II. Introduction

The New Generation Thinkers Scheme is intended to support up to sixty applicants with a chance to develop programme ideas alongside experienced BBC producers. Of these up to ten will become Radio 3’s resident New Generation Thinkers. They will benefit from a unique opportunity to develop their own programmes for BBC Radio 3 and a chance to regularly appear on air.

The call will open from Friday 9th September 2016 until Thursday 27th October 2016.

III. Context

New Generation Thinkers was launched in November 2010 at Radio 3’s Free Thinking Festival of Ideas. Since 2010, 360 academics have attended the workshops and developed their programme ideas. Each year 10 have become New Generation Thinkers, going on to present documentaries on Radio 3, take part in discussion programmes and make taster films for BBC Arts Online.

Watch the New generation Thinkers Film
IV. Aims of the Call

The aim of the scheme is to provide a development opportunity for early career researchers Cultivating their skills to communicate their research findings to those outside the academic community. While the principal aim of the AHRC is funding research of the highest quality across a diverse range of topics, it also has a duty to enhance the public’s understanding of the arts and humanities and communicate that research to people who can make use of it. One of the most effective ways of reaching a public audience as well as influencing policy and practice and changing public opinion is to work with broadcast media.

The BBC also wants to find a new generation of academics who can bring the best of the latest university research and scholarly ideas to a broad audience. This is part of Radio 3’s dedication to commissioning and developing emerging talent in music and the arts.

Applications should demonstrate an engaging and stimulating programme but also indicate an ability to talk about other subjects areas within the arts and humanities in an accessible and refreshing manner, with an awareness of the wider listening audience.

Successful workshop applicants

Up to sixty applicants chosen to attend one of three workshops

1. Delegates will gain a perspective from BBC staff on how they commission, produce and present both Radio and TV
2. The delegates will workshop their programme ideas with the help of other delegates and producers
3. They will take part in an interactive practice sessions to showcase their programme ideas and demonstrate their ability to communicate with the listening audience

Final applicants

Up to ten successful applicants chosen from the workshops will become Radio 3’s New Generation Thinkers for 2017. They will:

- Work with BBC Producers to develop their own Programme ideas for BBC Radio 3
- Be invited to a winners event to showcase their research and trail their programme idea at the BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking Festival of ideas.
- Appear regularly on air in BBC Radio 3’s New Generation Thinkers slots
- Have a chance to make a short taster film for BBC TV Arts
- Have the chance to speak at AHRC events to both senior academics and the public and feature their research on the AHRC website
- Be offered further media training and support from the AHRC
- Have travel and subsistence reimbursed for the winners event and the first radio programme recording in accordance with AHRC policy

V. Eligibility

To apply for the New Generation Thinkers scheme, you must be:
A UK resident over 18 currently working or studying at a UK Research Organisation eligible to receive funding from AHRC.

Applicants do not have to hold a permanent contract of employment in order to be eligible to apply.

You will be either:
   a) Currently a PhD student. If you are a doctoral candidate you should have made considerable progress on your research, for example be within one year of submission.
      OR
   b) Within eight years of the award of your PhD (this duration should exclude any period of career break, for example, family care or health reasons)
      OR
   c) Within six years of your first academic appointment (this is a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function.

Anyone who has applied in previous years is free to apply again except the previously selected researchers who became the final 10 New Generation Thinkers in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

We welcome applications from researchers working in all areas of the arts and humanities. This year we are again extending the call for researchers who work in areas of the social sciences and medical science whose work intersects with the arts and humanities. There are a series of interfaces, and many areas of common ground between. This can be seen in the cross-council Connected Communities, Life Long Health and Wellbeing and New Dynamics of Ageing programmes. The subject coverage for this year’s schemes covers all disciplines covered by the AHRC, including additional subjects that intersect with the work of our sister councils the Economic and Social Research Council and Medical Research Council. For further information on the disciplines covered please see Annex one.

Employees of the BBC and the AHRC are not eligible to apply.

VI. Guidance on Project Timescales
Applicants should be available to attend workshops:

- Wednesday 11th January, Salford
- Monday 16th January, London
- Wednesday 18th January, London

If invited to attend the workshops you will be offered a date at one of the three locations. We will offer you an alternative date if you are unable to attend the first one offered. If you cannot attend any of the dates then your place will be offered to another candidate. Candidates will be invited to the workshops the week commencing the 12th December 2016.

Applicants that are successful at the workshop should be free to attend:

- Wednesday 8th March 2017, for media training in London
• the dates of the Gateshead Free Thinking Festival between Friday 17th March to Sunday 19th March as the winners will be announced during this period.

VII. Application Process and Format
Applications should be submitted using the Research Councils’ Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/ at the latest by 4.00pm Wednesday 26th October 2016, and must go through the host organisation approval process prior to this closing date.

Applicants should ensure they have a Je-S account in good time before the closing date and should note that it may take a number of days to create an account if one does not already exist.

Using the link above you can check if you already have an account and/or create a new one. If you already have an account you should check that your organisation has granted it the correct level of authority to submit applications. To do this select the Account Summary option and if you have a ‘basic’ account an Upgrade option will be presented, please select that and follow the instruction.

If you do not already have an account please select the Create an Account option. Follow the instructions and ensure that when selecting Account type that you select An Applicant on a Standard or Outline Proposal. Complete the subsequent screens and finally submit your request. The request will be sent to your host organisation for verification and approval.

To prepare a proposal form in Je-S:

• Log-in to your account and choose ‘Documents’ from the menu;
• then select ‘New Document’;
• ‘AHRC’ as the Council,
• ‘Outline Proposal’ as the Document Type;
• ‘AHRC Outline’ as the Scheme;
• ‘New Generation Thinkers 26 October 2016’ as the Call/Type/Mode and
• ‘Create Document’.

Je-S will then create a proposal form, displaying the section headings below. Using the ‘Help’ link at the top of each section will provide guidance relevant to that section of the form.

Project Details
Enter the details of your host organisation, a project title, a start date and a duration. Precise dates of the collaboration with the BBC will be confirmed at a later stage, for the purposes of the form please enter 1st March 2017 and a Duration of 12 months.

Eligibility
Please select the most appropriate description that applies to you.

a. Within eight years of the award of your PhD (this duration should exclude any period of career break, for example, family care or health reasons).

b. Currently a PhD student (if you are a PhD student you should have made considerable progress on your research, for example be within one year of submission).
c. Within six years of your first academic appointment (this is a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, fixed-term or permanent which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function).

Principal Investigator
Enter your details by searching and selecting from the Je-S database.

Summary
Focusing on one aspect of your research, describe how this could make an engaging and stimulating programme for Radio 3 of up-to 45 minutes for an informed, but non-academic audience. Explain what format this programme would take. You can listen to examples of Radio 3 speech programmes and the work of previous New Generation Thinkers using the BBC iplayer. Note there is a limit of 2000 characters.

Attachments
The only permitted attachment is a Case For Support which should be no more than two sides of A4 with font no smaller than Arial 10. It is extremely important that this includes the information described below and using these headings.

Current Research Activity
Briefly describe your research and its broader relevance to a non-academic audience (250 words).

Research History
Please give a brief research history, listing academic institution at which you were based, research undertaken, and timings in years. (250 words)

Review
Review a new film, play, novel, book of poetry, exhibition or other cultural event that you’ve recently attended. This should be of interest to and written for a non-academic audience. It must be on a topic and discipline separate from your research. Write the review as if you were going to read it on air as a short essay for BBC Radio 3. (250 words) You can listen to examples online.

Examples of programme ideas, current research activity and reviews are shown in Annex Two.

Proposal Classifications
Please select at least one research area to describe the subject area of your research proposal. If you select multiple areas, you are required to identify one of these as the primary area.

Once you have completed the proposal you will need to 'Submit t' it. Note that Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation's administration, not to AHRC. Your organisation must submit the proposal to us by the closing date of 4pm Wednesday 26th October 2016. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the Call closing date.

VIII. Assessment Process and Criteria
The AHRC and BBC is committed to a thorough review of all applications. The assessment process is outlined below:

Stage One:
• The AHRC will assess all applications against the assessment criteria below and assign a grade (1-3).

• After considering all proposals both the AHRC and BBC will shortlist up to 100 applications each. Assessors are advised to keep a note of comments/strengths/weaknesses etc regarding these shortlisted applications as it will help facilitate discussions during stage two.

• The AHRC and BBC can involve more than one person in the Stage One assessment process. It is each organisation’s responsibility to ensure all assessors they involve use the assessment criteria below and are aware of what constitutes a conflict of interest (below). It is recommended that there are at least two people to review each application if possible.

