



Amazing Grace 250

Creative Film Commission Brief

March 2023

Overview

In July 2022, the Amazing Grace 250th year was launched in Olney, Milton Keynes. Amazing Grace, written in Olney, sung around the world.

Amazing Grace is thought to be one of the most recorded songs of all time, with over 3,000 copies in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. For many, the hymn encapsulates feelings of hope and provides an opportunity to look towards the future, as well as back at what has happened. It is for this reason, perhaps, that *Amazing Grace* has endured.

The hymn was written in Olney in late 1772 by curate in charge - and former slave trader - the Reverend John Newton to accompany his sermon for his New Year Day morning service at St Peter and St Paul Church on January 1st, 1773. This 250th anniversary was commemorated and internationally profiled to the day through sermon and song on 1st January 2023 at the same Church and at the Milton Keynes Rose, a spectacular public place in Central Milton Keynes, designed by Artist Gordon Young and available to everyone for celebration, commemoration and contemplation.

In order to ensure that this extraordinary year is captured for a wide range of audiences, we are looking to appoint an experienced and creative documentary filmmaker to work with stakeholders, partners, creative practitioners and communities to capture the process of making and delivering, alongside the impact of the various projects, programmes and commissions, which make up this historically important cultural programme.

Background

In 2019, a steering group led by [Cowper & Newton Museum](#) with The Open University, Stables music venue, Friends of the Caribbean, African Diaspora Federation, African and Caribbean Arts & Heritage Union, Milton Keynes Sierra Leone Community, the Olney parish church of St Peter & St Paul, Olney Town Council, Olney residents, and Milton Keynes City Council came together to discuss and develop ideas around the 250th anniversary. From these discussions, a yearlong programme of exhibitions, talks, walks and cultural and community events was identified.

In 2022, with funding support from Milton Keynes City Council, the Cowper and Newton Museum and its partners secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to Lottery Players, to deliver the 'Heritage Programme' and with [The Stables](#) secured Arts Council funds to deliver the 'Music Programme'.

With a major new commission by renowned baritone Roderick Williams OBE working in collaboration with writer and performer Rommi Smith and performed by professional ensemble Chineke! as part of IF: Milton Keynes International Festival in July 2023.

Highlights of the Heritage Programme include:

- A launch event and conference at the Open University,
- New AG250 school packs and permanent exhibition, created by [MuseumAnd](#),
- New temporary and touring exhibitions, including one created by the Sierra Leonean MK Group,
- A range of museum and partner-led activities at the Museum and across Olney and Milton Keynes,
- A final Youth Conference event to be held in Olney in July 2023.

Highlights of the Music programme includes:

- A new composition by renowned baritone [Roderick Williams OBE](#) with words by multi-award winning writer and performer [Rommi Smith](#) to be performed by [Chineke!](#) The commission is a musical response to the meaning and impact of Amazing Grace in the 21st century, led by black and diverse artists, involving responses from the local community, cultural and academic voices from Milton Keynes, the UK and beyond. The music commission includes music education and outreach events with MK schools. The launch will be a major event at the [Milton Keynes International Festival](#) 22nd July 2023.
- '250 Voices - a mass community choir performance arranged specifically for community choirs. This piece will be performed at The MK Choirs Festival on 17th June.

Both programmes are fully embedded within the local communities of Olney and Milton Keynes and especially with Black and Caribbean groups, to ensure contemporary voices and a range of viewpoints on the story of Amazing Grace.

Deliverables

The successful filmmaker / creative practice will engage with partners the Cowper and Newton Museum and The Stables (supported by Milton Keynes City Council) to identify:

- A creative responsive and reflective approach to capturing the development and delivery of significant moments within the AG250 cultural programme. We are interested in telling the stories of creatives, participants, audiences and the wider community and opening up access to 'behind-the-scenes' moments throughout the year for all to enjoy.
- We are really keen that the film, rather than taking a straight 'documentary's style approach intersects AG250 Cultural Programme content with historical and contemporary reference points including archival imagery/photography/animation to help explain the story of Amazing Grace to a wide audience, ensuring a strong, accessible narrative and an informative and captivating viewer experience.

- The film will exist on multiple platforms and will be used to tell the story of both Amazing Grace and the AG250 cultural programme in the future. It will be screened to large audiences, as well as exist on websites.
- We will be looking for a filmmaker who can take on the logistical arrangements of filming specific activities, liaising with stakeholders and partners to gain access, filming permissions, approvals etc. Capacity of the commissioning organisations is very limited. However, a programme will be provided of events, activities, rehearsals, moments and locations.
- We will require permission to use images, stills, quotes, soundtracks etc. for marketing and publicity purposes.
- The film will be one of the main legacy outcomes for the Museum and its partners, we are keen to ensure that the final outcome meets the requirements of the funders; Milton Keynes City Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council and others, whilst creatively engaging a wide and diverse audience in this globally important story

Commissioning Information

As commissioner and funder, all rights will rest with Milton Keynes City Council.

The role of the filmmaker / creative practice will need to lead on and include all logistics and liaison with all partners, contacts and subjects for the film.

The Stables and Cowper and Newton Museum will work with the successful candidate to:

1. Share contacts and support communications and help interpret the activities and priorities of the Heritage, Music and Community Programmes.
2. Advise on any partnership and contract agreements in place to ensure appropriate access to all performers, individuals and community partners.

The budget available for this commission is **£10,000, ex VAT**, to include all expenses.

Submitting a Proposal

The selection process is outlined below. To ensure that submissions are evaluated on a consistent basis it is essential that the required information for assessment is submitted. Failure to provide the required information may lead to the submission being rejected.

Submissions will be evaluated against the criteria listed with their relevant weightings, the information supplied will be evaluated and points given to each element using the scoring system as illustrated. From the submissions a shortlist will be made, and these will be invited for interview.

The purpose of the interview will be to:

- Confirm that the contents of the submission are accurate.
- Assess the suitability of the candidate.
- Clarify any uncertainties and /or anomalies in the submission.

Send applications to the MKCC Culture Team, FAO Louise Izod, Public Art Specialist at culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk by **Noon, Monday 27th March, 2023**

Please see below for weighting and criteria.

Information required	Weighting
CV which includes: Career history, qualifications and professional memberships etc.	20%
Approach: A written outline of Your approach to delivering this Brief Your knowledge of Milton Keynes, Olney and/or Amazing Grace themes Your availability and interest in this role with relevant skills and experience	30%
Proven track record on quality delivery: Two examples of relevant commissions that you feel demonstrate your ability to deliver this contract. Please share previous examples of shorts, documentary films or other examples you feel are relevant, these can be shared as Vimeo files. Please include details of two referees Stated cover for relevant insurances (Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and if applicable, Employers Liability) at £5,000,0000. Proof to be demonstrated if called for interview.	30%
Inclusion: Either within case studies/examples or letter of interest, demonstrate your experience of or approach to working with diverse communities and/or diverse-led organisations. Please ensure that your application is no longer than 6 sides of A4 and no larger than 10MB.	20%

END

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