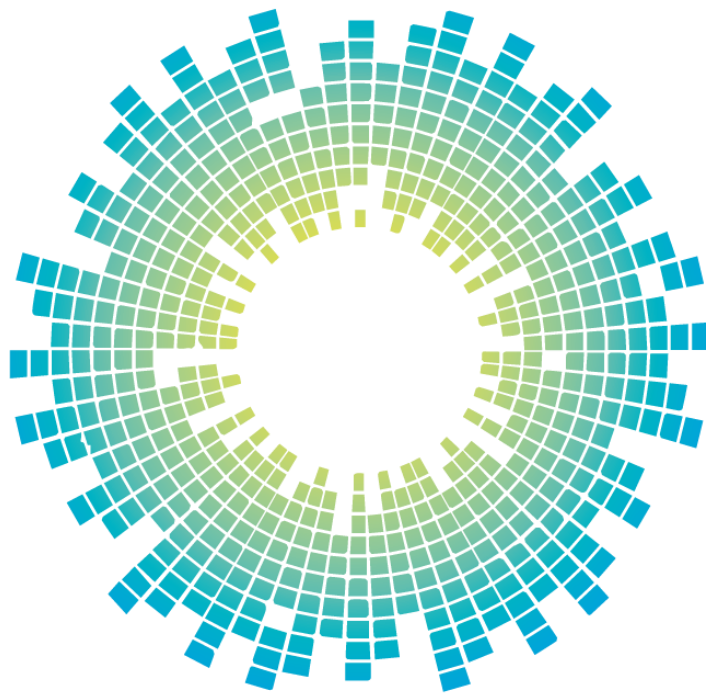




Commissioning Brief



Commissioning Brief No. 31334

Music Matters

For BBC *Radio 3* for April 2026 - March 2027

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SECTION A: EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITY

Commissioning Brief ID / Title: 31334: Music Matters

Commissioning Editor	Jeremy Evans
Commissioning Contact	David Ireland
Commissioning Brief Title	Music Matters
Network	Radio 3
Guide Price	£3000 per episode, including presenter fees
Genre	Music - Classical
Duration	59'
No. of Episodes	c.32
Transmission Period	April 2026- March2027
Slot Day	Sunday
Slot Time	1500-1600
Production Location	No restriction
Commissioning Round	2026/27 – Round 2 (Music Matters)

Important Points to Note:

Short Proposals and your responses to the **Production Eligibility Questionnaire** must be submitted via PiCoS, using **Commissioning Brief 31334: Music Matters**, and **Commissioning Round 2 2026/27**, before the deadline at **noon on Thursday 16th October 2025**.

- This title will be commissioned under the Audio Terms of Trade.
- Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the requirements contained in this document and on the commissioning website. Proposals not complying may be rejected by the Commissioners whose decision in this matter will be final.



The **Production Eligibility Questionnaire** can be found in **Appendix 1**. This is the first part of your submission and it will be considered as part of the process. Please only complete if you've not previously had music programmes commissioned by the network, otherwise enter "N/A".

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. About BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 3 is the BBC's classical music station, also offering a range of broader cultural programming to entertain and absorb audiences. Classical music leads its daytime schedule, complemented by a host of live concerts and live performance every day. Alongside this are distinctive programmes on jazz, world music, as well as documentaries and speech programmes.

Network Editorial Strategy & Objectives

Cultural programming is a central part of Radio 3's mission.

- We believe classical music is for everyone. We aim to create an inclusive, welcoming space for all listeners that brings people together through shared experience and understanding, providing a place of inspiration, and a means to navigate a complex world.
- We pride ourselves on being a commissioner of distinctive classical music programmes, shining a new light on well-loved artistic works and investing in new talent.
- We are one of the most significant commissioners of contemporary classical music anywhere in the world and the biggest broadcaster of live classical concerts including the BBC Proms.

Diversity

Diversity & Inclusion is a priority for all of us. We want BBC Content to be demonstrably 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 through the BBC 50:50 initiative 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 part of 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. And contributing 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 proposal might contribute to the expanded 50/50 Diversity initiative and how your company already aligns with our D&I Commissioning Commitments, or could do so in future (See Appendix 1).

2. The Editorial Opportunity

What matters in music and why does music matter? This strand talks to the people who matter in music, it delves into the stories that matter in music and it presents the most compelling music that can change lives.

