

**Independent Panel on Charter Review  
Seminar: Culture**

**Consultation Responses on the BBC's submission, 'The BBC's impact on culture'**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Arts Council England	2
2. UK Film Council	10
3. Creators' Rights Alliance	12
4. Museums Libraries and Archives Council	14
5. English Heritage	16
6. National Campaign for the Arts	17

## 1. RESPONSE FROM ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts. Between 2003 and 2006 we are investing £2 billion of public funds in the arts, including funding from the National Lottery. Our vision is to promote the arts at the heart of national life, reflecting England's rich and diverse cultural identity. We believe that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

As part of our growth agenda we work in partnership to realise resources and profile for the arts sector. We recognise and share the BBC's commitment to public value and finding a way of measuring this value, believing in the power of the arts to support individuals' creativity and development and to foster greater social and community cohesion. We look forward to working more closely with the BBC in the future to maximise our cultural spend and impact for public value.

The Arts Council is particularly interested in the links between broadcast programmes and their impact on attendance and participation in the 'live' arts and the ways in which audiences access arts experiences and programmes through broadcast and new media. While we work with a range of broadcasters we recognise that our commitment to public value gives us a significant shared agenda with the BBC and we would welcome a long-term strategic partnership. That shared agenda includes a commitment to creative and cultural entitlement, encouraging reach and depth for arts audiences, supporting artists and creativity, championing new quality work and enhancing the profile of arts and artists locally, nationally and internationally.

Your timeframe did not enable us to consult with the wider arts sector for this contribution. This response reflects the Arts Council's analysis of the major areas of success together with a consideration of under-developed and neglected areas of programming and services which could in our view be strengthened and developed.

We acknowledge the BBC's wider role in developing the broadcast and creative industries infrastructure but we focus our comments largely upon the BBC's stated role in providing universal access to culture, creating new works, supporting, promoting and encouraging creative talent and facilitating cultural events across the UK.

We also limit our comments to the following areas of cultural programming: music, dance, drama and theatre, literature and poetry, visual arts, design, architecture and the built environment. Film and comedy are excluded from our response.

### **The BBC's cultural impact**

Arts Council England supports the BBC's case for Charter Review and recognises its wide reaching cultural impact in England. We believe that the BBC is an invaluable cultural resource and organisation, reflecting to a great degree the diverse interests of the arts sector in England.

We recognise that the BBC has strengthened particular types of cultural output, expanded cultural formats and genres, exploited new media and multimedia capabilities, launched new services with a strong cultural focus and developed new partnerships which have been able to take the BBC's cultural impact 'beyond the broadcast.'

However, we believe there is opportunity for review and development. In looking at those opportunities we have focussed on the following areas of shared interest:

Building Partnerships  
Cultural Programming  
Audience Growth and Education  
Supporting Artists  
Ensuring Diversity

### **Building partnerships for Public Value**

We support the assertion in *Building Public Value* that 'the BBC enriches the UK's cultural life by bringing talent and audiences together to break new ground, to celebrate our cultural heritage, to broaden the national conversation.'

We were particularly pleased to see the document describing the mutual benefits to the BBC and the arts of 'unlocking the power of partnerships', indicating a commitment to new ways of working; crucial both to the wider cultural ambitions of the BBC and UK cultural organisations in the 21st Century.

We look forward to seeing its 'partnership contract' which will make the BBC more transparent to the cultural sector and we welcome the opportunity to work as a key partner with the BBC to develop specific objectives in relation to the extension of the 'beyond the broadcast' initiatives, recognising the power of the 'multiplier' effect mentioned within *Building Public Value*, through which the BBC's cross media programming and marketing capability and the public value of cultural activity is maximised.

### **What more could be done?**

We believe that there is great potential for the BBC to develop its partnerships to deliver its ambitions. In addition to a partnership contract, we would urge the BBC to publish an action plan for arts and culture over the next three years. This would support greater partnership working in relation to shared priorities and objectives. The BBC's *Impact on Culture* document provides greater detail than *Building Public Value*, but is still essentially a review rather than statement of future commitment. We would welcome more detail and more hard commitment.

We believe that closer planning and partnership working is critical to the future development of the BBC's arts and culture strategy, unlocking both financial and human resources from the wider arts and cultural sector and maximising current cultural investment through our arts funding and the BBC's investment in cultural output, based on shared interests and responsibilities.

