

BBC Charter Review  
Dept. for Culture, Media & Sport  
Broadcasting Policy Division  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH

Reply 15/6

24. 5. 2005

Dear 'BBC Charter Review',

I have had your newspaper ad 'Your BBC, Your Say' cut out and put to one side awaiting attention for quite a while now, and - noting that the closing date for responses is 31st May - I realise that I must deal with this 'pronto' or I shall be too late.

I note also that you - 'have some specific questions and options, and you can help by letting us know what you think.'; but that, from the context of the rest of your 'ad' I need to have access to your website via a computer or to be able to e-mail you.(ie - to find out what these questions/options are).

Neither of those facilities are available to me ... and I am then told that in such circumstances I should go to my local library and 'ask staff' for assistance ... which I am not prepared to waste my time doing!

Therefore, without knowing what your 'specific questions & options' are, I have to resort to your final 'option' of writing to you.

I pay a TV Licence fee on two different properties (one in Walsall, one in Wales) and I have to say I resent massively, repeat massively(!), paying this money to them because of the appalling low-life quality and 'dumbing-down' of their current output ... programme after programme in which the actual substance & thematic quality is not open to criticism but which are for me (& others I know) utterly ruined by the pollution of a sound-track infested with synthesized thumps, clonks, clicks, plonks,<sup>etc.</sup> usually in a 2-bar sequence which is repeated and repeated and repeated ad nauseam (and I mean ad nauseam(!)) 'til it nearly drives one mad.

I used to love watching the 'Holiday' programme ... but no longer! The repeated 'thump, thump, thumps' on the soundtrack make it unwatchable ... and the BBC sees its over-all viewing figures (%-wise) going down & down & down. Surprise, surprise. ( - well, not really!).

Another programme I used to like to watch - 'Top Gear' ...but no longer. Every time one turns it on there seem to be Ferraris, Porsches, etc tearing round cones & obstacle courses with tyres screeching away. It used to be an informative programme about the merits of various affordable(!) cars. The makers of this programme should be prosecuted for contributing to the encouraging of <sup>of</sup> tearaway & dangerous 'boy-drivers' on our roads.  
~~racers!~~

Last week Alan Yentob was doing a programme about 'skyscrapers'. It was (I had previously heard) supposed to be part of the BBC's campaign to include more 'quality' programming into its schedules in order to convince the government that it was worthy of having its Charter renewed.

It is the sort of documentary programme I really like; but about  $\frac{1}{2}$ -way through I switched off in absolute fury because of a background sequential musical 'theme' (actual real music this time, not synthesized thumping!) which was actually louder than Mr. Yentob's commentary, and seized my att-

ention to such a degree that I realised I wasn't taking in the commentary at all. So what's the point? Don't the fools who add this over-loud music/'Muzak' to otherwise good-quality programmes such as this one realise that this is the sort of effect it will have on many people? Obviously not, as they're so puerile!

I never thought the day would come when I would turn off in disgust (or have to turn the sound off temporarily) 'Gardeners' World'. As a very keen gardener it had always been one of my top-favourite must-see programmes; but now it's been afflicted by the 'thump-thump' disease. Why the idiots at the BBC should ever think for one moment that people who love gardens & gardening would not act with revulsion at, or just acquiesce in, having their favourite programmes spoilt in this way is beyond me.

IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT, ABOVE ALL, MAKES ME 'MASSIVELY' RESENT PAYING MY LICENCE FEE, IT'S WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO 'MY' GARDENING PROGRAMMES!!!

Only last night, in the programme on the Chelsea Flower Show, there was a sequence in which Rachel de Thame took us round the floral marquee, with comments about some of the many beautiful flowers there. It was accompanied throughout with some woman caterwauling in the background, with the almost compulsory thumping on the offbeat....on what sounded like a hollow wooden box. Absolutely appallingly infuriating and inartistic.

I had to turn the sound off ... and so missed out on the comments (which I really wanted to hear). Why should I pay out my licence fee for this? Every now & then I tried turning the sound back on to see if the 'din' had stopped, and I could again enjoy the programme. It hadn't - it went on & on & on & on throughout the whole quite lengthy sequence.

\* \* \* \* \*

As well as my utter fury at the massive 'dumbing-down' of programmes as explained above, my other huge bone-of-contention re the BBC is the ever-increasing levels of foul language, smut and frequently quite explicit sexual content.

On the recent 'Feedback' programme, for example, there had been numerous complaints about the sexual references in the Sunday afternoon serial 'The Raj Quartet', one of the main reasons for these complaints being that it was on a Sunday afternoon.

I don't normally listen to plays, but I happened by chance to hear the part of this play being complained of as it was left on after I'd been listening to Gardeners' Question Time. I was listening on my own. Had other family members been around I should have felt highly embarrassed.

Why should I be put in the position of being 'embarrassed' at what the BBC decides to relay into my private living space?

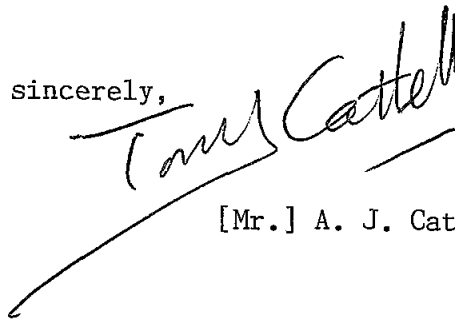
I must make this point in connection with the above - I am no prude. As well as being a very keen gardener I am also a very keen 'DIY' person (in the process of carrying out a big improvement scheme on my property). If something fouls up in what I am doing, my language is unrepeatable in the context of this letter ... but that is my choice and in private. I do not want the BBC transmitting swearing & filthy language & sexual content, at what seems an ever-increasing level, into my home. I'm absolutely sick of the smut. Have

the people in charge no consciences?

In conclusion (& you won't be at all surprised at this, consequent to my comments on the quality of the BBC's output):-

Unless the BBC cleans up its 'act' and clears out all those puerile dumbed-down programme-production techniques which are so trashing the quality of so much of its output (news-bulletins with loads of drum-thumping!!!!!!) then its 'Royal Charter' should not be renewed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. J. Cattell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the left and then curves downwards.

[Mr.] A. J. Cattell