



# Commissioning Brief



Commissioning Brief No.: 31335

*100 Years of the BBC Proms*

For BBC Radio 3 starting in April 2027

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## SECTION A: EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITY

### Commissioning Brief ID / Title: 31335: 100 Years of the BBC Proms

<b>Commissioning Owner</b>	Jeremy Evans
<b>Commissioning Contact</b>	David Ireland
<b>Commissioning Brief Title</b>	100 Years of the BBC Proms
<b>Commissioning Round</b>	2027/28 – Round 1
<b>Network</b>	Radio 3
<b>Guide Price</b>	£2,100 per episode, plus a £6000 one-off payment for development, excluding presenter fees which will be paid for by the network.
<b>Genre</b>	Music - Classical
<b>Duration</b>	56'30"
<b>No. of Episodes</b>	15
<b>Transmission Period</b>	April - July 2027
<b>Slot Day</b>	Saturday
<b>Slot Time</b>	1300-1400
<b>Production Location</b>	Editorial leadership must be based outside London

#### Important Points to Note:

- All proposals must be submitted via **PiCoS** and will go through **production eligibility checks**.
- The **Production Eligibility Questionnaire** can be found in **Appendix 1**, but **only needs to be completed if you do not already make regular music output for the network**. This is the first part of your submission that the BBC will consider as part of the process.
- **Short Proposals** and your responses to the **Production Questionnaire** must be submitted via **PiCoS** before the deadline at **noon on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**.

More information relating to all commissioning briefs and rounds, regardless of Network can be found on the [‘Pitching Ideas’](#) page of the Radio Commissioning Website.



## 1. BBC Radio 3

### About BBC Radio 3

Radio 3 is proudly the home of classical music and the BBC Proms. We have such a range of programming and resources at our fingertips that allow us to share with our listeners incredible music from across the last thousand years in astonishing performances. We allow our listeners to explore with us and share the knowledge and insight of some of the finest minds working in classical music and we make our programmes for no one other than our listeners.

We welcome everyone with warmth and open arms, whether it's someone who's just discovered us on social media and joined us to hear more of what they liked, or a listener who's been with Radio 3 for many years and knows the station inside out; we want everyone to share the journey through this amazing music.

Radio 3 has a power and ability to present and explore music like no one else. Our programmes are joyful, warm, generous, intelligent, entertaining and welcoming. They also need to challenge, to dig deep, to encourage us to ask questions and reveal things about the music we listen to and ourselves.

## 2. 100 Years of the BBC Proms: A nation in music (w/t)

2027 is an important year for the BBC Proms. A century ago the BBC took on the stewardship of Robert Newman's Promenade Concerts and went on to transform them into what is regarded as the world's greatest classical music festival. Now an essential international festival with global impact it remains rooted in the UK and central to British musical life and culture.

Starting in April 2027 and on air through to the beginning of the Proms in July that year, Radio 3 will be running a high profile series of programmes at 1pm on Saturday lunchtimes exploring the history of the Proms through the prism of the historical, social, cultural, political, economic and technological changes Britain has gone through over the last 100 years. We want to hear proposals for the 15-part series that connect the history of the BBC Proms directly with the story of the UK.

In your proposals we would like you to consider how, over the course of the series, you address areas such as changing repertoire and changing audiences; who was heard and who wasn't in terms of composers, artists and orchestras; and how technology, economics and global relationships continually reshape the Proms. In short, we would like a series that explores how the Proms describe Britain's understanding of itself and its evolving relationship with classical music and the wider world. Crucially, we also want this series to look forward to the future. Its primary focus will be on the history of the BBC's stewardship



of the Proms, however, it also offers an opportunity to explore how this enduringly popular festival will be shaped and influenced in the years to come.

We have identified a presenter for the series and should your short proposal be successful we will be able to discuss this with you ahead of submission of your long proposal.

### **The Audience**

The Radio 3 audience is broad – we want to welcome anyone and everyone who wants to listen – and whilst the programmes should be designed for both established and new listeners, the group we are targeting is that of the culturally curious 45-64 year olds. They are people who might head to a museum or gallery if they have the opportunity; they might also go to a cultural event – the theatre or a concert - if they live in an area with access. They might listen to Radio 4 (the majority of Radio 3 listeners do listen to Radio 4), or they might be the type of person who listens to a history podcast or watches a BBC Two or BBC Four documentary.