We would encourage a more joined up approach to the campaigns mounted by the BBC and a clearer articulation of planning potentials and 'exit' strategies for campaigns. These would have an impact on the wider arts sector alerting it to potential opportunities for sustainable audience development. There are further opportunities for the BBC to support wider access to UK cultural venues, owned by everyone in the UK, through closer working with arts organisations as part of our cultural entitlement agenda.

We urge the BBC to 'go further' in ensuring that its distinctive contribution to the arts and public service broadcasting is deepened. Competitors such as FIVE and Channel 4 are making headway in developing partnerships and carving out areas for growth, FIVE with its intelligent and popular arts series, demystifying contemporary art and Channel 4, in its commitment to artist's visions and new formats.

### **Cultural Programming**

We note the BBC's approach to providing a range of content across platforms to target differing audiences, in particular commitments to provide breadth and diversity of output, appealing to a range of audiences and in particular to attract new audiences to cultural content whilst providing a depth of coverage and output, 'helping people make cultural journeys of discovery'

A major strength has been an impressive increase in cultural programming, particularly notable on BBC Television, over the past two years.

There are now strong, arts 'landmark' biographies in peak on BBC ONE focusing on historical examinations of literature and visual arts. *Rolf on Art* is a major contributor to 'new audiences' proving that arts programming if boldly scheduled can attract large audiences for high quality programming which is both entertaining and educational.

Gaps in output are beginning to be addressed through the introduction of a new regular arts strand *Imagine* on BBC ONE and we look forward to *The Culture Show* on BBC TWO which will provide a strong topical arts journalism strand missing from the current portfolio, beyond *Newsnight Review*.

Particular achievements have been in interactive arts programming such as *The Big Read* which showed the 'multiplier effect' to great success through large scale campaigning which attracted new readers in partnership with arts organisations and through the orchestrated multi-platform/online partnerships within the BBC to broaden and deepen coverage of events such as The Proms.

We recognise the importance of the BBC's long-term strategy to encourage digital take up and welcome new channels and its commitment to broadening access through online provision which clearly increase the range and depth of cultural coverage, serving audiences and provide differing entry points for arts engagement.

We particularly welcome BBC FOUR into the cultural landscape and a vital new addition to UK Culture. BBC FOUR provides an important and distinctive contribution to the arts, serving predominantly ABI audiences. It has taken on the remit to experiment and take risk, both with production methods and programme content.

With the advent of BBC FOUR we note the partnerships allowing for more specialised arts content to find space on BBC TWO, albeit mainly through the post Newsnight BBC FOUR showcase on TWO.

### **What more could be done?**

Whilst there has undeniably been a strengthening of particular types of cultural output we believe that there are still weaknesses in the BBC's portfolio of arts programming. In our view, audiences seeking depth of coverage and more specialised arts programming are not currently being well served on analogue BBC platforms.

We believe that the BBC should provide more serious and depth coverage of the arts, particularly on BBC TWO. We believe that BBC TWO is a vital space for more challenging, depth programming, and an increase in the volume and range of innovative programming could address a common perception of a gap between popular accessible arts programming on BBC ONE and specialist arts programming on BBC FOUR.

We encourage BBC TWO and FOUR in particular to invest in more major series. Since its launch in 2002 with a series on Young British Artists, investment appears to have been more in one-off programmes rather than series. Series allow audiences to explore ideas in more depth; they also provide anchors in the schedule and are an incentive to first time BBC FOUR viewers to return to the channel.

In summary, we urge a strengthening of the output in relation to contemporary visual arts, theatre, literature and dance on BBC TWO, especially within peak, and a greater profile for international work on BBC platforms.

Scheduling remains a major concern. The report provides audience research demonstrating the critical importance of scheduling for audience growth and we would urge more ambition from the BBC by scheduling more arts programmes, both accessible and challenging, within peak. Crucially, we hope that the Culture Show is given prominence within peak on BBC TWO.

We would encourage like more co-partnerships and peak time transfers between BBC channels in order to give arts audiences with analogue-only capacity the chance to experience this greater depth and range of arts programming.

We are taking this opportunity to encourage the BBC to extend the hours on BBC FOUR and encourage a greater focus on young and emerging artists who make challenging work, and more regional theatre and performance.

We believe that BBC THREE has potential for greater arts coverage and series that appeal to its younger key 24-35 audiences. Whilst arts series *Whine Gums*, *Dreamspaces*, *Underground* have been strong we think there are gaps in reflecting the dynamic British art scene and exploring the relationship between 'lifestyle' and Contemporary Visual Arts and Design. The channel promotes new comedy talent but has not so far profiled the best young British artists, such as Blast Theory and a wealth of cutting-edge artists, committed to risk and innovation, who could be encompassed within the BBC THREE brand, and where appropriate transferred to BBC TWO.

