



## **PRIX ITALIA**

### **SHORT LIST**

#### **RADIO DOCUMENTARY JURY REPORT**

May I start by presenting the Radio Documentary jury to you. There were seven members of the jury: Lisa Herbert from CBC (Canada), Hynek Pekarek from CR (Czech Republic), Idalberto Fei from . RAI (Italy), Hwang Jong-Hyun from MBC (South Korea), Lars-Helge Myklebust from NRK (Norway), Tana Kusa from SR (Slovak Republic) and I am Lorelei Harris from RTE (Ireland). An eighth member of jury, Marco Horat from Switzerland, was excluded as he arrived late and felt unable to catch up with the number of programmes the jury had already heard.

There were 35 entries in the Radio Documentary competition. Of these, the jury excluded one entry, from Romanian Radio, on the basis that it was a radio drama and did not therefore conform to the criteria of the radio documentary competition. We listened to a third of each programme entered into the competition and, from this, drew up a long list of 12 programmes which we listened to in their entirety. This listening process and the subsequent discussions has given us a shortlist of six programmes: three in each of the two categories we have been asked to judge. Before reporting on the programmes we have heard this week, I should add one observation in relation to the composition of the jury in future Prix Italia. This was the first year in which the former sabbatical system was removed from the radio competition. The jury felt it created an invidious situation and led, at times, to unnecessary tension. We would therefore recommend that the sabbatical system be reinstated.

Over the week we heard a number of documentaries about the effects of war and politics on people's lives; we heard small stories about big issues and big stories about small issues; we listened to drama documentaries and single interview documentaries. The majority of programmes were highly narrative in style, with storytelling as a major focus, reflecting a dominant tendency in radio documentary making at the moment. The jury deemed the general standard of entries to be high and thoroughly enjoyed the listening process. For this, we would like to thank all the participants. And now to the shortlists:

The jury has decided to award a Prix Italia and two Special Mentions in each of the categories. However, we are unable to divulge the Special Mentions now as we would reveal the two winners in

the process of so doing.

In the category of the Prix Italia award for overall qualities, we have shortlisted the following programmes. The order is alphabetical.

1. **When Time Stood Still**, a documentary from **ABC (Australia)** in which a son seeks to come to terms with the effects of war on the life of his father and his family. The jury felt that this documentary displayed high production values and brought to our ears vivid pictures using the medium of drama documentary in a sophisticated manner.
2. **Dr. Tramsen's Report**, a documentary from **DR (Denmark)** again exploring the effects of war on the life of one individual. The dramaturgy, recordings, narration and overall quality of this programme were regarded by the jury to be of a very high standard.
3. **The Blue Coat**, a documentary from **PR (Poland)** telling a story of a relationship between two families, one in post-WW11 Poland and the other in Australia. The jury felt that this minimalist story opened a window on the past of Poland in the 1950s and 1960s. The structure of the piece is sure and the pictures it placed before us are vivid and unforgettable.

In the category of the Prix Italia for originality and innovation, the following programmes have been shortlisted:

1. **Who is Vern Nash?**, a documentary from **CBC (Canada)** about two men, mental illness and music. The jury viewed this documentary as being like a short novel with good narration and dramaturgy. The form is sophisticated and economical, providing us with a beautiful miniature.
2. **Grandpa On The Rocks**, a documentary by **NRK (Norway)** about a frozen body and a visit to America. The jury loved the idea of this programme and felt it handled the big questions of life and death with humour while presenting us with some delightful and memorable characters..
3. **The Social Legacy**, a documentary by **SR (Sweden)** about alcoholism in a family. The jury admired the form of this courageous programme and its construction which permitted us to eavesdrop on a dilemma at the core of one family

Lorelei Harris RTE Ireland  
Jury President

Venice, 29 September 2006

## REPORT OF THE DOCUMENTARY TV JURY

### Current Affairs--- shortlist

Canada --- CBC/SRC

#### SEX SLAVES

First rate investigative journalism that clearly took risks and required courage. The film provides excellent access to an unfolding story, and a window to a global human tragedy. While jurors had reservations about its length, the power of the narrative clearly comes through.

Sweden ---- SVT

#### FRAMED ---- A Satanic Miscarriage of Justice

A classic gem of investigative journalism that powerfully and relentlessly unravels the truth behind an appalling injustice, and confronts the authorities with the consequences of their neglect. While it is conventional in form, this does not detract from the achievement.