Stage Two:

• The shortlisted applications from both BBC and AHRC will be considered at a panel meeting.

• All panel members (listed below) are required to consider all applications in detail but are not required to submit comments or grades. However, assessors may find it useful to record their own thoughts to facilitate discussion.

• The Chair will ensure that stated processes are adhered to and that all applications are treated in a consistent manner. The Chair is also responsible for facilitating the panel discussions.

• The Panel meets as a whole to discuss all the applications selected by the BBC and AHRC and agree final applicants who will attend the workshop.

Stage Three:

• The BBC will monitor progress of the workshop attendees and final decisions about the final ten will be made by the BBC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>An outstanding application. It gives a simple, jargon free explanation of the research in an engaging manner. It provides a strong programme idea that explains the significance of the research and what the findings mean in day-to-day terms.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The review and the research description shows a breadth of interest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The written sections demonstrate that the applicant is comfortable in communicating ideas outside of their research area in an interesting and engaging manner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The idea is innovative, and interesting to a public audience.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>It should be put forward to the panel meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>An application with limited scope.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The application falls short of expressing the research and the review in an accessible manner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Little attempt to engage broader audiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The review focuses on a similar topic to the research subject</td>
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</tbody>
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| 3 | A application which falls into one or more of the following categories:
|   | • the research is not explained in a clear and concise manner,
|   | • falls significantly short of meeting the assessment criteria for the scheme,
|   | • is unconvincing in terms of its ability to engage a public audience.
|   | It is not suitable for being put forward to the panel meeting. |

### IX. Scheme Requirements and Post Award Reporting

Award holders will be required to submit outputs, outcomes and impacts that arise from the scheme to the AHRC’s communications team. This could include interviews, social media, items for website and training of additional New Generation Thinkers in future years.

### X. Contact Information

For queries on creating and submitting the application form please contact the Je-S Helpdesk via [jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or 01793 444164 between 9-5 Monday to Friday.

Enquiries regarding this call should be directed to the AHRC enquiries team:

Email: [enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk) Telephone: 01793 416060 between 9-5 Monday to Friday.

### XI. Annex One

The subject coverage for this year’s schemes covers all disciplines covered by the AHRC detailed below, including additional subjects that intersect with the work of our sister councils ESRC and MRC. These are:

- American studies
- Archaeology
- Architecture
- Art history
- Classics
- Community arts
- Conservation of art and textiles
- Creative writing
- Cultural geography
- Cultural policy
- Cultural studies and popular culture
- Dance studies
- Design
- Dictionaries and databases
• Divinity
• Drama and theatre studies
• English language and literature
• Gender and sexuality
• History
  o Economic and social history
  o Historical memory
  o History of Science and medicine
• Information studies
• Journalism
• Law
  o Socio legal studies
• Librarianship
• Life writing
• Linguistics
  o Applied linguistics
  o Comput/ corpus linguistics
  o Phonetics
  o Psycholinguistic
  o Sociolinguistics
  o Languages and linguistics
• Literary and cultural theory
• Media
• Media and communication studies
• Modern languages
• Museum studies
• Music
• Philosophy
• Post-colonial studies
• Religious studies
  o Sociology of Religion
  o Psychology of Religion
• Textual editing and bibliography
• Theology
• Visual arts
  o Psychology of Art
• Human Geography
  o Cultural Geography
• Other subjects
  o Medical humanities
  o Health humanities
  o Digital humanities
  o Social Anthropology
  o Psychology of Culture

Please note that no one research area will get preferential treatment over another. All applications will be assessed on their own merits against the application criteria.

XII. Annex two
Summary (submitted via the Je-S form)
Focusing on one aspect of your research, describe how your research could make an engaging and stimulating programme for Radio 3 of up to 45 minutes, for an informed, but non-academic audience. Explain what format this programme would take. You can listen to examples of Radio 3 speech programmes and the work of previous New Generation Thinkers using the BBC iplayer.

