

PERFORMANCE LIVE (working title)

Introduction

This is a callout for artists, producers and arts organisations in England to propose ideas for a new strand of live performance for BBC television. The callout opens on Wednesday 20 April 2016 and the deadline for submissions is 10am Thursday 19 May 2016.

Live performance on television has a long tradition going back to the 1950s. Now, in 2016, you are invited to create a new adventurous strand of live performance for broadcast on BBC over the next two years in a new initiative funded by Arts Council England and BBC. We want to hear ideas for live performance – including theatre, dance, spoken word, live art and everything in between - that could make its way to television. It is our intention that most of the commissions will be broadcast on BBC Two on Saturday nights.

Performance Live (working title) aims to democratise the creation of arts for TV. We want to use this opportunity to embed digital and television production skills with artists and arts organisations around the country. We like the idea that each programme reflects the locality in which it is created. For example, performances may use a building or environment as a backdrop, rooted in different parts of the country.

We need your inspiration and vision to create *Performance Live*. We are looking for around 15 ideas in total. Most will come through this open callout and there will also be a handful of direct commissions. *Performance Live* is being supported by Battersea Arts Centre, who will also co-ordinate the selection process. Ideas will be selected by an independent panel. Your proposal for this callout might be inspired by an existing performance or it might be brand new piece of work. We are especially interested in ideas that explore the middle ground between live performance and television. Where does one end and the other begin? We don't just want to point cameras at live performance; we want to explore the potential of a live connection with television audiences.

We also want to use this strand of programmes to explore a variety of ways in which we can attract a new audience for arts on television. *Performance Live* will seek to reflect the diversity of the nation in terms of the artists that create the work and the subject matter that each performance explores.

One of the inspirations for the new series is an experiment that was broadcast on BBC Four on Sunday 15th November 2015, under the title of *Live From Television Centre*. You can watch clips of the show [here](#). The Guardian's Leader column described the programme:

Sunday's experiment...showed how much can be brought to TV by a collision with the fresh thinking and spirit of independent artists – the kind of ingenuity that might, in fact, work its way into much more mainstream TV just as fringe theatre has historically so often influenced the mainstream...*Live From Television Centre* should not be left as an intriguing one-off, but the start of a new spirit in the BBC."

Performance Live is seeking to build on this platform with a broader range of art forms, working with partners across the county to create a genuinely collaborative project that breaks new ground in arts television.

Brief for Companies and Artists

This call out is open to artist led ideas. You might be an individual artist, or an independent company, an independent or building-based producer. The most important thing is that you are putting forward a great idea with a strong artistic lead.

We want to commission accessible and innovative projects that embrace a range of contemporary forms including theatre, dance, spoken word, live art and everything in between and we want to share with our wider audience the rich experience and diversity that arts and culture offer, locally, regionally and nationally.

We are inviting you to not simply translate performance work for television but to harness your distinct imaginations and to share your work with a new medium and in a new way. We will offer support to develop your knowledge and skills as creators of work for broadcast.

What we are looking for

- Great artistic ideas that communicate something engaging, inspiring or provoking about who we are and our place in the world.
- Ideas that capture the excitement of live performance through the medium of television.
- Ideas that seek to integrate approaches to live theatre “capture” and broadcast from the beginning of the process.
- Ideas that are new and created specifically for this project or ideas that are based on existing material that would be re-imagined for a television audience.
- We are very interested in the live relationship with the audience watching on screen. We would like to hear your ideas for how you will connect with this audience. We would also like to hear whether you think there should or shouldn't be an audience in the live performing space and if so, how do these relationships work?
- Inspired locations. Projects that work in site specific, found spaces and adaptable environments rather than taking place in a performing venue. We hope to have performances from all kinds of locations in different parts of the country; for some pieces the locations will provide an exciting visual setting, for others it might be the symbolism of the location that is important, for some it will be both.
- Artists and companies who are open to working with television directors and producers and learning about the opportunities this medium offers their work.
- A range of artists and projects of all scales that together reflect the breadth and diversity of the performing arts sector.

Eligibility to make a proposal

You will need to meet all the following eligibility criteria:

- You are an artist or company of artists, if you are a producing company/venue then there will be a clear artistic lead for your idea
- The lead artist/s for the project will have been making work (outside of study) for at least 5 years
- You are based in England. The BBC is currently seeking additional UK partnerships in order to extend the offer.
- No previous experience of broadcast, filmmaking or the capture process is needed.

How to Apply

- **Introduce yourself and your work - 150 words max**
You can include links if you wish. If you prefer, you can submit this by making a 1 minute max video on your phone, as an alternative.

- **Your project idea - 300 words max**
Describe your idea, including potential locations. If you prefer, you can submit this by making a 2 minute max video on your phone, as an alternative.

- **Live-ness – 300 words max**
Describe how your performance might relate to an audience on live broadcast and subsequently online. If you prefer, you can submit this by making a 2 minute max video on your phone, as an alternative.

