

17th March 2004

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in response to your leaflet 'Your BBC Your Say'.

My comments are as follows;

1) What I value most about the BBC. The fact that there are no breaks during programmes. Films and the few plays there are can be viewed without the numerous advertising breaks that we get on Commercial Stations. However as far as content is concerned I find that most of the programmes are very similar to those on the Commercial Stations, with too many 'Reality' and Sports programmes and not enough on Arts subjects. I also deplore the fact that the BBC especially seem to think that the public want to spend hour after hour watching the same type of programme. I cannot believe that anyone wants to watch golf for 9 hours at a stretch for days on end as happened last summer. I certainly find that cluttering up the schedules with hours and hours of Sport is very frustrating.

2) I do not have the 'internet' so have no comments on this except to say that it gets rather boring that every programme seems to want the audience to join in with comments. I am sure that most of these, which incidentally we never hear, are really not worth knowing. I have 'Freeview' Digital television which I would watch more often if there was more of interest. At present BBC4 the so called Arts Channel shows too many programmes which are (to me) rather uninteresting, with far too many repeats in too short a time. More Classical Music, Opera and good plays would find me watching more often. I rarely watch BBC3 as I realise that it is not for my generation and as I get my news from the BBC mainly on BBC1 I don't watch News 24 very often.

3) I have no opinion on Online Services as I have no Internet capabilities and have no interest in getting the equipment.

4) Regarding Commercial Services. I agree with the BBC continuing and even extending their commercial arm. I am pleased that they sell some of their programmes on DVDs and Video, and by selling magazines as an extension to programmes they can put the profits back into making more programmes. In fact I should be pleased if they would raid

their Archives more often and let us see more of their old plays and shows, which are often better than some of the more recent output.

5) How to pay for the BBC. I am in favour of the continuation of the Licence Fee. I agree that to some it seems to be a tax on the Public but I certainly do not want the BBC to take advertisements, or even to rely on Sponsorship as this has produced some very 'dumbed down' and boring programmes on the Commercial Channels. I also think that viewed over the year the Licence Fee is better value than Cable or Satellite Channels.

6) I have no comments on the running of the BBC, except for the thought that perhaps the Governors should take a more pro active role with Viewers and Listeners and reflect their views more as I understand they were meant to do originally.

7) On Regulation. I think that overseeing of the BBC should come under OFCom as has happened with the Commercial Channels. Then perhaps when I send a letter of complaint about their service, I might get a better reply than being fobbed off with a smug self satisfied letter, as I did last year when complaining about the non appearance of the heats of 'The Cardiff Singer of the World' on BBC2 but at the same time having hours and hours of golf on what was originally the Culture Channel.

8) Re accountability to the Public and Parliament. I do not like interference in any Broadcasting Organisation by Parliament because that way comes censorship. The BBC certainly has a responsibility to the Public who at present fund programmes which should cover the whole spectrum of tastes and interests. A thing it doesn't do at the moment. There is almost no Arts and Cultural Programmes on BBC1 and BBC2 where ordinary members of the public might come across them. The aim of the BBC at present seems to be to put these programmes on the cultural ghetto of BBC4 and so ensure that as with Radio 3 the casual viewer would never find them. Also there must be thousands of people who cannot get Digital Services on Freeview. Two of my friends, one living in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire and the other in Stevenage, hardly the back of beyond, have been told that they cannot receive Freeview in their areas. (My friend in Stevenage can't even get Channel 5 but that is another story.) Perhaps the BBC are afraid that if too many people find that they like Classical Music etc, they might have to spend money on quality programmes rather than cheap 'participation' shows. I do agree that the Public should have a say in what are after all Channels which are funded by them but how that 'say' should be manifested I am not sure. I rather suspect that the public not knowing of the treasures to be found on the 'cultural' channels would opt for more rubbishy reality type shows of which we have been getting a surfeit from all Stations lately.

I am glad to take this opportunity to make some remarks about the BBC which I would be very sorry to see go. It is a pity however that I will not have the chance to

participate in any of the Public meetings which you state will be held, as the dates (as stated in your leaflet) will be published on the Charter Review Website and as I mentioned above I have no access to the internet.

Yours faithfully,

C. A. Partridge (Miss)

