

Composers 2016
An ISM report

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Introduction

The ISM Composers' Special Interest Group launched a survey on Friday 4 March 2016 looking at a range of issues affecting composers in the UK.

The survey looked at ways to respond to the BBC's desire – in their own words – 'to clarify the process for Radio 3's commissioning of new music' and look more broadly at ways in which the BBC could support new music beyond commissioning.

The survey also considered the progress made at PRS for Music since the last ISM composers' survey (2012) and looked at ways in which PRS for Music could further improve its work with contemporary writers of new music.

Finally, building on the services the ISM provides to its professional composer members, and our well-received composers' pack (including template contracts), self-publishing guide and professional development programme for composers, the survey looked at what the ISM could do next for composers.

The survey was closed on Tuesday 3 May 2016 and received 140 responses from a broad range of composers.

These findings and recommendations were then discussed at an ISM Composers' Round Table on Tuesday 12 July 2016.

About the ISM

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) is the UK's professional body for musicians in the UK. We have more than 7,500 members working as composers, writers of new music, academics, performers, educators and soloists across the music profession. We provide legal, business and contract support and advice as well as campaigning and lobbying for composers' rights, performers, the wider music profession and music education.

For more information about this report, contact derin.adebiyi@ism.org

For more information about joining the ISM, visit www.ism.org/join

If you are an ISM member and are interested in joining our Composers' Special Interest Group (SIG) please contact derin.adebiyi@ism.org with a short biography.

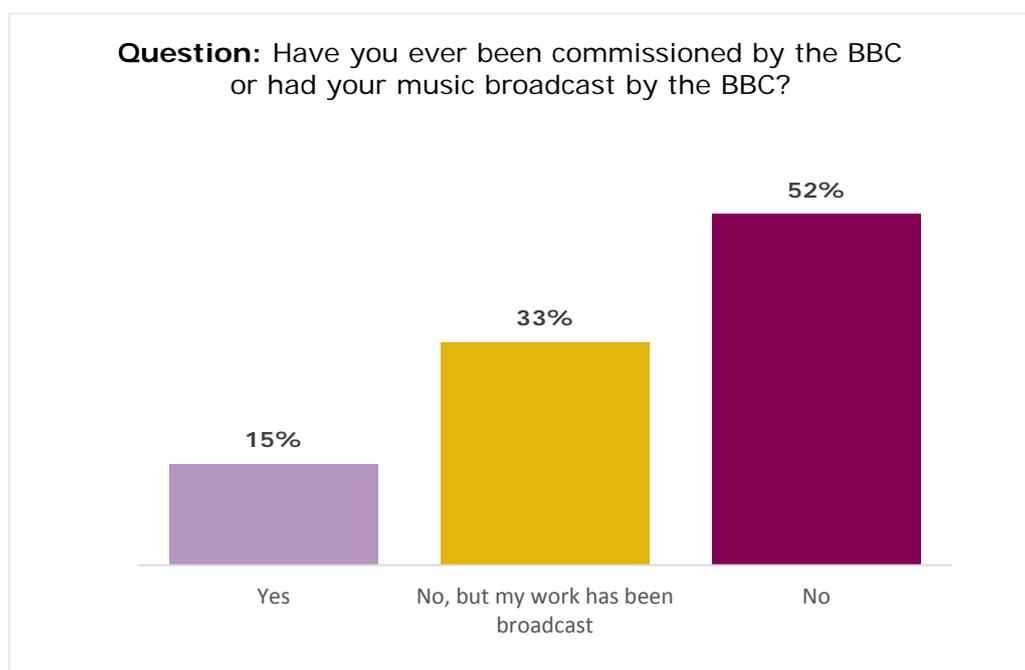
The results

1. The BBC's commissioning and broadcasting of new music

The BBC's commissioning process was seen as opaque and confusing. The BBC is seeking to address this challenge, and a series of positive recommendations were put forward which could help the BBC address this challenge.

89% of all survey respondents reported that they do not know how the BBC commissioning of new music works, or how the selection of new music to broadcast works.