We believe that there is still room for improvement in the consistent quality and range of cultural coverage on English Regions local radio in order to better serve the C2DE local radio audience. In terms of commitments to audiences, it is vital to encourage this audience's active participation in culture (2.4.1) building new audiences for an increasing access to cultural output (2.4.2)

Whilst we note provision for children on digital platforms e.g. Radio 7, CBeebies, and CBBC, we also believe there should be greater space in Network/analogue platforms for innovation in arts programming for children opening up space for shared family engagement where children are currently not well served.

### **Audience Growth and Education**

We recognise the vital role BBC has played in developing audiences for the arts, and its particular commitments in relation to reaching new audiences through

- providing universal access to culture
- facilitating cultural events across the UK
- encouraging cultural involvement

The BBC has been effective not only in encouraging new audiences between BBC platforms but through its facilitation of cultural events in particular, encouraged attendance at cultural events and participation in cultural activities and arts education which are of clear benefit to the wider arts ecology.

The BBC plays a vital role in arts education, providing cultural learning opportunities that encourage people develop their knowledge and skills and to become participants. We support the increasing use of interactive online services to involve those traditionally facing barriers to cultural activity and to support specific arts 'communities of interest' for greater depth of information and support. We recognise the vital importance of the Creative Archive as a repository for culture and learning.

We support the BBC's aim to empower users and communities to publish their own content notably through BBC online services such as BBC Arts, Radio 3 and BBC Where I live sites.

### **What more could be done?**

We concentrate our comments here on the BBC's ambitions around its Creative Archive. We believe the BBC has the responsibility to be an archivist for the nation but we must register our serious concerns in relation to its current practice specifically in archiving the work of artists and performances and preserving a depth and richness of arts content within the archive

We encourage the BBC to deepen its commitment to specific 'cause related' campaigns, in partnership with others to encourage grass roots participation and education for long-term audience development and cultural entitlement.

### **Supporting Artists and New Work**

We recognise that artists and writers have diverse working portfolios which involve working across the boundaries of broadcast and arts and the BBC provides a critical part of this cultural employment in its provision of broadcast opportunities for artists, actors and writers which have 'both a creative and economic benefit beyond the BBC or its programmes'.

The BBC plays a critical role particularly in music, commissioning new work and supporting a range of orchestras making a 'cultural impact by providing practical support, stimulation and patronage for creative people'

The BBC also provides strong opportunities for new talent to be nurtured and developed for emerging artists and those discovering their creativity through competitions, awards, workshops and master classes.

### **What more could be done?**

We encourage the BBC to develop more partnerships with artists, commissioning work from artists of all kinds. Animation, dance, new media, moving image and interactive work can be commissioned at relatively low cost. There could be a greater focus on interdisciplinary arts, contemporary arts practice and its intersection with science and commissioning of hybrid works which cross artform boundaries.

We encourage the BBC to invest in in-depth one to one interviews with artists of all kinds. Terrestrial schedules no longer give space to in depth conversation. This should be part of the BBC's distinctive contribution. It also builds an archive of voices of the artists who shaped the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The BBC can take risks that the market cannot contemplate, making a 'distinctive contribution to the cultural marketplace, going further than other broadcasters and complementing what others provide'. Currently, we note a strong commitment from Channel 4 to more creative approaches to profiling new artists and work through artist authored 'The Art Show,' and regular forays into more challenging content within 'The Slot'. It is vital that the BBC considers and renews its commitments to individual artists, which could be strengthened in partnership with those agencies with a creative research and

development focus. The Arts Council would welcome opportunity to work with BBC to broker partnerships with emerging British writers and artists.

### **Ensuring Diversity**

We note the ambition to 'represent different cultures, traditions and languages around the UK and minority as well as majority communities of interest'

We believe that the BBC's arts coverage is still too London-centric. It is true that there has been, largely on BBC FOUR, coverage of festivals outside London e.g. Brecon, Cambridge, Glastonbury but the predominant picture is metropolitan. The document refers to output from Scotland and Wales, but there is little around English regions' contribution and reflection of culture, particularly on network or digital platforms.

Although there is a clear commitment to multi-faith Britain and regional voices, the document is thin in our view on reflecting the diversity of arts within England and in reflecting Black Minority Ethnic arts in particular. Presentation and content across the platforms still tends to reflect a largely white middle class profile.

