Torchwood star takes shot at Russell T Davies ‘gay actors’ argument after playing beloved bisexual character

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Torchwood star Gareth David-Lloyd has responded to Russell T Davies’ remarks on why straight actors shouldn’t play LGBT+ characters in film and television.

Russell T Davies waded into the never-ending debate earlier this week in an interview for the Radio Times, where the showrunner explained why “authenticity” is key when casting gay roles.

“I’m not being woke about this… but I feel strongly that if I cast someone in a story, I am casting them to act as a lover, or an enemy, or someone on drugs or a criminal or a saint,” he said. “They are not there to ‘act gay’ because ‘acting gay’ is a bunch of codes for a performance.

“It’s about authenticity, the taste of 2020.”

He added: “You wouldn’t cast someone able-bodied and put them in a wheelchair, you wouldn’t Black someone up. Authenticity is leading us to joyous places.”

Davies’ comments contributed to a discussion on the lack of LGBT+ representation in media, and whether marginalised minorities should be given the opportunity to portray themselves in queer stories.

The debate obviously resonated with David-Lloyd, who is straight but was cast by Davies as the gay character Ianto Jones in the 2004 series Mine All Mine.

He also played a bisexual character by the same name in Davies’ popular Doctor Who spinoff Torchwood, which saw Ianto have a loving relationship with the omnisexual Captain Jack Harkness (played by John Barrowman).

“Ianto’s sexuality was complex, but interesting that I got the role partly based on the strength of a gay character I played for Russell T Davies in Mine All Mine. But then I suppose we all make mistakes,” he tweeted on Saturday (16 January).

Fans were quick to respond with their support for David-Lloyd, whose performance as Ianto was so popular that after he was killed in Torchwood’s third series a shrine was created for the character in Cardiff. It has remained in place for the past 12 years.

“You play Ianto as the fantastically-written character he is and a layered, complex person,” commented one, “never a caricature or stereotype like some of of the roles and actors currently under scrutiny – and continue to be supportive of LGBT+ people and fans.”

https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/01/17/gareth-david-lloyd-ianto-jones-torchwood-russell-t-davies-gay-actors-lgbt-roles/