

BBC Trust Service Review: Music Radio Consultation



Arts Council England response

5th November 2014

Arts Council England's mission is 'great art and culture for everyone' and we work to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives, enabling new artistic developments, realising talent, and championing culture in public policy. As the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries, we support a range of activities from theatre to music, reading to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts. We support and invest in high quality arts practice and the best emerging practitioners whom we believe are the backbone of a dynamic creative economy.

As two of the largest promoters and funders of cultural activity in the country, the creation and distribution of excellent publicly funded content is a shared aim for the BBC and Arts Council England. Our new Partnership Agreement, signed in July 2014, commits us to close partnership working to ensure maximum public engagement in high quality arts and culture, developing and supporting the best creative talent and contributing to the successful performance of the UK's creative economy.

The BBC's commitment to public education through the promotion, commissioning and programming of local, national and international music on its portfolio of music radio stations has been and continues to be of vital importance to the UK music industry. It reflects strong return on investment for the license fee payer and it is important the resources are there for this work to continue. The impact of the BBC's commitment to developing a diversity of emerging talent and delivering excellent music content can be felt across the educational sector, the cultural sector within the creative industries and the economy as a whole.

It is with this breadth in mind that we answer this response. Where necessary we will refer to individual BBC Music Radio stations, programmes and initiatives.

1. BBC Music Radio showcases and develops talent across a diversity of genres

The BBC plays an invaluable role in the UK's new music ecology by supporting talent development in emerging and experimental music across its digital, FM and digital television radio stations. It is also the foremost commissioner of new music, providing opportunities for the creation, performance and promotion of a range and diversity of music genres.

We share with the BBC the belief that 'Talent is our primary resource'¹. Investment from Arts Council England underpins the conditions in which music talent can thrive; from support for arts and cultural venues, performing groups and tours to audience development and music education. We recognise that talent is nurtured and developed across all of the BBC Music Radio stations; from the BBC Introducing platform (which has seen uploads of 250,000 tracks uploaded by 100,000 members²) to the BBC Radio 2 Folk and Young Folk Awards and Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme supporting rising jazz and classical music stars. We recognise the value of BBC Music Radio platforms in supporting audiences to discover local and national emerging talent in all genres of music and in contributing to the delivery of Goal One of our strategy, *Great art and culture for everyone*³, to support and celebrate excellence in arts and culture.

We welcome initiatives that celebrate the best of the UK's talent, such as the Best of British playlist on BBC Radio 3⁴, and would strongly encourage the BBC to continue its commitment to showcasing home grown talent across its Radio platforms. We encourage the BBC to continue its commitment to presenting local artists on platforms that have national reach. In our 2014-17 Partnership Agreement we outline a joint approach to aligning our resources with BBC promotion through new planned Music Talent Development Bursaries that can support the continued professional development of musicians at important stages of their careers. BBC broadcasting and showcasing partnerships with the UK's leading music festivals allows emerging artists to gain prestigious slots, significantly increasing public exposure to live performances by the best of new UK artists (for example, BBC Radio 3 support of the EFG London Jazz Festival).

¹ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/great-art-and-culture-everyone> pg 26

² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/bbcmusic/introducing>

³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/great-art-and-culture-everyone> pg 42

⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03lzxnx/live>

BBC Music Radio platforms also showcase the diversity of the UK's music talent to an international audience and support our aim to ensure that the best of our arts and culture finds new audiences and markets overseas. UK Music recently reported that UK music exports contribute £2.2bn to the UK economy, making up almost 60% of the music industry's gross value added (GVA)⁵. This demonstrates some of the direct benefit to UK economy from the BBC's strategic lead and from initiatives led by UKTI, the British Council and Arts Council England⁶ in showcasing new music internationally. We welcome the BBC's increased commitment to showcasing new talent internationally, as demonstrated by a partnership announced earlier this year with PRS for Music Foundation to increase showcasing of the best BBC Introducing artists at platforms in the US⁷. To date, this has ranged from initiatives like BBC Introducing at SXSW to international opportunities for UK-based cultural organisations and music creators relating from exposure at the BBC Proms⁸.

Working in partnership with the BBC, we aim to ensure that there is support and clear progression routes for emerging artists in all genres. We outline in our 2014-17 Partnership Agreement that we will work together to ensure that BBC Introducing works in collaboration with the wider music industry to identify new talent. The BBC has a leading role as a developer of exceptional talent across genres and we are delighted that the BBC is a partner on programmes initiated and supported by Arts Council England, such as Momentum Music Fund⁹.

It is important that resources are available to support the BBC to continue its commitment to talent development across genres and with a holistic, forward thinking approach to skills development. We are delighted that our shared commitment to work in partnership to help build the digital and media capacity of artists is reflected in our 2014-17 Partnership agreement. This is a key aspect of

⁵ http://www.ukmusic.org/assets/general/UK_MUSIC_Measuring_Music_September_2014.pdf

⁶ See for example, partnership between ACE and British Council 'Re-Imagine India'
<http://press.artscouncil.org.uk/Press-Releases/Arts-Council-England-and-British-Council-announce-Re-Imagine-India-8c3.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/bbcmusic/introducing>

⁸ <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/liverpool-philharmonic-orchestra-bbc-proms-7463518>

⁹ <http://www.prsformusicfoundation.com/Funding/Momentum-Music-Fund>

Goal Four of *Great art and culture for everyone*¹⁰ - to develop a diverse and appropriately skilled workforce - and our *Creative Media Policy*¹¹.

