



## Children's column - Picture Book is inspiring TV

Nicolette Jones

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*BBC4's series Picture Book, of which the second hour-long programme of three was aired on Wednesday, gives the lie to an old myth about children's books coverage on television: that you can't make it interesting to adults, Nicolette Jones writes. It demonstrates that, at 9pm, there is an audience - parents, teachers, librarians, authors, artists, publishers, booksellers and anyone who ever read books as a child - who might be prepared to watch experts talk seriously (as well as entertainingly) about what goes on in the books children read. (Declaration of interest: I make fleeting appearances in the programme.)*

The first programme (5 November) reached the highest number of viewers for BBC4 that night; the second programme on 12 November had more viewers still. (Yes, this is a digital channel, and the figures are relatively modest.) Imaginatively produced to offer something visually exciting, nostalgic, star-studded, and thoughtful, *Picture Book* is making the case for coverage that avoids the stock formulae: it does not use dramatisation, nor children asking questions, nor wannabe popstar presenters brimming with fake enthusiasm.

*Picture Book* enlivened the talking heads with ingenious, superimposed backgrounds, relevant footage, inspiring images of children reading or being read to, and clever editing. It demonstrated that picturebooks especially lend themselves to the medium. So when will we see *Picture Book* repeated on BBC2, and reaching the audience it deserves? Or the BBC producing the long overdue Nation's Favourite Picturebook? Or the magazine programme that would exploit all the news stories about children's books that are currently wasted?

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