

The Writers' Guild Weekly e-bulletin No. 401, Friday 11th December 2009

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Guild News

1. Campaign to get BAFTA TV writer award upgraded

The Writers' Guild has lobbied BAFTA for several years to request that the award for TV writer is included in the main, high-profile BAFTA TV awards (alongside those given to actors) rather than in the subsidiary craft awards.

As Gail Renard, Chair of the Guild's TV Committee comments, another letter was sent this year:

In May, the TV Committee wrote to BAFTA after receiving many comments and complaints about how writers are acknowledged in the BAFTA awards. To my knowledge we never received a reply.

The Guild feels strongly that writers are an integral part of any production; naturally, we'd think the most important. We begin with nothing and turn it into something which is where all creative work begins. We now ask for our place alongside our colleagues in the spotlight.

That's why the Guild is fully behind the campaign being led by Guild members [Danny Stack](#) and [Martin Day](#) to get BAFTA to give TV writers their proper place at the main ceremony.

Danny has written [an open letter to BAFTA](#) and there is an ongoing campaign on Twitter.

Guild members are urged to join the [Twitter campaign](#) or [contact BAFTA](#) directly

2. MP seeks to save Silver Street

Following the BBC's announcement of its [decision to axe the Asian Network radio soap, Silver Street](#), John Hemming MP has tabled an [Early Day Motion](#) expressing his concern:

EDM 315

SILVER STREET AND BBC RADIO DRAMA

01.12.2009

Hemming, John

That this House is concerned at the proposed cut back in radio drama proposed for the West Midlands by the termination of the Asian radio network production Silver Street in March 2010; notes that the proposed replacement radio drama output will be a cut of 80 per cent. of the BBC's Asian network production in the West Midlands since 2004 and reduce the viability of the Birmingham Mailbox radio drama production site, as well as diminish opportunities for writers, technical staff and for lead roles for ethnic minority actors in the Midlands; believes that this action contravenes the commitments given by the BBC to the House, to take production outside the M25 at Charter Renewal, and to spread production to all the English regions and the nations; and calls on the BBC to rethink this proposal.

The Writers' Guild has already issued a [press release](#) condemning the decision and Equity has set up a [Facebook Group](#) to campaign for it to be overturned. They are urging people to urge their MPs, particularly in the Midlands, to support the Early Day Motion (EDM 315). You can contact your local MP via [writetothem.com](#)

3. News for Writers' Guild pension scheme members

GUILD PENSION ADMIN COMES UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

HSBC Actuaries and Consultants Limited (HACL) – which has administered the Writers' Guild pension scheme for a number of years – was taken over by the JLT Group (JLT) on the 1 December 2009. This development brings together two big forces in employee benefit provision. However the personnel has not changed and the senior executive overseeing Guild members' pension affairs remains John Adams. He can be reached on 01727 775 071 for queries relating to payments into your scheme and details of benefits. Queries about entitlement to pension contributions from television, radio and film producers, and the contribution rates under different types of contracts, should be addressed to the Guild office.

CHANGES TO PENSION TAX RELIEF FOR HIGH EARNERS

If your income is £150,000 or more in any of the tax years 2007-08 to 2010-11, you should seek advice before making changes to your pension contributions or paying single premiums. Failure to take account of changes to tax relief could lead to a 20 per cent tax charge. For obvious reasons we do not think this will affect many Writers' Guild members, but if you may be caught, please contact John Adams at JLT (number above) if you are in the Guild pension scheme, or your usual pension adviser if you are in a different scheme.

WERE YOU BORN BEFORE 5 APRIL 1960?

On 6th April 2010 the earliest age at which you are able to take benefits from your pension plan will go up from 50 to 55 for most people. This means that if you retire before that date you can take your benefits at 50, but after that date you will have to wait until you are 55. Taking pension benefits early may impact significantly on the level of income available to you over the long term. Before making such an important decision you should discuss your financial situation and retirement plans with your financial adviser. If you have queries on this subject you can contact John Adams at JLT (number above) if you are in the Guild pension scheme, or your usual pension adviser if you are in a different scheme.