2. BBC Music Radio stations are well positioned to deliver high quality cultural content whilst responding to changing ways of listening and engaging with culture

Our ongoing partnership with the BBC is historic and valuable and reflects the importance of the BBC's ability to respond to technological change. The BBC has embarked on a number of important strategic partnerships that have led to excellent and innovative cultural and educational programming to encourage wider public learning and engagement. An engaged music audience benefits from a well-supported and promoted music sector; the music sector is stimulated by an active, informed and engaged listenership. New and changing means of receiving and experiencing arts and culture open up new possibilities for artists and audiences. That is why we partner with stakeholders that help us deliver our mission to deliver *Great art and culture for everyone* and to expand the public's access to and engagement with arts and cultural content.

As means of consumption and engagement with cultural content changes, we know that we will draw closer together in our partnership and explore new possibilities. This can be exemplified by the recently launched 'Ten Pieces' programme¹², a nation-wide programme aiming to inspire primary school children through classical music. The BBC is unique in being able to deliver such a high public value programme. There are no comparable institutions nationally that could bring together such a range of stakeholders, delivery organisations, experts, composers and performers who will shape the content to be delivered through BBC platforms, including BBC Radio 3. The breadth of this initiative, ranging from classroom materials to radio broadcasts, shows how the BBC is responding to changing ways of engaging with culture. This approach compliments our ambitions for increased partnership working through our national network of Music Education Hubs¹³.

¹⁰ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/Great_art_and_culture_for_everyone.pdf pg 56

¹¹ http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/creative_media_policy_final.pdf

¹² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4KCVB2XVgPQ0JwnqLGJI8y0/about-bbc-ten-pieces>

¹³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/>

Despite the BBC's considerable contribution to culture and to music to date, there will be even greater possibilities in the future. In our *Creative Media Policy*¹⁴ we outline our belief that the public should be able to access the best of publicly funded culture through digital media and new technologies, complementing and enhancing the essential live, place-based experiences that will continue to form the backbone of the arts. We operate in a context of increasing pressures on public funding and the BBC is a vital partner that will help us to maximise the value of publically funded content. In our 2014-17 Partnership Agreement we articulate a commitment to increase the presence and profile of publically funded artists and organisations on BBC Platforms. We have a shared objective of ensuring that excellent cultural content can reach larger audiences and reflect our dynamic, world class contemporary culture to UK and international audiences.

3. BBC Music Radio delivers a high quality product across their platforms, ensuring excellent content and diversity of genres that fulfils their service license commitments

We share the BBC's commitment to supporting a wide diversity of talent and artistic creation that reflects and celebrates the diversity of society. We share the belief that diversity in artistic creation and engagement is one of England's key cultural strengths. BBC's Music Radio Platforms must continue to ensure that excellent and diverse content can be widely accessed by the licence fee payer.

BBC Music Radio has consistently supported new ways for listeners to engage with a diversity of genres, as shown through initiatives like BBC 1xtra's Urban Prom 2013. This is a valuable effort to support the development of audiences across perceived genre barriers. This quality and access across genres is made possible by supporting new music in a way that enables space for risk taking and experimentation, and the results of this are ultimately beneficial to the BBC licence payer. The BBC's support of emerging, experimental and niche genres through its digital and FM music stations is vital early exposure for artists of all types. The BBC's commitment to support at this early career stage is a vital link that enables high quality emerging music to feed into the larger channels and to reach broader audiences through daytime playlists.

We welcome this opportunity to review how the BBC Music Radio platforms should aspire to develop and sustain a diversity of high quality music content. As outlined

¹⁴ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/creative-media-policy>

in our response to the Culture, Media and Sport inquiry into the future of the BBC (Dec 2013)¹⁵ we would recommend that the BBC considers how it could reflect a diversity of programming by commissioning content from other providers and by actively hosting and promoting other content. We believe that the BBC should support the greater 'discoverability' of music and arts content using its unique reach, marketing and cross-promotional power, including creating shared spaces within BBC online platforms to help bring the arts to wider public attention. An example of this includes our shared partnership initiative, The Space¹⁶, recently re-launched following a successful pilot programme during the Cultural Olympiad in 2012. We encourage the BBC to continue to engage with the wider music and arts sector in a way that provides an exemplar for a future, more collaborative way of operating. This would have beneficial results for the diversity of cultural content on the BBC Music Radio platforms.

We welcome the BBC's support of radio platforms that support artistic excellence in both accessible and specialist music genres. We see BBC Music Radio as a significant strategic partner to continue to explore, innovate and support musical excellence.

For more information, please contact:

Nicole McNeilly
Officer, Policy and Research
nicolemcneilly@artscouncil.org.uk

¹⁵ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/ResponsetotheCultureMediaandSportInquiryintotheFutureoftheBBC-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.thespace.org/>