



Alumnus Gareth Davies
Subject Music and Drama
Graduated 1995
Place of Work The Presenter Studio
Position Co-Director



Gareth's career started at the BBC where he worked for nearly 10 years before going freelance, making shows for ITV, Channel 4 and the BBC. Gareth is the Founder and Co-Director of The Presenter Studio. The Presenter Studio is a talent development agency that trains, creates and breaks TV presenting talent. It offers a variety of professional presenter training giving exceptional training, insider knowledge and invaluable career advice you won't find anywhere else.

Why did you want to study Music and Drama at Royal Holloway?

I was very aware of Royal Holloway's reputation and I knew that would help me find work when I finished. I wanted to combine my love of Music and Drama and Royal Holloway seemed the perfect place. Back then if you wanted to get into Music your choices were Oxford, the Royal Academy of Music, or Royal Holloway. When I was applying I knew that in the Music Department I was going to be with the crème de la crème of music students in the UK.

The Drama department was very creative and brilliant for the practical element. There were lots of opportunities for me to develop my skills – I got to be in everything from Shakespeare to modern plays. I worked with some incredible people like Jackie Clune: a lecturer you could really aspire to be like. The course was also very academic and pushed you to hone your writing skills. I've found this of great use since leaving the College.

Has the College changed much since you last visited?

The College has really moved with the times – there are so many new buildings everywhere. I just can't believe the juxtaposition between the heritage of the beautiful Founder's, and then

the great bubble of the School of Management just round the corner. With it being a campus university it is so important that you like your surroundings and this is a brilliant place to come and be a student – never mind come on holiday quite frankly!

What is the most important thing that Royal Holloway has taught you?

I always felt that at Royal Holloway I had the best chance possible of being the best I could possibly be. I got a real sense of confidence that I didn't have when I began my degree and by the time I left I felt that I could succeed in whatever it was I chose to do. I think that coming to Royal Holloway gives you a certain sense of confidence because you are mixing with such talented people as well as some truly brilliant lecturers.

What has been your career path so far?

My first job in television was as a runner for a post production house in Soho. I did everything from making tea to emptying the bins. Then I applied for a job at the BBC as an Assistant Floor Manager and got it – I was quite unlike the other applicants as they had come directly from the theatre. It was my experience as a runner and my degree that got me the job.

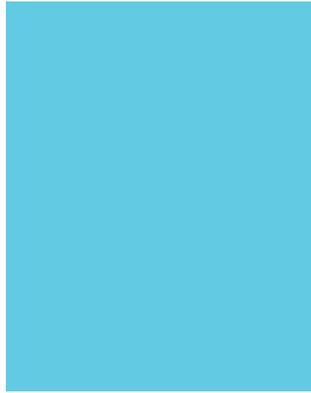
Great minds *go on to* great places

As an Assistant Floor Manager I looked after the artists on shows like Top of the Pops. I'd organise the presenters and artists on set and make sure they were where they needed to be. I was at the BBC for nine years and whilst there I worked on everything from Blue Peter to Eurovision and from the Royal Variety Show to Later with Jools Holland. Then I decided I wanted to use my creative side a bit more so I became a Researcher. As a Researcher on Liquid News (a daily, live, irreverent news show on BBC3) I began creating my own story and programme ideas.

I worked my way up from Researcher to Producer in quite a short amount of time. As a Producer I came up with my own TV series called 'Liquid Profiles' – a show that followed a celebrity for a day. Every person has a different story to tell and it was fascinating finding out who the real person was behind the glossy facade. It was a great show and we featured some brilliant celebrities from Kiefer Sutherland to Kylie Minogue. After Liquid News I worked as an Assistant Producer on Strictly Come Dancing. I cast the judges' panel and also came up with the idea of putting the live band on – I thought it would be a great opportunity to have live music back on television.



Royal Holloway
University of London



people with passion

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Music entertainment shows were the best ones to do. So You Think You Can Dance was a brilliant series to work on as there was music, dance and performance. I think it reflects best what I learnt at Royal Holloway – which was how to look at things creatively and put shows together. When it comes to big Saturday night programmes it's about trying to visualise something that is very different to what everyone else is doing.

What does The Presenter Studio do?

I set up The Presenter Studio eighteen months ago as for years I had people coming to me who'd been on programs like the Weakest Link and wanted to become presenters but weren't sure how. There seemed to be a gap in the market to help those who had a genuine talent but didn't know how to harness it. As a talent development agency we help create TV personalities not presenters. We work hard with individuals to find out what their brand is. Then we embrace and create three key points through various filming scenarios in order for them to be packaged. Our weekend course called the Fast Track TV Presenter Programme is for a maximum of five people and is an intensive two-day programme that covers studio and location presenting as well as a screen test. We also do one on one presenter training courses where we take

individuals and create a complete talent taster tape with them. I love working with people and getting them on screen.

Why did you want to come back and run a workshop for the current students?

The College was, and still is, such an important part of my life that it was incredible to come back. The creative industry can be slightly daunting at times and it is often about who you know so through the workshop I was trying to share my industry based knowledge to help give the students an edge. I find helping people realise their potential extremely rewarding.

My workshop was a window to what we do at The Presenter Studio. Our approach is incredibly rare and offers an insight into what can be quite an inaccessible industry. It is important to me to take time to impart knowledge, share mistakes and give tips in order to help current students.

What exciting projects are you working on at the moment?

I'm setting up another business called The TV Studio where we are trying to get programmes commissioned through the contacts we've made and really build upon what we started with The Presenter Studio. We've already started our first

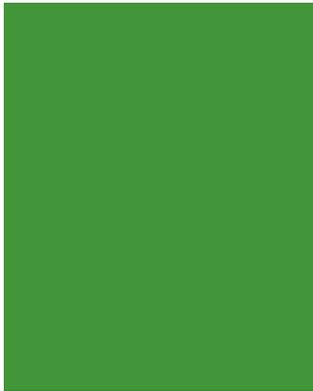
programme and are currently working on a pilot for the BBC and Channel 5. I'm always working or developing some new project: in this industry you have to have the passion and energy to see it through.

What advice would you give to students who would like to pursue a career in television?

I would advise them to network – try and find the people like myself whose job it is to hire. Find the back door rather than trying formal job advertisements and use social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in order to build connections with people.

You really have to be sure you want a career in television as it an amazing but tough industry. You've got to work hard: the industry demands long hours and patience.

To find out more about The Presenter Studio please visit www.presenterstudio.com



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