Events

4. The 7th London short film festival - programme announced 8th-17th January 2010

10 days / 12 venues across London / 16 programmes of new UK short film talent, with 200 shorts / live music & film events / industry & networking

venues: ICA / Curzon Soho / Roxy Bar & Screen / Rich Mix / Shortwave Cinema / BAFTA / Lexi Cinema / Cinephilia West / The Roundhouse / The Frontline Club / The Hospital Club / Vibe Live

Full details at www.shortfilms.org.uk <http://www.shortfilms.org.uk/>.

5. The New York Writers Room opening West London, March 2010

It can be a tough old life for the lone writer working at home. Constant distractions, isolation, the tendency to turn slightly feral, not too mention the persistent siren call of the fridge contents and the odd packet of HobNobs.

The answer is here at last! The UK's first New York style writers' room is opening in Chiswick, West London in March 2010. On offer is 1500 sq feet of funky, inspiring and comfortable space with individual writers' workstations, numerous sumptuous sofas and coffee chat area with a vast array of teas, coffee, juices and biscuits to fuel the creative juices.

The New York Writers Room will provide a creative, supportive space for new, emerging and established writers of all genres. They will run monthly special events such as author talks, members' readings, masterclasses and social evenings. There will also be opportunities for dramatising new works and showcases. Members will also have access to preferential rates for our NYWR Script Development and other specialist programmes, such as the Spring Chicken series, specifically designed to encourage and develop the work of their more mature new writers.

Open 7 days a week and run on a membership basis. Special discounted opening offer. £100 per month for full time unlimited access. £65 per month for part-time members - early mornings, evenings and weekends

They are currently inviting expressions of interest and welcome replies to newyorkwritersroom@tiscali.co.uk.

Courses and Workshops

6. Ongoing weekly workshop for musical theatre libretto

David James will be offering the UK's first ongoing weekly workshop for creating, crafting and developing musical theatre libretti, beginning 25 February, 2010, for 16 weeks in the spring and 14 weeks in the autumn at the Actors' Centre in London. It is hoped that the workshop will then develop into a permanent fixture.

David specialised in libretto at the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop for seven years in New York before moving to London, and will use the philosophy of that programme, which, over the past 40 years, has been the starting point for the writing of such musicals as *Nine*, *A Chorus Line*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, and *Avenue Q*, among many others.

Even experienced playwrights are usually unaware that musical theatre book development, like screenwriting, is based on a craft that needs to be fully understood before writers can begin to consider 'breaking the rules'. These tenets will be explored and practiced here as new work is developed from its earliest stages over an extended period.

Equally importantly, musical theatre is the most completely (and complexly) collaborative dramatic art form, and the workshop will be a place to practice giving – and receiving – helpful feedback to and from the other participants, so you can safely test and retest your work to a finished level.

For further information on how to apply, please visit

<http://www.bookmusicandlyrics.com>

7. Script editing - applications now open

Price: £225 + VAT for two 2-day workshops

Location: London

Date: 25th & 26th January 2010

Bursaries Available: No

The script editor is vital in the creative process though it is often unclear just what that role consists of and how one becomes an editor. This course, created and led by script consultant Diane Culverhouse will guide you step-by-step through the editor's position.

Topics range from searching for original talent to a detailed exploration of the relationship between writer, script editor and producer. You will also work on honing your script analysis technique as well as investigating the storylining process.

Please email shamsul@tapsnet.org for an application form.

8. Series masterclass - applications now open

Price: £425 + VAT for two 2-day workshops

Location: Talkback Thames Studios, South London

Date: Module 1: 14th & 15th January 2010 Module 2: 25th & 26th January 2010

Bursaries Available: No

Writing 60-minute episodes is easy - it's just like two 30-minute parts, right? It's this misconception that sees many writers hitting a glass ceiling in their careers as they cannot make the jump from 30 to 60-minute work. That's where TAPS comes in.

This course will show you exactly how to modify your views of story and structure to the 60-minute format. Split across two workshop sessions, you will work with top writers and creative staff from "The Bill" to follow the creation of an episode from storyline to transmission.

