

Nothing says “responsibility” like a Bachelor of Arts in history and languages.

“I guess I just wanted to have some sort of plan in order,” says actor Emily Edwards of her decision to study at James Cook University in 2009.

“I wasn’t doing much acting or performing while I was studying and then I started doing theatre in Townsville again,” she says.

It wasn’t long before Emily decided to “do the acting thing”, and it was probably the best decision of the confessed gypsy’s life, as she returns to Townsville with a Bachelor of Fine Arts majoring in acting from the prestigious National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA).

The 27-year-old was commissioned straight after graduation by Theatre iNQ to take the lead role in Theatre iNQ’s upcoming production *First Born*.

Adapted and directed by Terri Brabon, the play is a rollercoaster of myth, murder and madness, deeply rooted in Greek mythology.

Emily was born in Alice Springs and has jumped around from the Atherton Tableland to Perth, Townsville and Sydney, and now back to Townsville, to reunite with the people she loves.

“In life you always end up working with the people you like working with,” she says.

“This is especially true for the arts industry because of the way creative collaboration works.”

Her gypsy lifestyle was a result of her father, Timothy Edwards’, work as a pilot with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, taking her and older sister, Angela, and younger brothers, David, Charlie and Jamie, across the country.

After finishing school in Perth, Emily was happy to get back to Townsville and returned to the city to complete her degree at JCU before giving in to her dream of being an actor.

“The difference between liking something and loving something is just really poignant,” she says.

NIDA is renowned for being extremely difficult to get into and Emily auditioned four times before successfully gaining a spot there.

The actress attributes her success to TheatreiNQ’s Bridge Project, devised by artistic director Terri Brabon and production manager Brendan O’Connor.

The program aims to steer regional talent towards a career in the professional industry with a unique place-and-train model developed by theatre professionals for the development of young, emerging performing artists.

“Brendan and Terri fostered



Actor Emily Edwards; above with Theatre iNQ’S Brendan O’Connor and Terri Brabon.

Pictures: SCOTT RADFORD-CHISHOLM, VIOLETTE AYAD, ELIZABETH JAMES

and mentored my creative development and through that, they really helped me,” she says.

“I feel very lucky to have got to work with them and attribute a lot of where I am today to the help these guys gave me.”

As a precocious child, Emily “always just really wanted to be up on the stage”.

“It just seemed like a natural stance,” she says.

Emily, who also sings, is keen to learn all aspects of the industry.

“Terri and Brendan are great examples that you don’t just have to do one thing,” she says.

“You can do lots of different things that will be the funnel for your creative expression.

“They tend to feed off each other, so they still act as well as direct and artistically produce and they’re really great role models of what you can achieve when you set your mind to it.”

The thing that initially struck Theatre iNQ about Emily, Terri says, was that she was incredibly in touch with her emotions.

“Obviously it was also that she’s beautiful, fantastic, got a beautiful speaking voice and as a singer and she’s incredible,” she says.

“When I thought about doing a Greek theatre play, I thought Electra would be a great role for a young actor like Emily who wears her passion as a person.

“She doesn’t have a lot of guards up and she’s not afraid of looking sad or looking angry.

“She wears her heart on her sleeve and that’s kind of quite difficult to find in young actors.”

Emily says her lead, Electra, has been an interesting character to study.

“I always try to bring the character to me, rather than extend to the character if that makes sense,” she says.

“She (Electra) is just this wild animal that is a product of her circumstances and the choices she has made, as we all are, I guess.”

Emily can relate to Electra’s drive and determination and will return to Sydney after *First Born* to continue to pursue her career, which she hopes will take her overseas some day.

“I’m also really passionately a lover of telling Australian stories and contributing to the Australian arts industry,” she says.

“I think there are a lot of stories left to tell for ourselves and I’m excited to be at a point where I get to start contributing to those in a way that’s meaningful.”

First Born runs from June 28 to July 7 at Dancenorth. With opening night already sold out, get your tickets now to avoid disappointment, at theatreinq.com