

## BIOGRAPHY

Rakie Ayola grew up in Cardiff, Wales. Membership of South Glamorgan Youth Choir, South Glam Youth Theatre, Orbit Theatre and The National Youth Theatre of Wales lead to a 3 Year Acting Diploma at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (entirely funded by South Glam Education Authority).

Rakie is co-founder of Shanty Productions and she is Executive Producer of the award winning films 'Twelfth Night' (Shanty Productions) and 'Safe Space' (Hidden Arts Films).

Rakie is Patron of the charity, Childhood Tumour Trust (which supports young people and families living with NF1- Neurofibromatosis type1), Eclipse Theatre (the UK's foremost black- lead production company) and Dominique Moore Arts (offering workshops and coaching for young actors). She is a trustee of the charity The Actors' Children's Trust (which provides grants, advice and support to actor-parents).

For the last 30 years Rakie has worked extensively in theatre, tv, film and radio. Classical roles she has played include Lady Macbeth, Helena in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Portia in The Merchant of Venice, Ariel in The Tempest, Viola, Olivia in Twelfth Night, Paulina in The Winter's Tale, and most recently Regan in the Talawa Theatre/ Manchester Royal Exchange production of King Lear which was subsequently screened on BBC4. The many theatre companies she has worked for include The Royal Shakespeare Company, Birmingham Rep, The National Theatre and Shakespeare's Globe. In the West End Rakie has played Siobhan/narrator in 'The Curious Incident of the Dog In The Night Time' and Hermione Granger in 'Harry Potter and The Cursed Child'. Her tv and film work includes Noughts and Crosses, Shetland, No Offence, Doctor Who -Midnight, Holby City, Been So Long and Dredd.

Her workshops and coaching sessions for actors are aimed at finding emotional depth and freedom through classical language and verse.

On the 150th anniversary of his death Rakie took part in a celebration of the life of African American classical actor, theatre manager and pioneer within the arts, Ira Aldridge, (created by Warwick University lecturer Tony Howard).

Following the premiere of Inua Ellams' Half God of Rainfall at The Kiln Theatre, London earlier this year Rakie is currently performing at The Bush Theatre in Caryl Phillips' Strange Fruit, before starting work on Ed Thomas' new play 'On Bear Ridge' for The National Theatre of Wales which opens at the Sherman Theatre Cardiff before transferring to The Royal Court, London.