



ITV STUDIO SESSIONS PRESS PACK

The full series of *ITV Studio Sessions* streams on ITVX from Friday 3rd May and every Friday on ITV1 at 10.45pm



ITV announces a brand-new music show *ITV Studio Sessions* in partnership with Priority from O2 and Lifted Entertainment, part of ITV Studios. The show will platform some of the most talented UK musicians as well as championing new singers with **Becky Hill, Cat Burns, Jess Glynne, Tom Walker, YUNGBLUD** and BRIT award rising star winner **Sekou**, as they perform new music, old favourites and one-of-a-kind covers allowing audiences to enjoy the artists in a whole new light.

The six artists will take the stage in front of an audience of Priority members in O2 Blueroom which resides inside the UK's most iconic music venue, The O2.

ITV and O2 share a rich legacy in music and connecting fans to experiences they love. From ITV's broadcasting of *The BRIT Awards* and *An Audience with Kylie*, to O2's heritage within the industry - offering early access to the most sought-after tickets in entertainment and O2's exclusive Priority Gig series, which has seen iconic talent such as Sam Fender and Anne-Marie headline intimate shows for customers.

Audiences will also get to discover the stories that inspired the artists' work as **Clara Amfo** will interview the artist between songs, finding out how their tracks have had an impact on their lives and what we can expect next.



Host: Clara Amfo

How excited were you when you first found out you were going to be hosting *ITV Studio Sessions*, brought to you by Priority from O2?

I was and remain so excited, I've always loved longer chats with artists and live performance will never tire. Hearing new interpretations of new and classic songs is always a joy for music fans!

The O2 is an iconic venue and it is fantastic the show will be filmed in the O2 Blueroom.

The O2 remains one of my favourite spaces for big gigs, I've seen it been transformed into incredible worlds countless times, O2 Blueroom is a fabulous hidden gem, it's intimate and holds sound so well. I loved seeing how all of our guests in this first series have made it their own. The dining booths have song lyrics and titles on them, which is a cute touch and it has a photo booth that is made for rinsing many a photo op solo with friends!

What is your favourite memory you have at The O2?

Hosting *The Brit Awards*! Beyonce's Mrs Carter Show, Prince 3121, Raye, SZA, Spice Girls, Kendrick's DAMN tour, so many!

What are you hoping to discover about each artist when you interview them?

We're so used to seeing all the fun stuff from our favourite artists so I'm hoping to discover what keeps them going and what fuels their creativity, as the music industry is really fun but it's also tough!

What was it like filming *ITV Studio Sessions* in front of an intimate audience? How was the atmosphere?

It was so fun! I feel artists give their performance a little extra when it's a smaller audience as it's really exposing, in a positive way. The atmosphere was great, as it was O2 Priority customers who had no clue who they were seeing, watching their reactions to the performances was really sweet.

***ITV Studio sessions* is an exciting way to platform artists, why do you think it's important?**

I think it's important because you're getting a 3D conversation with the artists - tone of voice, facial expression etc. - when chatting about their work and it gives people a richer insight into where they're at. Also they get to show off. Being able to command an intimate space is a real skill and not everyone can do it, all the acts for this series brought their A game.

Describe the show in three words?

Intimate, joyous and honest.

What was one thing that surprised you whilst filming?

I was surprised to learn that despite mega streaming and sales, playing all over the world etc. artists still get mega nervous when performing!

Why do you think viewers at home should tune into the show?

Viewers should tune in to see and hear from their faves in a unique way, hear them chat a little deeper and enjoy a free home gig!

You have interviewed so many artists, can you pick a favourite and why?

This will always be SO tough!! In this moment, I will say Billie Eilish, we spent the day together in L.A. and she was brilliant, open, warm, funny and so gifted.

Is there an artist you have ever been starstruck by whilst interviewing or meeting them?

Beyonce when I hosted the Lion King premiere, she really has a different glow! Also Shania Twain on the red carpet at *The Brits* at The O2 last year. I couldn't believe she was real, we said, "Let's go girls" together, I was delighted.

What do you think makes a great artist?

Someone who truly listens to their gut when they are creating and doesn't compromise.

Can you tell us one song you listen to on repeat?

I've been lucky enough to hear the Dua Lipa album early and I can't stop listening to 'End Of An Era'. It opens the record and it's a delight!

What kind of music and singer do you think is on the rise at the moment and on your radar?

I'm seeing a lot more black artists who don't make R&B gain so much traction and it's really exciting. Aziya, Rachel Chinourri, Nxdia, MasterPeace, Nova Twins and Connie Constance, Della XOZ, Flowerovlove are all great! Also so many great women just continuing to be fun and not apologising for being smart. With that said, I'm excited to see more from CMAT and Joy Crookes! Also generally speaking, more independent artists. The major label system isn't for everyone and that's okay!

Do you still get nervous on stage?

Yes but I kind of love it, it makes me feel alive on the job! I'm always simultaneously confident and nervous, I don't ever want that to change!

The show is in partnership with Priority from O2 – with Priority, members have access to exclusive gigs and 48-hour presale access. What lengths have you gone to/ what is the most extreme thing you've done to secure tickets to a gig?

When Prince was doing his pop up gigs in the UK, I finished my weekend breakfast show at 1Xtra at 10am and then I ran down the road from the BBC to the venue and queued up for 9 hours to watch him, it was worth every minute. Elite energy from the audience and he was on fire, all the hits!

Which artist would you most want early access for Priority Tickets to?

If/when Frank Ocean reemerges with a new project, I am straight there! Also if Rihanna fancies dropping this R9 album, it's Usain Bolt level sprinting to The O2.



Episode One: Jess Glynne

How was performing in front of an intimate audience?

Having not done any shows for a while, I actually really enjoyed it and I think intimate shows are so special. Hearing an artist that you are a fan of in a setting, so close is actually one of my favourite things so I really do enjoy doing it. It is definitely a little bit more nerve racking but I enjoyed it alot.

Can you tell us a bit about the songs you chose to perform?

So the songs I decided to perform, firstly I did "Easy" and "Enough" from my new album. Two really important records for me in this kind of era, going into this album. 'Enough' kind of sets the tone for the album and is the first song I actually wrote for this record, which is kind of nuts, nearly four years ago. 'Easy' is my next single.

Then I chose 'Piece Of My Heart' which is one of my favourite songs and being that Aretha Franklin is probably one of my biggest icons, I have looked up to vocally and her sister was the one that sang 'Piece Of My Heart'. I think that was pretty special and I have always loved it. And then 'Hold My Hand' because it's having a moment right now on socials. It's just going off so I thought it was super relevant to sing that and just celebrate it, because it is the song that keeps on giving.

What's next for you?

What's next for me is... Jess! Album three and touring, and there's alot to come so yeah that's what is going on next!

Images of all the artists and Clara available here - <https://we.tl/t-d2Bh0R3WYw>