



# UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES FOR JAZZ

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## Briefing 9: How can we persuade more people to see jazz more often?

### How to use this briefing:

This is an analysis of the questionnaire responses, the online survey and the focus groups, which explores issues that will help improve your marketing. It includes:

- which communication methods are most effective
- how audiences find unfamiliar music to listen to
- what audiences think of our publicity material
- the effectiveness of our online marketing
- ways of selling more tickets

### Key points

- Focus group participants say that these factors are stopping them attending more often:
  - not knowing what to expect from a gig
  - not knowing enough to persuade others to come with them
  - worrying that they won't understand/enjoy the music
  - not knowing what's on
- Audiences want to know:
  - what will the music be like?
  - will I like it?
- The majority of existing and potential attenders have no idea what we're on about because we name drop, use complex language and hype gigs up with empty phrases
- The vast majority of attenders are relatively heavy internet users but only the committed can find promoters' websites
- Get more Musical Omnivores to include jazz in their gig-going:

- Focus on the ‘waverers’ by producing more effective publicity material and offering post-show discussions (not talks), interaction with the musicians and discovery gigs for grown-ups

## How did they hear about the gig?

There are three important sources of information for existing attenders: the promoter’s brochure, the venue’s brochure and the promoter’s website.

Different types of audience found out about the gig in different ways.

Respondents who said they had attended fewer than three jazz gigs in the past 12 months were less likely to say that their main source of information was the promoter’s brochure or website and a little more likely to say that their main source was the venue brochure or website, a poster or a general newspaper or magazine and much more likely to cite national radio.

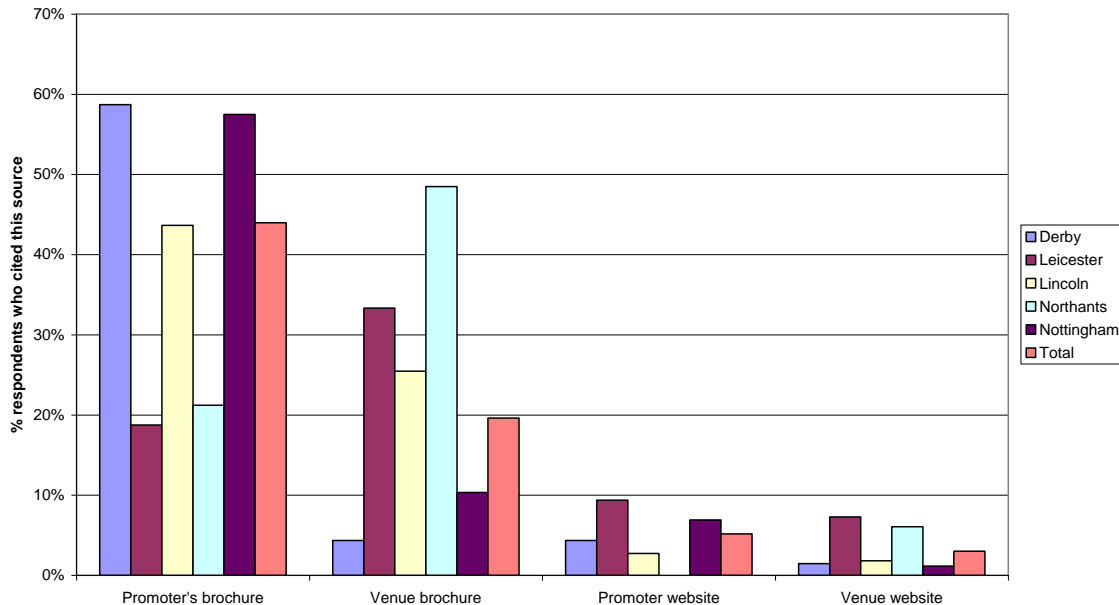
Source	All sources*	Main source
	% of respondents	% of respondents
Promoter’s brochure	62%	54%
Venue brochure	41%	23%
Promoter’s website	20%	6%
Told by someone with me this evening	10%	4%
Venue website	10%	4%
General newspaper or magazine – news item, review or listing	8%	0%
Told by someone else	6%	3%
Musician(s)’s website or Facebook page	5%	2%
Other (please specify)	4%	3%
Specialist music publication - news item, review or listing	3%	0%
Poster	2%	1%
Other website	1%	0%
Specialist music publication - advertisement	0%	0%
Local radio station	0%	1%
National radio station	0%	0%
Television	0%	0%
Total respondents	455	343

\* Respondents were asked to tick all those that applied so this column does not add up to 100%

There were big differences between promoter groups in terms of the main source of information cited by respondents.

