

Decision of BBC Audience Services not to respond further to a complaint about the BBC Proms

The complaint concerned a lack of diversity in the music included in the BBC Proms. He made the following points:

- He did not believe the BBC Proms was sticking to the publicly stated original aim of presenting the widest range of music, performed to the highest standards, to large audiences.
- The 2015 Proms programme included 76 concerts of which only seven presented non-classical music.
- There were no brass bands, no folk music, no world music, jazz only in the shape of Frank Sinatra and swing, no opera and no apparent recognition of the wide range of music enjoyed by the UK public.
- It was the BBC who had chosen to call the Proms the “world’s largest classical music festival”, but it was not a classical music festival because the BBC said its original aim was to present the widest range of music, performed to the highest standards, to large audiences.
- What did the BBC propose to do about the lack of diversity in the Proms?
- He had concerns about the handling of his complaint as some of his queries went unanswered.

BBC Audience Services made the following points:

- The BBC had broadcast, as part of the Proms programme, a number of performances that were not classically related, but ultimately the BBC Proms was the world’s largest classical music festival.
- They apologised for not having responded to the complainant’s letters of 30 August and 16 September 2015. This appeared to have been due to duplication which caused administrative confusion at the BBC’s end. They recapped on all correspondence to date.
- In their response dated 19 October 2015, Audience Services summarised the content of the Proms concerts which the BBC had broadcast.
- The BBC did not have the resources or airtime to be able to replicate every aspect of the BBC Proms on radio and/or television and each year the BBC had to make very difficult editorial decisions about what to broadcast.
- The Proms was only one part of the BBC’s music output and, considered as a whole, the BBC carried an unrivalled breadth of music.

Audience Services said they had nothing further to add and that they did not believe the complaint had raised an issue that justified further investigation.

Appeal

The complainant appealed to the BBC Trust on the substance and handling of his complaint. He reiterated his concerns and made the following points: