

# Craigmount old boy returns from Hollywood

A former Craigmount High School pupil who swapped the street lights of Corstorphine for the bright lights of Hollywood, returned to the school giving senior pupils an insight into what it's like to have a career in the entertainment industry.

Gavin Laing, an award-winning Scottish writer and producer, left the west of Edinburgh school in 2008 to study Film & Television at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

With a passion for family entertainment, he made a short children's film which won him several awards and led to the opportunity to work for the BBC children's department where he remained for four years before the glitz and glamour of Hollywood beckoned.

Since his move to LA, Gavin has worked for Sony Pictures Animation, where he was involved in the animated movies Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse and Hotel Transylvania 3. He currently works for the Gotham Group, the Hollywood-based management and production firm behind The Maze Runner trilogy, which has made over \$1 billion worldwide.



Gavin and some of the Craigmount pupils he met on his visit Gavin, 28 said: "Ever since I was young I've enjoyed entertaining people and had a passion for telling stories. I started making films with friends throughout high school, and my drama teacher Laura Thompson encouraged me to pursue this passion and consider a career working in the entertainment industry."

"In the 10 years since I left school I've had amazing career opportunities and it was only right that I came back to Craigmount High to share my experience with budding arts and drama pupils, and hopefully inspire others to consider a future working in entertainment."

Gavin was recently honoured at the BAFTA Britannia Awards ceremony in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles in October, billed as BAFTA's biggest event outside of the UK.

The event is hosted to honour and celebrate the careers of exceptional members of the entertainment industry. This year the honourees were Emilia Clarke, Cate Blanchett, Jim Carrey, Kevin Feige, Damian Lewis and Steve McQueen. The ceremony was hosted by comedian Jack Whitehall.



During the ceremony, BAFTA recognised emerging talent by celebrating the recently announced BAFTA US Scholars of which Gavin is one, having been awarded the Tom Hunter Foundation Scholarship in recognition of his extraordinary talents as a writer and producer.

Laura Thompson, Curriculum Leader of Performing Arts at Craigmount, added: "Gavin knocked on the door of the Drama Staff Base on my first day of term in my new job as Principal Teacher of Drama at Craigmount. He pitched the idea of a student-led production of Little Shop of Horrors and assured me that he could be trusted as the man in charge. He was right. His passion, commitment and energy for the project was clear to see.

"Even as a Sixth year student, he was able to bring out the best in those he worked with and lead them to reach an end goal. The production was a great success and, moreover, he managed to do this without letting his school work suffer. He achieved an 'A' in Advanced Higher Drama, specialising in Directing, and deservedly so.

"A great talent, a hard worker and a genuinely nice guy, I am so pleased to hear he has continued to pursue his dream with success. He's definitely one to watch!"