**Example One**

A scripted essay interspersed with sound effects, brief interviews with academics and saga extracts fading from Old Norse into English translation. <oars in water, seabirds> I describe the ninth-century settlement of Iceland—a 'terra nova' transformed by settlers from Norway and Britain—and introduce the sagas. [7mins] <rustling vellum manuscripts> I explore medieval maps and geographical texts that situated Iceland in the marginal north, and explain how this affected the Icelanders’ perception of their country and the wider world. [5mins] [Interview: Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, Iceland.] <whistling arctic wind> The sagas describe the far northern wildernesses as the uncanny home of trolls, undead pagan kings and magic-making Sami. [7mins] [Extract: Bárðr’s saga.] [Interview: Torfi Tulinius, Iceland.] <music from 'Edda' by Sequentia> In the west, sagas blend realistic descriptions of the Greenlandic settlements and expeditions to Vinland (Newfoundland/L’anse aux Meadows) with tales of strange Vinland natives and marvels beyond the known world. [7mins] [Extract: Erik the Red’s Saga.] [Interview: Judith Jesch, Nottingham.] <medieval plainsong> As saga protagonists journey south, they move towards Jerusalem, the centre of medieval Christendom. Yet their motivations are mixed: pious pilgrimages, bloody crusades or mercenary service in the Byzantine imperial guard. [7mins] [Extract: Sigurd Jerusalem-Farer’s saga.] [Interview: Sverrir Jakobsson, Iceland.] <sounds of busy eastern market and music> In the east, the sagas describe dragons, witches and flying carpets, as well as historical realities of trading, exotic kingdoms and royal exile in Russia. [7mins] [Extract: Yngvar the Far-Traveller’s saga.] [Interview: Elizabeth Rowe, Cambridge.] I draw the saga world together. [5mins]

**Example Two**

‘Cutting Edge History’ Every day, millions of men start their day with a shave. But why? Over the centuries, facial hair and beards have gone in and out of fashion, not simply through individual preference, but because of wider changes in society and culture. Facial hair-fashions are synonymous with many historical periods from the Tudor ‘spade’ beard and Stuart ‘Van Dyke’ to the Victorian ‘badger’ beard. But beard fashions are not accidental; they reveal much about attitudes to masculinity through history. This programme recovers a hidden past of the hirsute, exploring everything from the barber-surgeon’s pole to the sharpest razors in history. How did the Enlightenment influence shaving? What was the 19th-century ‘beard movement’, and why were beards considered good for your health? Shaving is certainly a personal act, but it’s also a public statement. We uncover the technologies of razors, from the cut-throat to the safety razor. In the 18th-century, people even could buy books telling them how to shave, and advertisements appealed to masculine ideals of strength and hardness. We discuss beard depictions, from portraits and prints to Paxman’s beard, and what images of facial hair reveal about the society that produces them. We also explore the sometimes-gruesome relationship between barbering and medicine. The same man who studiously avoided cutting his customers’ faces also thought nothing of opening a vein in their arm to let blood! So why have men put lethally sharp blades to their faces and necks in the name of fashion? This programme reveals all.
Example Three

What does it mean for a woman to change her surname when she marries? Is it a symbol of love and commitment, marking the creation of a new family identity? Or an unsavoury practice that erases a woman’s identity within a marital partnership? In this programme I show that the custom has a colourful and contested history, and explore its implications for the choices that married women make today. The narrative journey starts by showing how marital name change originated in the medieval doctrine of coverture, which stated that a woman’s legal identity was subsumed into her husband’s. Although many other countries never adopted it, the custom became entrenched in the English-speaking world throughout the early modern period - but there have always been women who bucked the trend. I showcase little-known sources illustrating the controversial fashion in eighteenth-century England for ‘Name-compelling Wills’, whereby an heir was only able to inherit property on the condition that he adopt a woman’s surname. In the early twentieth century, the Lucy Stone League fought for a woman’s right to legally keep her maiden name, with the slogan, “My name is my identity and must not be lost”. In recent decades, many powerful women – Hillary Rodham Clinton, for example – have faced criticism for the decision to retain their maiden names in public life. Is this history relevant to women today? The programme concludes with an all-female panel debating this question, and explaining the decisions they have made in their own lives concerning surname change.

Current Research Activity

Briefly describe your research and its broader relevance to a non-academic audience (250 words).