These differences appear to be partly related to the different direct marketing strategies used by promoters and venues. Nottingham Jazzsteps and Derby Jazz have much larger mailing lists than other the other promoter groups and mail a significantly larger proportion of them on a regular basis. They also distribute more brochures to shops, businesses and venues in their area. The Castle captures the names and addresses of a high proportion of ticket buyers and mails them with an effective season brochure.

Information source by promoter group: main source



Most focus group participants complained that it was hard to find out about live jazz in their area.

*Very, very rarely do we see jazz advertised anywhere. You have to look for it.*

*You have to go looking for the adverts for jazz.*

*That's one of the main things, publicity. The publicity round Leicester is pants. I get nothing. I only go to gigs if someone tells me it's worth going to and if it doesn't drop through the door, I won't be going because I'm too busy with other stuff to be going round looking for gigs.*

*It needs some kind of direct contact.*

*I think it's worse in Leicester than a lot of places.*

Leicester focus group participants

A few were actively finding out about the tour schedules of favourite bands and soloists:

*We know who we like so we go looking for where they are. We make a conscious effort to follow up people we want to see.*

Leicester focus group participants

but these were in the minority as most were looking for what was on in their local area.

Expecting audiences to actively seek information about jazz is problematic because of the large proportion who are music enthusiasts rather than specifically jazz enthusiasts. They are simply looking for good music and if other events come to their attention more easily, then those are the ones they will attend.

Participants agreed that you need to have a level of knowledge before you can find out what is on:

*- You tend to know which venues put jazz on so you tend to go looking for their leaflets.*

*- We seem to know about it by word of mouth. As soon as you're in there, you know about it. But if you don't get in there in the first place, you don't get access to information at all. It's a completely other world*

Leicester focus group participants

Participants report getting information irregularly:

*I get the stuff from Nottingham and they have some really good stuff on but I don't seem to get the stuff from Leicester. I've had one mailing shot from here, the last one.*

Leicester focus group participant

Participants speculated that there was a time limit on their mailing list membership:

*When you go places and you fill a form in to join the mailing list, a lot of these places will only send stuff for a certain amount of time.*

Leicester focus group participant

There are also issues about what the publicity material looks like:

*- What's Leicester Jazz? Is that Jazzhouse?*

*- No, it's all that green stuff. It's a leaflet for all of Leicester. That could be improved.*

Leicester focus group participants

*When initially I looked at the flyer, it was really Council, it's very like Derby City Council. They're all the same format and the same logo. It's not pleasing at all.*

Derby focus group participant

Box office data analysis and the responses to questionnaires show that there are far more occasional attenders of jazz than expected. Ticket buyers are purchasing on average 1.4 events promoted by EMJAZZ members per year. (See Briefing 7) This means that direct mail strategies that focus on the ticket buyers for recent jazz events will be unproductive as these people are unlikely to reattend for a while.

It is the people with a specific interest in jazz who are most likely to join the promoters' mailing lists. But there are far fewer jazz enthusiasts than expected. (See Briefing 7)

It would be much more effective to capture the names and addresses of as many ticket buyers as possible and to focus on making sure that they eventually reattend.

## **How do they keep in touch with jazz?**

Focus group participants report that they find it difficult to keep up with all the music that is available. Most rely on a relatively small number of sources of information:

*The trouble I have now compared to when I was 16 is there's just so much music about. I don't know where to start. Before it seemed relatively simple, I could keep in touch with what was going on. Now I don't really have a clue what's going on. I rely on reviews, the Observer, the FT, whatever and I see what they say and I think there's a world of music out there and I have to get it down to a manageable amount. This guy seems to know what he's talking about so I'll listen to that. If it's got five stars, I'll probably go out and buy it.*

Nottingham focus group participant

But they have limited time for active research so they rely on coming across interesting music in their everyday lives:

*We don't really search for interesting things to listen to. Most of the time it hits you. If you're listening to Radio 3 or you go to a festival ... I might have a little search when I'm bored one afternoon to see what it's like. I don't think I'm like 'Give me world music now'. I'll watch Jools Holland, I'll read a review in the Observer as well. You find out things from other people as well. I was talking to a colleague the other day and he said about a band he'd heard at The Fiveways, here's a sample do you want to listen to it. There's no prescription, it's about being open-minded.*

Nottingham focus group participant

That is why recommendations are important, including the 'if you like this, you'll also like this' recommendations offered by some media:

*I found out about them because there's a website radio station called last.fm and if you put bands in there it tells you lots of other bands that are similar and it gives you all the touring information so you can find out where they are playing. You put in something like Ornette Coleman and you just hit Ornette Coleman radio and it'll play you stuff that's like Ornette Coleman and you just listen and I'll be working away and something will come on and I'll think, 'This is great, what is it?' and it'll tell you. And then you can investigate who they are and it's a web of discovery. You don't have to make much effort.*

Nottingham focus group participant

## **Is our marketing effective?**

Focus group participants say that these factors are stopping them attending more often:

- not knowing what to expect from a gig
- not knowing enough to persuade others to come with them
- worrying that they won't understand/enjoy the music
- not knowing what's on

These are all failures of communication. The key problem is that promoters have a perception that the majority of their audience are like them: well-informed people who define themselves as jazz enthusiasts and pro-actively seeking information. Their marketing is only communicating with the tiny minority who are in fact like that.

The majority of existing attenders and that huge potential audience out there don't know much about jazz, don't want to know much about jazz and just want to feel fairly sure they are going to enjoy the gig.

*It's about attracting the waverers not the die-hards. The die-hards will come anyway.*

Lincoln focus group participant

The die-hards do respond to the promoters' marketing:

*Most of the Jazzpac leaflets are quite good. You haven't heard of them but you say that's great and I'd like to go. The blurbs are essential to give you a flavour.*

Lincoln focus group participant

Even the enthusiasts are baffled by a lot of the things promoters say about jazz:

*If it's people I don't know very well, it says who they are and who've they've played with but I don't get a sense of the type of music and whether I'll like it. People may not know what type of jazz or where they fit into the jazz spectrum. They need more information.*

Lincoln focus group participant

Emotional Responders really don't understand what promoters say:

*The language is off putting and pretentious so I didn't read it.*

Lincoln focus group participant

*What does the abstraction of Joe Harriott mean? I'll be honest, after reading that, I wouldn't know what the hell to expect.*

Lincoln focus group participant

The complex language makes them feel stupid and reinforces their preconception that jazz will be difficult to understand and enjoy:

- *What does the abstraction of Joe Harriott mean ... get them to write it again.*
- *I suppose abstraction means the taking away of something or you're abstracted and you're not concentrating. There's two different meanings and I don't know what this one is.*

Wellingborough focus group

Jazz enthusiasts, particularly Analytical Responders, are willing to puzzle over the copy, trying to decode the language:

*Reading the advertising is like reading between the lines. It's up to us to kind of work out what we are expecting.*

Lincoln focus group participant

They are having to base their understanding of what to expect on the tiniest of clues:

*I guess it's African because of the word Mwamba and vibraphone*

Lincoln focus group participant

This means that they can jump to negative conclusions:

*I don't even understand the last bit, what it means. Reading the top bit, I'd have thought - however hard you hit a vibraphone it's never going to make a thumping great noise - it would have been quite nice music. But when it says the 'trio's approach references the wilder times in jazz' that tends to mean there aren't going to be any harmonics in it and it's going to be a way out noise.*

Wellingborough focus group participant

*I would put Blink at the bottom of my list because it says "interesting setting" and from past experience when it says "interesting" I'm not going to like it. It's code to me for very experimental, hard work, going off far down deep roads where I can't follow.*

Lincoln focus group participant

*I picked out Compassionate Dictatorship because it's got the word 'folk' in it, which I like, and "contemporary jazz", which I like. But it also has a word that's very worrying to me, which is "free". Free jazz to me is just unlistenable to but I'd go just to see what it's about.*

Leicester focus group participant

All they want to know is:

- What will the music be like?
- Will I like it?