This is despite **48%** of respondents having been commissioned or having had their work broadcast on the BBC.



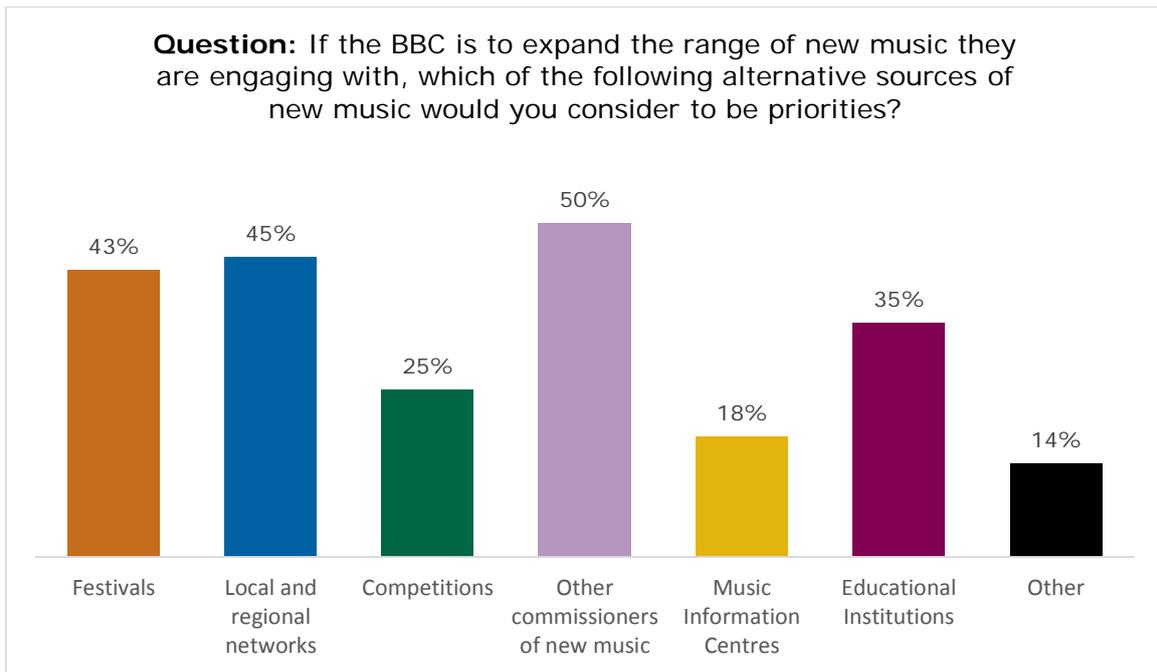
The rest of the questions relating to the BBC were deliberately open in order to encourage composers to suggest ways forward for the BBC.

It appears there is significant gender disparity in terms of commissioning practice. We learned that **24** of the **30** world, UK and London premieres at the BBC Proms this year were works by male composers, and just **six** were works by female composers.

At the Composers' Round Table, Sound and Music (SAM) the contemporary music body supported by Arts Council England (ACE) was praised for its work in openly publishing its diversity data (in a project titled *Because It's 2016*).

And finally, composers repeated their simple calls for more new music to be broadcast, and an open call for anonymous works to be submitted, with a reading group being supported by the BBC with the assistance of professional bodies.

'I cannot say with any certainty what the BBC's process is for commissioning new works, other than the Embedded scheme they run with Sound and Music. I have the impression that most new commissions arise out of connections with publishers and/or personal connections with composers.' – Composer



Specific suggestions on how the BBC might meet these suggestions and answers to the question 'Where should the BBC look for new music?' were also made and these are collected in Appendix A.