United Kingdom ---- DISCOVERY NET

#### THE BESLAN SIEGE

Dramatically and powerfully told in all its human and political dimensions. It is journalistically impressive and also possesses very touching human moments –such as the mother forced to choose between staying with one child or another. There were some reservations about music and effects, but the film stands as an achievement.

### Cultural ---- shortlist

France --- FR2

#### TRANQUILITY BAY

The Jury moved this film to the Cultural category because of its strong social content. This is a disturbing story of cruelty against children in the world's richest country, and raises many fundamental questions about the fragility of liberty. While the jury would have liked some more rigorous journalism in placet, this is the work of promising filmmakers.

France --- FR3

#### THE BATTLE OF CHERNOBYL

A story of an epic scale that brings new facts and insights to one of the most dangerous moments in modern history. It reveals how close we came to an even greater tragedy. The mixture of archive and dramatic reconstruction caused some concern with jurors who felt it could be potentially misleading.

United Kingdom ---- CH4

#### WORLD WITHOUT WATER

This film is simply but powerfully told, effectively mixing individual human stories with global issue and the question of privatization. While there were some reservations about possible oversimplification, the importance of the crisis is made dramatically clear.

Mark STAROWICZ

President of the Jury

Venice, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006

## PRIX ITALIA

## SHORT LIST

### RADIO DRAMA JURY REPORT

*It has been an interesting and challenging few days for the Radio Drama jury, beginning with the realisation that some jury members were representing organisations that had, under this year's new regulations, also submitted entries to the Radio Drama category, whereas others had not. This presented a potentially difficult situation so we elected a president from one of the organisations which had not submitted entries, namely Alison Hindell, Head of Radio Drama for the BBC, UK. The other jury members were: Anna Messariti from ABC, Australia; Jasna Mesaric from HRT, Croatia; Blandine Masson from SRF, France; Sujin Oh from KBS, Korea; Andrzej Brzoska from PR, Poland; Ales Jan from RSLO, Slovenia and Laura de Luca from RV, Vatican State.*

*The overall standard of entries was good with a wide variety of style and theme, from traditional naturalism to avant-garde blends of acoustic art and impressionistic text. It was the jury's view that the standard of the more experimental poetic pieces was better than in some previous years. We felt that the range of entries demonstrated a great and welcome diversity of international cultures although we*

would encourage careful use of the stipulated synopsis to contextualise local specifics for an international audience. At least two of the entries were originally mixed for surround sound and it is unfortunate that we were therefore not able to hear the full intention of the creative team as we were listening only in stereo.

In the category of Original Radio Drama, and in a very closely-fought competition, the jury have selected:

*A RED ROCKET TO THE OLD WORLD* from CBC, Canada, as a delightful miniature, fully-conceived for radio, that creates and sustains a consistent atmosphere. It manages to achieve simplicity – which, as we all know, is very complex – and stretches the definition of the genre through its use of meditative memoir combined with factual material.

*LEE DE FOREST – SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER* from NPB, Netherlands, celebrates a moment in the history of the development of radio with wit and a light touch. Its variety of pace and texture is assured with strong use of radiophonic images and a fresh interpretation of the use of a chorus. It was unusual to hear a play with an ambiguous protagonist and in which radio itself becomes the hero.

*HAPPENING: A NIGHT-TIME COMEDY WITH A HEARSE IN THE BACKGROUND* from PR, Poland was welcome as one of the very few comedies, which gives us a light on to life in contemporary Poland through its surreal and absurd style and story. The soundworld is subtle with strong characters and superlative technical standards. This is a play of power and energy.

The jury would also like to make a special mention of *WAITING FOR BRAM* from SRF, France for its absorbing and closely-focussed philosophical examination of what it means to be an artist.

In the Adaptation category there were fewer entries this year although the jury did add three entries which they felt had been incorrectly entered as original works.

*THE SORROW OF WAR* from NHK, Japan uses the setting of the Vietnam war to tell a compelling universal story about the suffering caused by armed conflict. Its multi-layered soundworld is rich with a strong sense of aesthetic and moving performances.

*IPHIGENIA* from NRK, Norway takes a modern, ironic approach to a classical text with a strongly-contrasting soundtrack of electronic and non-naturalistic effects. It was refreshing to hear such an iconoclastic retelling giving contemporary resonances to a classic myth.

*IN THE PENAL COLONY* by SR, Slovak Republic, seemed to take the ingredients of Kafka's tale to create an eloquent manifesto against capital punishment, thus giving the text a contemporary meaning. The sound effects are selectively used to echo the nightmare images in the dialogue and its pace captures the inescapable perverted logic of Kafka's world.

