

Programme Summary

The Advanced Writing for Television Drama programme was devised with the purpose of building the professional writing skills and collaborative principles necessary for writers to succeed at the highest level in the competitive genre of primetime drama series. Writers with proven credits and experience were nominated by senior industry professionals. The programme, spread over the course of 10 months has been focussed on the creation of a reliable resource of experienced writers for the industry.

Modules 1 - 4

(2017: Module 1 – June and Module 2 – October

2018: Module 3 – January and Module 4 - March & April)

Module 1: We have been extremely well supported by the industry from all sides throughout the Programme. Module 1 sessions included from writers: **Paul Abbott** (NO OFFENCE, SHAMELESS, STATE OF PLAY), **Danny Brocklehurst** (IN THE DARK, ORDINARY LIES), **Tony Jordan** (DICKENSIAN, HUSTLE), **Sally Abbott** (THE CORONER), **Bryan Elsley** (CLIQUE, SKINS), **Jed Mercurio** (LINE OF DUTY), **Peter Bowker** (THE A WORD) and **Julie Geary** (CUFFS, SECRET DIARY OF A CALL GIRL). Amongst the production company executives were **Jane Featherstone** (MD, Sister Pictures), **Tony Wood** (Buccaneer), **Willow Grylls** (Founder, New Pictures), **Sarah Stack** (Head of Development, BBC), **Roanna Benn** (MD, Drama Republic), **Sally Haynes** (MD, Mainstreet Pictures) and **Tom Winchester** (Creative Director, DNA Films). Broadcast parameters were given by **Polly Hill** (ITV), **Chris Aird** (BBC) and **Lizzie Gray** (SKY).



Roanna Benn, Managing Director, Drama Republic - session, Module 1

European and US perspectives ranged across **Module 1 and 2** with writing and story input from Executive **Tatjana Andersson** (Head of Development, Palladium Fiction, Sweden) in Module 1 to Writer **Jeppé Gram** (FOLLOW THE MONEY, BORGES, Denmark). The **Module 2** workshops from experienced US Showrunners **Chris Black** (MAD MEN, OUTCAST) and **Rina Mimoun** (MISTRESSES, GILMORE GIRLS), and the unique bridge between the US and Europe, **Frank Spotnitz** (MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, X-FILES, HUNTED) provided invaluable insights.

As **Module 2** focused on the skills required for collaborative writing, US Writer, Producer, and Showrunners **Chris Black** and **Rina Mimoun** demonstrated the collaboration principles and involved the participants in the practices of a working writers' room through two days of simulated Room

Workshops (SWOOM) with associated ‘homework’, writing and story breaking tasks. **Frank Spotnitz** showed how this system can be adapted for the UK industry. **Jeppé Gjervig Gram** added a further dimension to the different ways of collaborative writing through his introduction of the Danish ‘One Vision’ model. This model evolved through observation of the more collaborative process established in the US and tailoring it to what Denmark needed for its own purposes.



Simulated Writers Room, Module 2

In Module 3, the principal focus was to consolidate the writers’ relationships to the elements of the industry with which they will be interacting. This was achieved through meetings with representatives of commissioning and production teams, including visits to the development teams at production companies **Left Bank** and **Kudos**. Roundtable discussions led by experienced executives and writers in the Scripted Drama Industry, such as **Cameron Roach** (Commissioning Editor, Sky Drama), **Tony Grisoni** (PHILIP K DICK’S ELECTRIC DREAMS, THE YOUNG POPE) and **Bryan Elsley** (SKINS, KISS ME FIRST), provided more insights to the various stages of the pre-production and production process. This included liaising with those responsible for the ongoing notes and editorial changes, coordinating with producers to directors, to production staff and sets, to better examine how writers can contribute to the smooth and effective running of the overall process. We hope that this has helped to cement those working relationships which are integral to the development and production of TV Drama shows.



Tony Grisoni (Philip K Dick’s Electric Dreams) & Nick Marston (Curtis Brown/Cuba Pictures), Module 3

PROJECT CONTINUITY & SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT:

Following the completion of each Module, Participants have been supported in the sustained development of an original project. By application of what they have learnt during the Programme, as well as through a schedule of collaborative writing and notes sessions involving a team of 9 script editors, each participant receives one-on-one development of their project to a full treatment and first draft script stage, pitch ready for the contacts they have connected with through the Programme.

CONCLUDING PITCHING DAYS:

The **Advanced Writing for Television Drama Programme** concluded with 4 days of pitching. The participants pitched their originally developed projects to approximately 75 of the UK's most accomplished production companies and producers. March 22-23 was attended by the HETV Levy companies whose contributions have supported this Programme. April 12-13 was opened to the whole drama industry and was equally well attended by UK producers and development executives. Options for projects have already been forthcoming and responses to the participants for their role and availability as writers or for alternative projects are under discussion.

"the writing has been of extremely high calibre and I look forward to being able to option at least one project but hopefully more. To have the chance to meet so many accomplished and passionate writers in one afternoon was a treat in itself."

