



PROGRAMMING AIMS¹

Revised August 2019

ArtSound Programming Concept

¹ Prepared for 1984 Licence Bid
Used for 2000 Licence Bid
Updated 2004, 2010, 2019 Licence Renewals

This paper summarises key areas of ArtSound's Programming Philosophy, as articulated in documentation that has formed the basis of licence applications in 1994 and 2000, and licence renewals in 2005, 2010, and now 2019.

It has been updated in some cases to reflect more recent programming evolution informed by audience feedback and specialist volunteer presenters.

What does ArtSound's service sound like?

The announcing style is intended to be relaxed and friendly. Listeners should not need to suffer noisy, heavy-sell promotions and DJ hype — but it should not be dull and boring, either.

Listeners can hear the best of arts and music from Canberra, Australia, and the world, and be able to hear how much Canberra contributes to the world. We give prominence to the arts and music genres of jazz, folk, world, and classical music to complement the broadcast licences of other radio stations in the region. Our local broadcast components include a very wide range of live music recorded directly by ArtSound.

ArtSound continues to draw upon and reflect the diverse cultures that make up Canberra and augments this with some of the best the world has to offer as a niche but capacious service to our listeners.

Broad Program Objectives:

ArtSound aims to provide a mixture of music and spoken word programming to its community of interest with objectives encompassing specific areas.

These are:

- the broadcasting of quality music, primarily jazz, world, folk, and classical music (and their various and evolving hybrids);
- the encouragement of local musicians, choral groups, singers, chamber groups, etc. through the broadcast of concert recordings, live broadcasts, and studio recordings; this should include airing and supporting historically important, as well as contemporary and experimental music in chamber, jazz, and other fields, in preference to easy-listening varieties.

- the provision of a much-needed communication network and information exchange in Canberra's arts and cultural community;
- the encouragement of other artists in Canberra such as writers, actors, designers, drama producers, poets, craftspeople, dancers, critics, and visual artists. The nature of the programming to achieve this aim varies according to the field. Some examples have been the commissioning of works, provision of technical and production assistance, broadcast of works directly, programs about artists and their works, review of works, and educational programs about techniques and trends;
- the provision of programs for and by young people to help foster creativity and social and cultural skills and interests.

As a benchmark, we consider our programming successful when it is widely said of our station:

We would not be without it.

We love the focus on 'our region' and the support community radio gives to 'our people and their activities.'

We love the absence of the noise of commercialism while being professional and informed.

Music Policy

The station's policy is to present the work of local performers and to provide a wide range of quality music that focuses on key genres not covered in the remit of either commercial or community radio stations in the region.

Our "core" music mix consists of our principal music genres:

Jazz, blues, and hybrids
 Folk music (all styles)
 World Music
 Classical

They were determined by the founders of the organisation or added by common consent of successive Boards of Management, advised by Program Committees, as the organisation grew.

Common characteristics include:

- They are areas of activity deemed not to be adequately serviced by the other media outlets.
- The characteristics of our programming are sufficiently compatible to coalesce into a viable and credible service.
- The music mix is consistent with coverage of the performing and creative arts in the region: it emphasises the arts, not commercialism.
- The music selections reflect the time of day and are sensitive to the expected listening audience.

Having stated that, it has always been acknowledged that the core genres would evolve and would acknowledge, for example, the emergence and evolution of “world” and “multicultural” music forms, which led to their introduction to ArtSound’s specialist music slots with good audience response.

ArtSound’s core music mix features mainly in its showcase arts information programs *Sounds Early*, *Arts Café*, *Disc Drive*, and *Meridian*. These mixed programs are specifically designed to be the main vehicles for imparting community information, what’s on, where things are happening, and who’s visiting. Interviews, discussion, news, and information modules are the foreground content focus, while music provides incidental but consistent “glue” or “mortar.”

As distinct from ArtSound’s specialist music programs, these slots are not intended to focus in great detail on the music and its performers, nor on the presenter of the slot. This would be inappropriate for high paced programs and listeners in transit. It is the purpose of the specialist music slots to take that role, known as “foreground programming.” It is assumed that presenters have good knowledge of the material.

Mix programs do not in general provide *detailed* musician listings, the pace of the program being better suited to a brief mention of the principal performer and the title of the work. Even the title of the CD is not considered important for obligatory mention every time on these programs.

This has the effect of shifting the listener more to the principal information features offered during the program.

Music selection across the *Sounds Early*, *Meridian*, *Arts Café*, and *Disc Drive* programs reflects audience activities/situations at the respective times of day. For example, in *Sounds Early* the goal is to provide reassurance for the day ahead while readying for or travelling to work; so, the program is gently paced, the content light.

