



1. Introduction to the Market

Population: 62.74 million

GDP per capita: \$38.309

With a long tradition of producing globally recognised artists and songwriters, the UK is currently one of the leading markets for recorded music in the world and offers many opportunities for Nordic exporters.

Many of the European headquarters of international record labels and music businesses are based in the UK, with over 90% of these situated in London.

The UK music industry is key component of the country's creative economy, and contributes significantly to its culture, society and economic productivity. Umbrella body UK Music estimates that the UK is the third largest net exporters of musical repertoire in the world and sustains more than 130.000 jobs.

2. Record Labels, Licensing & Distribution

The record industry in the United Kingdom consists of hundreds of independent companies alongside the three major labels - [Universal Music](#), [Sony Music](#) and [Warner Music](#). The only UK major label (EMI) was acquired by Universal in 2012.

The independent sector, however, still includes many iconic names - the most dominant being [Ministry Of Sound](#) and [The Beggars Group](#), which houses under its umbrella [4AD](#), [Matador](#), [Rough Trade](#) and [XL Recordings](#).

Trade body the [Association of Independent Music](#) (AIM) lists more than 800 independent label members. Some of the key ones include:

[Cooking Vinyl](#)

[Communion](#)

[Domino](#)

[Bella Union](#)

[Fat Cat](#)

[Fire Records](#)

[Heavenly Recordings](#)

[Hyperdub](#)

[Infectious Records](#)

[LEX Records](#)

[Mute](#)

[Moshi Moshi](#)

[Ninja Tune](#)

[One Little Indian](#)

[Transgressive](#)

[Warp](#)

[Wichita](#)

2.1 Distribution

The UK still retains a number of independent distributors, digital aggregators and label services specialists, including:

[Absolute Music](#)

[AWAL](#)

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[Believe Digital](#)

[BMG Rights Management](#)

[The State 51 Conspiracy](#)

[Cargo Distribution](#)

[Essential Music & Marketing](#)

[Discovery Records](#)

[Kobalt Label Services](#)

[PIAS](#)

[Plastichead](#)

[Proper Music Distribution](#)

[Republic of Music](#)

[RSK Entertainment](#)

[Shellshock](#)

[The Orchard](#)

3. Publishing

In addition to the three multinational publishers [Universal Music Publishing](#), [Warner Chappell Music](#) and [Sony/ATV](#) there are more than 250 independent music publishers in the UK. The key ones include:

[Bucks](#)

[Imagem](#)

[Kobalt](#)

[BMG Chrysalis](#)

[Mute Song](#)

[Notting Hill](#)

[Peer Music](#)

[Eagle-i Music](#)

4. Performance Rights

For composition rights, each Nordic performing rights society has bilateral agreements in place with UK collecting society [PRS for Music](#) - which incorporates both PRS (the

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Performing Rights Society) and MCPS (Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society).

For public performance rights, the music licensing company [PPL](#) is mandated to license the public broadcast of recorded music (for instance, on TV and radio). Royalties are then distributed to its performer and record company members.

Again, reciprocal agreements are in place between PPL and Nordic performance rights organisations and royalties should be automatically transferred to a member's domestic society.

However, it is advised that you consult both PRS for Music and PPL if you know that your compositions or recordings are being played by British broadcasters or if you regularly perform in the UK.

5. Management

The UK is home to significant numbers of domestic and international music managers who are represented by their trade organisation the [MMF](#). Key UK management businesses include:

[ATC](#)

[Crown Talent & Media Group](#)

[ie:music](#)

[Ignition Management](#)

[Wildlife Entertainment](#)

[Hall Or Nothing](#)

[EverybodyK](#)

[Machine Management](#)

[JHO Management](#)

[Big Life](#)

[Air MTM](#)

[Raw Power Management](#)

6. Live

The live market in Europe is largely dominated by UK players. UK-based agents have great influence and all major European booking companies have their headquarters in London.

In terms of the live sector itself, the UK hosts hundreds of festivals each year and has a diverse national network of venues from stadiums and arenas through to pubs, bars and universities.

