

## **WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME AND WHO SHOULD APPLY?**

**PROGRAMME PURPOSE:** The purpose of Advanced Writing for Television Drama is to build the professional writing skills and collaborative principles necessary to succeed at the highest level in the competitive genre of primetime drama series.

**WHO IS THE PROGRAMME FOR?** The training programme is for writers with proven credits and experience who have been nominated by a senior industry professional and are able to provide references from two additional referees whose own credits and experience are acknowledged in the drama series arena.

**WHY APPLY/OUTCOMES?** If you are seeking to advance to a position where you will be viewed as an ongoing, collaborative, flexible and resourceful member of a show's key creative team, with skills which are transferable between shows, whether for the UK or potential international coproductions, this programme aims to offer you the training in writing skills and collaborative practices and to open up more opportunities to achieve this advancement.

**PROGRAMME PROVIDER:** MediaXchange has been commissioned by Creative Skillset to design, manage and coordinate this programme in response to the industry's need for advanced writers. The programme is funded by the High End TV Levy. Both Creative Skillset and the Levy have been specifically put in place to promote the advancement, and industry funding, of skills for those working in the media sector.

**Please review more details below regarding the criteria for candidates who have been referred to apply to the programme.**

## **PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

The programme for the group of 12-15 successful applicants, including the referral and application process, will be spread over the period March 2017 to March 2018 and will be delivered through a carefully designed set of Modules timed to take place in July and October in 2017 and January in 2018.

Modules will cover the writing and creative process for returning episodic drama and limited series.

Each Module will include masterclasses, workshops, constructive feedback sessions, writing of sample scripts and 'homework' that will advance writing practices, character development, story structure and address the collaboration involved in the writing process drawing on the experience of key creatives from current shows as well as those from TV channels or content platforms and a range of production entities.

Between Modules participants will be expected to continue working by developing materials for one of their own original projects for which they will receive development notes and feedback from one or more assigned drama professional/s. The original project should be solely owned by the participant with no other parties attached.

At the end of the programme, each participant who has completed all Modules and Continuity assignments will be in the position of having completed a valuable professional training opportunity,

including an advanced version of the materials of their original project from the expert input given during the programme, as well as having directly connected with an impressive range of the professionals currently working in the drama genre.

It is the ambition of both MediaXchange and Creative Skillset that, following the completion of this first year of the programme, there would be the potential to offer a limited number of placements with relevant industry partners, subject to further funding and arrangements being possible.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The programme's brief is to include the following types of established, 'intermediate' writers to provide them with an advanced level of professionalism and exposure to successful writers, producers, directors, show and development processes, enabling the participants to gain more writing and collaboration skills, source more writing opportunities and take their place with greater confidence and ease on existing shows.

- ✓ Writers 'in waiting', as in those whose writing has been noticed by one or more drama mentors or peers, specifically writers who have already or recently been working on writing episodes across a range of series and who wish to be considered as having the potential for stepping up to the next level.
- Consideration of a candidate for the programme is based on their being initially referred to the programme by a current industry professional and to their being in compliance with the Eligibility Requirement as set out in Clause 2 of the Standard Terms and Conditions.
- In support of their initial referral, each applicant will need to meet the following criteria of credits and experience, including:
  - ✓ have written for one or more drama shows (e.g. primetime or continuing drama series) which has/have been shown on industry recognised 'broadcast' (TV or radio) or streaming media, including on-screen credit for those show/s
  - ✓ have been working in the TV industry for no less than 3 years
  - ✓ provide two references, which relate directly to the candidate's suitability for the programme, from those currently working in the drama writing, development, producing, commissioning sectors of the industry and providing each referee's contact details, current role, show or company. These two references are in addition to the initial referral by a current industry professional.
- In line with the above requirements, the programme selection process will also be considering and encouraging the inclusion of the following:
  - ✓ candidates from across the UK including all Regions and Nations
  - ✓ candidates from under-represented groups particularly those from BAME (Black, Asian or minority Ethnic) or those with a disability

- Writers who have a significant writing track record in different mediums such as theatre, radio, books and journalism, will be considered subject to their being able to provide one TV industry referee supporting their expected capability of working in the TV drama genre and two other referees supporting their writing experience. These writers must recognize that the training in the programme will assume a working knowledge of the writing practices for TV series which may require the writer to do additional work in their own time.
- The programme requires that applicants will be available to commit to all Modules and the Continuity assignments scheduled to take place within the programme period.

