



CHANNEL 4: 40 YEARS OF REVOLUTION

Music and Youth

Panellists: Producer/director Jonnie Turpie; Original Channel 4 Commissioner Youth/Music, Mike Bolland; Current Head of Youth and Digital Channel 4 Karl Warner; Producer The Tube, Malcolm Gerrie.

With its unique blend of magazine format and live music transmitted live from Tyne Tees Television in Newcastle, *The Tube* immediately struck a new tone and style. It was further enforced by the daring presentation of a very young Jools Holland and Paula Yates. Breaking such major acts as Frankie Goes to Hollywood, it was the show's ability to seek out emerging talent that remains its enduring legacy. This screening of highlights is followed by a panel discussion with creatives.

In handing over filmmaking of some sequences to local community groups and regional workshops, power was shifted to young people, unleashing authentic access and youth programming with a new sense of raw energy and commitment. Featuring additional clips from shows such as *Giro: Is This the Modern World*, from the Birmingham Video and Film Workshop, those involved describe these unique productions and their impact on youth programming.

The Tube

In 1982, Andrea Wonfor headed Tyne Tees' youth department. It became obvious to her, through interviews with children, that magazine shows had an unimaginative dependence on promotional videos. With her new format, Wonfor sought to regain some spark by devising a rock concert inside a television studio, not unlike *Ready, Steady, Go!* (ITV, 1963-66).

Transmitted live from Newcastle, *The Tube* (a reference to the studio entrance) was launched during Channel 4's opening week. Its hosts were ex-Squeeze keyboardist Jools Holland and the provocative Paula Yates. The pair's confidently irreverent approach chimed well with Channel 4's mould-breaking self-image.

The series supported the rock and pop aristocracy as well as the independent music scenes, touching on many innovative new styles emerging from America. In a teeming decade, *The Tube* had a refreshing lack of musical snobbery, proudly developing close relationships with the likes of U2, Eurythmics, Culture Club and Duran Duran. For Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Madonna and Terence Trent D'Arby, first appearances were critical. Indeed, the spectacle of Frankie... in bondage gear was enough to get them signed overnight.

A string of supporting presenters guided the programme content. Scottish journalist Muriel Gray made her mark here, as did Leslie Ash when she deputised for Yates throughout series two. Famously, Felix Howard, at the time barely in his teens, joined for the final run. Notable guest hosts included Peter Cook, Nicholas Parsons and John Peel.

'Rock concert' constituted just half of *The Tube*, with a magazine hour acting as warm up. Fashion items, filmed reports and backstage interviews were

typical fare. Comedy too, with *The Comic Strip Presents...* team making regular appearances.

After five years of fighting its corner, *The Tube* collapsed in April 1987 under the weight of internal bickering. Holland inadvertently stoked tensions with a colourful slip during a live trailer, leading to a six-week suspension. It did, however, inspire the title of his comic travelogue *The Groovy Fellers* (Channel 4, 1989) with Rowland Rivron.

A *Tube* revival was proposed in 1994, but the original producers instead developed *The White Room* (Channel 4, 1995-96). A millennium special, hosted by Chris Moyles and Donna Air, aired on 20 November 1999 as *Apocalypse Tube*. Even then, there was no firm intent for a new series.

Ian Greaves, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

Jonnie Turpie

Following Fine Art study at the RCA, Jonnie Turpie began his media career with Birmingham Film and Video Workshop at the onset of Channel 4 and BFI Regional Production Fund. He produced and directed innovative and collaborative video focussed on young people's expression. For 25 years he was a Director of Maverick Television, which he founded and grew into one of the UK's leading independent regional production companies joining All3Media in 2007. Acknowledged across the industry as a forward thinker, he applied new video and digital techniques to create innovative approaches to multi award winning television and digital media. He has always supported, encouraged, and advocated for young people and their participation in arts and media.