Travelling around the UK is relatively easy. The transport infrastructure is well developed and distances between the major cities are short.

However, to tour the UK is not always glamorous. The fees are frequently low and a new band must often repeatedly play the so-called "toilet circuit" (a network of small venues) in order to build a fanbase.

One key event to note is London's Ja Ja Ja club night - a NOMEX initiative that provides a regular showcase (10 times a year) for Nordic artists to perform to UK audiences and industry: www.jajajamusic.com

6.1 Promoters and Festivals

US promoters [Live Nation](#) and [AEG](#) both have their headquarters in London and dominate much of the UK.

Live Nation owns or operates several festivals such as [Download](#) and [Wireless](#) as well as owning a stake in [Festival Republic](#) - the promoter for [Reading](#), [Leeds](#), [Latitude](#) and Norway's Hove Festival. The company also owns a majority share in the [Academy Music Group](#) which operates 14 venues, including [Brixton Academy](#) and [Shepherds Bush Empire](#). Live Nation manage a number of other venues, including the [Motorpoint Arena Cardiff](#), the [Motorpoint Arena Sheffield](#), and [Southampton Guildhall](#).

AEG owns, among others, the [O2 Arena](#) in London and the [Hammersmith Apollo](#).

Other key promoters include:

[KiliLive \(Sonisphere\)](#),

[SJM Concerts \(V Festival\)](#)

[Metropolis Music](#)

[MAMA Group \(The Great Escape, Lovebox, Global Gathering, Wilderness, Kentish Town Forum, The Jazz Cafe, The Barfly\)](#).

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These national promoters will book shows in small venues like [The Lexington](#) (home of the Ja Ja Ja club night) all the way up to [Wembley Stadium](#). They will also collaborate with many of the major festivals.

Beyond these national players, there are two major regional promoters worth noting: [DHP](#) which owns six venues around Nottingham and promotes a number of festivals; and [DF Concerts](#) in Glasgow, which runs the famous [King Tuts Wah Wah Hut](#) and [T In The Park festival](#).

The UK also has a healthy independent festival scene - including the likes of [Bestival](#), [Green Man](#), [End Of The Road](#), [Evolution](#), [Secret Garden Party](#) and [WOMAD](#). These independently-run events have their own trade association - the [Association of Independent Festivals \(AIM\)](#)

Other key independent promoters include:

[All Tomorrows Parties \(ATP\)](#)

[Eat Your Own Ears \(EYOE\)](#)

[Serious](#)

[Bird On The Wire](#).

There is also a rather large outdoor event that takes place at the end of June, called the [Glastonbury Festival](#).

6.2 Booking Agencies

The UK hosts a number of booking agencies, often specialising in a number of genres and with great influence on touring in the rest of Europe. It is not uncommon for a British agent to request a contract that applies to the whole of Europe.

Key booking agencies include:

[CAA](#)

[The Agency Group](#)

[CODA](#)

[ITB](#)

[Primary Talent](#)

[William Morris Agency](#)

[X Ray Touring](#)

[Elastic Artists](#)

[Free Trade](#)

[Nomanis](#)

6.3 Backline rental

[Blacklight Tours](#)

[Music Bank](#)

[Terminal](#)

[Matt Snowball](#)

[FX Rentals](#)

7. Media, PR & Promo

The UK media has long been considered a global trendsetter, and includes a wide variety of music titles, specialist publications and lifestyle magazines. The majority of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers also cover music extensively. Securing coverage in the UK media can prove a solid foundation for an artist and become a catalyst for further international attention.

7.1 Print

[NME](#) (weekly)

[Mojo](#) (monthly)

[Uncut](#) (monthly)

[Classic Rock](#) (monthly)

[Kerrang!](#) (weekly)

[BBC Music Magazine](#) (monthly)

[DJ Magazine](#) (monthly)

[Mixmag](#) (monthly)

[Metal Hammer](#) (monthly)

[Q](#) (monthly)

[Clash](#) (monthly)

[Jazzwise](#) (monthly)

The UK has 11 national daily newspapers. These are published Monday through Saturday with a sister edition published on Sundays. All have embraced digital platforms and offer a

diverse range of music content. Broadsheets like [The Guardian](#), [The Times](#) and [The Independent](#) all weigh heavily in terms of coverage, while tabloids like [The Sun](#), [Daily Mirror](#) and the [Daily Mail](#) focus mostly on celebrity news and major pop stars.