Please email shamsul@tapsnet.org for an application form.

9. LFS Workshops Schedule: January – March 2010

Applications are now open for the following short courses at the London Film School. For more info click on the course titles below, visit www.lfs.org.uk or contact Carolyn Atherton: workshops@lfs.org.uk/+44 (0)20 7836 9642.

Early Bird Discount: Book any of the following courses by 15th December to receive a 10% discount!

[Sales, Marketing & Distribution with Mia Bays](#) 8 & 9 Jan

[EP/Movie Magic Budgeting & Scheduling with Emma Dobinson](#) 16 & 17 Jan

[Alexander Mackendrick on Filmmaking with Paul Cronin](#) 23 & 24 Jan

[Script Supervision & Continuity for Film & TV with Beth Multer](#) 6 & 7 Feb

[A Practical Introduction to Location Sound: Recording and Mixing with Joel Cahen](#) 13 & 14 Feb

[Sound & Music Techniques for Narrative Filmmaking with Gustavo Costantini](#) 27 & 28 Feb

[Directing as Visual Storytelling with Josh Appignanesi](#) 6 & 7 Mar

[Writers' Gym I with Ellis Freeman](#) Starts 8 Mar – app deadline 1 Feb

[Writers' Gym II: Feature Script Development Programme with Ellis Freeman](#) Starts 9 Mar – app deadline 1 Feb.

Opportunities

10. 12th Annual Scriptapalooza International Screenplay Competition

early deadline is January 5th

www.scriptapalooza.com

Why should you submit your script to Scriptapalooza?

-Grand Prize: \$10,000

-All the reading is done by 90 production companies -Entertainment Weekly Magazine calls them 'One of the Best'

-they promote the winners, runners-up, finalists and semifinalists for a full year -We are considered one of the best screenplay competitions by agents, managers and producers - Supported by the Writers Guild of America west -Supported by the Writers Guild of Canada

About Scriptapalooza:

The Scriptapalooza Screenwriting Competition, was founded in 1998, and has generated heat, publicity and a reputation that demands respect. Scriptapalooza, Inc., along with its various divisions was created to nurture talent and create opportunities. Storytellers come from all over the world and from all walks of life, because of the simple fact that everyone has a story. Scriptapalooza's goal: to seek out that storyteller and honour their script with a grand prize of \$10,000.

Each year dozens of production companies and literary representatives sign on as participants to read our winners, resulting in many scripts being optioned, sold or outright bought.

Questions? Comments? call the office 323.654.5809 or info@scriptapalooza.com

www.scriptapalooza.com

11. Plays wanted

It's Theatre Trail time again! The Company, in association with New Writing South and the Steyning Festival, are looking for 6 unperformed plays (maximum length 45 mins), from playwrights from the South East, for the hugely successful Steyning Festival Theatre Trails. The plays will be performed by professional actors as rehearsed readings, at different Site Specific venues in Steyning, as part of the Festival. This is the fourth year of the Theatre Trails. Over the last two years the Trails have been so popular that they were sold out weeks before the Festival started.

Constructive feedback will be offered on every play submitted, and we are delighted that the Q & A session at the end of each day of performances will be chaired by Chris Taylor of New Writing South. All plays need to be submitted by 15th January 2010.

Scripts should be sent to :

The Company

Whitehouse Farm

Novington Lane

East Chiltington

East Sussex

BN7 3AU

If you would like your play to be returned please enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and if you need any more information please contact Stephen Israel at stephen@thecompanysussex.plus.com

(Please note that emailed scripts will not be accepted)

12. Guiding Lights launches again

Following two successful rounds of Guiding Lights, they are looking for another 25 up-and-coming film professionals to match with top industry talent. Successful applicants will benefit from 12 months of one-to-one mentor support from an established practitioner. Previous mentors include Danny Boyle, Paul Greengrass, Gurinda Chadha, Kenneth Branagh, Alison Owen, Christopher Hampton and Bill Nicholson.