It is good to see mention of the successful BBC/Arts Council *Roots* project within the document which in its first year achieved 1,273 broadcast pieces across radio, television and online; 440 profiles of culturally diverse artists; 38,900 attendances at live events and activities supported by *Roots*. But how can we build upon *Roots* and promote and extend this kind of partnership working within Network/Television platforms?

### **What more could be done?**

Regional arts do not feature on BBC ONE, TWO, THREE or FOUR to any great extent beyond festivals and we think that this is an area for improvement. It is vital in our view that entry points to culture can be located within regional arts coverage and reflected on both regional and national platforms, to engage and stimulate the widest audience. We encourage the BBC to reflect a greater range and depth of regional arts from within England in its schedules.

We understand the new *Culture Show* on BBC TWO aims to cover regional topical arts journalism we welcome this. We believe there are a number of ways in which the BBC could increase its coverage and deliver its broader ambitions around diversity and audiences. For example Regional Theatre is at an all time high and we would hope that performance coverage can reflect its success.

We would encourage the BBC to extend its partnerships beyond London and the largest institutions specifically in relation to dance, classical music and theatre.

A key point in relation to Black and Minority Ethnic arts is that the current document does not indicate a commitment to integration within the mainstream BBC output. Whilst we acknowledge the need for a multi-stranded approach to targeting culturally diverse audiences,

and the development of IExtra, and Asian Network, we would urge a stronger focus on diversity within BBC 1, 2, 3 and 4.

We also note a lack of detail in relation to Disability. Over 14% of the population are disabled and the Arts Council is committed to supporting disabled people's access and participation in the arts, recognising the barriers that disabled people can face as audiences and artists. We would like to see greater coverage of disability arts and would welcome working with the BBC to improve the profile of this work, bringing it to a wider mainstream audience together with a clearer focus on how BBC platforms and services plan to open up access for disabled people to cultural programming and support services.

**Sir Christopher Frayling**  
**Chairman of Arts Council England**

## 2. RESPONSE FROM UK FILM COUNCIL

(1) The UK Film Council agrees with the BBC that throughout the Corporation's history it has played a unique and vital role in creating, transmitting and renewing British culture. Given this, in principle, we welcome the broad thrust of the case made for Charter Renewal by the BBC in *Building Public Value*. In particular, we welcome the BBC's insistence that the rationale for Charter Renewal depends on the impact the BBC has on the lives of citizens, the community and the creative economy.

(2) We observe the complementarity between the goals set for the BBC in *Building Public Value* and the Government's policy objectives for film as articulated through the UK Film Council. The policy objectives which have particular relevance are those to:

- a. Encourage the making of distinctive UK films
- b. Ensure audiences throughout the UK have access to the full range of British and international cinema
- c. Support appropriate skills training
- d. Support the development of opportunities for all UK citizens to understand and appreciate film
- e. Support the development of opportunities for access to cinema history and heritage
- f. Promote social inclusion and celebrate diversity
- g. Encourage excellence and innovation particularly through the use of new digital technologies

(3) We endorse the BBC's description of the full range and scale of the BBC's cultural impact as set-out in *The BBC's impact on culture*. In particular, we welcome the BBC's acknowledgement and, we hope, determination to address the challenge of creating and implementing a strategy for film that meets public value tests (p.4, 24).

(4) That said, in relation to specific references to film in *The BBC's impact on culture*, we are forced to conclude that the BBC is overstating its case when it comes to film. The overstatement is derived from an effort to square the responsibilities of the world's leading public service broadcaster towards the world's leading art form, with an investment of just £10 million-a-year (including £3 million in overheads) on new British film. This figure contrasts with the £200 million invested annually in film by the BBC's counterparts in France, the £50 million invested by RAI, the BBC's counterpart in Italy, and perhaps £70 million invested by Germany's public service broadcasters. Even in a country like Denmark, with 5 million inhabitants, the public service broadcasters are spending double what the BBC spends. In addition, as yet, the BBC has no coherent strategy, or even editorial policy for its

participation in and contribution to film culture in the UK. This situation compares unfavourably with that of music.

(5) To conclude, whilst acknowledging the BBC's stated intention to put in place a film strategy, the UK Film Council still awaits sight of that strategy and therefore at present we reserve our position on the BBC's willingness to harness film to deliver Public Value though among other things:

- ❑ Investment in British films
- ❑ The acquisition of a genuinely diverse range of British film and international cinema
- ❑ Investment in talent, ideas and innovation
- ❑ The use of the BBC's unrivalled media presence to encourage cinema-going and film appreciation in the UK.