Example One

I am currently part of a team of researchers working on a major new project ‘The Medical World of Early Modern England, Wales and Ireland, c. 1500-1715’. Although much is known about early-modern medical practitioners, some surprisingly basic questions remain unanswered: where were they located, how were they trained, and how mobile were they? Perhaps most importantly, we don’t even know how many medical practitioners there were. It has long been assumed that practitioners were relatively sparse outside large towns in this period. Rural areas such as Wales, for example, have tended to be depicted as hotbeds of ‘folkloric’ medicine and the domain of magical healers rather than ‘proper’ doctors. But how true are such depictions? Even apparently straightforward issues such as occupational titles are in fact incredibly problematic. How did medical practitioners identify themselves, and how did others identify them? What was the difference, for example, between a barber-surgeon and a surgeon, or a chemist and an apothecary? Our evidence suggests that practitioners routinely used various titles, and that such titles don’t necessarily reflect what individuals actually did. Our project seeks to address many of these questions through a new and exhaustive search of a huge range of archival records to produce a database of medical practice, from which the true ‘map’ of medical practice can be constructed. Drawing on everything from probate to parish records, diaries and letters to books and advertisements, it will offer an entirely new perspective on medical practice and practitioners in early-modern Britain.
Example Two

My research addresses the relationship between personal naming and identity in England in the late eighteenth century. Using novels, newspapers, parliamentary debates, government archives, case law and transcripts of treason trials, I explain how people in this period forged new political and social identities by changing their names. Paying close attention to these acts of naming can help us to understand how people thought about the relationship between language and identity, and the tension between individualism and community belonging. Unlike the legal systems of most European countries in this period (especially France, in which the revolutionary administration attempted to rename people, places and months), English law never attempted to control personal naming. I argue that the very laxity of the English common law creates a space in which subjects participate in a rich variety of self-styling practices, and that naming becomes a way in which national, political and social identities were asserted. Political radicals attack honorific titles, and adopt democratic monikers such as ‘Citizen’ to signal revolutionary sympathies. Women adopt or reject marital surnames to reflect intersecting anxieties about gender, sexuality, fame and posterity. Noble and middle-class subjects spend huge amounts of money to secure Royal Licences or Acts of Parliament, to publicise their name changes as declarations of patriotism, citizenship or fashionable status. And on the eve of the first British census, a proposal for the universal tattooing of names bears witness to cultural anxieties about crime, anonymity and how the state should monitor individual identity.

Example Three

In 793, the Vikings erupted onto the international stage, shattering the peace of the Lindisfarne monks with brutal raids foreshadowed by lights streaking across the sky, whirlwinds and fiery dragons flying across the firmament. In the centuries that followed, Norse longships transported these hairy northern voyagers to all corners of the medieval world and beyond, where they raided, traded, colonised and settled lands, converted to Christianity and embarked on pilgrimages and crusades. Tales of their deeds and adventures echoed down the centuries, described in written accounts from Europe and in the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas. The sagas were shaped and recorded during the first centuries of the Icelandic settlement, blending fact with fantasy, oral tales with literary motifs, and history with legend. My current research explores the geographical worldview of the medieval Icelanders as reflected in these sagas. From their unique, somewhat insecure vantage point in the far north, the saga writers looked out across the world and back in time: north to the frozen wastelands of the arctic, west across the North Atlantic islands to Greenland and the North American continent, south to the heart of medieval Christendom, and east to the Russian wastelands and river systems along which the silver trade flowed. The book that will stem from my research is entitled provisionally, ‘From the Frozen Edge of the Earth: Mapping the World in the Old Norse Sagas’. The chapters are based on the four compass points, describing in turn the supernatural north, the wild west, the holy south and the exotic east. I received offers of publication from Thames & Hudson, Oxford University Press, and Reaktion, and am in the process of signing a contract with Oxford University Press. My aim is to explain the fascinating world of the Old Norse sagas in an engaging, accessible way that appeals to a broad, non-specialist readership as well as to academics and students. My research often takes me to the chilly Nordic climes of Scandinavia, Iceland and...
Greenland. I spent last summer (2012) in southern Greenland, bumping along on the back of an Icelandic horse as I explored Norse archaeological sites once settled by famous Vikings such as Eiríkr the Red and Leif the Lucky. Next summer (2013) I will be heading further north to explore the deserted Western Settlement (near Nuuk) and the northern hunting grounds (near Disko Bay), where the Norsemen hunted walruses, narwhals and even polar bears.

Review

Review a new film, play, novel, book of poetry, exhibition or other cultural event that you have recently attended. Write the review as if you were going to read it on air as a short essay for BBC Radio 3 (250 words maximum). This review should be on a subject different to your current research area.