We recognize that selected applicants may be attending the programme in parallel with separate paid writing or other work they have already secured, or will be undertaking, throughout the months the programme will be running. It will therefore be the responsibility of each applicant to assess their availability to take part in the programme. The schedule has been designed to facilitate, as much as possible, being run in parallel with a writer's own commitments during the programme period. It will not, therefore, be possible to make exceptions for any applicants who are not able to attend all parts of the programme.

- As part of the application process, we will be asking you to confirm whether you are a member of the Writers Guild UK and/or are represented by an Agent.
- Applicants for this programme should be open, as well as confident enough, to re-examine and readdress their own creative process in the light of the range of practices to be presented by the Experts. In looking at how to advance their position, applicants need to 'buy in' to the commitment and flexibility being sought by Executive Producers, Creators and Head Writers in terms of 'staffing' writers for a show. Applicants should recognize that their creative contributions to the established 'vision' for a show will identify them as having future and long term investment potential.

### **MODULE DETAILS AND DATES**

There will be multiple Modules on this programme, with the First Module focusing on the writing process and the initial confirmation of the original project which each participant will work on during the course of the programme. The Second Module will cover collaborative writing, followed by the Third Module about how to work as part of the core creative team.

- The First Module will run for five days from Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>-Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- The Second Module will run for five days from Monday, October 9<sup>th</sup>- Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- The Third Module will run for three days from Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018- Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

These dates are subject to possible change at MediaXchange's sole discretion.

Locations will be advised closer to the time of each Module but Module 1 is currently expected to take place in the London, W1 area.

### **CONTINUITY BETWEEN MODULES**

Between each of the Modules, there will be Continuity exchanges, where the participant will apply to an original project of their own what has been learnt in the prior module. Each participant's work will be monitored and assessed by one or more members of a group of producers, writers and development executives to provide notes and help you in this application.

The Continuity exchanges after the Third Module will be expected to be completed by no later than Friday, March 23rd, 2018.

### **EXPERTS**

By drawing on MediaXchange's connections and existing programmes, the successful participants will be exposed to and experience the collaborative creative processes currently being practiced locally in the UK and abroad in Europe, as well as – where appropriate - the US and on international coproductions where the UK is a partner.

Selected Writers, Creators, Showrunners, Directors and non-writing Executive Producers of shows as well as Script Editors, Development Executives, and Commissioning Executives from TV Channels, Production Companies and Studios will be attached as 'Experts' to appropriate sessions. The Experts will include European and certain US practitioners as well as UK based professionals.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES RE CONDITIONS FOR APPLICATION TO THE PROGRAMME**

Your application should be emailed to [creativevision@mediaxchange.com](mailto:creativevision@mediaxchange.com).

#### **Deadline Dates:**

Safe receipt of your application will be acknowledged within 2 working days. If you have not received this acknowledgement within this time, please resubmit your email and call MediaXchange to confirm safe receipt.

Your application must reach us by no later than **17.00 on Tuesday April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017** and include all the documentation and information required by the Application Form.

If you do not hear from us by **17.00 on Friday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017**, we regret that your application has not been selected for this year. It is MediaXchange's and Creative Skillset's hope that, in due course, the programme will be offered on a regular basis, thereby offering a future opportunity to reapply.

