

= Max Pirkis =

Max Pirkis ( born 6 January 1989 ) is an English actor . Appearing in two productions during the mid @-@ 2000s , Pirkis made his film debut in Master and Commander : The Far Side of the World ( 2003 ) after the film crew recruited him at his school , Eton College . In a critically praised performance , he won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Most Promising Newcomer and the Young Artist Award for Best Young Actor in an International Film . Two years later , Pirkis was cast in the BBC / HBO television series Rome as Gaius Octavian , a role he held until 2007 .

= = Personal life = =

Pirkis was born in London on 6 January 1989 . His mother is a publisher , and he has a sister . After being educated at Eton College , Pirkis began attending St Catharine 's College , Cambridge , where he read Theology . There , he was captain of the college 's football team in 2009 .

= = Career = =

= = = Master and Commander = = =

Pirkis started his acting in school plays while attending Eton , though he never took them seriously . Although unsure what he wanted to do with his life , Pirkis was cast for his first professional role in 2003 , when he appeared in the successful film , Master and Commander : The Far Side of the World . The hire occurred after production staff visited Eton to hire boys for the ship 's teenage crew . Pirkis attended a workshop and auditions as " a joke " , ultimately securing the part of the 13 @-@ year @-@ old , eventually one @-@ armed midshipman Lord Blakeney of HMS Surprise . Director Peter Weir thought Pirkis " stood out very early on , but not to the extent that you see in the film . That was a complete surprise . " According to Pirkis , he was at first " nervous " about acting with Russell Crowe , but changed his mind when he realised that Crowe was " a pretty normal guy . "

One of four teenage actors chosen for the film , Pirkis began researching the history of the Royal Navy and the Napoleonic Wars to prepare himself for the role , before ultimately spending six months shooting the film . Weir soon discovered that Pirkis had " an old actor 's soul in his body , " and consequently gave him more acting challenges . Because his character loses an arm , Pirkis wore a prosthetic stump on set ; tucking his real arm to the side , he practised how to write and eat using only his left arm . Pirkis completed the amputation scene in two takes , thinking of the death of a family friend for inspiration .

Soon after being cast in Master and Commander , Pirkis was contracted to be represented by Hollywood talent agency ICM . The income he earned for the film was placed into a bank , making him wait until he turned eighteen . For his role , Pirkis received critical acclaim and won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Most Promising Newcomer and the Young Artist Award for Best International Performance by a Young Actor at the 25th Young Artist Awards . Pirkis was also nominated for Best Performance by a Youth in a Lead or Supporting Role ? Male at the 4th Phoenix Film Critics Society Awards . Jeremiah Kipp of Slant Magazine praised Pirkis , writing that he " makes a winning impression as midshipman Lord Blakeney , a pugnacious one @-@ armed lad who imitates the masculine bravado of Crowe and the bookish reserve of Bettany . "

= = = Rome = = =

In 2005 , Pirkis made his television debut . Until 2007 , Pirkis played Gaius Octavian ( later to become Caesar Augustus ) in the BBC / HBO television series Rome . Many critics highlighted Pirkis and his character for praise . At the beginning of the first season , The Washington Post columnist Tom Shales remarked : " Played both knowingly and innocently by Max Pirkis , he gives the audience something it desperately needs ... a character to root for , or at least care about . "

During the second series , Pirkis was replaced by Simon Woods in order for the show to depict an older version of the character .

= = Filmography = =