



## **PROGRAMMING AIMS**

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Submitted with 2000 and subsequent licence renewal applications including 2025

# ArtSound's Programming Concept

This document summarises ArtSound's Programming Aims and Objectives. It has been updated in 2025 to reflect programming evolution stemming from input by specialist volunteer presenters and audience feedback.

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## The Nature and Purpose of ArtSound's Programming

ArtSound's purpose is to foster the arts in and around the ACT in accordance with its licence remit, Constitution, and obligations to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). It achieves this by providing engaging broadcasts with a mix of cultural and informative arts-oriented programming in such fields as music, radio drama, and literature.

In music, its distinctive emphasis is a very broad umbrella of jazz, blues, world, folk and classical music and related expression.

ArtSound's arts mission and licence remit make it an unusual, specialised broadcaster. Its commitment extends beyond what is expected of and appropriate to general-listenership community radio broadcasters.

It presents, fosters, and even constructively provokes arts practice, and it cultivates listeners' interest in vibrant arts activities in the ACT region by drawing on local, national, and international sources.

ArtSound's mission extends to supporting and holding arts events of interest to citizens of the ACT region, such as concerts, broadcasting courses, and publishing in non-radio settings.

In all its activities, ArtSound includes an ever-widening range of people with diverse artistic engagements, tastes, and perspectives. To increase community engagement, ArtSound encourages participation by local artists and artistic and other cultural — including multicultural — groups. This includes disseminating information about their events, exhibitions, publications, festivals, and other forms of presentation.

ArtSound aims to achieve this mission by:

- curating program content that goes beyond the styles that dominate at most radio outlets
- providing an independent and affordable voice for musicians, artists and cultural organisations
- helping people who are unable to attend local arts activities in person to enjoy the Canberra arts scene

- engaging with our audience by pioneering new programs that demonstrate the value of audio media in communicating artistic works
- involving a wide range of age groups in ArtSound and arts activities, to strengthen inter-generational relationships
- advancing collaboration among arts practitioners and cultural industries
- appealing to devotees of under-represented specialist music and other art forms
- seeking out potential presenters among leaders and innovators in artistic circles
- developing worthwhile, quality content
- providing a “virtual gallery for the audio arts”
- promote the art of listening and the art of presentation

## Broad Programming Objectives

Among ArtSound’s core programming objectives are to:

- broadcast quality music with special emphasis on jazz, blues, world, folk and classical music (and their various hybrids and related expressions)
- broadcast arts-related spoken-word programming
- encourage and promote local musicians by broadcasting concert recordings, live events and studio recordings
- provide a communication network and information exchange for Canberra’s arts and cultural communities
- encourage and promote professional and amateur artists in the Canberra region such as writers, actors, designers, drama producers, poets, craftspeople, dancers, critics, and visual artists
- provide programs for and by underserved groups, including young people, to foster social and cultural creativity, skills, and interests

ArtSound seeks to promote the work of local artists, to present unfamiliar work from around the world to local artists, and to provide a wide range of quality music.

Common characteristics of our broadcasts include:

- they highlight areas of cultural activity deemed by the organization not to be adequately serviced by other media outlets
- they advance ArtSound’s broadcasting ethos
- music selections reflect the time of day and are sensitive to the expected listening audience

As a benchmark, we should consider our programming has been successful if it is widely said of our station, “We would not be without it; we love the absence of the noise of commercialism.”

## What ArtSound sounds like

ArtSound’s announcing style is relaxed and friendly while we provide a mixture of music and spoken word programming. The proportion of music to spoken word varies depending on resources available, listener interest, and ArtSound’s considered program curatorship.

ArtSound draws upon and reflects the Canberra region’s diverse artistic cultures. We prioritise forms of arts and music expressions that complement, not replicate services provided by radio stations that broadcast in the ACT region. ArtSound is distinctive in that it includes a wide range of recorded and live music.

ArtSound cannot air advertisements but can broadcast “sponsorship announcements” that are effectively advertisements without commercial radio advertisements’ loud pushiness and with sensitivity about the selection of and placement of announcements.

Throughout our programming, we also appropriately identify the station and promote its various programs persistently via polished in-house promotional announcements.

One way to enhance listener engagement is to offer evolving content and pacing of delivery over the course of days and weeks: from morning to early evening and from the beginning to the end of the week. This can manifest itself via a change of pace, or inclusion of more lively or diverse content as the day or week progresses.

Presenters, whose personalities should not dominate over the music and information conveyed, also bear in mind the regulatory requirement that the station’s broadcasts should include a percentage of Australian content (25% over all, 10% in classical programs).

## Non-competitive with other broadcasters

ArtSound has gained its licence and licence renewals by guaranteeing that its programming would remain essentially non-competitive with existing outlets. ArtSound’s key differentiation from other broadcasters is our orientation towards fostering arts practice and interest in and around Canberra.