To close we would like to make three recommendations:

1) the new system of jurors being able also to submit entries creates an uncomfortable and potentially iniquitous system which reduces the jurors' capacity to be entirely objective. We recommend reverting to the previous system.

2) We would suggest that entrants be asked to provide promotional or publicity material, both to help the press and as additional information for the juries.

3) The recordings had a great variety of sound levels and we would suggest a technical level be set for entries in the regulations.

Finally, we would like to thank Prix Italia, RAI and the City of Venice for being such generous and warm hosts and to thank the students who have supported each jury so willingly in all organisational matters.

Alison Hindell, BBC  
President, Radio Drama Jury 2006

Venice, 29 September 2006

## **REPORT OF THE DRAMA TV JURY**

It was hard to make a decision as the entries for TV DRAMA series and singles were of high quality. We saw a lot of politics, crime and terrorism passing as a sign of the time. Out of this we made a selection of programs that are in-touch with human understanding.

### Serials--- shortlist

Germany --- ARD

TURKISH FOR BEGINNERS

A fresh way to present a simple message: "We are all human beings". In a rather classic format of soap comedy, a carefully written, witty, original tale is shown with in its central role a marvellous young actress.

Italy ---- RAI

THE FOG ---- COVERED RIVER

It's a crime story with a very high production value, beautifully shot, as an efficient thriller with an incredible leading actor and that gives an interesting look in the past.

Spain ---- TVE  
FAMILY PORTRAIT

An amazing bunch of actors ricreate a historical era and conflicts that infect society in general. The quality of the single series is very high considering this is a long-running weekly program.

Single Play--- shortlist

Austria --- ORF  
BROTHERS III --- ON THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO  
A light-weighted classic drama about a contemporary theme: finding yourself. It brings some very witty dialogues along, that sweep you away.

South Korea --- KBS  
HD FEATURE DRAMA: SAYA SAYA  
A magic, moving and poetic story about the power of love with high quality performances that is visually stunning and is taking drama to the very roots of story-telling.

United Kingdom --- CH4  
THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO  
A new way to dramatise a story, to deeply catch the public's attention to a real case where human dignity is involved.

Rik STALLAERTS  
President of the Jury

Venice, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**PRIX ITALIA**

## SHORT LIST

### Communication for Life

#### GRANAROLO SPECIAL PRIZE JURY REPORT

The 2006 Granarolo Jury has examined 39 productions – split into documentaries and dramas – which – with the exception of Canada and Japan - all came from European countries. The Jury noticed that a number of entries – while in some cases of outstanding quality – did not meet the Granarolo Prize requirements. As a consequence the Jury would like to ask the Secretariat to revise the rules to make them more precise and waterproof for future Granarolo Juries.

Among the productions viewed by the Jury the following three productions have been chosen to go on the short list

#### **White Ravens – The Nightmare of Chechnya – ZDF – Germany**

White Ravens is the shocking story of the difficult coming back home of two Russian soldiers and a nurse involved in the Chechen war. Through the eyes of morally and physically damaged youngsters we experience the horror of the war which unfolds itself while the world continues to turn its back to the tragedy. This well researched and produced programme forces the viewer to question him- or herself on how in our time such a horrible and senseless waste of life can happen.

#### **Children at the Muo'men Hotel – NHK – Japan**

This is an eye-opening and impressive report about the hidden effects of the Iraq war on so many innocent lives, in particular children. This documentary tells the story of two of these children affected by cancer and leukaemia and is a critical reminder of the responsibilities towards the next generation expressed through pains and hopeless fight against cancer, even under the most tragic conditions of the war.

#### **Lost in Afghanistan. To return in Twenty Years - CH1 Russia – Russia**

Lost in Afghanistan is the plainly told story of a Russian soldier who goes through the hardships of the Afghan war and captivity. He saves his dignity as a human being and proposes to the world the positive values of life. His striking optimism helps him bridge cultural and political differences and makes him cope with even his most difficult moments in life. This production looks into the country's recent history with critical approach and reflects the wisdom of traditional Russian culture.

In addition the jury would like to make a special mention to **Sinesipho: Why must I die? - FR2 / France** - dealing with the tremendous problem of HIV/AIDS in a problematic and critical continent as Africa with a positive and constructive spirit.

