



**Name:** Rachel Graham

**Age:** 17

**Time involved with the Garage:** 4 years

**Activities:** Arts Award, Breakdance, Creative Foundations Course, Jungle Book Summer Production and Senior Theatre

*I just love being in the Garage and I'll be here forever"*

Rachel first came to the Garage when she was 13, working with some other girls to gain a Bronze Arts Award and taking part in senior drama and breakdance. She describes herself as lacking in self-confidence and being very shy. She did not come back to the Garage until she was 16. At that point she joined the Creative Foundations course and *'absolutely loved it'*. It was a chance to meet new people, have fun and learn about drama in a small group. She thinks that Adam, the course tutor, saw something in her and he encouraged her to take part in the Jungle Book and join Senior Theatre.

Rachel was initially unsure about taking part in Jungle Book because she was one of the older participants. However she met peers who are now her best friends and she describes the 2 weeks as *"one of the best bits of my life"*. She loved all the excitement and enthusiasm and how they had to work really hard to bring the performance together so quickly. She loved playing Shere Khan as it was such a *'dramatic and in your face role'* and enjoyed the *'melodrama'*. She pushed herself to achieve her best and enjoyed her leadership role and the chance to inspire other participants and build their confidence.

Like many of the Creative Foundations participants Rachel has helped other people who are new to the Garage and feeling nervous. She spoke about one new senior theatre participant who didn't really talk and wasn't sure that he wanted to be here. She told him: *"no one will judge you, no one will care what you look like - you're here to do what you enjoy"*.

Rachel loves the Garage because *"it's a safe place and the staff are lovely. Coming here I completely relax because there's nothing to worry about...no matter what happens I've always got a place."*

The Garage team recognise that Rachel is extremely talented and is very hard working and committed. In September 2014 she started at Norwich City College and won Best Newcomer in the Norfolk Arts Awards. She was also nominated for a Bernard Matthews Youth Awards Bravery Award for overcoming many challenges in her life to pursue her love of drama.

