



Tara Erer

RTS London Convention 2026 Chair and Head of Northern Europe and Film & Unscripted, UK, Amazon MGM Studios

Hi everyone - thank you so much for being here today.

I'm Tara Erer, and I am genuinely delighted to be standing in front of you to open this year's RTS Convention. We've long been proud supporters of the Royal Television Society at Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios, so it really is an honour to be here.

I've been thinking about what to say to a room full of people who have shaped an industry I've admired my whole life. And I thought the most honest thing I could do is tell you how I ended up here.

I was born and raised in Istanbul, studied film in New York, and spent many years working in independent film; a world that completely shaped how I think about storytelling, filmmakers, and creative vision. During that time, I was fortunate to work on films like *The King's Speech*, *The Imitation Game*, *Under the Skin* and many more. And what I kept noticing was that the talent I was most drawn to; the writers, directors, producers... so many of them were British. Every project, every decision I made seemed to bring me closer to this industry, and closer to the UK. So when my husband and I decided to move here and to raise our two boys in this country, we knew we were making one of the best decisions of our lives.

The truth is, my love for British television started long before I ever left home. Growing up in Turkey, everything I knew about the UK; the culture, the humour, the people... I learned through television. My father was/is obsessed with British shows. He talked about shows like *Are You Being Served* and *Fawlty Towers* so much that I genuinely thought *Fawlty Towers* was ten seasons long. It wasn't until years later that I discovered it was twelve episodes. Twelve! That's the power of great British TV.

And that's what makes this industry so special. UK television doesn't just entertain; it shapes how the world sees this country. It spreads culture. It builds connection. And that is something worth protecting and championing.

Today, I get to commission some of the biggest shows in the UK: from *Clarkson's Farm* and *Last One Laughing UK* to *The Grand Tour* and the *My Fault London* trilogy; and I feel incredibly lucky to be doing that work here, with so many of you in this room.

But at Amazon MGM Studios, our commitment to the UK goes beyond what's on screen. Not only are we expanding our commissioning slate, but we're actively investing in the next generation of talent through Prime Video Pathway - an initiative I'm most proud of. I'm delighted to say we've committed £16 million



to skills and training, opening up access to careers in film and television for people right across the country, with schemes such as the NFTS Production Coordinator apprenticeships, The TV Freelancers Reskill and Upskill Program, a Scripted Directors Workshop, a Black and Textured hair course and many more - because everyone deserves a way in. And this isn't just training for training's sake: 85% of our apprentices have gone on to secure placements in the industry. We're not just opening doors; we're building careers.

Beyond building a pipeline of emerging talent, we recognise the vital role of freelancers. As we all know, they are the backbone of our industry. That's why for our Prime Video Pathway freelancer jobs, we joined forces with you all to make sure they have work on multiple productions, not just our own.

Which brings me to this year's theme: United in Change; If Not Now, When? That question is going to inform everything we discuss today. And I think by the end of the day, you'll know the answer.

We had an exceptional advisory board this year, and countless discussions about where this industry is and where it's going. We also did something new: we asked every advisory board member to nominate two new people to join us; younger voices, earlier in their careers, freelancers - not just observing but fully part of the conversation, challenging ideas and shaping the programme alongside everyone else. It made the discussions richer, spicier (!) and I think you'll feel that in the sessions today. We all know we are facing real hard challenges. We are very good at highlighting those here. The freelance crisis. Budget pressures. Consolidation. Threat to the PSBs. YouTube. These are real, and we shouldn't pretend otherwise.

But there is good happening too.

In the last five years, investment in British content has hit record levels; total UK TV production revenues reached £3.81 billion in 2025, the second highest ever, with international revenues now accounting for 41% of the total: a record proportion that shows British content is earning more abroad than ever. SVOD commissions hit an all-time high of £916 million in 2025, while the BBC committed £243 million of its commissioning budget to diverse content, pledged 60% of its network spend outside London, and this year reached a record global audience of half a billion people a week: the BBC's highest ever. The proof is on screen: a one-man Edinburgh Fringe show became the most talked-about series on Netflix; Ludwig drew 9.5 million viewers and sold to 85 countries, proving British comedy still has the power to captivate; and a Cotswolds farmer became one of Prime Video's biggest global stars with Clarkson's Farm. None of these shows were made to travel; they travelled because they were so unmistakably British. And that's what makes this moment so exciting: the more specific we are, the more universal the stories become.

Our theme "United in Change" is not just a slogan. I chose this theme, so we could solve the challenges together. If we are not united, we will fail. We all want to tell the best stories and in order to do that



today, we have to champion new voices, and also rely on the wisdom of the people who built this industry over decades. We need both. You'll see that today from our incredible lineup of speakers. Change isn't going away. It's constant, and it's good. So while being realistic, let's be optimistic. If there's one message I want you to take away from today it's this; we are all part of the same thing – let's act like it.

Finally, I'd like to thank the team at the RTS and to my team at Prime Video and Amazon MGM Studios: you have worked relentlessly to put this programme together, and I know how much has gone into every detail. None of this would have happened without you, and I am so grateful. Thank you.

Please, enjoy the day and stick around to the very end, because we've got a brilliant lineup and a pretty great *Last One Laughing* surprise to close us out.

Now please let me introduce Kelly Day, Vice President of International at Prime Video, who will be delivering our opening keynote today. On top of running the business, she oversees Amazon MGM Studios' international Originals output. Before joining Amazon in 2022, Kelly was President of Streaming at what is now Paramount Global and Chief Operating Officer for ViacomCBS Networks International, running strategy and operations across more than 100 markets. In short, there are very few people in this industry with a broader view of where global entertainment is heading. Please join me in welcoming her to the stage.