Musically, it might be the case that they don't know much about classical music, however, they'll be open to the sound world of it. And there is an important section of that potential audience who will have a far greater range of knowledge of classical music. The audience will be looking for a mix of music that allows for both entertainment and discovery; music that matches their mood, and programmes that are welcoming, presented with warmth, humanity, intelligence and rigour.

The series will be broadcast on Saturday lunchtimes following the end of the Key Changes and should be designed to build those listeners who have made an appointment to listen to Key Changes – both live and on demand.

This series should be a richly engaging, beautifully made, social history of the Proms grounded within the wider story of the UK. Whilst warmly welcoming, the story it tells needs to be academically rigorous and stand up to serious scrutiny. Who will guide the production team on what is and isn't included in the series?

This opportunity is open to suppliers nationwide but as part of the BBC's Across the UK strategy, editorial leadership must be based outside of London.

### **At the outset we would like the following from you:**

A short proposal for the series of 15 programmes. Please also include details of who your team would be, as well as how you will structure the story you tell over the 15 weeks. The speech to music ratio should be around 25% speech to 75% music and a version of the programme should also be available in perpetuity online. We would like to hear how you plan to research and use archive from the Proms, and how you will create a series that's both warm and welcoming, sounding modern and fresh, that draws in listeners new to the music whilst being proudly rigorous, intelligent and in-depth.



Should you be successful in going forward to the Full Proposal stage we would like to hear about your fully fleshed out plans for all the above. Consideration should also be given to how the project will work online and on social media, as well as on air. We would therefore like to hear how you will manage music rights, ensuring that elements of the project can sit on-demand in perpetuity, and gain greater understanding of how you would propose your content would be reflected on Radio 3's social channels.

We are keen to read your proposals and to work with you on this exciting commission.

### **3. Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity and Inclusion is a priority for all of us. We want BBC Music demonstrably to be the best organisation in the audio sector to work for and with; one which reflects the diversity of the UK; and where people feel welcomed, appreciated, respected, and can be themselves and produce their best work.

Radio 3 is dedicated to improving diversity and inclusion across the station through a long-term strategy which will lead to an even richer musical and cultural offering. Radio 3 monitors representation across the network and has launched several creative initiatives on diversity – including our partnership projects with the Arts and Humanities Research Council to support research on and performance of composers from diverse backgrounds, and the Open Music scheme designed to bring creatives and musicians of all genres, styles and backgrounds from across the UK to the BBC.

The station is integral to BBC Radio's Diversity and Inclusion commitment, looking for new approaches to evolve listener engagement which will broaden the appeal of the network to new audiences. It also contributes to a more diverse and inclusive classical music industry as a whole, as well as other genres of music and culture. We are interested to hear your inclusive content ideas and how they might be expressed across the music played, stories told and voices heard. You may wish to consider how your company aligns with the BBC's D&I Commissioning Commitments, or could do so in the future (See Appendix 2).

### **4. Sustainability**

The BBC is committed to informing and inspiring listeners about how they, as individuals, can take steps towards more sustainable living.

Your proposal should consider how the editorial and production methods contribute towards the BBC's Net Zero strategy – you can read about this [here](#).

Where appropriate, sustainability themes should be woven into the editorial – either implicitly or explicitly. Unsustainable portrayals should be avoided in favour of showing more sustainable practices, e.g. if the narrative allows maybe a character takes a train journey instead of a flight, or presenters use re-usable cups instead of disposable ones.



The BBC Radio Commissioning site contains inspiration across genres: [Sustainability In Programme Editorial](#)

Production methods should demonstrate good practice, minimising negative environmental impacts (e.g. from energy, waste, travel) and where possible making a positive contribution.

For further information please discuss sustainability with the Commissioning Editor, and see our Radio Commissioning site [here](#).

