



PRESS RELEASE

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Kinks star Ray Davies “wanted to be art history teacher”

Rock star receives Honorary Degree from London Met

The Kinks frontman Ray Davies has revealed that he would have pursued a career in education had he not found success in music.

The rock and roll star, who penned some of the biggest hits of the last 50 years, said he has always harboured an ambition to become an art history teacher.

Speaking at London Metropolitan University’s summer graduation ceremony – where he was capped and gowned to receive an honorary Doctor of Letters degree – Davies said that if he had his time again, he might have made some very different choices.

“I would’ve liked to have become an art history teacher,” said the 70-year-old from Highgate in North London. “It still hurts me a bit that I didn’t.”

The rock star is, however, now finally fulfilling his ambition of teaching, although it’s not his knowledge on Rembrandt (one of his favourite artists) that he’ll be passing on to future generations.

The mastermind behind Kinks classics Lola, Waterloo Sunset and You Really Got Me has dedicated his time in recent years to developing and promoting young British song writers, and has recently been involved with the North London Young Songwriters competition at Bruce Castle Museum.

Now, he is looking to establish his own song writing school and foundation to encourage and support emerging young musicians.

Davies believes both teaching and learning should focus on creativity – something he thinks is sorely lacking in schools.

“Creativity is still relatively low on the priority list in schools,” said Davies in front of this year’s graduating students at London’s Barbican Centre. “If you can create through being creative then it’s good for the soul.”

The musician became an honorary Doctor of Letters alongside hundreds of London Met graduates at the ceremony on 29 July.

Davies is north London born and bred, which is one of the reasons he was chosen as a London Met honorary graduate. He said: “This is special for me because I’m a Londoner. The University is very near to where I grew up in Islington.”

An integral part of the London Met’s mission is to transform lives through education – and that was the big reason behind Davies’ acceptance of the offer.

Speaking to the audience, which he joked was “the biggest crowd I’ve played to since the Olympics,” Davies said: “When I was young, university was for the posh and privileged. Even today there are those who, because of financial circumstances, are unable to fulfill their promise. So I am accepting this on behalf of those not as lucky as me.”

Davies applauded London Met for helping to widen access to university, the diversity of the year’s graduating class and the wide range of courses on offer which encourage creativity. He said: “Creativity is a human right – not just for the privileged few but for everyone.”

The Kinks were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1990. Ray Davies was also inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Songwriters Hall of Fame this year. Davies was awarded a CBE in 2004 for Services to Music.

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