5 November 2004

### **3. RESPONSE FROM THE CREATORS' RIGHTS ALLIANCE**

The Creators' Rights Alliance brings together 16 major organisations that together represent over 85,000 copyright creators and content providers throughout the media.

We welcome the opportunity provided by the DCMS to respond to BBC Charter Review: Cultural Role. We believe that the BBC has a fundamental role to play in the cultural health of the UK and so too do creators and content providers.

#### **General Comments**

We believe that the BBC is an integral part of the nation's fabric and a cultural ambassador on behalf of the UK. As the largest employer of creators (including writers, directors, musicians, journalists, composers and designers) in Western Europe, it provides the base for the creative community in this country.

Through its global presence, the BBC has promoted UK culture and talent and had a significant economic impact both directly and indirectly. This aspect is also very important to UK creators who want to see their work exploited (with fair contracts that respect their rights) across as wide a canvas as possible.

The BBC sets the standards of broadcasting in the UK (and internationally) and invests in new, meaningful, programming that reflects the uniqueness of UK culture. If the BBC's ability to do this was reduced we believe it could have a significant, detrimental, knock-on effect in both the promotion of UK culture and also, in the long term, on the sustainability of a viable creative industry in the UK.

The BBC nurtures and provides opportunities for new talent in the UK that is unmatched by other organisations. Many people currently employed in the broadcasting industry received training and or experience with the BBC: from comedy writers to set designers; documentary makers to make-up artists; stage managers to owners of independent production companies.

The UK has an eclectic mix of cultures and we believe it is important that the diversity is reflected throughout the media. The BBC is well placed to do this and to also provide training and community based initiatives to ensure that the UK's cultural mix continues to be reflected in the programming it produces and broadcasts. The measure for broadcasting should, however, be quality not quotas. To ensure quality it is essential that the BBC is adequately funded to develop not only creative talent for the future but also to ensure that programmes with a specific ethnic or cultural flavour are treated on an equal basis.

It is important that each section of society has a voice, a platform. However, there is a danger that some channels or programmes that do not have huge audiences could become ghettoised and hit a spiral of under-funding. We believe, therefore, that it is vital that each programme – whether niche or mainstream – is adequately funded. This will act both to

ensure a quality threshold and to encourage the development and involvement of the best creative talent in programme making from all sections of the community.

### **BBC Archive**

We welcome the BBC archive being available for free to the UK public with the assurance that creators and performers, who have a stake in the programmes, are fairly remunerated for the use of their work. We also believe that the UK archive should be made available internationally but that this should be paid for by users and, of course, creators and performers paid accordingly.

The Creators' Rights Alliance believes that creators of work stored in the archive should be consulted from the earliest possible stage to ensure that their rights are protected. We also believe it is essential that the impacts of any decisions are thoroughly thought through and understood and that any trickle down effect is closely examined.

#### 4. RESPONSE FROM THE MUSEUMS LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is delighted to have this opportunity to respond to the DCMS consultation on the BBC's Charter Review.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council is the national development agency working for, and on behalf, of museums, libraries and archives and advising government on policy and priorities for the sector. MLA's roles are to provide strategic leadership, to act as a powerful advocate, to develop capacity and to promote innovation and change. Museums, libraries and archives connect people to knowledge and information, creativity and inspiration. MLA is leading the drive to unlock the wealth, for everyone.

Both MLA and the BBC are NDPBs under DCMS, and we share the goals of creating public value through the delivery of our services. We are seeking to develop an overarching partnerships agreement with the BBC which encompasses the whole of the museums, libraries and archives sector. We too seek to develop our audiences and increase our social reach, and our values and aims overlap considerably with the BBC's in the following areas:

- Building stronger communities and social values, through understanding the social capital housed in museums, libraries and archives.
- Providing educational value through formal and informal learning opportunities.
- Driving forward the knowledge economy, through the collections our institutions house and through increasing digitisation of services.

We are particularly interested in forming partnerships around our education and lifelong learning and digitisation agenda, and there are a number of initiatives which we are already pursuing with the BBC:

- Discussions with the BBC's Head of Learning to examine the potential for using MLA's Inspiring Learning for All template and generic learning outcomes as the BBC's prime tool for evaluating its impact on education and learning.
- Discussions with BBC's Learning and Interactive Controller regarding digitisation and interactive learning tools. MLA is developing a digital vision for its sector, Knowledge Web, which would be an interactive portal to the information and knowledge stored in museums, libraries and archives. There are synergies here with the BBC's plans to stimulate greater public involvement and interest in a subject and to encourage lifelong learning.

We would welcome DCMS' support in pursuing these agenda.