## 5. Success Measures

- Increased listener reach through Saturday lunchtime into the afternoon (as measured via RAJAR quarterly figures and BBC Sounds data)
- Evidence of impactful moments across the schedule, driving awareness and audience reach
- Positive response from audience, press and opinion formers
- Evidence of core listeners staying with Radio 3 and new listeners joining – particularly from the 45-64 age group
- Growing awareness and approval from the classical music community

## Compliance and BBC Editorial Guidelines

You will be required to deliver programmes that are in line with the BBC's Editorial Guidelines and be able to adapt to the BBC's changing editorial and business needs during the period of the commission.



## SECTION B: PROCESS, ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

### 1. The Five Stages

#### STAGE 1: Production Experience, Short Proposal and Shortlisting

##### Step 1: Production Experience (only necessary for those suppliers who do not already make regular music output for the network, unless you are proposing a Partnership)

- Complete the Production Experience Questionnaire (outlined in Appendix 1) using no more than 100 words per response. Please note the questions used in this brief may differ from those used in other Radio 3 briefs.
- Enter your responses in the 'Production Experience' section in **PiCoS**.

The questionnaire is designed to allow the BBC to understand more about your company and your experience of producing Radio 3-style programmes.

The Commissioning Editor, together with others from the evaluation team, will review all production questionnaires against the editorial brief set out in Section A before evaluating the Short Proposal.

Note: your short proposal may be declined at this stage if the information provided indicates you do not meet the criteria, so please answer these questions carefully.

##### Step 2: Short Proposal

Suppliers will have their Short Proposal assessed and a shortlist will be compiled.

- Your Short Proposal should be no more than **500 words** and should summarise your specific ideas. It should demonstrate your ability to produce the programme, and answer the editorial objectives and other requirements as set out in the Editorial Opportunity.
- Enter your proposal in the '**Short Proposal**' section in **PiCoS** before the deadline at **noon on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026**.

##### Step 3: Shortlisting notification

You will be notified of the outcome of Stage 1. Shortlisted suppliers will be asked to submit a Full Proposal. No feedback will be provided for unsuccessful proposals at this stage.

#### STAGE 2: Full Proposal

**Step 1:** We may issue further relevant programme production information to all producers reaching this stage. If sensitive information is being released then producers may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).



**Step 2:** Producers will be invited to provide a Full Proposal, via **PiCoS**, responding to this commissioning brief, which includes all the elements outlined in Section C (“Full Proposals”). For guidance, your Full Proposal should not exceed **5000 words** (excluding additional information).

In addition, two complete running orders should be included (these can be in addition to the 5000 word limit).

*Production Experience answers will only be considered during Stage 1 of the commissioning process. Producers may wish to consider repeating some, or all of the information given in the Full Proposal.*

**Step 3:** Producers will be offered the opportunity to discuss the programme brief with the Commissioning Editor prior to submitting their full proposal.

### **STAGE 3: Interview / Pitch**

**Step 1:** You may be invited to an interview/pitch meeting (via Teams or in person) with the evaluation team. We will notify you which members of the evaluation team will be attending this meeting and you should expect to be asked to discuss and elaborate on your proposal, and answer questions about it. It is also possible we may ask you to bring additional relevant material to this meeting – for example, a further running order – **but we ask that you do not play any video content or prepare a formal presentation.**

**Step 2:** Following the interview/pitch, the evaluation team will re-evaluate your Full Proposal against the assessment criteria outlined on pages 10 & 13, taking into account the responses given during the pitch, and any additional material requested. The evaluation team may then decide to award the contract to the producer(s) that best meet the assessment criteria.

Note: At any stage of the process, we may need to come back to you to seek clarification. Your answers will be factored into the evaluation process as appropriate.

**Step 3:** Or we may decide to hold second interviews, for example, in the event where we need more information to be able to differentiate between proposals.

### **STAGE 4: Contract Signed**

### **STAGE 5: Feedback**

Feedback may be requested by suppliers on unsuccessful proposals that reach Stage 3. Once notified of the result you have two weeks to request feedback. Requests for feedback should be made to **David Ireland**. Feedback will be provided within two weeks of receiving the request.



