



SKY ARTS COMMISSIONS 7WONDER AND DOUGLAS ROAD PRODUCTIONS FOR *LENNY HENRY'S GOT THE BLUES* SERIES

London, 31 March 2015

London-based indie **7Wonder** and Lenny Henry's **Douglas Road Productions** have been commissioned by Sky Arts to co-produce a three-part documentary series called *Lenny Henry's Got The Blues*, scheduled to telecast in summer 2015.

Ordered by Sky's head of non-scripted **Celia Taylor** and Sky Arts director **Phillip Edgar-Jones**, the 3 x 60 mins series will follow Lenny Henry as he sets out to reveal why the UK has never produced a single black blues singer of international standing, while also chronicling his own journey to record his first blues album. Part documentary, part musical celebration, the series will pay tribute to the legends of the British blues scene, as well as uncovering its unsung heroes.

Van Morrison, Tinie Tempah, and Jools Holland are amongst a strong list of iconic names set to appear in the series, which will culminate in a live performance in London featuring Lenny Henry, his own band, and special guest stars including **Lulu, Mica Paris** and **Laura Mvula**.

Lenny Henry's Got The Blues will be exec-produced by 7 Wonder's Chris Wilson and Douglas Road Productions' Barbara Emile. The series is Wilson's first commission, since his appointment to the newly created role of head of popular factual for 7Wonder late last year, as well as being new indie Douglas Road Production's first commission.

Philip Edgar-Jones said: "We love it at Sky Arts when someone comes to us with a project they are utterly passionate about and it's even better when it's a subject they're also incredibly knowledgeable about too. Lenny lives and breathes the blues and we're thrilled that he'll be sharing his passion – and talents - with the Sky Arts audience."

Lenny Henry said: “This project means a whole heap to me. I have been listening to Blues music my entire life - Muddy Waters, BB King and Howling Wolf to name but three of the artistes I admire. Singing the blues is about singing from your soul (Van Morrison told me this so it must be true) and on my journey through the British blues experience, I’ll talk to many of the movers and shakers of the UK blues scene , and discuss music, singing , race, sex, alcohol and all the rest. It’s going to be wild!”

Chris Wilson added: “This is really an irresistible project, bringing together Lenny’s fierce intelligence and passion for music, his power as a performer, a roster of British music’s biggest names, and a fascinating and previously untold musical story. It’s the kind of popular, intelligent, high-quality television we hope will become a hallmark of 7Wonder.”

The project began in 2014, when Lenny’s love of the blues prompted him to put together a band — Lenny Henry’s Blackacre Road – for a series of studio sessions. As a talented singer and a natural performer, Lenny wanted to see if he could master a musical style to which he had always felt emotionally and vocally drawn. As the sessions progressed, Henry’s interest in the story of the blues, particularly in Britain, began to grow.

The three-part series will include intimate, original footage of Lenny and the band rehearsing and recording in the studio, alongside a documentary strand in which Lenny adds his own perspective to the story of British blues, before performing an exclusive session in front of a live audience.

Elizabeth Dobson is the Series Producer and Director for 7Wonder and Richard Ackerman will be the Executive Producer for Sky Arts.

7 Wonder is a joint venture between the Seven Network, Australia’s most-watched broadcast television platform and Alexandra Fraser, Liza Abbott and Simon Ellse.

About 7 Wonder:

Launched in the Spring of 2014 7 Wonder is committed to collaborating with the best talent, on and off-screen, to deliver quality, bespoke and beautifully executed content across all non-scripted genres.

About Seven Network

Seven is Australia’s most-watched broadcast television platform. Seven – with three broadcast channels, Seven, 7TWO and 7mate - continues to lead in primetime, building on its market-leading performance over the past eight years. The network also dominates across breakfast and morning television. The network is expanding its presence in media, driving its leadership in the creation of content and delivering that content anywhere, anytime to the biggest audiences.

The company is expanding its presence in the further delivery of its video and publishing content beyond its three digital broadcast channels and across an array of platforms, including Hybrid Broadband Broadcast Television. Seven is also expanding into SVOD with Presto, a joint venture with Foxtel in Australia.

Seven is now creating more content than at any time in its history and is expanding its presence in international content production with the formation of two new international production companies: 7Wonder and 7Beyond. These two new businesses underline a key part of its strategy for today and in the future: the expansion of our leadership in the production of content.

Seven is a key business of Seven West Media, Australia's leading multiple platform media company which has a market-leading presence in broadcast television, magazine and newspaper publishing and online. The company is the home of many of Australia's best performing media businesses – Seven, 7TWO and 7mate, Pacific Magazines, The West Australian and Yahoo!7, and the biggest content brands including My Kitchen Rules, House Rules, The X Factor, Home and Away, Sunrise, the Australian Football League, Better Homes and Gardens, marie claire, New Idea, Who, The West Australian and PLUS7.

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