



THE JAZZ SERVICES  
**GUIDE TO**  
GETTING YOUR MUSIC  
**ON THE RADIO**  
BY CHRIS HODGKINS

**jazz** SERVICES  
A VOICE FOR JAZZ

**OMBR**  
Online Music Business Resource

# THE JAZZ SERVICES GUIDE TO GETTING YOUR MUSIC ON THE RADIO

## Introduction

When I was 14 years old I was listening to Humphrey Lyttelton's record programme on the BBC when he played Jimmie Lunceford's Uptown Blues where an 18 year old Snooky Young played a superb trumpet solo that floored me; the experience and memory of his trumpet playing remain with me to this day. This illustrates the power of radio – and even in this digital age of the “long tail”, Social Networking, Facebook, Twitter, Skype Conferencing and YouTube – to name a few, radio is still a very powerful medium through which you can reach a wider audience for your music.

I am very grateful to Jez Nelson of Somethin' Else, Gordon Wedderburn of Generation Radio, Laurie Burnette of Jazz London Radio, Helen Mayhew of Jazz FM and Jumoke Fashola of BBC Radio London and Paul Barnes of Radio Norfolk for their practical contributions, as they have been on the receiving end of a cry for airtime and airplay from any number of bands and musicians. This manual should be read in conjunction with “Where Do You Want To Be” and “Marketing Your Band” – all available at the Online Music Business Resource (OMBR) at [www.chrishodgkins.co.uk](http://www.chrishodgkins.co.uk)

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# 1 WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO REACH?



Fig 1 Market Segments

Before any work is done you need to decide who you want to reach and what your objective is. Do you want to get your CD played on the radio? Do you want to see if you can get a radio station or a particular programme to record your band? You may be on tour in which case it would be great if a radio station could preview the gig with an interview. You may want to invite a presenter to one of your gigs or just make the radio station aware of your music. Or you might want plugs for your new CD. Once you have decided on your objective or objectives, you then need to 'segment' the market in terms of radio stations and programmes that you might target (see fig. 1). This will give you a list of radio stations – public, independent and internet – that play music. The list below is not exhaustive and is just a cross section. Careful research will pay dividends in providing more segments and leads.

- Radio 1 (BBC)
- Radio 2 (BBC)
- Radio 3 (BBC)
- Radio 4 (BBC)
- BBC 6 Music
- Jazz London Radio (internet radio)
- Jazz FM (commercial radio)
- Hereford and Worcester/Shropshire/Stoke (BBC regional radio)
- Radio Norfolk (BBC regional radio)
- Radio Scotland (BBC regional radio)
- Radio London (BBC regional radio)
- Radio Leeds (BBC regional radio)

The next step in terms of your research is to break down or segment your list of radio stations into programmes that may be of use to you. The BBC publishes a useful list of programmes at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/categories/music-jazzandblues> It may be a local radio station with a 'drive time' programme (Jazz FM itself has a strong drive time slot) or a station such as Radio 3 that has a number of useful programmes:

- Jazz on 3
- Jazz Line Up
- Night Waves
- Late Junction

Again there are local and regional stations – Radio Scotland “*Jazz Nights at the Quay*” Once you have done this, you can then take a focused and targeted approach by further refining your list. This involves identifying the programmes that might play your music and who to contact on that programme – who is the person that will make the decision whether or not to play your music or interview you.

You will quickly learn which show is best suited to your music – for instance Jazz on 3 is frankly never going to play a Glenn Miller reissue. Having done your research you are not going to waste your time or theirs trying to reach broadcasters who are not relevant for your type of music. Your research also allows you to approach one show with a personalised message that shows your knowledge of the programme, which is much more effective than sending a generic message to them all.

What is your schedule? When sending material to a producer or presenter you need to be very clear about when you want your music to be played. For example, if your album is out on a Monday then you will probably want a track played during the previous week. Ideally you want the CD to land on the producer's or presenter's desk about 4-6 weeks before you would want it to be broadcast. Even if your CD is not played has in all probability been listened to, which all goes towards building your profile.

There are limited opportunities for new jazz artists to get their music on the radio in the UK so you need to make your pitch count. Decide which project you are going to push – it is better to focus on one tour or CD release.

## 2. PRESS RELEASES

Radio producers and presenters love dates! There should be a relevant date – the release date or the date you want it played – in big prominent writing, possibly even bigger than the artist name.