- **Submissions to Thea Jones email: theaj@bac.org.uk by 10am on Thursday 19 May 2016**

Please read the Further Information document below which includes some key dates

Further Information

Background and Context

Performance Live is the latest expression of the ground-breaking partnership between Arts Council England and the BBC. It is focused around three shared aims:

- *To extend the accessibility and reach of arts and culture.*
- *To support artistic talent and the creation of new work.*
- *To support skills development and growth of the creative economy.*

Performance Live will be a series of ambitious live arts programmes that will be broadcast over two years from Autumn 2016 – Autumn 2018.

It follows *On Stage: Live From Television Centre*, that broadcast four distinctive and unique pieces of performance live on BBC4, and another on BBC iPlayer, on Sunday 15 November 2015.

The programme was produced by Battersea Arts Centre in partnership with BBC and ACE and took place on location in the disused BBC Television Centre. It featured Gecko's *The Time of Your Life*, Richard Dedomenici's *The Redux Project*, Common Wealth's *No Guts, No Heart, No Glory*, Touretteshero's *Broadcast from Biscuit Land* and Islington Community Theatre's *Brainstorm*.

Each performance was either created specifically for the programme, or adapted from an earlier work to respond to the medium of television. It was a unique taste of the potential for broadcasting theatre and dance performance in a way that is very distinctive from stage capture, such as NT Live.

The success of *On Stage: Live From Television Centre* has inspired this landmark collaboration that over two years will explore the unique relationship between live performance and television. It will open up new pathways to our physical and cultural landscape and will offer diverse artists and communities the chance to share their stories with the widest audiences possible.

A note on the location for your idea

Each performance will be live from a specific location. We hope to have performances from all kinds of buildings, sites and spaces in different parts of the country. We would be interested to hear your initial ideas for two or three possible locations for your performance...where could your performance be live from? We would expect you to work in partnership with any location as a central collaborator because you will need their support to make the live programme.

Finding a context for your live performance

We are interested to find ways of introducing and contextualising the live performances in this strand for a television audience. An example of this in the music industry is *Later* on BBC2 in which Jules Holland provides an introduction and context for a wider range of musicians. We are not proposing to copy this model because our strand will be made up of one performance in each episode, but we do need to find the right and enticing way to introduce the strand to a wider audience. We do not yet know what this will be and we are open to your ideas. You do not need to address this in your proposal but if you do have ideas

for how this could be achieved, across the strand of work, or for your specific idea, then do add a sentence or two to your core proposal.

Producing Structure

We want *Performance Live* to be a collaborative strand of programmes that kick-start new creative relationships and empower artists and arts organisations to learn about television production. We aim to create a culture of sharing skills and knowledge across the strand, between partners, the BBC, ACE and Battersea Arts Centre.

Our selection process will introduce you to the models that can be used for programme making. You will then be supported to find a producing structure that will ensure that the process of filming and live broadcast enhances your artistic idea.

Parameters

- Each project will have a set length to be agreed, this will be in the region of 30 minutes but we are open to other lengths. We want to ensure that the project idea is matched with a time slot that works best for the material.
- Each project will be performed and recorded live. Some content could be pre-recorded but the experience will feel live.
- The projects we commission will range in scale from small, mid to large. If you are shortlisted, we will work with you to match resources to your idea. Your negotiated budget will include development costs, performance costs and television capture costs and we anticipate project budgets to be between £100,000 and £200,000.
- Each project needs to be realised within the agreed time frame and budget framework.

Ownership and rights

This is currently being worked out with the BBC and will be discussed openly with all selected artists. The details of this project are subject to change until all final agreements with all parties are in place.

Selection Process & Timeline (Please note that this is subject to change)

The Selection Panel will be made up of members of BBC commissioning team and independent artists from the performing arts sector. Arts Council England will be in attendance on the panel as observers.

Wednesday 20 April	Applying	Call out for proposals
Thursday 19 May 10am	Deadline	Submissions deadline. Email to Thea Jones theaj@bac.org.uk
Friday 27 th May	Longlist announcement	Longlisted applicants will be invited to the workshop weekend. At this stage you will be offered up to £2,000 fee for development of your idea.
Saturday 4 th and Sunday 5 th June	Workshop / Scratch weekend Venue TBC	A learning and testing ideas weekend when you can find out about live broadcast and explore creative possibilities. This will include support from BBC.
June	Development of Ideas	Time in which to develop your project idea with individual mentorship sessions
Week beginning 4 th July	Pitching Sessions	You will present your developed idea to a Selection Panel.
Week beginning 11 th July	Shortlist selection	Selection Panel will shortlist ideas for commissioning.
July	Budgeting Process	Each project develops detailed budget in a supported process. This process is to protect the artists/companies, ensuring the budgets are right, and also to ensure there is enough overall resource to deliver the shortlisted projects.
August	News!	The final selection of the Performance Live series will be made and upcoming programmes will be announced.