'Commissioning for broadcast or Proms has a reputation for being a "who you know" kind of thing with too much emphasis on London!' – Composer

'It was clearer in the past when Radio 3 had a commissioner for new music.' – Composer

'Having a point of contact for new music within the BBC. So that composers / curators / performers have someone they can approach.' - Composer

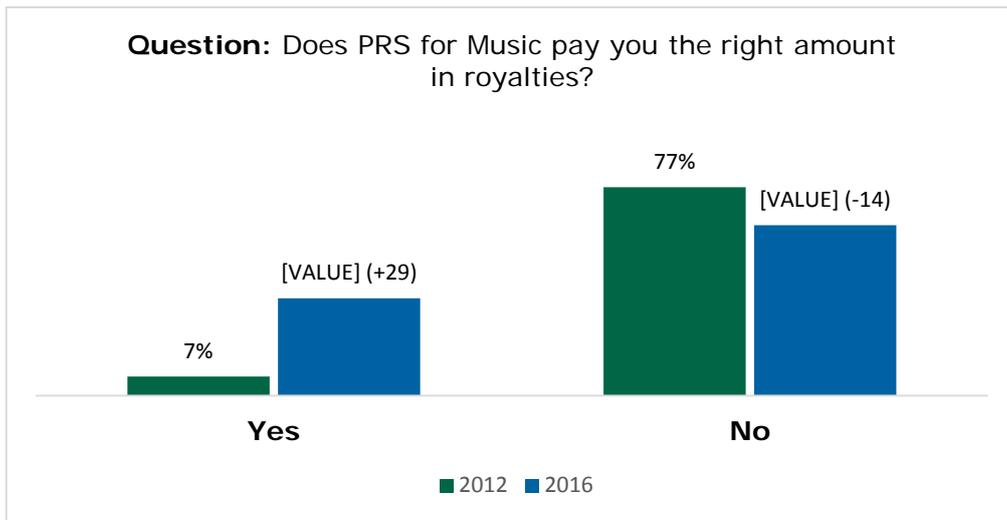
Recommendations for the BBC

1. The BBC should follow the example of Sound and Music ([Because It's 2016](#)) and collect and publish diversity data on commissioning and broadcasting of new music.
2. Geographical diversity should be taken into account within diversity considerations to ensure that regions outside of London are not omitted.
3. The BBC should investigate the possibility of creating a single point of contact for composers, writers and creators of new music to ensure open access.
4. Open calls for scores should be held – perhaps along a theme, but not necessarily just within BBC performing groups – to enable a wider range of composers to engage with the BBC. Any scores submitted should where practical be anonymised prior to presentation before those selecting to minimise the risk of unconscious bias within selections.
5. To help address some of these problems, the BBC should look to work with existing ensembles, festivals, networks and venues which promote new music to expand its reach.
6. Broadcast more new music, particularly through local and regional radio networks, at varied times within the schedule (not overly reliant on Hear & Now for the presentation of new music).
7. Investigate ways in which archived recordings can be made available for sale by individual composers, building on existing best practice (for example the AIM/BBC agreement).