Be brief and to the point, use relevant headlines rather than long passages of flowery prose. Put the most relevant information first. Think about your pitch – what is your unique selling point? Is it that you have a great band to play your music, that you are an award winning composer with a new project or that you have finished touring with a well-respected peer?

If you are unknown to the producer you may have more success if you can ease them into taking a risk to play your music. Tell them your kudos points – artists you have played with that they may know about or awards you have won – but keep it snappy,. Do not attempt to write ‘War and Peace’ with added jazz.

Presentation matters and you should make an effort with the formatting and layout of your press release. This applies equally to the CD itself. Make sure it is labelled clearly and correctly. These efforts will pay off.

Some professionals do not open unsolicited attachments in case of computer viruses, so check before sending your music by email if the broadcaster in question would prefer a CD. If you are planning on

sending your music by email, you should try to find out if they prefer to receive an attached mp3 or a link embedded into the email rather than an external link to your website. Ideally, you want to make the music instantly accessible in the email, but you don't want your email to be simply deleted on arrival. This can apply equally to pdf press releases. If in doubt, ask them what they prefer.

Always get someone else to proof read your press release before you send it and check for spelling and factual mistakes. If you are not a very good writer then get someone else to write it for you and perhaps also to design the layout for you.

### 3. FOLLOWING UP YOUR PRESS RELEASE

If you have not heard anything back a week after sending your press release, then you should chase it up. A phone call is much more effective than an email here. As with your press release, be brief and to the point without skirting round what you are trying to say. Do you want confirmation that the station has received your music? Do you want to know if they might be able to come to your gig? Producers do not mind if you call several times as long as there is a point to the call and it is not just harassment!

If you are an artist doing your own PR it is important to divorce yourself from the creative process. Do not take it as a personal criticism of your creativity if your music does not make it onto the radio. There are lots of reasons why this choice has been made so always be friendly and helpful.

Deliver on any promises you make. If you have been asked a question about the tour make sure you get back to the producer. If they need photos or more tracks make sure they get them.

### 4. NETWORKING

Networking is invaluable; try and chat to people in the industry and make your face known through friends and connections. Remember it is not always a pitch, it is often better to have a good time in social situations than to just push your work. Attending events and other musicians' concerts is the simplest way to meet people in the industry. Always be polite – don't harangue an industry figure who hasn't replied to an email. A simple and friendly conversation is more likely to lead to the response you are after. Don't forget social networking too. Many key jazz professionals, broadcasters included, are on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn – this provides you with an excellent platform to keep your name in people's minds.

### 5. BBC INTRODUCING

BBC Music Introducing is an initiative that supports unsigned, undiscovered and under the radar musicians. If you think your music is right for jazz on BBC radio, upload a track to BBC Introducing and let them hear what you have to offer. BBC Introducing will use your genre to make sure your tracks get heard by the right radio shows. They will also group artists by genre when they are curating gigs and creating playlists to put on the BBC Music website. You can update your genre any time.

**BBC Music Introducing**

## 6. TOP TIPS FROM RADIO PROFESSIONALS

### Gordon Wedderburn



Gordon Wedderburn presents “*Jazz In The Present Tense*” on <http://www.wandsworthradio.com>. He plays all types of jazz, but the programme has a particular focus on contemporary and smooth jazz. He is dedicated to promoting new and emerging talent, and regularly features up-and-coming artists on the show. He is on the management committee of Generation Radio and also presents a one hour show on UK Jazz Radio.

Wedderburn has lived in London since 2002 after moving to the UK from Jamaica where he grew up. He has degrees in English Literature and Hotel Management and has had a successful career in the hospitality industry as well as in broadcasting. He is also active in community projects and is on the board of the Clapham Park Project. He is the CEO of GW Jazz, which is a fledgling organisation that seeks to showcase contemporary UK jazz. Actively involved in event promotion, Gordon currently hosts the popular ‘Jazz Moods Live!’ at the iconic Ritzy venue in the heart of Brixton.

