



5 March 2026

Open Letter to BBC Radio Scotland from the Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA) and Supporting Sector Organisations

Dear BBC Radio Scotland,

We write collectively as Scotland's national music industry body alongside a coalition of organisations representing artists, music workers, industry professionals and the wider music ecosystem across Scotland and the UK. Together, our organisations represent thousands of creators, businesses and cultural practitioners working across Scotland's music sector.

In November 2025, the Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA), on behalf of its 6,500+ members, wrote to express concern regarding planned changes to BBC Radio Scotland's late-night music output and to request meaningful consultation with Scotland's music sector.

Since then, more than 300 artists and organisations have publicly raised similar concerns. Independent analysis of BBC Radio Scotland's late-night playlists – including evidence formally submitted by musician and campaigner Stephen McAll (Constant Follower) to the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture (CEEAC) Committee (16 January 2026) – has provided measurable indication of the impact these changes may already be having on Scotland's music ecosystem. The breadth of this response reflects the scale of concern across the sector and the significance of the issues at stake.

Using BBC-published playlist data, that analysis – comparing late-night output from 1–15 January 2026 against the same period in 2025 – reports:

- A 69% reduction in new music plays
- A 67% reduction in new Scottish independent music
- A 26% reduction in overall Scottish music
- A marked shift toward catalogue music at the expense of contemporary releases

These findings raise significant questions about how new and independent Scottish music is being presented to audiences and underline the need for transparency, engagement and strategic clarity.

This issue is not solely about individual programmes or presenters. It concerns the long-term sustainability of Scotland's music ecosystem and the role of public service broadcasting within it. Late-night specialist programming has historically provided a critical development pathway for artists, connecting creative work to audiences, industry opportunity and wider economic activity across Scotland's cultural sector.

We welcome the recent engagement of the Scottish Government on this matter and its clear view that changes to BBC Radio Scotland's output must not diminish opportunities for emerging artists or the long-term health of Scotland's creative landscape. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that public service broadcasting in Scotland continues to support cultural discovery, diversity and innovation.

While BBC Radio Scotland has stated that specialist music remains a cornerstone of its output, the evidence to date raises important questions about how support for Scottish music – particularly new and independent voices – will be sustained in practice.

Given the scale of concern across Scotland's music community and the cross-sector representation reflected in this letter, we believe there is a clear and urgent need for transparency, engagement and strategic clarity.

We call on BBC Radio Scotland to:

- 1. Undertake meaningful consultation with Scotland's music sector and audiences to assess the cultural and economic impact of these changes.**
- 2. Publish a clear strategy outlining how BBC Radio Scotland will meet its public service obligations to support Scottish music discovery and development,**

including measurable commitments relating to new and independent Scottish artists.

- 3. Clarify the commissioning rationale and editorial framework for late-night music output**, including how diversity, discovery and Scottish cultural representation will be safeguarded.

Scotland's music sector makes a substantial contribution to our national identity, economy and international reputation. Public service broadcasting plays a unique role in sustaining this contribution; not simply by reflecting established success, but by nurturing the conditions in which new work can emerge.

We remain committed to constructive engagement and would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with BBC Radio Scotland to ensure its services continue to reflect, represent and support the full breadth of Scotland's musical culture.

Yours faithfully,



Robert Kilpatrick

CEO and Creative Director

Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)

On behalf of the undersigned organisations

- **Association of Independent Music**
Gee Davy – Chief Executive
- **BPI (British Recorded Music Industry) Limited**
Dr Jo Twist OBE – CEO

- **Featured Artists Coalition**
David Martin – Chief Executive Officer
- **Help Musicians**
Sarah Woods – Chief Executive Officer
- **Music Managers Forum**
Annabella Coldrick – Chief Executive
- **Music Producers Guild**
Cameron Craig – Executive Director
- **Music Publishers Association**
Paul Clements – Chief Executive Officer
- **Musicians' Union**
Caroline Sewell – Regional Organiser Scotland and Northern Ireland Region
- **Music Venue Trust**
Stina Tweeddale – Scotland Coordinator
- **PRS Foundation**
Joe Frankland – Chief Executive Officer
- **Scottish Music Centre**
Gill Maxwell – Executive Director
- **The Ivors Academy**
Roberto Neri – Chief Executive
- **Traditional Music Forum of Scotland**
Brian Ó hEadhra – Director
- **UK Music**
Tom Kiehl – Chief Executive