Ursula Von Zallinger

President of the Jury

Venice, 29 September 2006

## REPORT OF THE SIGNIS JURY

### The SIGNIS organization

SIGNIS is a non-governmental organization that includes members from over 130 countries. As the "World Catholic association for Communication" it brings together professionals in radio, television, cinema, video, media education, the Internet and new technologies. It has juries at important festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Monte-Carlo, Venice, to name just a few. Signis has consultative status at UNESCO, ECOSOC (United Nations in Geneva and New York) and the Council of Europe.

Its principle scope is to promote "Media for a culture of Peace". It is therefore with this underlying perspective its juries choose and decide the winners of the various festivals.

### Criteria for evaluation

Our choice for the SIGNIS-PRIX ITALIA award this year is motivated by the following criteria:

1. The Content – a theme that promotes life, peace, justice and human development
2. The Production – the ability to harmoniously combine film technique with modern technology
3. Art – a concern for the symbolic and aesthetic reconstruction of real life.
4. 'Kyros' – an 'answer' to the exigencies of this particular moment in time (2006)

### Signis Short List

The choice had not been easy, due to the stiff competition posed by other excellent productions. The list we present is as follows:

AUSTRIA – ORF **AT THE HEART OF TIME**

FRANCE – FR2 **TRANQUILITY BAY**

UNITED KINGDOM – CH4 **THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO**

### At the heart of time (Austria)

This documentary was selected for its excellent use of cinematic language, its wealth of scientific information, the beauty of its Venetian setting and its reflections on time and life.

### Tranquility Bay (France)

Like *The Road to Guantanamo*, *Tranquility Bay* denounces abuses of human rights, especially of adolescents and young people, whose liberty is violated with the excuse of protecting them from the moral dangers that life can subject them to. This is done by applying a psycho-pedagogic method derived from Skinner's behaviourist theories and using highly controversial educational principles.

### The Road to Guantanamo (UK)

The work is a hard-hitting docu-drama which shows how sterile, barbarous and counterproductive it is to combat violence with violence. It neither convinces nor wins.

One of the greatest challenges of media in a time of war is to report objectively. Being media for peace involves listening to 'the other' and telling the story from the other's point of view. Channel 4 has done this. They have uncovered for the citizens of the world 2006, the dark side to the war on terror that has been fought in the name of 'Enduring Freedom'.

**The SIGNIS jury** decided to add a further consideration.

Since it is our duty to highlight the positive values present in all the entries to the Prix Italia, we are forced to state that we have spent a great deal of time viewing programmes that had, in our opinion, none of the required characteristics of quality, thereby leaving less time to analyse the considerable amount of material that manifested the necessary aesthetic, linguistic, social and ethical values, albeit to varying extents.

We would therefore like to bring to the attention of the organisers of the Prix Italia the need for a preliminary screening of the entries.

Furthermore, the Signis jury has noticed a considerable difference between the "Drama" and "Documentary" categories: the first, which is considerable, contains programmes of widely disparate values and often includes entries of scant ethical and aesthetic value. The good products appear like icebergs in a tired sea of repetition, due to both uninteresting content, and a lack of linguistic value and innovation. The result, we are sad to admit, is a demoralising globalisation of banality.

Nevertheless, we are pleased to note the serious treatment of characters, moments in history, and situations presented with linguistic dignity, and the treatment of events that invoke fear and apprehension and call for urgent intervention on the part of civil society.

This aspect is confronted more directly in the "Documentary" category, which clearly contains more linguistically sophisticated and sensitive works.

The members of the jury:

Michele Serra, President. Italy.

Peter Gonsalves, member of the jury: India

Venice, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**PRIX ITALIA**

**SHORT LIST**

**RADIO MUSIC JURY REPORT**

## Composed work

The jury consisting of ten members considered twelve programmes in this category. The jury was pleased with the number of works both in this and in the 'new' category – work on music – altogether 23 works. It was also interesting to notice that there were few themes which were common to several entries, ie. Mozart, water, joik - ingenious music of northern people.

We heard all the works in their full length and commented each of them after hearing. The general quality in this category was found pleasing and we were able to prepare the short-list for selecting further on one work worth of the Prix Italia.

A number of works in this category were considered to carry some of the best tradition of the genre thus fulfilling our desires both in technical aspect and in artistic point of view. Nevertheless, one of the programmes was found more better to fit in the category of 'work on music', and after voting it was changed to this other category. Jury also had to discuss whether there should be in statutes more precise definition of qualities and virtues for the works entering into this category in order to avoid programmes regarded merely as a recording of a live music performance.

During the listening session it was also noticed that while the technical setup in the room was very practical in use indeed, it's quality in sound terms didn't always allow us to define the true nature of some technical faults or finess of nuances in this specific category.