In addition, we welcome the BBC's engagement in the following:

- The landmark BBC 2 series **Who do you think you are?** The programme producers worked closely with both the Archive Awareness Campaign and The

National Archives. The BBC is also co-ordinating 9 Family History days over 4/5<sup>th</sup> December (one in each region), and the regional MLA offices are working with the BBC on these. We expect these programmes to stimulate people's awareness of and interest in family history and thus their understanding of the value of public archives as a resource.

- Initiatives such as the BBC's Big Read go a long way towards stimulating the public's interest in literature. Our sector is keen to offer support to and build on these programmes, and we are in the process of developing a partnership agreement on libraries.
- We are in talks with BBC Nations and Regions to explore how our regional agencies and the BBC regional structures might work more closely. As an example of this, the MLA Regional Agencies are hosting a number of BBC posts for the BBC People's War project.

In conclusion, we welcome the BBC's contribution to the cultural sector and its commitment to engage in strategic partnerships. We look forward to developing deeper and longer lasting links with colleagues and counterparts within the BBC, to the greater benefit of those who represent the museums, libraries and archive sector, and the public at large.

**Louise de Winter**  
**External Relations Director**

## **5. RESPONSE FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE**

Thank you for inviting me to comment on the BBC's submission: Impact on culture.

The aspect of the submission most relevant to the work of English Heritage is the category of Design, Architecture and the Built Heritage. There are three particular observations I would like to contribute to the debate.

Firstly, I think the BBC is to be congratulated for understanding that the historic environment is, in many ways, the most immediate and accessible "culture" and a part of everyone's life. It is the stage upon which other art forms take place and as such, deserves its own attention.

Secondly, the BBC was quick in recognising the popularity of heritage and has fed and led that interest by pioneering innovative multi-media campaign programmes such as Restoration. It sometimes tries a little too hard to find audience participation angles, but that aside, it is making programmes of wide popular appeal without "dumbing down".

Thirdly, I am pleased at the consultation and co-operation in making programmes. I find the BBC receptive, open to ideas and able to deliver quality programmes in relatively fast time.

I hope you find these comments helpful.

**Simon Thurley**  
**Chief Executive**

## **5. RESPONSE FROM NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE ARTS**

Enclosed is a copy of the National Campaign for the Arts' response to the BBC's impact on culture submission to the Independent Channel on Charter Review.

The National Campaign for the Arts (NCA) is very supportive of the BBC's artistic and cultural work. As an organisation that lobbies on behalf of arts organisations located all around the country and specialising in a range of disciplines, the NCA is excited by the BBC's enlightened attitude to the arts and keen commitment to the arts and artists both within and outside of what is broadcast.

**Rachael Marsh**  
**Campaigns Officer**  
**National Campaign for the Arts**

### **Summary**

**The National Campaign for the Arts (NCA) is keen to express its support for the BBC's cultural work. In particular the enlightened attitude that informs the BBC's artistic and cultural output, and the investment it makes in both new art and artists and in its audience.**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 There are relatively few institutions in Britain, indeed in the world, that are as committed to a high quality cultural output as the BBC. From the high level of commissions, to the training and employment of a large number of artists and those involved with the creative industries to the reputation the corporation earns British art abroad, the BBC plays a key role in British cultural life.

### **2. Culture and attitude of the BBC**

2.1 The BBC's enlightened and flexible attitude to the arts is evident in the range and quality of its cultural and artistic output. This attitude is informed by an appreciation of the nature of arts and culture, and of their intrinsic value. The BBC's commitment is assured as this attitude is built into its aims and core purpose. It is important to British art that there are high profile institutions not trying to use art largely to serve other ends.

2.2 Crucially, this attitude is acted on in practice through the principles of 'practical support, stimulation and patronage' that the BBC is committed to.

2.3 An attitude of, "It's not for me," is one of the greatest barriers to individual's enjoyment and participation that the arts must overcome. The BBC, as a respected institution and with its potential for broad appeal and a variety of approaches, has a significant role to play in battling against this perception. Already, it does a great deal of work both opening up disciplines and subjects to many people who might not

immediately have an interest in them, as well as offering broadcasts that introduce, educate and inform in an accessible manner.

- 2.4 More support for the BBC and the projects and attitudes it initiates is needed from elsewhere in Government. The creative and educational efforts made by the BBC to introduce audiences to a range of arts, and to meet existing interests needs to be supported through co-operation with other Government departments.
- 2.5 It is a significant contributing factor to the overall culture of the BBC that it is keen to ensure that it is viewed and used as an open creative resource. This encourages the stimulation of both more artistic work and further collaborations.
- 2.6 It is important that the BBC is in a position to justify its output for reasons other than statistical evidence such as low viewing figures. The BBC has the rare luxury, because of how it is funded, of being able to challenge boundaries that are unlikely to be immediately popular, but where there is, nonetheless, scope for artistic creation and innovation.