Inevitably, some overlaps with other broadcasters occur, particularly when 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 ArtSound to widen its listeners’ choices — any incidental competition benefits the listener.

ArtSound FM has since its inception advanced the view that contemporary pop, rock, and other populist middle-of-the-road styles should have little or no role in ArtSound’s music mix as they belong on the commercial stations and other outlets where they are generally well catered for. Successive Boards of Management have endorsed this programming philosophy.

There may be some exceptions to this, and these are noted in our program policy briefs; for example, with our undertaking to support all arts practice in and around the ACT, ArtSound may, where appropriate, feature the practice of local musicians from within any field, including rock and pop.

## Music genres

As stated in our Constitution, licence bids, and commitment to ACMA, our “core” music mix consists of some principal music genres:

- Jazz and blues
- Folk music
- World music
- Classical music

These genres expand by consent of the Board of Management to reflect the evolving needs of the Canberra Community while remaining faithful to ArtSound’s licence commitment. It has been acknowledged throughout the station’s history that these broad genres do not remain static, but instead evolve and grow, and that ArtSound presenters reflect and embrace that change.

It has always been understood that these style/genre categories should be broadly interpreted, given that they all feature multiple, ever-evolving expression. For example, “classical” can be taken to include not only related music from before the “Classical” era, but also 21st and late 20th century “classical” or “art” music. Jazz and blues can include older, modern, and avant-garde forms of jazz and its variants, as well as soul, country and electric blues, funk, and any other style consistent with our core broadcasting aims.

ArtSound will include (with due cultural sensitivity) music of indigenous Australia and other cultures from around the world that provide a distinctive element not often heard on radio. We will publicise music in emerging styles that is compatible with the ethos set out in this document.

ArtSound is also open to any creative proposals from within our community of interest dealing with any aspect of music and other areas of artistic practice that are compatible with ArtSound’s Programming Aims.

## Program Types

### Generalist Arts-Information Programs

These showcase arts-information programs (which currently include, for example, Arts Café and the new Driveway) prominently features ArtSound’s core music mix. They are the main vehicles for imparting community information, what’s on and where, and who’s performing or exhibiting. Interviews, discussion, news and informational or arts segments are emphasized and even foregrounded content, with music providing incidental but consistent “glue.”

### Mix Programs

These programs (such as the current ArtStarter morning program) generally provide brief details (e.g. track title & artist) rather than detailed data. This shifts attention to information offered, such as news, weather, and events announcements.

Music selection reflects audience activities and the time of day. For example, early morning programming is appropriately gently paced with lighter content.

Presenters enhance the transition from one music style to another by, for example, avoiding heavy-handedly signposting shifts among genres.

### **Specialist Music Programs**

Specialist music programs (such as the current Leaves of Bluegrass, The Early Music Experience, The Music Works, and Jazz Frontiers) provide “foreground programming.” Their specialist presenters, with broad knowledge of the material, seek to provide compelling information about the music, sometimes briefly, sometimes more extensively, but never to the point of overloading listeners.

## **Sources of Music Programming**

Generally, the copyright fees ArtSound pays allow it to broadcast any commercially released music recording and some other kinds; (not covered are, for example, unlicensed broadcasts of theatrical performances, even commercially released recordings of them).

ArtSound can use a wide variety of sources to fulfil its aim of presenting interesting music not generally broadcast by other stations. These include:

- ArtSound’s own library of compact discs and digital audio files
- ArtSound’s collection of original recordings of local and visiting performers in our fields of interest, including recordings of live concerts in the ArtSound Gardens and other local venues
- extensive private CD, LP, and digital collections in core and specialty music fields
- local CDs produced for the ArtSound label
- the CBAA’s Community Radio Network (CRN) program service and recordings from its Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP) that fit our programming aims
- other sometimes appropriate sources including composers’ and musicians’ contributed recordings, particularly of original compositions; ANU School of Music recordings; recordings provided by embassies and consulates in Canberra; Australian community broadcasting stations; overseas national and public broadcasting organisations; the National Library of Australia; other music organisations such as the Canberra Symphony Orchestra; Australian Fine Music Network, etc.

## **Other Program elements**

ArtSound recognises that an informed audience with an interest in the arts also appreciates being kept up to date with some independent coverage of, for example:

News and current affairs  
Developments in design, architecture, science, technology, local history, etc.  
Community service issues

Listener surveys consistently demonstrate this. Listeners also consistently welcome ArtSound’s exposing them to current national and international artistic movements and trends. To meet this interest, ArtSound provides programming from other parts of Australia and overseas, prioritising programs heard only on ArtSound FM, in the local region.