Mike Bolland

Following 18 years at the BBC, Mike Bolland joined Channel 4 in 1981 as a founding commissioning editor. His original brief was to commission programmes for a young adult audience and they included *The Comic Strip Presents...*, *The Tube* and *Who Dares Wins*. Later he became senior commissioning editor for comedy and entertainment where his commissions included *The Last Resort* with Jonathan Ross, *Whose Line Is It Anyway*, *Friday* and *Saturday Night Live* and *After Dark*.

Karl Warner

Karl Warner is Head of Youth & Digital at Channel 4, where he leads the creative vision and commissioning of young skewing content across E4, E4 Extra, the Box 5 Music channels and digital commissioning for C4's social channels (YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook). Recent hits have included *Married at First Sight UK*, E4's biggest unscripted show ever, and digital-first bangers, *Secret Sauce*, *Celebrity Rebrand* and the award winning, *Boy Who Climbed the Shard*.

Prior to joining Channel 4 Karl was the Managing Director of Electric Ray, a joint venture with Sony Pictures Television, producing shows such as *The Class of 92*, *Million Pound Menu*, and *Bromans*. Before launching Electric Ray, Karl was a commissioning editor at the BBC, where he commissioned a range of shows including, *The Undercover Princes*, *Russell Howard's Good News* and *Junior Doctors* for BBC Three, and *John Bishop's Britain*, *Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow* and *Live at the Apollo* for BBC One.

Before joining the BBC, Karl was Head of Development at Monkey Kingdom and a Senior Producer on *Big Brother* and *Soccer Aid*.

Malcolm Gerrie

After Malcolm left Tyne Tees TV he set up Initial Film and Television in 1990 with Eric Fellner. He sold the company to John de Mol and Endemol in 1998 but remained as CEO for ten years. He set up Whizz Kid Entertainment in 2006 with Patrick McKenna and Ingenious and produced hit shows such as *Ex On The Beach*, *Lip Sync Battle*, *Let's Dance*, *The Match*, *Miami 7* and *LA 7*, and the Emmy award-winning *Concerto*. He sold Whizz Kid to Entertainment One in 2018 and is now Chairman of Entertainment One's UK Unscripted Division, which includes Daisy Beck studios in Leeds (producer of *The Yorkshire Vet*, amongst scores of other hit series).

Malcolm has Exec Produced the BAFTA Film Awards for the past 22 years. He has an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sunderland. He has helped create and produce over 30 major charity events including Band Aid, Red Hot And Blue, Fashion Rocks, Stand Up to Cancer, Soccer Aid, Let's Dance for Comic Relief, and Raise the Roof for Prostate Cancer. Malcolm is also Chairman of Precious Media.

CHANNEL 4: 40 YEARS OF REVOLUTION

Music & Youth: The Tube + Discussion & Q&A

Fri 2 Sep 18:20

Comedy: Discussion & Q&A

+ The Comic Strip Presents: Five Go Mad in Dorset

Tue 6 Sep 18:15

Channel 4's TV Drama Revolution: Discussion + Q&A

Sun 11 Sep 14:15

A Very British Coup + intro by author Chris Mullin

Sun 11 Sep 16:30

Diversity: Handsworth Songs + Q&A with

John Akomfrah + Panel Discussion & Q&A

Mon 12 Sep 18:15

Out and Proud: Veronica 4 Rose

+ Out on Tuesday + intro by original

Channel 4 Commissioner Caroline Spry

Thu 15 Sep 18:15

Access / Direct Speech: The Work They Say Is Mine

+ Women of the Rhondda + Face of Our Fear

Tue 20 Sep 18:15

Channel 4: The Television Revolution

Fri 23 Sep 18:20

Controversy: Jesus the Evidence + V + Mother Ireland

Sat 24 Sep 18:00

Who Needs Channel 4?

Wed 28 Sep 18:20

Channel 4 Then and Now conference

Fri 23 Sep 10:00–17:00 and Sat 24 Sep 10:00–17:00

Regional screenings and events will be taking place at these venues across the UK (please go to [bfi.org.uk/whatson](https://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson) for links): Arncliffe, Bristol; Filmhouse Edinburgh; Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast; Y Drwm, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

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