

## Essay runner-up: Emma Torrens, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Conservatoire

NOUN

A school combining music instruction with academics, drama, or dance. Stemming from the Latin root conservare, which means to preserve.

If they were ever to re-visit the dictionary definition of conservatoire, I would urge it changes to a verb. Because for me, a conservatoire is a place of action, doing, creating, and I'm not sure its current definition gives it enough credit.

Whether you are studying music, composition, acting, design, dance or a combination, you are never just part of a 'thing' or 'idea' (which is the basis of any noun). You are a part of something much bigger than that, you are part of creation.

I first decided to study at a conservatoire in sixth form. There, I had valued being a part of a team of people who were all studying different but similar things. There's something about the electricity in the air when a group of people are all secretly working together for a higher purpose. And there's no other school that embodies that as much as the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

I had never wanted to do Musical Theatre, it found me, in a way. I had studied opera; acting; jazz; dance, dabbled in music and finished my A-Levels at the request of my lamenting mother (even though she herself had run away to join the circus; rebellious artistry obviously runs in the family). I had always envisaged going to a place where I'd be able to do as many of these things as possible, whilst learning new things and exploring myself in other ways too, at the same time, preferably. A big ask of any higher education institution, I know. I had visited a few, fallen in love with most, but when I came up to Scotland for my audition, I felt more accepted, inspired, challenged and encouraged than I ever had, and there's something very addictive about that atmosphere. That's when you know you're somewhere special. I will never forget the weeks preceding my audition, I have never been more lovesick. I obsessed, following anyone who was or ever had been involved with the school on all social media and became giddy with butterflies each time I saw an unread email. Eventually I got my answer, a yes. Elation, fear, doubt, gratitude. But those initial feelings don't come close to the feeling I get each and every day I live my life at this extraordinary school; humbled.

This is a school not only dedicated to daily practice and growth but also to your development as an artist. Collaboration is a huge part of your experience here, one module set aside for creating projects with students across the board. One week of the year dedicated to platforming emerging companies, individuals and raw artistry. And an opportunity to not only watch, but be a part of it, of something bigger.

I know, for Musical Theatre students, the allure of training at an institution specifically designed for us, can be appealing, and almost expected. But no-where other than a conservatoire can teach you more than just what you're there for. I'm learning not only about my industry, but about the whole industry, not just my art, but all art, I'm not just a part of one course, I'm a part of the school. I'm a

part of it all, and what other community is better to spend your most malleable years, learning, growing, preserving. And that's exciting, isn't it?

Conservatoire.

VERB

A group of people combining music instruction with academics, drama or dance, collaboration, inspiration and creation. Stemming from the Latin root conservatoire which means to preserve.

