

B B C Scotland

radio
drama
newsletter
December | January | February

Enjoy a world of drama from BBC Scotland

Welcome to the latest newsletter from BBC Scotland Radio Drama!

Listen out for the exciting range of drama and readings being broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Scotland over the Christmas Season and the New Year.

On BBC Radio 4 Bill Nighy and Laura Dos Santos star in a sparkling new production of Willy Russell's classic comedy *Educating Rita*; John Gordon Sinclair braves a North American blizzard in *Winter Storm*, a new play by Bernard MacLaverty about the hidden perils of academic life; and Samantha Bond finds herself impersonating a sizzling Venezuelan soap star in *Fireworks at the Villa Lucia*.

Handkerchiefs at the ready for *The Lonely*, a dramatisation of Paul Gallico's story about a 1940s wartime fling, and *My Romantic History*, D.C. Jackson's sharp new comedy about the bumpy road to happiness.

There's mystery and murder aplenty over the holiday period: Brian Cox returns for a sixth series of *McLevy*, there are new cases for the more benign sleuths of Alexander McCall Smith's *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, and Shetland policeman Jimmy Perez makes his radio debut in Ann Cleeves' *Raven Black*.

On BBC Radio Scotland family secrets are exposed at Hogmanay in the comic drama *Happy New Year!* by Alastair Rutherford.

Our readings on BBC Radio 4 include the true story of an old-fashioned approach to romance in *The Last Matchmaker*, a series of short stories to mark the start of Istanbul's year as European Capital of Culture and the 50th anniversary of Elvis Presley's visit to Prestwick, the King's only trip to the UK.

BBC
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92-95 FM

Educating Rita

By Willy Russell

Date • Saturday, 26th December 2009

Time • 2.30 - 4.00pm

Producer • Kirsty Williams

Willy Russell's award-winning comedy stars **Bill Nighy** and **Laura dos Santos**.

A funny and touching portrayal of the relationship between an Open University student and her alcohol-fuelled tutor.

Rita is a working-class girl - with little formal education, she works as a hairdresser but longs for a better life. Frank is a middle-aged lecturer - uninspired by academia, his days as a poet are up and his days as a teacher are numbered. But when Rita walks into his study, her infectious and stubborn will to learn changes both of their lives.

This brand new version of a modern classic was specially adapted by Willy Russell for radio and is the first time any of his stage plays have transferred to the airwaves.



radio
drama



Dover Beats the Band

From the novel by Joyce Porter,
Dramatised by Paul Mendelson

Date • Saturday, 5th December 2009

Time • 2.30 - 3.30pm

Producer • David Ian Neville



Who would want to kill a mild-mannered philatelist - in a holiday camp? Inspector Dover doesn't much care - and his over-keen sergeant cares just that bit too much. But as the investigation begins to uncover a sinister conspiracy even Scotland Yard's

laziest detective becomes very determined to catch the killer. **Kenneth Cranham** and **Stuart McQuarrie** star as Inspector Dover and Sergeant MacGregor in this comedy thriller set in the 1970s.

Dover and the Sleeping Beauty

From the novel by Joyce Porter,
dramatised by Paul Mendelson

Date • Saturday, 16th January 2010

Time • 2.30 - 3.30pm

Producer • David Ian Neville

Another adventure for Chief Inspector Wilfred Dover, Scotland Yard's most unwanted man - and his long-suffering 'gofer', Sergeant Macgregor.

A young woman has been in an irreversible coma in a hospital in a small Northern town for eight months. She was shot with a German luger outside church. Now she has been smothered. Who killed her? Was it the person that shot her and why have they waited until now to complete their evil crime? Inspector Dover and Sergeant MacGregor are dispatched northwards from Scotland Yard to solve the crime.

Q & A:

Paul Mendelson - writer



Five words that best sum up radio drama to you? Respecting writers, ideas and listeners.

How do you first approach a dramatisation commission? With humility and an open mind. I know I have to be true to the author's intentions but also use the medium to its fullest - even if this means changing locations and even re-jigging elements of plot and character. Variety is the essence and, for example in my Dover dramatisations, having two coppers going door-to-door down a suburban street and into assorted living-rooms isn't quite so involving aurally as on the page. Additionally the build-up of suspense works in a different way when you're listening to when you're reading.

What did you most enjoy about dramatising the Dover novels? Mixing broad humour with a damn good detective story. It's a tricky balance not to make the laughs undercut the thrills, but when they act as a counterpoint the listener goes on the best sort of journey.

You also write for television, is it difficult to write for both? No - it's a joy. Writers thrive on variety. And radio offers you the opportunity to do one-off plays - how many of those are there on TV now?! - about subjects or in styles that TV would never touch. Most hearteningly it's still writer and idea-led rather than personality-led. TV is a far less personal medium, there are so many more hands at work (not to mention executives).

The best piece of writing advice you've been given? Don't get it right, get it written. (Or you'll be staring at that blank page the rest of your life!)