The three programmes short-listed in this category are, in alphabetical order of the countries:

## Composed work

### SRF Disappearances

An electro-acoustic composition entirely composed and created of recorded acoustic sounds of instruments and voices. The composition creates a well balanced relation between the spoken text and the singers. We admired the dramaturgy and the good tension of the work.

### RAI Auden Cabaret

A musical work for radio in the form of a modern cabaret. An interesting piece of music using radiophonic elements. In a sense, it is a perfect piece of entertainment based on a text by W.H. Auden exposed in a skilful way.

### SR The foundling woman

A radioopera based on texts by the Swedish author Kerstin Thorvall exposing her personal experiences in life and how women are impeded by the norms of Western society. The opera is combining the traditional symphony orchestra into the elements of inventive, radiophonic work with voices treated in a variety of ways.

## Work on music

In this category, which in Prix Italia statutes is described as 'work about music' consisted, after voting, eleven entries. Of these it was found that the entry of NPB (Annette Peacock; "To set the record straight), was a pure interview with music excerpts and thus better suitable and transferred to this category. In general the programmes in this category, compared to the other one, carried more narrative commentary about music, in basic being documentaries, features and interviews.

The jury decided, after voting, to select also in this category a programme worth of the Prix Italia, although the general quality was not considered equal to that of the other music category. Jury also had to discuss of the qualities needed for this category in general and of the nature of the musical substance in the programmes in particular.

The short list of three works in this category is (in alphabetic order of the countries) following:

ABC      Birds of a feather

A programme about the influence of birds singing in music and music creation. The composer and clarinetist David Rothenberg is inspired by the birds and he is also improvising on his clarinet with the birds and imitating their calls. The programme is combining these elements in an inventive way.

CBC      Spillville

A radio programme about the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak's stay during three months in the little town of Spillville, Iowa, in 1893. At the 100th year anniversary of Dvorak's death people are reminded of the presence of the composer in their everyday life. The programme has a sympathetic balance between speech and music.

SBC/RTS      Aquaphonia

The water has been a source of inspiration for many composers. The musical structures are found in nature, and in this work we can hear suggestions of water as musical elements. The work has a dramaturgy treating the material in a compositional manner.

Heikki Valsta  
Executive Producer, YLE Music  
Jury President

Venice, 29 September 2006

## **REPORT OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TV JURY**

Performing Arts --- shortlist

Germany --- ZDF

## DIDO AND AENEAS

The Jury commends "Dido and Aeneas" for presenting a complex performance with a coherent, modern aesthetic. It is a real film with a real point of view, an original work with a personal signature and exceptional choreography and dance performance

Netherlands ---- NPB

## OFF KEY WALTZ

The Jury found this production truly entertaining and also its taking. It is the one film that the Jury saw where the director is genuinely the author. It is an imaginative reworking of an archetypal love story. It is an interesting combination of dance, visual drama and film narrative. The opening sequence in particular immediately captivates the viewer, and the production should be commended for its overall level of ambition.

Norway ---- NRK

## SOFTLY, AS I LEAVE YOU

The Jury commends "Softly, as I leave you". It is a work of great purity, beauty and classicism. It is a highly successful film version of a contemporary dance piece for a broad audience.

The jury would like to give a special mention to "La Traviata". It is a film of real impact and has revitalised opera on television for a broad audience.

## MUSIC AND ART DOCUMENTARIES

### Statement about the Music and Art

The Jury has decided non to award a prize in the music and art documentaries category this year. The Prix Italia represents the very highest standard of international film making and the Jury was looking for a truly outstanding film in this category, a film that pushes the boundaries in both form and content, with an element of surprise. While the Jury saw some good films, it did not find the outstanding film it was looking for. The Jury considers the music and art documentaries category to be highly important because it represents cultural exchange for a broad audience and therefore the highest standards must be maintained.

This was a very difficult decision for the Jury to reach, but there was a general consensus that the dignity of the Prix Italia must be maintained ---- it is such a prestigious prize.

However the Jury wishes to give a special mention to "La Nilsson" ---- an enjoyable and humorous film about a great DIVA which made excellent use of existing archive.

Arild ERIKSTAD

President of the Jury

Venice, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006

## **Report of the Web Jury**

### **Web Short List**

The web category for the 2006 Prix Italia is “best homepage for Radio or TV program.” In this category, there were 10 entries.

The jury was composed of seven online media professionals representing public broadcasters in North America, Europe and Asia.

