

My letter to Tony Hall, Director General BBC

Saturday, 07 January 2017

07/01/2017

Dear Tony Hall,

Top of the Pops - The Story of 1983 - ran on BBC4 without mention or inclusion of my regular US Chart Rundowns, despite Michael Hurl and Gordon Elsbury (Producer and Director) saying, many times, that they were the key ingredients in the show's successful new format in the 80s.

A couple of failed attempts at foreign charts, such as the one from Singapore, were given substantial time.

Your reshewing of Top of the Pops has regularly, as previously discussed, removed all inclusion of my segments. This is against Editorial Guidelines, as are the absence of all my hits from various radio and TV shows.

The BBC appears happy to carry large amounts of footage of the music and appearances of George Michael, convicted of sexual and drug crimes. Yet appearances of Jimmy Savile, convicted of no crimes at all, are removed from repeats. Why? Is BBC Policy ruled by tabloid coverage rather than by justice? Will all David Bowie's music be banned when the tabloids decide to print all the allegations against him?

Leslie Grantham, a convicted murderer, and Boy George, a convicted sex offender, are allowed on the BBC (quite rightly). Dave Lee Travis, acquitted of numerous false allegations, is banned from BBC repeats due to a far less serious conviction. And, worse, so are all the artistes, writers and copyright owners of music he introduced on Top of the Pops, doing serious harm to the commercial prospects of innocent artistes, in clear breach of many of your guidelines.

Those guidelines are also breached by the removal of my US Chart segments. So many great old hits are no longer promoted on the BBC, damaging their value.

The output of the BBC should not be ruled by inaccurate and misplaced morality. I suggest the harm the BBC is doing to property owned by innocent musicians whilst happily promoting the songs of convicted sex criminals is a clear breach of your Editorial policy and may even be breaking your legal obligations as a public service broadcaster. It certainly offends me as a licence fee payer and one of your funders.

I know I keep on about this and I am also aware that your tenure will shortly be ending but I urge you, whilst you are in a position to improve matters, to do so.

I quote some of the BBC guidelines below...

We seek to establish the truth of what has happened and are committed to achieving due accuracy in all our output. We will apply due impartiality to all our subject matter and will reflect a breadth and diversity of opinion across our output as a whole, over an appropriate period, so that no significant strand of thought is knowingly unreflected or under-represented. Our output will be based on fairness, openness, honesty and straight dealing. Contributors and audiences will be treated with respect. We are accountable to our audiences and will deal fairly and openly with them. Their continuing trust in the BBC is a crucial part of our relationship with them.

I trust you are smiling after reading them. When your Competitive Impact Principles about the BBC's Public Service duties say "Does the activity sustain citizenship and civil society, for example by providing independent journalism of the highest quality?" I'm sure you raise an eyebrow and chuckle, answering "Only when the tabloids tell us what to do".

Best wishes,

Jonathan King