Weekend supplements, such as [The Guardian's Guide](#) and the [Sunday Times Culture](#) are highly coveted by music PRs. [Evening Standard](#) and [Metro](#) attract millions of readers in London, and the likes of the [Manchester Evening News](#), [Liverpool Echo](#), [Birmingham Mail](#) and [The Northern Echo](#) are all vital to their individual regions.

7.2 Online

All of the UK specialist music titles and newspapers have strong online coverage.

Additionally, a growing number of online music magazines and blogs have emerged over the past decade. For instance:

[Drowned in Sound](#)

[The Line of Best Fit](#)

[The Quietus](#)

[Popjustice](#)

[Resident Advisor](#)

[All About Jazz](#)

[Thrash Hits](#)

[Noisey](#)

[SBTV](#)

[RWD](#)

[Sinfini](#)

7.3 Music Business Media

The UK also has a number of specialist music business magazines and titles.

[Music Week](#) is the UK's main music business magazine. Also widely read are [Complete Music Update \(CMU\)](#) and [Record of the Day](#). The former offers a free daily newsletter of music-related news stories, while the latter is subscription-only and acts more like a cuttings service - circulating all key music-related news (with links) at 9am each morning. RotD also sends out a PDF magazine each Thursday evening, with editorial, interviews and a collation of the week's news.

All three titles would be considered essential.

There are also a handful of specialist live music and technology titles, including:

[Live UK](#) (monthly print magazine dedicated to the UK)

[Audience](#) (sister title to Live UK, dedicated to the international live music sector)

[Access All Areas](#) (free online magazine for the events and live music industry)

[Music Ally](#) (well-respected digital music title - subscribers receive a daily news bulletin each morning collating key stories, as well as weekly PDFs with in-depth interviews and analysis)

[Music Tank](#)

7.4 Public Radio

Given the extensive reach and diversity of the BBC, the broadcasting company remains key to success in the UK market. Major and independent record labels still compete ferociously for playlistings and spot plays on key specialist shows.

It is also a sector in the midst of considerable innovation - with stations fast-developing their digital platforms, and offering listeners the opportunity to consume on-demand. The most obvious example here is the BBC's iPlayer, which makes all BBC radio broadcasts available to stream for 7 days after transmission.

In many respects, such changes have offset consolidation in the sector, which, for commercial radio especially, has resulted in generic playlists and fewer opportunities for artists outside of the mainstream. That said, there are still many specialist stations, DJs and shows dedicated to championing niche and non-mainstream music.

Key BBC stations include:

[BBC Radio 1](#): the UK1

[BBC Radio 2](#): aimed at a more adult audience, Radio 2 is the most listened-to station in the UK. As with Radio 1, outside of the daytime playlist the station offers a diversity of specialist shows and music-related documentaries.

[BBC Radio 3](#): dominated by classical music and opera, but also featuring jazz, world music, drama, culture and the wider arts.

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[BBC 6 Music](#): a digital-only station with a playlist aimed at fans of non-mainstream and alternative music. Threatened with closure in 2010, the station now attracts record numbers of listeners and broadcasts a diverse range of specialist shows.

[BBC 1Xtra](#): a digital-only station dedicated to new black music - its playlist encompasses hip hop, RnB, reggae and other urban genres. Specialist evening shows are presented by respected DJs including Benji B, Sementex and MistaJam.

[Asian Network](#): a digital-only station focused on Asian news, music and sport.

[BBC LOCAL](#): in addition to its national and digital output, the BBC broadcasts regionally via almost 60 local stations covering all parts of the UK. All BBC LOCAL stations will include music programming.

7.5 Commercial Radio

The commercial radio sector is dominated by five main operators: Global Radio, 95.8 Capital FM, Real and Smooth, Bauer Radio and UTV Radio.