Music Matters holds a unique place in Radio 3's programming; at its best and most successful it combines in-depth, intelligent and revelatory storytelling with a brilliantly engaging music sequence. The format allows for multilayered and creative approaches; you might choose to tell the stories through topical investigative journalism that includes multiple voices. Equally, you might tell the story with a single compelling voice, with the use of incredible archive or unexpected contributors. Another approach could be bringing to air people who tell compelling stories about classical music but aren't often heard on Radio 3. Whatever the story and treatment, it will have serious depth; we want to hear stories that haven't yet been told, issues that haven't yet been investigated, narratives that will always be relevant to the general interests of listeners, something listeners will care about, will have impact and create wider interest around the programmes.

Music Matters is an opportunity to employ the most engaging storytelling around classical music and we want to hear about the innovative and captivating ways you will create the narrative. We are looking for proposals for individual series of between 3 and 6 programmes but are also open to ideas which could run for longer or return during the year.

From April 2026, Music Matters is moving to a new time of 3pm on a Sunday afternoon. Following on directly from Music Map, this is an opportunity to build on the Music Map audience and deliver listeners to Jazz Record Requests.

As well as the stories you tell, crucial to the success of the programme is a consistent and convincing classical music policy that sits within the overall sequence of programming on Radio 3. We are looking for a speech to music ratio of around 25:75. The music should engage and illuminate, complementing the speech, and tell its own story in the general narrative of the series.



The presenter of each series may have a high profile within or beyond the classical music world but that is by no means essential. Regardless of their profile, they will be a compelling storyteller with highly developed skills of communicating ideas and enthusiasms in the most engaging way. They may be an existing Radio 3 presenter or could be new to the network. Either way, they will be comfortable behind a microphone and should wear their knowledge lightly speaking informally to listeners.

The programme should be targeted at the broadest possible range of listeners, those who don't yet listen to Radio 3, whilst also still delighting and surprising the core, existing audience. Producers should take note of the programme's proximity to Private Passions in the schedule and consider how they ensure their proposals and production techniques are complementary to and distinctive from that programme.

We are looking forward to hearing the story you're going to tell, hearing about who's going to tell it and how you are going to do it. We also want to know how you will ensure your programmes captivate listeners working as a linear listen on a Sunday afternoon as well as standing out as a compelling series on BBC Sounds that's essential listening for anyone who cares about music.

Recent highlights

The following details of recently broadcast Music Matters give a sense of the range and depth of topics and approaches that may work for the programme at the new broadcast time of 3pm on Sunday afternoon:

The Land Without Music?: A six-part series taking an in depth look at the state of classical music in the UK. With contributions throughout the series from some of the main players on the British music scene today, including Nicola Benedetti, Martyn Brabbins, Evelyn Glennie, Darren Henley, Gavin Higgins, Sam Lee, James MacMillan, Stephen Maddock, Gillian Moore, Chi-chi Nwanoku, David Pickard and Judith Weir.

Jenni Murray's Women Composers: Women have always composed - but, far more than with their male contemporaries, obstacles have been thrown in their way. In this series, Jenni Murray explored some of the avenues women composers have taken to overcome these challenges, offering insight into their music and illuminating the cultural and human stories which resonate today, as well as celebrating the music itself with a vibrant playlist of some of the very best music by women. Guests throughout the series included Errollyn Wallen, Leah Broad, Joanna MacGregor, Roxanna Panufnik, Jude Kelly and Kadiatu Kannah-Mason.

Satire and the Stave: In this series, comedian and writer Chris Addison took listeners on a tour of how composers have used their music to question, parody, and challenge power and ideas over the years. Classical music can amplify the most glorious and spectacular state power. But it can also undermine it - satirising and thumbing the nose of the status



quo. With Chris as the single voice in each programme, each episode in this series took a big idea, and illustrated it with a playlist of entertaining and diverse music spanning the entire history of Western classical music.

25 Years of the West Eastern Divan Orchestra: Clemency Burton-Hill brought the story of the West-Eastern Divan Project up to date as it marked its 25th anniversary amidst a time of terrible conflict in Gaza. Including interviews with Daniel Barenboim, Mariam Said, biographer Elena Cheah, the Divan's General Manager Tabaré Perlas, and the Divan's concertmaster Michael Barenboim.

We are expecting to award these series to multiple production suppliers.

3. 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](#).

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](#).