### **3. New art**

- 3.1 The NCA is extremely supportive of the BBC's commitment to encouraging and supporting new artistic and cultural works. This is a vitally important area of the arts which is not supported fully enough elsewhere.
- 3.2.1 It is also important to offer unusual or interesting opportunities to produce work, such as the various competitions that the BBC runs. This format may appeal to individuals who might otherwise not have got involved with a particular art form, so increasing participation in the arts. The NCA would like to see the Government connect with this, through its education and social policies, to ensure that there are follow up opportunities for those newly engaged.
- 3.3 Moreover, the BBC is in a unique position to be supportive of the arts without the imperative of making profit. This is of enormous value to creators and artists, and something that should be utilized to the full. The freedom to innovate and take risks is invaluable to an artist and indeed to the quality of art the is ultimately produced. There is an appreciation of this already within the BBC's ethos, and it is an attitude that must not be lost.

### **4. New audiences**

- 4.1.1 It is certainly true that the BBC must seek to offer something to as much of the country as possible. This means taking into account different cultural views, experiences and expectations of different parts of the community.

- 4.1.2 There is, however, a definite need to clarify certain aspects of the BBC's approach to catering for new audiences. Establishing BBC4, to screen a programme largely consisting of, to use the Secretary of State's phrase 'complex culture,' should not jeopardize cultural content elsewhere.

## **5. Nurturing art**

- 5.1.1 The *Encore* project is of great value as there is not only an existing problem of commissioning new art, but also of providing a long term life for work that is produced. The *Encore* project has identified this area of need, and is doing something to address it. Perhaps there is a role for the BBC in doing more to ensure works of art last beyond the initial excitement of the first unveiling.
- 5.1.2 This could initially be done by simply drawing attention to them in broadcasts. While more ambitious projects along the lines of *Encore* will help further. Vital is the availability of information to back up programmes, which the BBC website is already good at providing.
- 5.1.3 The BBC nurtures existing art in Britain by identifying talent and giving artists opportunities to present their work to an audience. This is notable of the late John Peel's work with new music, for example. Lucy Duran at radio 3 also contributes a great deal to the standing of world music in Britain by offering not only a wide selection, but also presenting it with interesting background information that aids listeners' understanding.

## **6. Nurturing talent**

- 6.1.1 A particular area in which the BBC provides an almost invaluable service is in the training of those entering the range of professions involved in the work of the BBC, and in the wider creative industries. These are not just the high profile creators, but also those working behind the scenes.
- 6.1.2 The range of services and locations the BBC provides to achieve this is effective in reaching a wide range of people and interests.
- 6.3 The BBC's commitment to nurturing individuals with artistic and creative talent is evident in the work it does behind the scenes of the well-publicised front broadcasts. This establishes essential long term relationships between the arts and audiences and participants.

## **7. Active involvement and education**

- 7.1 The Big Read and Restoration are notable for the huge amount of attention that they raised. The numbers of people who participated are impressive. However, while it is fabulous that attention is drawn to these areas and the population's awareness raised, there is a danger that the BBC could be used either to fill gaps that should be

addressed by Government, or that the projects themselves direct attention away from other areas of need, for example focusing on the winner of Restoration, while other buildings are neglected.

- 7.2 The range of means the BBC has for involving its audiences does yield an extremely useful resource. Providing background information, such as programme and director's notes, is a fabulous way to involve young people in a range of different areas of entertainment, moving them beyond a passive enjoyment. Moreover, it provides them with insight into aspects of artistic and cultural creations that might not be immediately obvious to them.
- 7.3 However, this active involvement could constructively be taken further through stronger partnerships between the BBC and other relevant institutions. In particular, the BBC could work more closely with schools and teachers with the aim of providing young people with a next step to take once a BBC programme has caught their interest in something.
- 7.4 The experience of the NCA is that teachers are keen to expand their arts teaching, but are disconnected from the organisations and opportunities available. The BBC already works to provide practical information that can be utilized by teachers, however this work could be usefully expanded.