[www.facebook.com/GWJazz](http://www.facebook.com/GWJazz)

<http://www.wandsworthradio.com>

#### Gordon Wedderburn’s Top Tips

*“The advent of the internet and community radio has seen the emergence of the community (not pirate) stations that although rooted in the community operate and transmit online and as such have a global reach. These stations are, in the main, run by volunteers who bring their personal tastes and music to impact on and shape the programming and delivery of the station. When compared to the larger, more established entities, local community stations have one major advantage. They are not fettered by commercial dictates and as such, are able to play a wide range of music, encompassing less popular cultural and niche genres that reflect and represent the demographic makeup of the station’s host community. Local community stations are very quickly becoming an important part of the media landscape, providing an entry launch pad for persons who would not otherwise have made it into broadcasting. On the one hand, it is an excellent training ground for aspiring presenters & broadcasters. On the other, it is becoming an important and increasingly relevant outlet for musicians to get them and their music much needed exposure. My top tips for the band or musician who want to get their work showcased via radio are as follows:*

1. *Never underestimate the power and reach of any form of media (radio) that is available to you. Each type is an opportunity to reach new listeners.*
2. *Ensure the radio show you target to have your music played is one that plays similar music to what you produce or is open to new and different kinds of jazz.*
3. *The product you give to a presenter/DJ must be of the highest quality possible, as it will only enhance your music being broadcast over the airwaves. Substandard mp3’s, CD’s or records will almost certainly not be played by any presenter/DJ wanting to maintain the quality and integrity of his or her show. Furthermore presenters are not likely to play tracks that are of mediocre sound quality as it diminishes the quality of their show resulting in the loss of precious listenership.*

4. *Try to develop a sustainable and durable relationship with radio presenters and DJs. They are more prone to support, push your music and take a personal interest in furthering your career when good rapport is genuinely established and maintained over time.*
5. *Be Accessible. Ensure that a presenter/DJ can reach you easily and quickly. Although as a musician you are busy, try to return calls in good time as it aids the process of you getting well needed exposure on radio. Also try to ensure that you are available to do interviews as you are the best person to speak about and promote your music and its merits.”*

## Helen Mayhew

Helen Mayhew talking to Bobby Wellins at the 606 Club 2006



Helen Mayhew has been a jazz broadcaster since the inauguration of JazzFm in 1990. She currently presents JazzFM's True Brit programme showcasing the British jazz scene every Thursday evening at 6, and 'Late Night Jazz with Helen Mayhew' every Friday.

Mayhew has interviewed many of the world's leading jazz musicians including Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, Michael Brecker, Wynton Marsalis and Chick Corea, and is also a tireless champion of British jazz. She has

been nominated for Mobo and Sony awards and was twice winner of the Parliamentary Jazz Broadcaster of the Year award.

### Helen Mayhew's Top Tips

6. *“To send copies of CDs to all the individual presenters who you suspect might pick their own music – like me ,Jez Nelson, Chris Philips, Ruth Fisher and Tim Garcia, on Jazz FM – as we don't all inhabit the same office and shared copies can go astray*
7. *I would also make a plea to remember to put publishing details of songs on the CD cover otherwise it is difficult for PRS to pay the right people.*
8. *Also bear in mind that some presenters still use CDs rather than downloads, so offer a choice.*
9. *Occasionally a presenter will need to fade a track as we are all tied to time and sometimes in a short programme there just isn't time to play extended jams or long drum solos, so bear this in mind when sending tracks”*

<http://www.jazzfm.com/>

## Paul Barnes



Paul Barnes' radio programme on BBC Radio Norfolk 'The Late Paul Barnes' is shared with six other stations: Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Northampton, and SCR (Beds, Bucks and Herts) and is also on the internet. Born in Coventry in 1939, he came to jazz listening to bands like Ted Heath and Jack Parnell on 78s and listening to Willis Conover's 'Jazz Hour' on 'Voice of America'. Barnes played trumpet and tenor saxophone in traditional and mainstream bands for many years. He wrote and presented an 'A to Z of Jazz' series for British Forces Broadcasting and also reviewed new releases on Peter Clayton's 'Jazznotes'. 'The Late Paul Barnes' has been on air for more than

15 years. In 2011, Barnes was named 'Jazz Broadcaster of the Year' in the Parliamentary Jazz Awards. Details of his programme can be found at [The Late Paul Barnes](#)

### Paul Barnes' Top Tips

1. *"Like any other presenter of jazz programmes I receive quite a quota of communications from performers seeking wider exposure.*
2. *I do bridle a bit at the informality of messages that address me by my Christian name, as though we are old buddies, whereas we are complete strangers. However, when it comes to the music, I do always try to give CDs a fair hearing.*
3. *Overlong tracks and items in excess of four minutes are a bit of a deterrent; I groan at performances that perpetuate the worn formula of ensembles/solos/fours/ensembles; full chorus bass solos are a bit of a turn-off, as are extended drum breaks.*
4. *An album entirely made up from 'originals' causes my brow to furrow. A good test for any musician is to explore the potential of standards as vehicles for invention. I am allergic to the frenetic, the freakish and the 'fire-in-a-pet-shop' approach of some allegedly avant garde performers.*

