



**Alumnus Subject Graduated Place of Work Position** Luke Taylor and Gav Rowe  
BA Media Arts  
1999  
Bigballs Films  
Founders and Directors



Gav and Luke founded BAFTA nominated Bigballs Films in 2005 and since then the company has gone from strength to strength. Bigballs have created, distributed and monetised some of the most pioneering social entertainment to date, alongside delivering ground-breaking and award-winning advertising campaigns with some of the World's most forward thinking agencies and brands.

# Great minds go on to great places



### Were you considering any other universities before joining RHBNC?

**Luke:** I was looking at Bristol and Bournemouth but Royal Holloway was always my number one – it was the best place I came to visit. Also, the course was half academic and half creative and that was exactly what I was looking for.

**Gav:** I was studying Fine Art at school and I had a number of offers from Fine Art institutions like the Slade. Film was my second love and quite last minute I decided that I wanted to study it. So I looked around and was really impressed by the course and Royal Holloway generally. I don't think I actually applied anywhere else! The course offered lots of different options so I was able to utilise my art and design background. If you had passion for film and wanted to be artistic in some way this was the place to be.

### What is your fondest memory of Royal Holloway?

**Gav:** Apart from the sun drenched summers in the Quad there were interesting, charismatic and slightly lunatic teachers. It wasn't very strict here – you either did the work or you didn't. Of course if you didn't do the work you'd fail!

**Luke:** I remember how the course brought people together in a natural, creative and unimposing way. I can look back now on all the people from the course and think of many, many good times.

### How did you meet each other?

**Luke:** The first time we met was outside of our course. It was in the first year and I'd been to the Students' Union Fare and joined the Afro Caribbean Society and Basketball team. Anyway, I saw this long haired dude (who I actually thought was a girl) playing with a basketball. He was trying to bounce the ball up the steps and it shot off and I just got caught the ball. We both got chatting and realised we were both going to basketball trials though neither of us got in.

**Gav:** Then we started working together. Every time we had an individual project we would help each other out and when we had group projects we always worked together.

### Why did you decide to work together?

**Luke:** It was final year and we were both like "hmm what are we going to do? Do you want to do something together?" we were very in tune with what we both wanted to do creatively and have remained so to this day.

**Gav:** We left university and we knew we had to get jobs but we thought let's do something together. Looking back there was also a real entrepreneurial spirit about us.

### What did you enjoy most about studying in the Media Arts Department?

**Luke:** There were some great personalities in the department and people who helped us loads. I feel blessed because of the people we got to work with while we were at the College.

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

**Gav:** To be able to work with other people. Working with others, listening and being willing to share your ideas was essential. It prepared you to go and work in an environment where you get paid for your creativity because if you don't have the right attitude then you don't get paid.

### What has been your career path since leaving Royal Holloway?

**Luke:** We actually got our first job at the College's Summerball where we offered to do a music video for one of the acts – Dodgy. We then took the video to A-Z Films. At 21 years old we were the youngest signed Directors in London with Bullet



# people with passion

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Films. At Bullet we were producing music videos for the Ministry of Sound and produced two number 1 music videos. Then we were head hunted to Partizan where we worked as Directors. In 2005 we set up Bigballs Films. Now we are a company that make TV shows, run YouTube channels, work with brands direct, ad agencies and work for ourselves.

**Gav:** We've worked with some incredible people; McFly, Elbow, Paolo Nutini, Lupe Fiasco, Bloc Party, Working Titles, Channel 4, Nokia, Vodafone, we also used the power of content to help launch Mark Ronson and Calvin Harris in the UK, and we've been BAFTA nominated twice (for Innovation in Broadcasting and Innovation in Content Creation). With the birth of YouTube we wanted to get involved in content creation not just music videos.

## What inspired you to work together to create Bigballs Films?

**Gav:** The changing media landscape. People were consuming media in a completely different way than ever before with the advent of social media channels meant that we could make more cash from creating content than music videos. We wanted to start working for ourselves.

**Luke:** It is empowering, special and unique. I enjoy being in the position where you are the controller and you are able to constantly build on what you do.

## What has been your favourite project to work on?

**Luke:** The first job we ever did as Directors. That was the most fun I'd ever had and I got paid for it. It was out in Barcelona. We had to do our own casting, choose our Director of Photography everything.

**Gav:** One of the defining moments for me was Kate Modern as it was then that we really realised that communicating with the audience was key. My favourite project was for Nokia which saw Luke and I living in LA and Shanghai. It was all 5 star hotels with Stevie Wonder playing by the pool!

## What exciting projects are you working on at the moment?

**Gav:** One of our latest projects, iamplyr, is going great guns. It is a first person adventure game delivered through Facebook where you live the life of a professional football player through an eco system of mini games and story bubbles. Bigballs is interesting because of the combination of all the work it does. We've also been working on a Yazoo and Wagon Wheel commercial too. I wouldn't say they are the most exciting projects but what is exciting is that we are a traditional production company working with brands and advertising agencies but we are also pushing the envelope

with the games, YouTube etc. We are also working with Broadcast on some interesting projects. We've just completed a pilot called Fishing Trouble which is big fish fishing in war zones. So we've been down to Sudan, hung out with George Clooney and found out about the local politics. The plan is to go fishing with the Pirates in Somali because they were fishermen before they were kidnappers. Their waters were over farmed and so they turned to something else.

## What do you hope to achieve in the next ten years?

**Luke:** I'd like to continue to build the company as a modern media production company. I'd also really like to direct a feature film with Gav.

**Gav:** The one thing we wanted to do by getting into this game was convince people there was a market in social entertainment – that you can do something with brands and audience to bring them together. We think that absolutely everyone is creative, that's why Instagram and Draw Something are so huge – people are just looking for an outlet. We want to be an international player again.

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