Who'd play you in the radio dramatisation of your life? Well **Martin Clunes** played me in *Losing It*, my autobiographical ITV drama about an ad-man who gets testicular cancer (based on my Radio 4 play *I Can't Be Ill, I'm a Hypochondriac*). So if he's still up for it....

Behind The Scenes with Kenneth Cranham



What was your first experience of acting in radio drama?

It was while I was a student and it was a play called, *Boy Dugeon* by Ray Jenkins. It was his first radio play - about a boy in a borstal. I played the boy and another writer heard it and asked me to be in his first radio play. That writer was Joe Orton and the play was called, *A Ruffian On The Stairs*.

Which five words best sum up radio drama to you?
The true home of the epic. (I know that's six words!)

What skills are essential for good radio acting?
What challenges does it throw up?

It's such a freedom not having to learn the script it allows an intensity of concentration on your feelings and the delivery of lines.

Best line you've been asked to deliver?

In a Jacobean play: "...or like the wild Irish I'll ne'er think thee dead 'till I can play at football with thy head."

Best piece of advice you've been given?

To use a music stand as often as possible.

Which real person would you like to play in a Hollywood film of their life, and why?

In the last year on radio I've played, Dr. Johnson; Stalin; and W.G. Grace.

Raven Black

From the novel by Ann Cleeves,
Dramatised by Iain Finlay MacLeod

Date • Saturday, 23rd January 2010

Time • 2.30 - 3.30pm

Producer • Kirsteen Cameron

Atmospheric dramatisation of **Ann Cleeves'** award-winning crime novel, set in Shetland during mid-winter.

When a young woman is found strangled in a snow-covered field, the local community is thrown into panic. Detective Jimmy Perez must move quickly to find her killer or he'll have a lynch mob on his hands - locals hold loner Magnus Tait to be responsible but Perez has a hunch that the case will not be so neatly solved.



Missed something?

Remember you can **LISTEN AGAIN** to all of our programmes for seven days after broadcast on

BBC iPlayer via the following websites:

bbc.co.uk/radio4

bbc.co.uk/radio3

bbc.co.uk/radioscotland

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The Three Knots

By Linda Cracknell

Date • Tuesday, 22nd December 2009

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Kirsty Williams



A drama about faith and the supernatural set in nineteenth century Scotland. Thomas and his ghillie, Angus, are stranded on a dark and stormy hillside in the depth of winter. As the weather

closes in, they make for a nearby bothy where a mysterious old woman awaits their arrival. She gives them a thread with three knots tied in it - each, she says, contains a wind more ferocious than the last. As the men release the knots over the next few days, their faith and friendship are put to the test.

McLevy Series 6

By David Ashton

Date • Monday, 21st and 28th December 2009

Monday, 4th and 11th January 2010

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Patrick Rayner

Brian Cox returns in a sixth series of the popular Victorian Edinburgh police drama. This new collection of cases finds Inspector McLevy investigating crimes from the midnight platforms of Waverley Station to the storm-wracked shores of Northumberland. Guest actors include **Graham Crowden** and **Ewen Bremner**.



'One of the best drama offerings on air... Wonderful.'
(Financial Times)

Fireworks at the Villa Lucia

By Paul Mendelson

Date • Thursday, 31st December 2009

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • David Ian Neville



On holiday in the Bay of Naples, Pete, a jobbing TV scriptwriter who's jobbing less and less, attempts to pitch his cherished movie idea to a cult Hollywood director staying in the same villa. Knowing any director would run a mile from a struggling TV writer brandishing a dog-eared movie script, Pete hits on a ruse to 'sell' his script - he'll intrigue the guy by pretending his fiction is the true story of how he and his wife Julie met. Farcical misunderstandings ensue as Julie is forced to pass herself off as the script's main character - a fiery Venezuelan ex-soap star - with Pete masquerading as her psychoanalyst.

Samantha Bond stars as Julie and **Philip Whitchurch** as Pete.

My Romantic History

By D C Jackson

Date • Tuesday, 12th January 2010

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Kirsty Williams

Poignant and funny drama about love and memory. Charlie and Amy are both in their early thirties. Both single and both working in the same dead end job. They begin a relationship. It's a bit of a car crash. Nevertheless it continues. They both dream of their first loves, the loves that have never really been bettered. Then Amy falls pregnant and the lives they are leading, and the dreams they're dreaming, are forced into very clear focus. Starring **Sandy Grierson** and **Cora Bissett**.

Winter Storm

By Bernard MacLaverty

Date • Tuesday, 8th December 2009

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Kirsteen Cameron

Powerful new drama adapted by the Booker-nominated author from his short story of the same title. On a Midwinter's day in Iowa in 1996, Scottish poet Andrew Younger (played by **John Gordon Sinclair**) steps from his office on an American university campus and is engulfed by a severe blizzard. Lost and disorientated, Andrew muses upon the events which have led to him being stranded alone so far away from home.