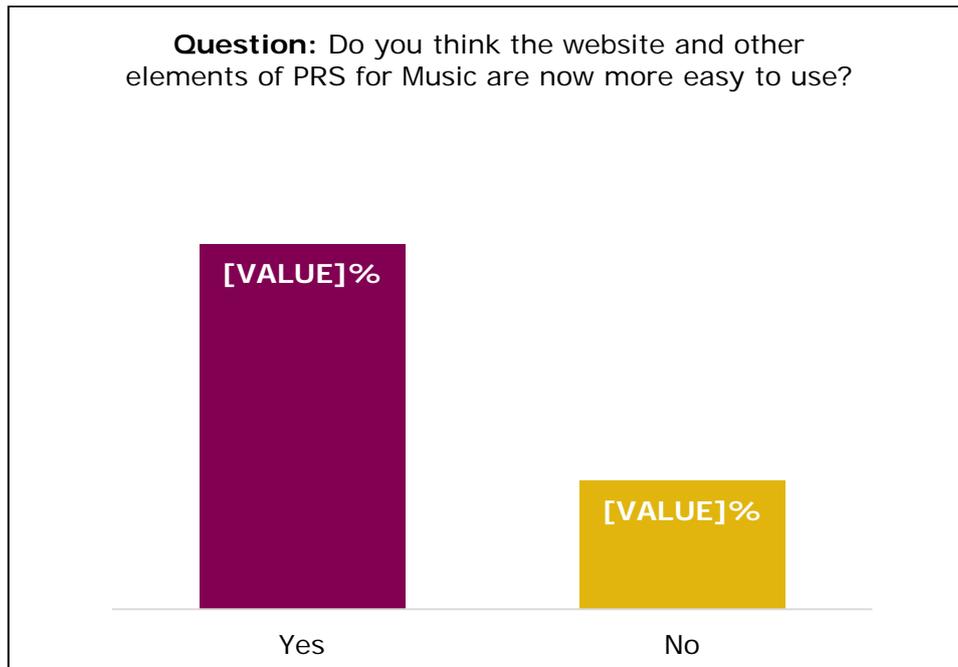
2. PRS for Music

PRS for Music's work with contemporary composers and writers of new music has improved substantially since the appointment of a dedicated Classical Account Manager. The survey and round table found that many problems were the result of a lack of information being shared with composers. It remains the case, however, that accurate reporting, regional contacts and classical concert tariffs continue to be an issues of discussion.

Comparing our 2012 data with our 2016 data, whilst a number of composers still do not feel like they are paid enough by PRS for Music, it is clear that there has been a marked improvement on previous years.



(The chart above only shows comparable data between the two surveys – it omits 'not applicable' option from 2012 and the one survey respondent who reported in 2016 that they were paid too much by PRS for Music.)



The ease of reporting performances and unlicensed venues continues to be perceived as a challenge and PRS for Music are working to improve their processes – including

introducing a new portal for reporting performances – which venues, performers and composers will be invited to use.

The operation of the classical tariff is inevitably being scrutinised following PRS for Music's recent review of their popular music tariff. While the classical tariff not up for formal review at present, the ISM will work with composers to consider what position we would want PRS for Music to take should it be reviewed.

Further training and resources around collecting royalties will also be developed.

'Less London-centric. Brilliant new composers seminar held in Glasgow. More of that please.' - Composer

Recommendations for PRS for Music

1. Continue to promote the new Classical Account Manager, Harriet Wybor, as a specialist looking to increase classical revenues and reporting.
2. Notify members (and professional bodies such as the ISM) as a new database becomes available so that composer members can easily access and understand what to do.
3. Work with the ISM to develop online FAQs, and produce a live performance guide and webinar.
4. Work with PRS for Music and composers to offer training on the reporting of small venues for licensing should they a) not appear on PRS' list of larger venues or b) currently be operating without a licence or c) currently be operating without reporting performances. This should include the development of a specialist seminar and/or webinar on how live music licensing and reporting works at PRS for Music.
5. Ensure that people understand how the classical tariff operates and (if reviewed) how the tariff could change. In particular, single pieces of new music in every concert will result in better royalties for works still in copyright than single concerts of just new music. A promotion of intelligent programming was needed.

3. What can the ISM do for composers next?

The final round table discussion and section of the survey looked at what the ISM and its charitable arm, the ISM Trust, could do to further support our composer members.

A surprisingly high number of composers were still not fully aware of resources such as Women In Music's excellent [Comps and Ops](#) page -- regarded as an invaluable resource by some at the composers' round table.

This suggests there is still a job for the ISM to do in terms of sign-posting composers to possible commissioning and competition opportunities.

Question: Which of the following (free) composer resources are you aware of?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • ISM Composers Pack (including template contracts): | 73% |
| • Sound And Music Composers Commissioning Survey: | 67% |
| • ISM Self-Publishing Pack and webinar: | 62% |
| • Sound And Music's Opportunities page: | 69% |
| • Women In Music's - Competitions and Opportunities: | 46% |

More open questions suggested that 'how to find funding' was a key area of professional development need. The ISM is working with Arts Council England (ACE) to present a webinar about bidding for funding (see below).

Recommendations for the ISM

1. The ISM should produce guidance for booking and working with performing groups. This could be incorporated into the Composers' Pack and include practical examples of composers working with performers.
2. The ISM should develop training on applying for grants.