## 2. Assessment Criteria

We will assess your Full Proposal and pitch according to the main criteria below (editorial proposal and capability, value for money and risk).

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
<p><b><u>Editorial Proposal and Capability</u></b></p> <p><b>Key indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Editorial fit:</b> suitability of the proposal to the overall Network Strategy, as well as support for the delivery of BBC Radio 3’s vision and objectives</li> <li>• <b>Appropriate Knowledge:</b> a keen understanding of the world of classical music and related genres</li> <li>• <b>Innovation and freshness:</b> ability to innovate on a Saturday afternoon, to attract and retain new and existing audiences</li> <li>• <b>Format:</b> convincing ideas for the format and structure of the series</li> <li>• <b>Production team track record &amp; ability:</b> demonstrating a track record in producing recent and relevant music programmes of high editorial quality and technical ability</li> <li>• <b>Creative challenge:</b> Response to the specific creative and editorial challenges set out in brief</li> <li>• <b>Target Audience:</b> deep knowledge of the Radio 3 audience and the competition for their attention. Ability to appeal to a broad listener base</li> <li>• <b>Digital:</b> ability to innovate across digital platforms in order to engage audiences e.g. via social media, interactive content and BBC Sounds</li> <li>• <b>Recruitment and Management</b> of key production staff</li> <li>• <b>Ability to</b> manage editorial risk</li> <li>• <b>Appointment to listen:</b> creating impact, and drawing audiences to Radio 3</li> <li>• <b>Presenter management:</b> ability to manage and develop high profile and/or specialist on-air presenters</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> How your Proposal will support the BBC ambition to achieve Net Zero by 2050</li> </ul>	<p><b>70%</b></p>



Assessment Criteria	Weighting
<p><b><u>Diversity and Inclusion</u></b></p> <p>Evidence of how the submission supports the BBC’s D&amp;I policies and commitments. For further information on these, see Appendix 2.</p>	<p><b>10%</b></p>
<p><b><u>Value for Money</u></b></p> <p><b>Key Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Budget:</b> financial plan, including a full budget breakdown and showing production and overhead costs, sustainable beyond contract term</li> <li>• <b>Price:</b> confirmation that price per episode can be met and does not exceed the stated price</li> <li>• <b>Efficiency:</b> efficiency of the production process</li> <li>• <b>Contract terms:</b> acceptance of key contract terms (including compliance with all applicable UK law)</li> </ul>	<p><b>10%</b></p>
<p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><b>Key Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Production:</b> planning and management, specifically the ability to produce large-scale series with a consistent and experienced production team</li> <li>• <b>Business continuity:</b> adequacy and robustness of business continuity plans; ability to continue the production in case of business disruption</li> <li>• <b>BBC reputation:</b> the ability to produce compliant programmes which pose no risk to the reputation of the BBC</li> <li>• <b>Conflict of interest:</b> confirmation that there are no conflict of interest issues with the supplier, presenters or proposals</li> <li>• <b>Legislation and policy:</b> the ability to comply with all relevant UK legislation and BBC policies (not limited to editorial policies)</li> </ul>	<p><b>10%</b></p>



## SECTION C: THE COMMISSIONING TIMETABLE

The commissioning process for this opportunity consists of a number of stages, as set out in the timetable below:

Stage	Timings	Activities
<b>Launch</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Publication of commissioning brief documentation and round opens in PiCoS.
<b>Short Proposal and Eligibility (where appropriate) shortlisting</b>	<b>Noon on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>	Deadline for Short Proposal to be submitted via PiCoS.
	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Suppliers shortlisted, notified of outcomes and asked to prepare a Full Proposal.
<b>Full Proposal and shortlisting</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> June – 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026	Opportunity to discuss commissioning brief with Commissioners prior to submitting Full Proposal.
	<b>Noon on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2026</b>	Deadline for Full Proposal to be submitted via PiCoS. Evaluation panel shortlists Full Proposals.
	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2026	Shortlisted Suppliers invited to Pitching Meetings
	16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026	Pitching Meetings
<b>Conditional Commission and Contract</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2026	Commission award decision made, commissioning specification completed and contract issued.
	August 2026	Agreement of all programme-related deliverables and technical specifications (for further information on requirements, please see the BBC's <a href="#">commissioning website</a> ). Full contract signed.
<b>Feedback</b>	August 2026	Feedback on rejected Full Proposals, provided in PiCoS. Suppliers have two weeks to request further feedback.



