderful memories. From her first role in Year 7 when she starred in Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Coat through to her final performances in the Upper Sixth, Rachel shone on stage at Woldingham's Dineen auditorium.

Rachel said some of her personal highlights included: *'the in between moments before going on stage for a production when we were being hushed in the wings and there's a sort of buzz in the air. And seeing teachers get passionate about the things they were teaching us about.'*

'Receiving a Woldingham bursary changed my life. It made my life in many ways and what I am doing now', said Rachel. *'Being at Woldingham and having that opportunity meant it didn't feel I had any limits because I was being supported throughout and believed in.'*

Rachel's mum, Agnita, is just as thankful: *'Receiving a bursary was one of the best things that happened to our family... [Rachel] hasn't just wanted to take this education for herself but she wants to give back and so a lot of her thinking now, as she attends Cambridge and is looking to the future, is she wants to make a difference.'*

Rachel's first role in Year 7.

Rachel performing in the Upper Sixth.

Rachel and her mum.

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