## **8. Children**

- 8.1 It is vitally important not only to introduce children to the arts and culture from a young age, but to do so constructively and in such a way that positive associations and understanding is fostered. It is from these foundations laid as a child that lifelong relationships with the arts develop. As a respected and prominent player in the cultural lives of a huge number of British people, the BBC has a critical role to play in this.
- 8.2 Such projects as the narration of *Swan Lake* and *Cinderella* are useful innovations as they can provide a means of accessing an art form that a child might not otherwise have. This might be in part because of a parent's lack of knowledge or interest. The BBC provides tools that either allow the child to discover for itself, or to do so with a parent, regardless of how much the parent already knows. There is much evidence to indicate that the influence of parents on their children's cultural education is extremely significant. By making programmes that are interesting to both children and parents, or that are supported by informative programmes to engage parents elsewhere in the schedule, the BBC helps to overcome this barrier. It is certainly an area in which the BBC can have an extremely constructive impact.

## **9. Economic arguments and cultural industries**

- 9.1 The huge external investment in people and products made by the BBC is of significant value to the creative industries and wider economy. It is misleading to focus only on the direct correlation between licence fee investment and economic output, given the significant indirect impact the BBC has regional and national economies.
- 9.2 The argument that the license fee, because it removes immediate profit incentives, raises expectations of quality is important. Much of what sets the BBC's cultural programming apart is due to the ethos of the organisation, central to which is the licence fee.
- 9.3 The significant number of exports of BBC products, for example 54% of TV productions, is testament to the high esteem in which both viewers and companies abroad hold the BBC. This has an indirect impact on the British economy, as it maintains the excellent reputation British arts have abroad, and in so doing encourages external investment in the UK.

## **10. British art**

- 10.1 The work the BBC does to promote UK talent is invaluable. This is in part because of the great respect that those in the UK and abroad have for the BBC. It is also the result of the huge investment the BBC makes in British art and artists.

## **11. Public support**

- 11.1 The BBC currently seems to involve the public through consultation and the feedback channels that it has in place. It is important to maintain a high level of feedback, which is constructively fed into subsequent broadcasts. Consultation with licence fee payers and with members of the arts world ensures a fully informed BBC that can not only respond to demand, but see which new projects have worked, and where.

## **12. Government support**

- 12.1 The fundamental commitment of the BBC to culture informs its output and influences its decision making processes. It is important that the Government responds to this attitude, which is undoubtedly an asset of the BBC, with a flexibility of its own. It is important that Government is prepared to be flexible also in its ways of assessing and monitoring the BBC. Central to the nature of the arts is challenge and innovation. These will not always be popular, but it is certainly the role of Government to recognize that such work is just as essential to the health and prosperity of the nation.

## **13. Sustainable**

- 13.1 The need to encourage the long term survival of new works has been identified in relation to classical music and addressed through the *Encore* project. It is not in this discipline alone that the problem exists. The BBC, already such an prolific commissioner of new works, could perhaps increase its work of supporting existing

works. This can in part be achieved by nurturing deep relationships between audiences and art works, encouraging them to pursue their interests.

- 13.2 The sustaining of the cultural work of the BBC would benefit from a broader range of partnerships with pertinent organisations. Support is needed from elsewhere to ensure new and existing enthusiasm kindled by the work of the BBC can be channeled effectively by individual's wanting to pursue it, and that other audiences are given access to it.

#### **14. Live music**

- 14.1 The NCA has been involved with the Department for Culture, Media and Sports' Live Music Forum as part of our own commitment to and belief in the importance of live music to the artistic and cultural life of the country. The high levels of live music supported by the BBC, particularly Radio 3, act to support live music in practice, something the NCA fully endorses.
- 14.2 The BBC also brings more people the opportunity to experience live music, either through broadcasts, or BBC-led events. This is extremely important, both for the industry and for audiences. The work of Andy Parfitt to encourage live music is particularly notable.

#### **15. BBC4**

- 15.1 The aims of BBC4 are both admirable and valuable. The format, it seems, has not yet fulfilled its aims in practice.
- 15.2 The BBC needs to develop a means of integrating awareness of the new channel into the mainstream, thus potentially introducing a variety of people to the specifically cultural content of the new channel. Perhaps BBC4 could be used as the sponsoring name, or driving force behind some of the BBC's cultural events. It is important the BBC4 does not ghettoize 'complex culture.'

#### **Conclusion**

- 16.1 The NCA is supportive of the BBC's enlightened attitude to new and innovative culture. Provision must be made to ensure the BBC is not obliged to chase ratings rather than invest in high quality arts and cultural work. It would be beneficial for the corporation for the wide range of its cultural work to be better publicized. The overall attitude of the BBC helps to make Britain the exciting cultural world-leader that it is.