4. Key Deliverables

Audio four weeks ahead of broadcast; Proteus descriptions that are designed for BBC Sounds; readiness to co-operate with BBC Radio 3 Comms and Marketing teams; delivery with metadata such as Presentation Details and Genealogy.

5. Success Measures

Clear audience impact; strong on-demand performance on BBC Sounds – particularly for over-45s; critical and press attention; Reinforcement of Music Matters as an appointment to listen.

6. Compliance and 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

STAGE 1: Short Proposal and Shortlisting

Step 1: Production Experience

- Review the Production Experience Questionnaire section in Appendix 1.
- 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 evaluation team (see full list below in Section 2), 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 who performed best on their production questionnaire (by best demonstrating their experience and capability in producing (inset network/department) style programmes) will have their Short Proposal assessed and a shortlist will be compiled.
- Your Short Proposal should be no more than 250 words and summarise your specific ideas. (PiCoS will allow you to enter more words but you should still stay within the word count for this commissioning round in order for your proposal to be fully considered) The proposal 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 16th October 2025.

Step 3: Shortlisting notification

You will be notified of the outcome of Stages 1 & 2. 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 will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).

Step 2: Producers will be invited to provide Full Proposals, via PiCoS, responding to this commissioning brief, which includes all the elements outlined in Section D (“Full Proposals”). For guidance, your Full Proposal should not exceed **two sides of A4** when printed using Arial font, size 11. (Any running orders can be in addition to this).

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

Step 4: We will evaluate all full proposals against the editorial brief, as given above, and commission those we feel most successfully fulfil the brief and help to make up the most varied and balanced season of Music Matters.

Step 5: Producers who are successful will be notified on PiCoS. Feedback for rejected proposals will be also be given here. Further feedback can be requested at a later stage.

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.

STAGE 3: Commission Awarded and Contract Signed

THE EVALUATION TEAM

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

Sam Jackson, Controller, Radio 3

Jeremy Evans, Head of Content Commissioning, Radio 3

Ruth Thomson, Commissioning Executive, Radio 3

David Ireland, Senior Planning Manager, Radio 3

Subject matter experts (e.g. production experts, network management, diversity, finance, etc.) may also be consulted.



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
Launch	Thursday 11th September 2025	Publication of commissioning brief documentation and round opens in PiCoS.
Commissioning Webinar	Friday 12th Sept 2025	An online briefing from commissioners (full details to follow)
Short Proposals and shortlisting	Noon on Thursday 16th October 2025	Deadline for Short Proposals to be submitted via PiCoS.
	Thursday 23rd October 2025	Suppliers shortlisted, notified of outcomes and asked to prepare Full Proposals.
Full Proposals and shortlisting	27th October – 14th November 2025	Opportunity to discuss commissioning brief with Commissioners prior to submitting Full Proposals.
	Noon on Thursday 20th November 2025	Deadline for Full Proposals to be submitted via PiCoS. Evaluation panel shortlists Full Proposals.
Pitching meetings for successful offers	1st – 12th December 2025	Invitations to these will be issued on 24 th November. Please keep time free during this period
Conditional Commissions offered	18th December 2025	Commissioning decisions made, subject to contract. Editorial specifications agreed. Feedback submitted on PiCoS.

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, please ensure you email them to david.ireland@bbc.co.uk by 10th October 2025 at the latest.



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 two pages of your proposal (plus any supporting information).

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.

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.



APPENDIX 1: Production Eligibility & Experience

Guidance

The Production Eligibility Questionnaire is the first part of your submission that the BBC will consider as part of the process. Please only complete it if you have not previously been commissioned by the network. Otherwise just insert “N/A”.

Once completed, please copy and paste your responses into the ‘**Production experience**’ section of the Create Proposal page in PiCoS (maximum 1,000 words).

Questionnaire

Part 1: Production Eligibility & Experience

Please outline your relevant production experience, using recent examples, in the following areas:

We require a production base with relevant experience and staffing depth in national radio production.

[Insert details]

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/on demand and social platforms.

[Insert details]

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

[Insert details]

Part 2: Partnerships

Complete Part 2 ONLY if you plan to submit a full proposal as part of a partnership.

Please list each partnership and describe the responsibilities each partner will take.

[Insert details]

Please indicate the lead company with whom the BBC will contract.

[Insert details]

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]



APPENDIX 2: Diversity & Inclusion

We want BBC Radio & 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](#).