**Payment:** This is a professional training course funded by the High End TV Levy Initiative. Providing the Experts for the Modules and Continuity, the location for each Module and other Programme items, will be covered. Participants will be responsible for their own travel expenses and any meal or personal expenses not covered by the programme. Participants will not receive payment for attending, or for the work which they may produce during and as a result of, the Modules, Continuity or the Programme.

**Original Project:** each participant will be expected to work on a project of their own during the course of the programme.

- a) It must be an original idea by the applicant, in the form of an outline, treatment or script, for a series intended to be between 4 and 10 episodes of 1-hour duration, with the potential for returning seasons.
- b) It must not be already under option to, or in development with, a producer, TV channel, one or more other writers or other partner or a third party who has a claim of ownership on the project.
- c) It will be worked on as part of the Continuity section of the programme with each participant applying the skills and practices from each Module to their own materials. Readers, drawn from current industry professionals, will be assigned deliver their notes on the materials to each participant to assist the writer in progressing their materials because, in addition to the training the programme provides, the aim is for the writer to leave the programme with materials with the potential to be progressed further and to have provided the participant, and their Original Project, with exposure to additional industry professionals.
- d) It is expected that a participant will retain the copyright in all drafts and versions of their Original Project. Neither MediaXchange nor Creative Skillset will be held liable, either during or after the programme, for any claims or action by third parties in relation to the drafts or versions which the participant produces during or after the programme. Please review the Terms and Conditions regarding this point.
- e) If the Original Project is eventually commissioned to series a credit in the form of the following will be included: *With thanks to MediaXchange, Creative Skillset and the HETV Levy for the professional training and project development opportunities provided by the Advanced Writing for TV Drama Programme.*

#### **APPLICANT'S CONTACT DETAILS AND INFORMATION:**

**The contact details and information provided in support of your application to participate in the Advanced Writing for Television Drama Programme will be shared by MediaXchange with Creative Skillset. This includes your own contact details, those of your initial referee and two supporting referees and your agent/s which you have listed on your Application Form.**

**Creative Skillset has also required MediaXchange to collect background information by way of the applicants and selected participants voluntarily completing questionnaires about their personal and professional background as well as their feedback on programme elements. It is hoped to offer the programme on a regular basis so this information will be used to assist in the future development of the application process and programme modules, and providing future opportunities for the writers it is aiming to support.**

MediaXchange and Creative Skillset are registered under the Data Protection Act.

**Please be sure to review all documents, including the Programme Terms and Conditions, before confirming you will be accepting your place in the programme.**

## **PROGRAMME PROVIDER**

### **MEDIAXCHANGE**

Based in Los Angeles and London, MediaXchange is a media consultancy assisting entertainment industry professionals to develop effective knowledge, contacts and business in the international marketplace through direct exchanges between creative counterparts.

Founded in 1991 by CEO Katrina Wood, MediaXchange draws on its extensive network of UK, US and international contacts - encompassing, writers and developers, studios and networks, creative and business executives, financiers and filmmakers, government agencies and industry associations - to fulfil its mission. Two of MediaXchange's principal scripted drama programmes are the Showrunner TV Drama Series Exchange, now in its nineteenth year in Los Angeles, and the European TV Drama Series Lab which, in association with the Erich Pommer Institut and the support of Creative Europe, will return for a fifth year in 2017.

## **FUNDED BY**

### **CREATIVE SKILLSET and HIGH END TV LEVY**

#### **About Creative Skillset**

Creative Skillset works with the UK's screen-based creative industries to develop skills and talent, from classroom to boardroom.

#### **About High End TV Levy**

As part of the consultation with government on High End TV tax relief, the [High End TV Levy](#) was started with the intention of creating a sustainable funding legacy which would be used to directly support the next generation of High End TV talent. In establishing and managing the skills levy, Creative Skillset set up the [High End TV Council](#) as governance and it works closely with the Council to help identify key training needs, set priorities and to develop relevant training programmes such as 'Advanced Writing for Television Drama'.

*End.15 March 2017  
P17042Skillset\Module 1\8.- Marketing*