Editor's note: The ISM Trust is holding a webinar titled 'An introduction to Grants for the Arts with Arts Council England' from 1-2pm on Thursday 22 September 2016. More information about this and the ISM Trust's webinar programme can be found on our website: www.ism.org/professional-development/webinars

3. The ISM will refresh its guide for composers on where to look for commissioning opportunities.
4. The ISM should investigate facilitating links between composers and performing groups looking to commission work and work with composers.

Appendix A – places for the BBC to source new music

General recommendations: Local events and festivals, independent record labels, additions to music information centres such as the British Music Collection (including announcements of premieres), regional TV and radio, improvised music and live events, PRS for Music Foundation funded events, higher education institutions.

Composer networks	
Group for New Music Ensembles and Composers	www.facebook.com/groups/182679433724
Colchester New Music	colchesternewmusic.com
Women In Music	www.womeninmusic.org.uk
Venues	
Block 336	block336.com
International Anthony Burgess Foundation	www.anthonymburgess.org
Kammer Klang	www.kammerklang.co.uk
UK cathedrals	(For example, Wells Cathedral: www.wellscathedral.org.uk/music-the-choir/new-music-wells)
Composition and Performance events at Aldeburgh Music	www.aldeburgh.co.uk
Festivals and events	
The Annual Malcolm Arnold Festival Weekend	www.royalaldergate.co.uk
Lichfield Festival	www.lichfieldfestival.org
Swaledale Festival	www.swaledale-festival.org.uk
Classical Sheffield	classicalweekend.com
Frontiers Festival (including the The Philip Bates Composition Prize)	www.frontiersmusic.org
ddmmyy	www.ddmmyyseries.com
Three Choirs Festival	www.3choirs.org
The Cottier Chamber Project	www.cottierchamberproject.com
Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival	www.hcmf.co.uk (re-designed @HCMFUK)
The English Music Festival	www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk
London Contemporary Music Festival	www.lcmf.co.uk
St. Magnus Festival	www.stmagnusfestival.com
Presteigne Festival	presteignefestival.com
Vale of Glamorgan Festival	valeofglamorganfestival.org.uk
Bangor Music Festival	www.bangormusicfestival.org.uk
New Dots	www.newdots.org.uk
Nonclassical	www.nonclassical.co.uk
sound	sound-scotland.co.uk
New Music North West (NMNW)	www.rncm.ac.uk/festivals/new-music-north-west
Listenpony	www.listenpony.com
Promote UK based composers abroad commissioning and broadcasting for example at Donaueschingen, Wittener Tage Für Neue Kammermusik, and Darmstadt	
Ensembles and orchestras	
Kokoro (Bournemouth SO new music group)	www.bsolive.com/ensemble/10003/kokoro
Ensemble Perpetuo	www.ensembleperpetuo.com
Riot Ensemble	riotensemble.com
CHROMA	www.chromaensemble.co.uk
Britten Sinfonia	www.brittensinfonia.com
12 ensemble	www.the12ensemble.com
EXAUDI	www.exaudi.org.uk
London Sinfonietta	www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk
Kreutzer Quartet	www.divine-art.co.uk/AS/kreutzerqrgt.htm
Aurora Orchestra	www.auroraorchestra.com
Other funders and commissioners	
John Armitage Memorial (JAM)	www.jamconcert.org
PRS for Music Foundation (Women Make Music)	www.prsformusicfoundation.com

was specifically highlighted)	
Association of British Orchestras (ABO) in association with the PRS for Music Foundation	resonate.abo.org.uk/
Sound And Music	www.soundandmusic.org
Royal Philharmonic Society (new music)	royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk
Rambert	www.rambert.org.uk
RSNO	
LSO Discovery, LSO SoundHub, LSO Panufnik	lso.co.uk/lso-discovery
BBC Introducing	
Campus of Indiana Bloomington University Music Department USA	Investigate
Record labels	
NMC Recordings	www.nmcrec.co.uk