The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency

By Alexander McCall Smith

Date • Friday, 25th December 2009

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm and 3.15 - 4.00pm

Producer • Eilidh McCreadie

Precious Ramotswe is now well established as the owner of Botswana's only detective agency, which she runs with her assistant Mma Makutsi. Despite the wide range of cases on their books, one thing the lady detectives know very little about is football - which is unfortunate as the agency's newest client is the big-shot owner of the ailing Kalahari Swoopers. There's a traitor on the team and as his season goes from bad to worse, 'Mr. Football' wants to know who the saboteur is...



Claire Benedict and **Nadine Marshall** return for the fifth series of **Alexander McCall Smith's** popular series.

The Lonely

From the novel by Paul Gallico,
Dramatised by Rebecca Hughes

Date • Tuesday, 19th January 2010

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Kirsty Williams

Radio adaptation of the romantic novella, set during the Second World War. A young American pilot and an English WAAF decide to holiday together in Scotland. He's got a fiancée back home in the States and makes it very clear he'll return to her. Once the holiday ends, he realises he's in love with the young WAAF. But when he returns to America to break off his engagement, things get complicated.



The Ca'd'oro Café

By Donna Franceschild

Date • Tuesday, 26th January 2010

Time • 2.15 - 3.00pm

Producer • Kirsty Williams



It's closing time when Billy walks into the café where Melanie works. This is the moment she's dreamt of - being alone with Billy. Only it isn't. He's about to start smashing windows.

Starring **Robin Laing** and **Elsbeth Brodie**.

A dark and comic play about the lengths one man will go to to go to jail.

City of Two Continents

Date • Tuesday 19th, Wednesday 20th & Thursday 21st January 2010

Time • 3.30 - 3.45pm

Producer • Kirsteen Cameron

An atmospheric series of short stories specially commissioned to mark Istanbul's year as a European City of Culture in 2010.



Elvis at Prestwick

Date • Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th & Thursday

26th February 2010 Thursday 21st January 2010

Time • 3.30 - 3.45pm

Producer • Eilidh McCreadie



As every proud citizen of Ayrshire knows, the King stopped off at Prestwick Airport on 2nd March 1960 when the US Army aircraft carrying him home from military service in Germany landed to refuel. The one-hour stopover was supposed to be a secret but news leaked out and a thousand fans turned up to greet Sgt. Elvis Presley on what

would be his only visit to Britain. Writers including **Oliver Emanuel, Ruth Thomas** and **Andrew O'Hagan** contribute new short stories inspired by this event.

Book of the Week

The Last Matchmaker

by Willie Daley, abridged by David Jackson Young

Date • Monday 4th - Friday 8th January, 2010

Time • 9.45 - 10.00am; repeated 12.30 - 12.45am

Producer • Kirsteen Cameron

For centuries, Irish matchmakers have performed a vital service, bringing people together in love and marriage. It is a mysterious art, and the very best matchmakers have an almost magical quality to them. **Willie Daley**, whose father and grandfather were matchmakers before him, is the most celebrated of them all. A gentle tale for the dark days of January, this is an intimate glimpse into the culture and traditions of rural Ireland in a book that lives up to its subtitle: "*The Heartwarming True Story of the Man Who Brought Love to Ireland*".

Woman's Hour Serial

The Whole of the Moon - Series 2

Date • Monday 15th - Friday 19th February 2010

Time • 10.45 - 11.00am

Omnibus repeat Friday 19th 21.00 - 22.00pm

Producer • Patrick Rayner

Colin MacDonald's legal drama returns - and finds Jo Ross (**Vicki Liddelle**) prosecuting in a High Court murder trial and beginning to ask herself whether the right man is in the dock.



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Ignite

Young Playwrights' Competition

Playwrights'
Studio
Scotland

BBC Scotland Radio Drama, in association with the Playwrights' Studio Scotland, is running a

competition to encourage young people aged 16 - 26 to write for radio and the stage. To enter the competition you need to write and submit a synopsis and a scene for a play either for radio or stage on any subject you want. The scene should be between 3 and 5 minutes long. Shortlisted writers will be given a one day workshop with actors and the two winning writers will receive professional mentoring and the chance to hear their work recorded in BBC Scotland's radio drama studio.

Entries must be submitted to the Playwrights' Studio Scotland on an official entry form. To download an entry pack with full rules and regulations log on to:

www.playwrightsstudio.co.uk or call the Playwrights Studio on **0141 332 4403** for more details.

Deadline for entries is 10 January 2010.

BBC Scotland
Radio Drama

Happy New Year!

By Alistair Rutherford

Date • Thursday, 31st December 2009

Time • 11.30am - Midday

Producer • Bruce Young

Comic drama set in Leith. As the Laing family prepares to celebrate Hogmanay, Meg's eldest son returns after 20 years abroad because he believes his mother is seriously ill. Meg is overjoyed at having her family reunited but a few home truths will be exposed before the bells ring in 2010.



Missed something?

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bbc.co.uk/radioscotland

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