Example One

Happy Birthday Edward Lear: 200 Years of Nature and Nonsense  
Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum has brought out the bunting for its latest exhibition: ‘Happy Birthday Edward Lear’. As the title suggests, the celebration seems designed to please the birthday boy himself, foregrounding the natural history illustrations and landscape paintings that Lear considered his principle artistic achievements. The walls of the first room hummed with colour and life: an orange-winged lorikeet shuffling awkwardly along his branch, a study of copper-gold feathers accurate down to the wispiest downy barb. Like his lovers who crossed seas—and species boundaries—in a pea-green boat, Lear was a far-traveller who wished to ‘topographize and typographize all the journeyings of [his] life’. In the second room—nestled between polished vistas of exotic lands—preparatory sketches captured the immediacy of a single hour in brown ink and diary-like scribbles: ‘Gaza, 6AM’, ‘…houses are oker-pink-pale and the domes milk-white’. Unfortunately, the cases of ‘nonsense’ tucked away at the back seemed like a too-tiny slice of birthday cake after a nutritious dinner. Strikingly, Lear’s limericks and portly, bespectacled self-caricatures caper across the margins of his professional life: in painting receipts, subscriber notes and a doodle entitled ‘The Landscape Painter Perceives the Moufflons on the Mountains of Crete’ (in which a tiny tubby Lear dangles from an enraged goat’s tail). The exhibition breathes new life into the father of the toeless Pobble and the lovelorn Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo; a multi-talented, complex man who declared ‘I HATE LIFE, unless I WORK always’. Nevertheless, I could have managed a much larger slice of birthday cake.

Example Two

Many musicians could render a version of ‘My Darling Clementine’ but perhaps fewer can claim to be inspired to perform it after saving a drowning woman…Cerys Matthews is one such artist! With her eclectic musical tastes, Panama hat and banjo at the ready, Matthews’ December appearance at the Sherman Theatre Cardiff was unlikely to be formulaic. Instead a ‘festive feast of carols, stories and singing’, took in everything from American standards to Welsh lullabies. Accompanied by her multi-talented instrumentalist Mason Neely, this was an evening of folk, music hall…even pantomime, and all in that unmistakeable voice. Any expectations of Catatonia’s Greatest Hits, for example, were soon dispelled by the opening number: ‘Let’s Go Fly a Kite’! Stories in-between songs gave us the briefest glimpse into Matthews’ colourful life. Her childhood memories of Wales and post-Catatonia exodus to the USA yielded many colourful anecdotes. The audience were far from forgotten either. After being assured that everyone could sing we were set to work and even given a masterclass! Volunteers joining the ‘band’ on stage were rewarded with enthusiastic banter from
the lead singer and cheers from the crowd. Even some old classics were given the ‘unplugged’
treatment, much appreciated by longstanding fans. With a bubbling atmosphere, and enthusiastic
home crowd she could hardly go wrong. But Cerys’s sheer force of personality, as well as her
shimmering musicianship, made this a rare and wonderful event at a time when things like
experience and feeling are increasingly being sucked out of live performance.

Example Three

‘Where are the daughters of Buffy?’ That was the question posed by this Radio 4 Front Row special
in which writer Naomi Alderman celebrated the cult TV series Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and
explored its cultural legacy. Listeners unfamiliar with Buffy were given enough background
information to grasp why it was so unique. But there were also revelations to satisfy even the most
hardcore fan. A spin-off for Anthony Head’s character Giles, set in an English school? What a tragedy
that never came to pass. But what about the question at stake? Where, indeed, are the daughters of
Buffy? Sarah Michelle Gellar’s heroine, Alderman argued convincingly, was never just a sexy high-
kicking blonde. She was a girl learning how to be a grown-up in a dangerous world, just as concerned
about her career, family and friendships as she was about her love life. Buffy is one of those rare
shows that passes the Bechdel Test with flying colours. In the last few minutes of the programme,
the show’s creator Joss Whedon admitted that he felt the cultural mainstream has picked up his
show’s window dressing – the pitfalls of getting involved with dishy vampires – while ignoring the
kernel of feminism at its core. I wished there had been a little more time for the presenter and
guests to really get their teeth into this issue. These days, it seems, we have to be satisfied with
Twilight’s Bella Swan, torn between destinies as the girlfriend of a vampire or of a werewolf.