Between them, these control hundreds of individual stations, including:

[Capital FM](#): mainstream pop station.

[Classic FM](#): mainstream classical music station, covering a wide range of composers.

[Absolute Radio](#): national pop and rock station, covering classic hits from the 60s to today - also features regular live music sessions.

[XFM](#): alternative/indie stations broadcast separately from Scotland, Manchester and London. Features both daytime and evening playlists, and a commitment to new music from DJs like John Kennedy and Eddie Temple Morris

[KISS FM](#): former pirate station, now owned by Bauer and specialising in dance, hip hop and RnB. The station features a genre specialist DJs in the evening.

[Jazz FM](#): mainstream jazz and blues station for London

[Kerrang!](#): rock radio station broadcast digitally throughout the UK - includes specialist metal, punk and alternative DJs in the evenings.

[Amazing Radio](#): an online and digital station dedicated entirely to broadcasting new music – includes a show fronted by Bella Union’s Simon Raymonde, a long-time champion of Nordic music

It is common for UK music businesses to hire the services of specialist companies to assist them in securing press coverage, radio plays and TV spots. Larger record labels will often employ an ‘in-house’ PR team, although many still use the services of PR or promo specialists on key projects.

There is no shortage of PR agencies operating in the UK. Many are 1-2 person operations, or run by ex-record label employees and most will focus on specific genres.

Most agencies specialise in either press or promotion. A PR remit might include online, national and regional press, or a combination of all three. Promo companies generally specialise in either online, radio or TV – although, with changes in music consumption, these boundaries continue to blur.

7.6 PR companies

[Prescription PR](#)

[Bleached](#)

[Toast PR](#)

[LD Communications](#)

[MBC PR](#)

[Dawbell](#)

[Create Spark](#)

[In House PR](#)

[Murray Charmers](#)

[Inside/Out](#)

[Dog Day Press](#)

[Freeman PR](#)

[Purple PR](#)

[Partisan PR](#)

[Everything Counts PR](#) [Real Life PR](#)

7.7 Radio and TV Pluggers

[Alan James PR](#)

[Listen Up PR](#)
[Chapple Davis](#)
[Cool Badge](#)
[JBPR](#)
[Hart Media](#)
[The Power Group](#)
[Plugged In PR](#)
[Trail of Press](#)
[Rocket](#)
[Radar Plugging Ltd](#)
[Your Army](#)

8. Industry Networking Arenas

[Showcase Scotland/Celtic Connections](#) (folk)
[The Great Escape](#) (rock/pop)
[Go North](#) (Scotland)
[Liverpool Sound City](#) (Rock/pop)
[Norwich Sound and Vision](#) (Rock/pop)
[Belfast Music Week](#) (Northern Ireland)
[London Jazz Festival](#)
[Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival](#)
[AIM Music Connected](#)

9. Taxation

9.1 Value-added Tax (VAT)

The standard VAT-rate in the UK is 20%. Admission fees to cultural events are exempt from VAT, and there is a 0% VAT-rate on records.

When invoicing for goods and services across national borders, the same rules apply for the UK as the rest of the EU. B2B trade between businesses eligible to pay VAT is generally tax-free. In B2B-trade it is the responsibility of the buyer to pay the VAT according to the buying country's laws. However, the buyer is allowed to apply for a refund when submitting their

taxes, which makes the transaction practically tax-free. When selling to consumers, tax is collected by the country of the provider.

More information can be found on the UK tax authorities' website, [here](#).

9.2 Income tax

As a non-resident performer coming to the UK to perform, you are eligible to pay tax on your income. How much you pay depends on the way your payment is received.

The first £10,600 income per year earned in the UK is tax free.

It is the responsibility of the promoter to withhold, report and pay your tax on any income you earn. The tax-rate for performers is typically around 20%. Some promoters have a middle-man-arrangement, where only one player in the payment chain takes the responsibility for paying the taxes.

Read more about tax rates [here](#) and payments to foreign artists [here](#), on the UK tax authorities website