*That is, of course, a subjective view. But then, my choices for the programme are subjective and that is why ODJB and the Mound City Blue Blowers could find themselves on the same agenda as Sachal Jazz, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Claire Martin or Ian Shaw. When I do perceive talent and/or promise I'll give it my support, often playing tracks in successive weeks.*

5. *Often I hear from people who have clearly never bothered to listen to the programme to try and determine its nature. They submit material that does not fit the context, which is pretty wide ranging; they offer interviews, when it is perfectly obvious that the programme contains none.*
6. *If this makes me sound like a dictator rather than a democrat, so be it. Musical tyranny is the name of my game. And it's rather fun."*

### The Late Paul Barnes





Jumoke Fashola is an award winning radio and television presenter. She is the host of 'Inspirit', BBC London 94.9fm's Sunday morning lifestyle and ethics programme.

- 1 *"Be persistent but polite. Sometimes presenters are swamped with material and so it may take a while to get to your CD. Most of us will listen at least once but a gentle reminder often works. But don't hound anyone!"*
- 2 *Make sure all the details are on the CD or enclosed. If you have a forthcoming gig, that's often a nice hook & may prove of interest to the programme.*
- 3 *Is your music the kind that they play on that programme? Does the presenter have a particular passion for jazz et al? A scatter gun approach doesn't always work. Do some thought & research before sending out your CD.*
- 4 *If you are coming into the studio, you may be expected to perform live. Make sure you have something that is about 3 minutes in duration, and acoustic preferably (that doesn't require people running around to plug things in for you). Time is tight on a live programme.*
- 5 *Ask yourself, why would they want to interview me? Your music maybe the best new thing on the planet but if you don't have some stories that will catch the listener's ear it makes for a dull interview. You want the interviewer to enjoy having you on the programme. Ditto if you are not 'live' in the studio make sure the press release has some unusual facts or something that will catch our attention.*
- 6 *Use social media wisely. Most presenters are on social media sites like Twitter. They will probably listen to some links that you message to them. Choose your tracks wisely! Don't forget we listen to quite a lot of music. We can often tell in the first couple of minutes whether the track will work on the programme."*

[www.jumokefashola.com](http://www.jumokefashola.com)

## Laurie Burnett

Jazz London Radio receives a substantial number of emails on a weekly basis from musicians, publicists, agents all promoting their music and interests. Here are some tips for submitting your music and potentially getting airplay

Email [official@jazzlondonradio.com](mailto:official@jazzlondonradio.com) or [presenters@jazzlondonradio.com](mailto:presenters@jazzlondonradio.com)



1. Include "Music Submission" in the title and provide a concise background about the new release
2. Attach press release & photo of band / singer and links to relevant website
3. Provide links for listening to the track(s) such as Bandcamp, SoundCloud, YouTube, MP3s, MP4s or WAVs. MP3s must be at least 256 kbps to be considered.
4. Allow in at least two weeks for a reply before making any follow up contact as there is often a backlog of submissions to get through.

[www.jazzlondonradio.com](http://www.jazzlondonradio.com)

## 7 CONTACTS FOR JAZZ RADIO PROGRAMMES

### The BBC

**BBC Jazz and Blues programmes**

### Independent Radio

[www.jazzfm.com](http://www.jazzfm.com)

### Internet Radio

**Jazz London Radio**

<http://www.jazz24.org/>

**Internet radio jazz stations**

## 8 SOME MORE TIPS

Click on the tips below to take you to useful online articles and websites.

**4 Tips For Getting Your Music Heard**

**Self Releasing Your Music In The UK**

**Get Your Song On The Radio**

**Ditto Music Blog - How To Get My Music Played On The Radio**

**How To Get Radio Airplay**

<http://www.jazzfm.com>

JazzFM are always keen to hear new groups and new music. If you think your tracks would sound good on **Jazz FM** send them to JazzFM at 75 – 77 Margaret Street, London, W1W 8SY or to [chris.philips@jazzfm.com](mailto:chris.philips@jazzfm.com) They accept both electronic and postal submissions but unfortunately cannot return any materials you send them.