We will assess your proposal according to this timetable. **Late submissions cannot be accepted.**

If you have any questions about this commissioning brief that need answering before you submit your Short Proposal and Experience responses, please ensure you email them to [david.ireland@bbc.co.uk](mailto:david.ireland@bbc.co.uk) by 29<sup>th</sup> May at the latest.

## Evaluation Team

The following people may be involved in the evaluation of your proposal at various stages:

- Sam Jackson, Controller, Radio 3 & BBC Proms
- Jeremy Evans, Head of Content Commissioning, Radio 3
- Ruth Thomson, Commissioning Executive, Radio 3
- David Ireland, Senior Planning Manager, Radio 3
- Representatives from Business Affairs and Procurement

Subject matter experts (e.g. production experts, visual content specialists, network management or finance advisors etc.) may also be consulted. See Section B for information on the commissioning process, timetable and assessment criteria.



## SECTION D: FULL PROPOSALS AND REFERENCE INFORMATION

**Please refer to this [important information](#) on the Radio commissioning website, regarding submission of your full proposal, including guidance on how to set out your budget.**

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in this commissioning brief and on the commissioning website. Proposals not complying may be rejected by the Commissioner whose decision in this matter will be final.

All the information required should be included in the (maximum) 5 pages of your proposal.

The BBC reserves the right at any time prior to award of a commission, and without incurring any liability to the affected suppliers, to accept or reject any proposal, or to annul the commissioning process, rejecting all proposals.

This title will be commissioned under the [BBC Audio Terms of Trade](#).

More information relating to all commissioning briefs and rounds, regardless of station, can be found on the [Pitching ideas](#) page of the Radio commissioning website.





**Please include the key personnel responsible for the production and delivery of the programme and details of the partnering company they are currently contracted to.**

[Insert details]

**You MUST complete this section:**

## **Part 2: Production Eligibility & Experience**

*In no more than 100 words per question, please outline your relevant production experience, using recent examples, in the following areas:*

**2.1 We require a production base with relevant experience and staffing depth in national music-radio production, particularly within classical music – both studio-based and in the live event/OB environment.**

[Insert details]

**2.2 We require a production base with relevant ‘production team’ experience of producing a non-mainstream music radio programme, with strong current relationships with record labels and artists, as well as an understanding of the BBC Archive.**

[Insert details]

**2.3 We require a production base with an understanding of the importance of multi-platform content, and recent company/production team experience of producing engaging content for online and social platforms.**

[Insert details]

**2.4 We require a production base with relevant production team experience of presenter management to the level required and the ability to build those relationships quickly and effectively.**

[Insert details]

**2.5 This programme airs outside normal working hours, so we are particularly interested in hearing how any unexpected absence from the production team would be managed at short notice.**

[Insert details]



## APPENDIX 2: Diversity & Inclusion

We want BBC Music to be the best organisation in the audio sector to work with and for – with an inclusive culture, diverse teams and representative programmes. That’s why, across radio and television, we are prioritising £80m annually of our commissioning budget on commissions that meet our criteria for diverse and inclusive content.

Programmes must meet two of the three criteria to count towards the commitment:

- Diverse stories and portrayal on-air: Representing all audiences around the UK
- Diverse production leadership: Influential roles off-screen or off-air involved in shaping and making programmes for the BBC
- Diverse company leadership: Senior roles involved in shaping and leading production companies making programmes for the BBC

There will be opportunities throughout the commissioning process to discuss how programme-makers and suppliers are meeting the criteria. This will not affect whether or not your commission is accepted, and our commissioning teams will be on hand if you need any further support or advice. It is important to note that this commitment is not a commissioning criteria, but rather a way for us to invest a proportion of our existing commissioning budget to increase representation both on and off air.

The full definitions supporting each priority can be found [here](#) and some FAQs [here](#).