The content evolves during the week in a couple of dimensions – from morning to early evening and from beginning of the week to the end of the week. This manifests itself via a change of pace and inclusion of more lively or diverse content as the day/week progresses. Presenters' personalities do not smother the music content and presenter teams strive for consistency.

Presenters of mixed-music programs aim to provide appropriate balance. For example, they do not automatically play all the most recent CD releases. There are specialist music programs designed for that, such as *Discovery*, *Down in the Basement*, *The Music Works*, etc.

Presenters bear in mind the requirement to include statutory percentages of Australian content wherever possible, and the station ensures that, over all, it does meet those goals.

Presenters aim to avoid genre clashes. Good judgement is applied to enhance the transition from one music style to another.

Sources of Music Programming:

ArtSound uses a wide variety of sources to fulfil its aim of presenting interesting and unusual music. These include:

- ArtSound's own library of compact discs;
- ArtSound's collection of original recordings of local and visiting performers; this collection is large and growing rapidly, as every opportunity is taken to record new material in our fields of interest;
- Live ArtSound concerts – we are extremely fortunate in having a huge reserve of all types of musical talent in the area, and our commitments include the greatly appreciated national festivals. Live music enriches the station's output, and we promote small-scale musical events as well as the annual local or national music festivals (jazz, folk, multicultural, classical...).
- Local CDs recorded on the *ArtSound* label
- Extensive private CD and vinyl LP collections in specialty music fields
- The CBAA's Community Radio Network program service;

- Overseas national and public broadcasting organisations; Australian community broadcasting stations; the National Library of Australia; other music organisations such as the Canberra Symphony Orchestra; Australian Fine Music Network, etc.
- ArtSound also encourages original composition by Canberra's young composers.

Live and Local

Quality, local, live performances (whether live broadcast or pre-recorded) by musicians drawn generally from within the above genres, showcasing original compositions and with an acoustic orientation², are a major feature distinguishing ArtSound from other stations.

Traditional and Indigenous Music

Music of indigenous Australian and other cultures from around the world provides an element not often heard on radio with a focus on local artists.

Note:

- ArtSound is also open to any creative proposals from within our community of interest for high quality productions dealing with any aspect of music, as long as it is compatible with ArtSound's ethos and remit.
- In most cases, and especially where the material is unusual or unfamiliar, a music program is introduced by an informed enthusiast, musician, critic, or commentator.
- In general, in deciding whether to program a particular piece of music, we expect presenters to ask themselves "How does this selection of music satisfy our own license and not impinge on the remit of other stations? How does it distinguish ArtSound from other community and commercial stations? Does it support localism? Does it provide a worthwhile contribution to the listening diversity of Canberra?"

Other Program elements

² This recognises that "rock" and "contemporary commercial pop" styles (including local performers) are largely catered for by existing Canberra radio services.

ArtSound recognises that those in the local community that work in, have an interest in, or appreciation of, the arts and cultural matters also appreciate the opportunity to be exposed to current national and international issues and developments. So, ArtSound provides programming from other parts of Australia and overseas to educate and entertain its audience. Many of these programs are unique to Artsound FM and continue to be rated highly in listener surveys.

Like any radio station, ArtSound also recognises that an informed audience with an interest in the arts appreciates and deserves the opportunity to be kept up to date with some independent coverage of issues such as

- news and current affairs;
- topical matters of interest to society including developments in science and technology; and
- community service issues.

Accordingly, we incorporate elements of the above in the interests of maintaining a “well-rounded” program schedule, and to discourage listeners from “tuning out.”

Impact on other broadcasters

Since successfully winning its full-time licence in 2000, ArtSound’s programming has essentially remained non-competitive with other outlets via competent, expansive, curious, and informed presentation. In both audience and revenue terms, ArtSound aims to serve its own specialised audiences in ways not otherwise adequately catered for, if at all.

Inevitably, there will be some overlaps, particularly if other broadcasters such as the ABC, with greater resources at their disposal, choose to target ArtSound’s market niche with similar programming – but this encourages diversity and provides a wider choice for audiences.

ArtSound endeavours to offer Canberra and region listeners new concepts in radio, drawing substantially upon local presenters, local productions, and locally recorded music (whether recorded by ArtSound or other producers) wherever possible.

However, competition with existing stations is not within the central concept of ArtSound, just as a tailored service to arts/cultural interests is not the principal aim of other broadcasters in the region.

Indeed, the founders of ArtSound FM, supported by successive Boards of Management, have maintained the view that contemporary commercial pop or rock music or “populist middle of the road” is not intended to be part of our music mix – that “pop” belongs on the commercial stations and rock music is generally well catered for elsewhere. There may be some exceptions to this and these are noted in our program policy briefs or considered by the program committee as special programs.

2/2/1999 revised 5/11/2004, 12/1/2011, 19/6/19, 8/8/19