



*Mo Crow, a show manager at the Royal Albert Hall in London*

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*This programme was first broadcast in 1997*

**Clip      Mo Crow**

I see myself as a West Country girl who has lived all her adult life in London. I think that if I were to get married and have children and give up my career, I would want to go back and live in the countryside again. I think London is a very good place to live for young people.

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**Sue:**      In Private lives today we meet Mo Crow. Mo is 34 years old, and she was born in a small village in the west of England. When Mo was 18, her dream was to work in the theatre. Now, she's a show manager at the Royal Albert Hall in London. As we'll discover, Mo is a determined young woman, who's very enthusiastic about her job. And we'll hear her talk about the house where she lives, her concerns about the environment, as well as what it's like to work behind the scenes at a great British building. First, Mo retraces her steps from working hard for her A level exams in her final year at school, to going on to drama college, and becoming a show manager at one of Britain's most magnificent venues.

**Clip            Mo Crow**

I was determined to get good A level results, so that I could go into whatever career I wanted to. However, what I really wanted to do I think was acting, or presenting, something like that. I soon grew too tall to be an actress - I'm 5 foot, 9 and a half - so I gave up ideas of that and began to think about jobs backstage, such as stage management. I went to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and studied stage management there. Then I worked for a series of small theatre companies and ended up at the Royal Albert Hall.

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**Sue:**            Mo lives in West London and travels to work by bicycle or underground train - depending on the weather. She's home-loving, and a landlady, since she rents one of the rooms in her house to an old friend.

**Clip            Mo Crow**

I live in a Victorian terraced house. It's a small three-bedroom house. It's the first property I have ever owned and I love it. I have a lodger, who I've known for many, many years - he's called Tony - and I like to be at home whenever I can, I like to plan redecorating my home, I love gardening. My favourite room is probably the living room.

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**Sue:**            Mo supports two organisations which campaign to protect the environment, and she saves items of household rubbish, so they can be collected by local government workers and reused.

**Clip      Mo Crow**

I'm very concerned about the environment. I'm a supporter of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. I'm very into recycling - I recycle from home ... paper, card, cans, bottles ... I'm also a vegetarian, not a strict vegetarian because I do eat fish.

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**Sue:**      Mo and her friends make the most of living in London - they often go out to restaurants and bars, and they go to the cinema or theatre at least once a week. Mo feels very fortunate to work at the Royal Albert Hall, which has about 300 shows a year, including classical and pop music concerts, ballet, boxing, comedy acts, tennis, Sumo Wrestling and even ice skating. It's clear that to get to know Mo, we need to appreciate the place where she works.

**Clip      Mo Crow**

If you'd like to come with me now, we'll go up these stairs. This is staircase eleven at the Royal Albert Hall and it's going to take us up to the gallery. From the gallery, we'll get a wonderful view of the whole of the auditorium of the hall.

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**Sue:**      When she reaches the gallery, Mo stands in the back row and proudly surveys the vast auditorium. It's a glorious space, which can hold over 5,000 people. It's like an amphitheatre, with a huge glass and iron dome high above the auditorium and stage. Mo continues our tour, and takes us into a very elegant seating area - bought by Queen Victoria over 125 years ago, and now owned by the present Queen, Queen Elizabeth II.

**Clip            Mo Crow**

We're now standing in the Queen's Box. It's a double-sized Grand Tier box, it has twenty seats in it. Today, we have an event on called "Youth Makes Music" and the orchestra are on stage, they're about to start rehearsing, they're all youths of sixteen or seventeen who once a year come in and have the hall for the day - this is after all the nation's Village Hall.

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**Sue:**            Many villages in Britain, like the one Mo grew up in, have a village hall where local events take place - such as summer fetes, amateur theatre group productions, and even wedding parties. The Royal Albert Hall is a grand-scale venue where ballet companies and orchestras from around the world can perform to huge audiences. One of Mo's most precious memories as a member of an audience at the hall is of a pop concert.

**Clip            Mo Crow**

I think my favourite type of music is probably rock music, if I'm honest, and my favourite artist has to be Eric Clapton.

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**Sue:**            Managing a show like that Eric Clapton concert, is Mo's job. She finds out in advance what technicians and musicians will need, discusses what they can put where, and then informs staff at the hall how the show will be managed. Mo takes us to meet her colleague, Adrian Bray, the Technical Show Manager at the Royal Albert Hall. He's in charge of what he calls the "butch side" of putting on events - hanging lights, flying in scenery, laying cables ...

**Clip            Adrian Bray**

Typically at 7 o'clock in the morning, three or four articulated trucks will pull up outside the Royal Albert Hall laden to the gunwales with kit that has to be brought into the building, installed and made to work in time for a performance at seven o'clock that evening. So to get all this kit in, I'll be rushing up to the roof and rigging chain hoists to pick up the lighting tresses and the speakers. I'll be crawling about underneath the stage, laying in cables that allow the lighting controller to operate the lights, the sound controller to operate the sound etc. etc. It's a long old day, and it's very nice at 2 o'clock in the morning to close the doors, collapse back down into the Show Management office and have a cup of tea and say, "There, another show well done!".

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**Sue:**            Adrian and Mo work together so that a show is taken care of technically, artistically, and safely.

**Clip            Mo Crow**

We're now in the centre of the roof of the Royal Albert Hall - we call this the Corona. We're standing 140 feet, or 40 metres, above the arena floor. We're standing on a wire gauze - it's very strong so we're quite safe, but we're a long way up, looking down!

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**Sue:**            From here, balloons and streamers are dropped once a year at the end of a lively evening of classical music, known as the last night of the Proms. The Proms is an annual series of about 70 concerts - featuring music from all over the world. Preparing for these concerts is a very exciting and demanding time for Mo and Adrian. The last night of the Proms is like a huge party, and it ends with a celebration of British music.

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**Clip                      Mo Crow and Adrian Bray**

**Mo:** The last night of the Proms is probably our most famous event here at the hall. It's a celebration of British music. But not only that - it's a huge party for all the Promers - that is the audience of the Proms who have been to most of the Prom concerts during the season.

**Adrian:** For me, it's another long night at work. As soon as the television cameras have switched off, and the last of the Promers has left the building, I have to go on stage and wade through yards of ticker tape and streamers and party poppers and start sweeping it all up, and taking all the lights down, and putting all the cameras away - and it's a long night's work. But it's the build-up to the Proms - 70-odd shows earlier that's a very exciting period. It is a fantastic celebration of music, it's world-renowned, and I'm very, very proud to be a part of it

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**Sue:**                      To end the programme, Mo talks about a member of her family whom she confides in, and who has always inspired her.

**Clip                      Mo Crow**

I think the person I admire most in my family is my grandmother. She's now 99 years old. She's a very well-respected member of our family. She's a very determined woman, full of courage, she always speaks her mind, and even now that she's in bed all the time, she lives at an old people's home, she's still very forthright with her views. I think in some ways I'm like her but I try to be a little more diplomatic than she's always been!

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