Angela Sinden, Producer, Hat Trick Productions, UK

Programme organisers MediaXchange and Creative Skillset would like to thank all the industry professionals who took part as speakers and script editors. Their input has been invaluable and was much appreciated. A list of the speakers and script editors as well as the participating writers in the group will be found below.

MODULE 1:

- Paul Abbott, Founder, AbbottVision, Creator/Writer/Producer, *No Offence*
- Jed Mercurio, Creator/Writer/Producer/Director, *Line of Duty*
- Bryan Elsley, Founder, Balloon Entertainment, Creator/Writer/Producer *Kiss Me First, Skins*
- Peter Bowker, Creator/Writer, *The A-Word*
- Julie Gearey, Creator/Writer/Producer. *Cuffs, Secret Diary of a Call Girl*
- Danny Brocklehurst, Writer/Executive Producer, *In the Dark, The Five, Ordinary Lies*
- Sally Abbott, Creator/Head Writer, *The Coroner*
- Polly Hill, Head of Drama, ITV
- Lizzie Gray, Executive Producer, Sky Drama
- Tony Jordan, Founder, Red Planet Pictures, Creator/Writer/Producer, *Life on Mars, Death in Paradise, Dickensian,*
- Jane Featherstone, Managing Director, Sister Pictures
- Roanna Benn, Managing Director, Drama Republic
- Tony Wood, CEO, Buccaneer Media
- Tatjana Andersson, Head of Development, Palladium Fiction
- Kaye Elliott, HETV Programme Lead, Creative Skillset

MODULE 2:

- Frank Spotnitz, Writer/Executive Producer/ Showrunner, *The Man in the High Castle*, *Ransom*, *Medici: Masters Of Florence*, *The Indian Detective*
- Ben Harris, Head Writer of *Ransom*
- Bryan Elsley, Founder, Balloon Entertainment, Creator/Writer/Producer *Kiss Me First*, *Skins*
- Chris Black, Writer/Executive Producer/Showrunner, *Outcast*, *Mad Men*
- Rina Mimoun, Writer/Executive Producer/Showrunner, *Mistresses*, *Everwood*, *Pushing Daisies*
- Sally Abbott, Creator/Head Writer of *The Coroner*
- Sasha Hails, Writer of *Moonstone*, Writer, *Versailles*
- Jeppe Gjervig Gram, Writer, *Borgen*, Head Writer/Creator, *Follow The Money*
- John Yorke, Managing Director, Angel Station, Executive Producer, *Moonstone*, Consulting Producer, *EastEnders*
- Willow Grylls, Executive Producer, Co-Founder, New Pictures, *Rellick*, *The Missing*
- Christopher Aird, previously Head of Drama, London, BBC Studios, transitioning into Head of Drama, Two Brothers Pictures

MODULE 3:

- Tony Grisoni, Writer, *Southcliffe*, *Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams*, *The Young Pope*
- Nick Marston, Agent & Executive Producer, Curtis Brown & Cuba Pictures
- Cameron Roach, Senior Commissioner, SKY Drama
- Diederick Santer, Managing Director, Kudos Film and Television
- Alison Barnett, Head of Production, Kudos Film and Television
- Richard Cookson, Senior Drama Commissioner, Kudos Film and Television
- Lila Rawlings, Executive Producer, Left Bank Picture
- Jessica Burdett, Head of Development, Left Bank Picture
- Bryan Elsley, Writer, *Skins*, *Kiss Me First*
- Julian Friedmann, Founder & Agent, BlakeFriedmann

ORIGINAL PROJECT - CONTINUITY & DEVELOPMENT:

- Serena Cullen, Producer, Serena Cullen Productions / Supervisor, Script Editor Group
- Kim Varvell, Script Editor
- Clare Couchman, Script Editor
- Janine Jones, Script Editor
- James Roblin, Script Editor
- Sophie Mitchell, Script Editor
- Lola Oliyide, Script Editor
- Oliver Grieve, Script Editor
- Dan Walker, Script Editor

PARTICIPATING WRITERS:

Karen Brown, award winning writer for stage, radio and TV

Melissa Bubnic, London based, Australian TV scriptwriter

Ishy Din, from Middlesborough with credits in TV and for the Stage

Jimmy Dowdall, from Chester who works closely with TV legend Paul Abbott

Brendan Foley, former journalist from County Antrim, now an award winning author and scriptwriter

Alastair Galbraith, former actor and director turned scriptwriter, originally from Scotland and now based in Ipswich

Vivienne Harvey, also from Scotland, writes for both TV and radio

Kit Lambert, from Cardiff, with a host of TV and theatre writing credits

Jane Marlow, former writer for Broadcast Magazine, she's has been writing for continuous drama and other formats for several years

Ben Morris, who has a raft of script executive credits to his name

Laura Neal, a 2012 Broadcast Magazine Hot Shot with a strong list of theatre and TV writing credits

Carol Russell, with a portfolio that includes radio, TV and films

Tracy Spottiswoode, Cardiff based award winning writer, director and animator

Sumerah Srivastav, a law graduate with a background in film production and commercial radio