

27 November 2025

Open Letter to BBC Radio Scotland

Dear BBC Radio Scotland,

On behalf of the Scottish Music Industry Association's 6,000+ members across the country, I am writing to express deep concern regarding the announced removal of four BBC Radio Scotland late-night music programmes. While we recognise the need for evolution within any public service broadcaster, these changes – taken together – represent a significant withdrawal of vital support for Scotland's artists, industry professionals and wider creative economy.

As Scotland's national music industry trade body, the SMIA's responsibility is not only to advocate for individual artists and industry practitioners, but to safeguard the health, diversity and long-term sustainability of the ecosystem as a whole. These late-night programmes have been part of that ecosystem for decades. They have played a distinct and irreplaceable role in platforming emerging Scottish talent, supporting career development and ensuring that our national broadcaster meaningfully reflects the strength and diversity of Scottish music.

The issue at hand is not only the loss of specific presenters or shows, but the erosion of a dedicated, culturally rooted space in the schedule where Scottish artists – across a range of genres, backgrounds and career levels – can be discovered, contextualised and championed. In an era where commercial radio is increasingly homogenised and algorithmic platforms reward scale and privilege, the BBC's public service remit becomes even more essential. It is precisely in these spaces – uncommercial, curated and culturally intentional – that many of Scotland's working musicians and independent artists (particularly developing talent) find the exposure they often cannot access elsewhere.

Platforming these artists is essential: they contribute to Scotland's cultural identity, drive local economies, sustain venues and form the talent pipeline that later feeds national and international success. Taking away four culturally significant broadcast spaces that connect their

work to audiences, industry and opportunity – without a clear alternative – will only widen inequities at a time when many artists are already under severe financial pressure.

We note that the BBC Charter requires the organisation to “*reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of the United Kingdom’s nations and regions, and support the creative economy across the UK.*” For Scotland’s music sector, this remit cannot be fulfilled through a single easy-listening format or by relying solely on the important – but limited – capacity of the remaining specialist or emerging-artist programmes on BBC Radio Scotland. Nor can Scottish music’s full scope be adequately represented through UK-wide stations whose commissioning priorities do not consistently align with Scotland’s cultural needs.

We therefore respectfully request that BBC Radio Scotland:

1. **Pauses implementation of these changes and undertakes meaningful consultation with Scotland’s music sector** – including artists, industry organisations and audiences – to assess the cultural, economic and creative impact of removing these platforms.
2. **Sets out a clear strategy for how it will meet its public service obligation to represent, support and platform the full breadth of Scottish music** – including emerging, independent and genre-diverse artists who rely on culturally rooted programming that cannot be replicated by mainstream or algorithmic formats.
3. **Commits to maintaining a distinct, nationally recognisable space within its schedule dedicated to Scottish music discovery and development**, ensuring Scotland’s diverse creative identity is not diluted through homogenised programming.

At a time when artist livelihoods are under significant strain, it is essential that BBC Radio Scotland strengthens, rather than diminishes, its role in championing Scottish music.



We urge BBC Radio Scotland to pause these changes and commit to a transparent process that involves the sector. And if the decision is to proceed, we call for a clear, future-facing strategy that ensures Scotland continues to have a dedicated national broadcast platform where its artists – established and emerging alike – can be heard, nurtured and celebrated.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue to help shape a solution that protects the cultural value, diversity and vibrancy that Scottish music brings; not only to Scotland, but to the BBC's wider offering.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Kilpatrick

CEO and Creative Director

Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)