The entries were all very different. Large and small; serious and fun; some aimed at a mass audience, and some at a specialized one such as kids, music lovers or history buffs.

We developed the following criteria in assessing them:

- Successful integration of TV/Radio and web content. This included cross-media promotion, cross-media connection, content exclusive to or adapted for the web, added value to the TV-Radio content, and multimedia.
- Usability. This includes interactivity, good use of technology and functionality, good use of design, and clear navigation.
- Audience focus. This includes a useful goal or purpose that is wanted by an audience and addresses its needs, and an intelligent use of engagement techniques.
- Content quality. This includes reliability, credibility, lack of errors, and the content not being out-of-date. Our feeling is that reliability and trustworthiness are particularly important for public broadcasters.
- Artistry (craft).

Through discussion, we promoted six sites to a semi-final list. These we examined and discussed thoroughly, and then voted upon. In our first vote two sites were far ahead of the rest of the pack. We voted again with the same result.

This brought forward two clear standouts for our shortlist: sites that had impressed us by being rooted in a good idea, by having intelligent cross-media interaction and high-quality content, and by their evident audience success and impact. In both instances, the broadcaster shared significant control with the audience, creating a space in which people could communicate directly with each other, offering each other entertainment or expertise, mostly in the form of user-generated content.

The shortlist (in alphabetical order by name of organization):

1. NRK (Norway) – [www.nrk.no/urort](http://www.nrk.no/urort)

This website is founded in a great concept – young Norwegian bands can upload songs, videos, photos, and tour dates, and anyone can listen, download and vote for their favourites, as well as discuss the songs and music in general. Since the site launched in 2002, more than 14,000 bands have uploaded to it more than 23,000 songs.

The site is an excellent companion to a two-hour daily radio show of the same name, and there's also a weekly TV show. The program staff listens to every song, looking especially at the most popular, and chooses the best and plays them on-air. And the radio show is live-streamed online, offered on-demand for three weeks, and offered by podcast. There is also a 24/7 radio channel delivered online. The web is a critical part of the broadcast property, which couldn't exist without it.

The site offers a wide range of musical genres – including hip-hop, rock, jazz, country, metal and hardcore. You can find music by genre, artist, song title or region within the country – or by whichever songs have been most recently added or specially-recommended by the program staff.

The site reaches 125,000 unique visitors monthly. It has had a real impact in Norway, with some bands going on to be signed by recording companies. It also offers an annual tour and televised prize show.

The design is not flashy or elegant: it is raw, somewhat stark, and seems inspired by a Soviet or communist aesthetic. We think this is appropriate for a non-mainstream music service aimed at young people. And we also found it simple to use: registration for example was very easy.

The idea of sites that allow young bands to upload their music is not new, and indeed similar sites are offered by many public broadcasters. However, we believe it's a good example of the genre – and a focused, useful service for the young Norwegian music-lovers who are its core audience.

## 2. NPB/Vara (Netherlands) – <http://kassa.vara.nl>

The website of the consumer advocate show Kassa is an independent property with solid foundations in the "old" world of TV.

The most important part is "Question and Answers," where consumers write in with questions and problems, and others offer their advice. The questioners then rate the quality of advice, and the highest-rated advisors become known as Experts – which helps others know who to believe. This results in a large database of information and tips usable by anyone.

The site has a massive audience. It gets 1.2 million unique visitors a month, and 5 million page views. It has 60,000 registered members, and offers a twice-weekly newsletter with 120,000 subscribers. This says to us that Kassa is meeting a real need, and is successfully engaging its audience. There is a wide range of topics and a very good quality of information.

Kassa offers intelligent use of multiple media: there is a TV show, a new radio show, a 24/7 broadband internet channel containing all consumer public-TV shows and the website itself. The staff of the TV show monitors the site to see what people are talking about and this turns into on-air programming, with the forum Experts often appearing as guests. The weekly TV show concludes after half-an-hour on-air, but continues streaming live online for an additional half-hour.

The site also offers polls, in-depth surveys and product testing – based on what's being discussed in the forums. And, it calls upon its 60,000-member consumer panel to evaluate products and offer

opinions. The site also offers news, updated three times a day by the editorial staff, and also available by RSS.

We were impressed with how user-friendly Kassa is, with the clarity of its navigation, and the quality of the community tools, including notifications of new material, and the ability to rate comments. It is not beautiful or slick, but is extremely usable and information-rich.

Venice, 29 September 2006

Mr. Vincenzo Bitti  
President of the Jury