Guiding Lights welcome applications from across the community and will select participants from a range of industry disciplines. The scheme is open to directors, producers, screenwriters, cinematographers and professionals working in sales, distribution, exhibition, marketing, publicity and business affairs.

Please check the website www.guiding-lights.org.uk for eligibility criteria, guidelines and FAQs

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 1:00pm Wednesday 23rd December 2009

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Website: www.guiding-lights.org.uk

Email: guiding@lighthouse.org.uk

Telephone: 01273 686320

Guiding Lights are able to facilitate access for deaf and disabled people.

All information is available in large print format. Copies can be downloaded from the website:

www.guiding-lights.org.uk

What Members Are Getting Up To

SALLY ABBOTT wrote the episode of *Casualty* "No More Heroes" going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Saturday 12th December.

PAUL ALEXANDER wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Tuesday 15th December.

JESSE ARMSTRONG co-wrote the episode of *The Thick of It* going out on BBC2 at 10:10pm on Saturday 12th December.

SARAH BAGSHAW wrote the episodes of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm and 8:00pm on Thursday 17th December.

SONALI BHATTACHARYYA wrote the episode of *Holby City* "Too Close for Comfort" going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Tuesday 15th December.

MARK BURT wrote the episode of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 8:30pm on Thursday 17th December.

STEVE CHAMBERS and PHIL NODDING'S radio play *High-lites* is going out on Radio 4 at 2:15pm on Tuesday 15th December.

KATIE DOUGLAS wrote the episode of *Waterloo Road* going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Wednesday 16th December.

RACHEL FLOWERDAY wrote the episodes of *EastEnders* going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Monday 14th and at 7:30pm on Tuesday 15th December.

MARK GREIG wrote the episode of *Paradox* going out on BBC1 at 9:00pm on Tuesday 15th December.

JONATHAN HARVEY'S second series of *Beautiful People* concludes with the episode "*How I Got My Gash*" going out on BBC2 at 10:00pm on Friday 18th December. He also wrote the episodes of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 7:30pm and 8:30pm on Friday 18th December.

IAIN HEGGIE'S radio play *The Tobacco Merchant's Lawyer* is going out on Radio 4 at 2:15pm on Monday 14th December.

PETER KERRY wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Friday 18th December.

FRED LAWLESS has written a new comedy Christmas play '*Merry Ding Dong*' for the Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool. It opens on Friday 11th December and runs until Saturday 23rd January. More details at <http://www.royalcourtLiverpool.co.uk/>

KATHLEEN MCCREERY'S play *When I Meet My Mother* has been published in a collection entitled 'In the Continuum and Other Plays', edited by Rory Kilalea for Weaver Press, Harare, Zimbabwe. ISBN:978 1 77922 084 4. See www.kathmc.com and www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com for more information.

NEIL MCLENNAN wrote the episode of *Doctors* "A Little of What You Fancy" going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Monday 14th December.

DOMINIQUE MOLONEY wrote the episode of *Doctors* "O Christmas Tree" going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Tuesday 15th December.

ROLAND MOORE wrote the episode of *Waybuloo* being shown on CBeebies at 6:00pm on Saturday 12th December.

The BBC1 war time drama series, *Land Girls*, has been nominated for a Broadcast Award. Created by ROLAND MOORE, and written by Roland Moore, DOMINIQUE MOLONEY and DALE OVERTON, the series is a contender for the award for Best Daytime Programme.

JOHN MORTIMER'S radio play *Rumpole and the Reign of Terror* will be going out in two parts on Radio 4 starting with the first half *Truth Makes All Things Plain* at 2:15pm on Thursday and concluding with the second half *The Past Catches Up with Us All* going out at 2:15pm on Friday 18th December.

LESLEY CLAIRE O'NEILL wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Wednesday 16th December.

CAROLE SIMPSON SOLAZZO wrote the episodes of *The Archers* going out on Radio 4 at 7:00pm from Sunday 13th till Friday 18th December with each episode being repeated at 2:00pm the day following its original broadcast.

TINA WALKER wrote the episode of *Doctors* "Dead Serious" going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Thursday 17th December.