

BBC Charter Review Consultation
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2 - 4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH

20 March 2004

Dear Sir/Madam

BBC CHARTER REVIEW CONSULTATION KEY QUESTIONS

Thanks for asking. My response is as follows:

1st bullet point – What do you value most about the BBC? News (including online), documentaries, comedies.

Subjects it covers less well ... or not at all. The live Sunday church service is neither entertainment nor information. It is a way of being part of a congregation when you cannot – for whatever reason – physically go to a church.

According to the last census there are over 70% self-declared Christians in the UK. These would therefore not be offended if such programmes were broadcast. Not many of them would want to watch Sunday worship – most of those who wish to do so can go to church. The remainder is only a minority but these are often people with special needs. If the mid-morning slot is too popular, perhaps a live link with the BBC Radio 4 Sunday morning worship could be a solution?

Christians in particular are the group for whom Sunday is a holy day, because it is the day of the resurrection of Jesus from death. Items such as *The Heaven and Earth Show* could be shown on Saturdays.

A Sunday Citizenship Class Catering for the children of those 70% is sometimes adequate – on ITV with programmes such as *The Ark* (10 out of 10?) and *Story Keepers* (7 out of 10). I feel it is very important to broadcast such programmes for non-churchgoers. As well as taking some care of children's spirituality, these programmes provide moral education.

I certainly detect an anti-Christian bias even – or especially – in some of the documentaries dealing with Christian subjects.

Classical music etc. Most programmes are now accompanied by upbeat, 'pop' music, which many of us find unpleasant. Again, perhaps a link with radio might cater for those who, like myself, would prefer different music to accompany programmes. I have, of course, tried turning down the TV volume, putting on some music and using subtitles. But ~~this~~ ^{and} this, obviously, cuts off all TV sounds ^{and} it forces you to read, when you really wish to watch the pictures.

This could also apply to some programmes that have music ~~that~~ ^{which} is drowned by commentary and crowd noises. I am referring to ice skating and pageantry shows, where radio could perhaps provide the music, with the commentary being strictly between music pieces. The crowd noise might be unavoidable, but some music-sensitive commentary could cater for some BBC-neglected music lovers.

Another of the least well served minorities are lovers of classical ballet (+ Shakespearean comedies and light opera). I find the absence of dance on the BBC particularly unfair because you can hear music on the radio but with dance you need to watch a show.

This anti-classics culture means that the BBC is not educating the public. The success of the Classic FM radio station ~~alone~~ ^{e.g.} shows that perhaps the BBC is neglecting what could be a potential majority. Even more so if other cultures were included e.g. Indian sacred dance.

More generally speaking, exotic shows seem to be almost non-existent on the BBC.

P.T.O.

4th bullet point Should the BBC run commercial services? These lead to having commercials on television NO thanks. There are already too many - far too many - commercials on the BBC.

5th bullet point How should we pay for the BBC? No ideas - unless technology achieves a pay-as-you-watch system.

8th bullet How do we ensure that the BBC is properly accountable to the public and Parliament?

Accountability is ... even just one actress suing for on-screen sexual harassment/abuse ... or ... a viewer suing a BBC (or other) performer for indecent on-screen exposure.

I certainly feel there is far too much explicit sex, violence, bad language, and general vulgarity. This has been the case for many years now. Often, even when reporting on a deceased person, the programme makers' main preoccupation seems to be that the dead cannot sue.

Use of technology A relatively more recent unpleasantness is aggressive camera-work - it is physically difficult to watch many programmes in part. Some of the old days' camera work ensured that the movement of the picture would not cause giddiness to the viewers. The contrary seems to happen now. This is added to sudden bright flashes. Is the BBC (and others) damaging the audience's eyesight?

There are also aggressive images, seemingly aimed to disturb the viewer, such as anti-social close-ups and loud whisperings, often without warning. It seems that, as we keep on watching TV, we learn to put up with it, and are conditioned enough to see/hear the next - even worse - lot, in a progressing downward spiral, ending where? Even the images between programmes are generally more aggressive on BBC 1 than on other TV channels. One seriously wonders whether those in charge started their careers as small children defacing the walls in their neighbourhoods. Now, thanks to their BBC jobs, they can disturb - even abuse - a much wider neighbourhood and a great deal more efficiently than by just spraying paint and general vandalism.

Discrimination Gender and age discrimination seem to me to be very much present at the BBC ... doesn't it just show?.. at least with all those on-screen jobs-for-the-boys - and young boys at? Whatever happened to the 'listen to your elders?' I perceive imbalance, lack of even and fair representation for viewers and would-be viewers.

IF, as a society, we keep climbing up the civilisation ladder, eventually the looking back will be at the bad old days, when the BBC was seemingly being run by a bunch of rowdy, overgrown teenagers.

Still - I'm sure the BBC is one of the best TV broadcasters in the world - a matter of world wide standards being low? A sad, sad world?

With all best wishes *and thanks for the good broadcasting,*
Kind regards *which is part of the BBC as well.*

Jb Cali

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