### **What makes copy hard to understand?**

*The only one I would relate to immediately is Blink because it says she's a pianist and is "in her most interesting setting with this trio" and I felt I understood that a little bit. Whether I do or not, I don't know. I've no idea who Harrison Birtwistle is. But it's fairly plain English. Compassionate Dictatorship, I couldn't even be bothered to read it.*

Lincoln focus group participant

The factors that make publicity material difficult to understand are:

- Name dropping – enthusiasts and dippers alike worry if they haven't heard of the references that are intended to communicate the style of music

*- I'd go for Platypus because I know the five musicians and I've got a good idea what they're going to play and I'm fairly sure I'm going to enjoy it.  
- I thought these were all made up. I've no idea whether Gerard Presencer and Platypus is a real group or not. Or any of these other people at all.*

Lincoln focus group participants

- Complex language

*I like 'tight funk-inspired rhythmic patterns', it sounds interesting. If I was walking past and I saw a poster with "funk-inspired rhythmic patterns" ... But what's 'transmuted'? Funk and progressive rock sounds different but then it's 'transmuted'.*

Derby focus group participant

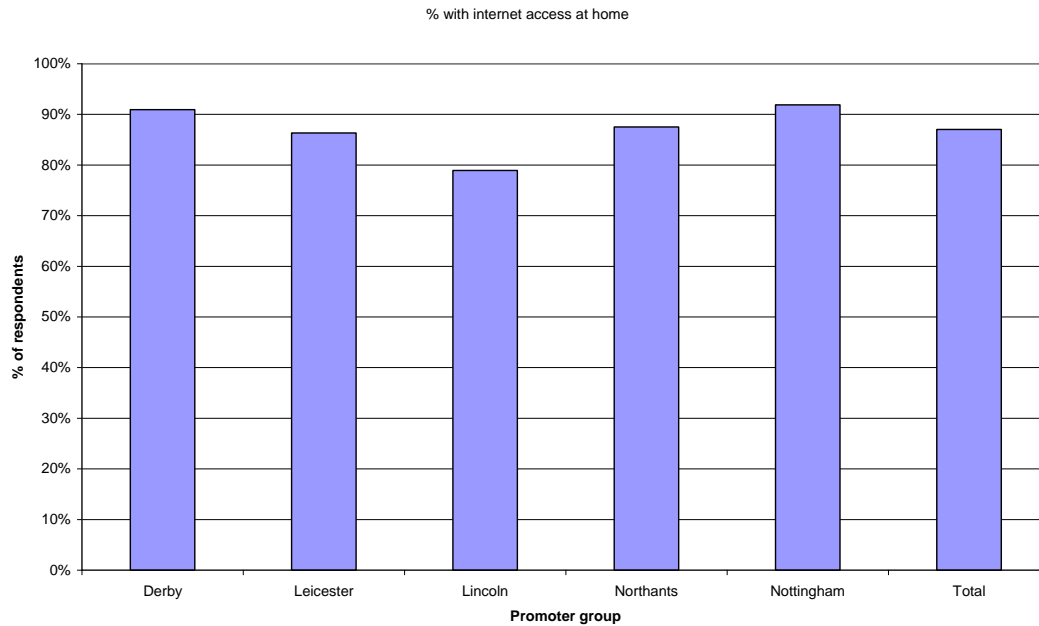
- Hype – we use phrases that don't mean anything to try and make gigs sound more exciting instead of saying why it will be great:

*[It says] you've got 'three rising stars'- could mean anything*

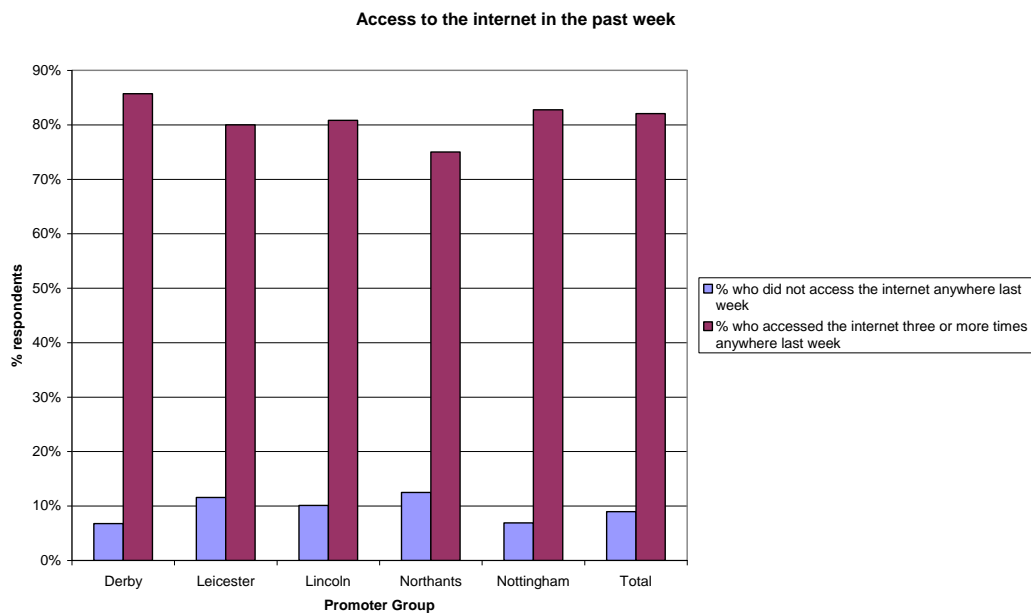
Lincoln focus group participant

## Online marketing

The vast majority of questionnaire respondents have internet access at home.



They are also relatively heavy internet users:





An online survey appeared on the promoters' websites between January and the end of February 2009. It showed that online respondents were twice as likely not to have been to a jazz gig in the past 12 months as questionnaire respondents at the gigs and slightly more likely to have attended a jazz gig three to five times in the past 12 months. They were significantly more likely to be male than questionnaire respondents (78% compared to 58%) and twice as likely to be aged 35 to 44.

The high levels of internet access and usage makes it all the more surprising that only 20% of questionnaire respondents mention the promoters' websites. The reason is that the websites are almost impossible to find unless the potential user types the promoters' name into a search engine. This means that only loyal attenders can find the information.

Each promoter group have received an audit of their website as part of this project. In summary, promoters need to:

- Use keywords that would be used in searches by Musical Omnivores including local searches for 'what's on', 'live music', 'live gigs', 'music gigs', 'live bands' etc in all the areas of the site assessed by search engine spiders
- Check that website designers are delivering search engine optimisation by Googling using a range of keywords including those listed above and by using the free tools at [www.ranks.nl](http://www.ranks.nl)
- Use a different title tag on every page that describes the content using key words
- Use keywords in the headings and copy
- Use words that mean something to the average visitor eg "for Schools" or "workshops for adults" instead of "Education"
- Get visitors to the website to buy tickets by including:
  - Links to venue online ticketing alongside the information on every event
  - Phone numbers everywhere
  - Maps and directions
  - Links from musicians' websites and MySpace pages
  - Music samples and links to online videos

### **How can we increase the proportion of people preferring to receive information by email?**

Some promoters are trying to cut the costs of marketing by encouraging audiences to sign up to receive emarketing rather than direct mail.

The potential advantages for audiences are that they can respond so easily to emails as, when emarketing is implemented effectively, one click will take them to online booking facilities. They can also share information with friends easily by forwarding the email. But this conversion doesn't happen by itself. Marketers recommend the following strategies:

- Don't try and get an email address from first time bookers – they don't know you well enough to trust you with the information

- Include a URL in printed information that takes people straight to an emarketing signup web page
- Tell them about the advantages of converting to emarketing both to them and to the planet
- Give them clear calls to action and a date to sign up by
- Tell them clearly what they are signing up to: what will you be sending and how often?
- Let them choose what kind of information they want
- Offer them a reward for signing up – this could be a discount or, even better, something extra
- Have a clear call to action on the home page – “sign up today for news, views and useful information” - that takes people to the email sign up page
- Make sure you collect correct email addresses by asking people signing up online to enter it twice
- Make sure the emails and newsletters you send are personalised, relevant and timely.

## Getting bigger audiences

The most effective strategies for growth will be to:

- Get more Musical Omnivores to include jazz in their menu by:
  - writing copy that does not assume a high level of knowledge
  - getting the information into places, real and virtual, where other styles of music are played and discussed
  - capturing more names and addresses at the box office, looking after the data better and using it more
  - getting the promoters' brochures in people's hands through direct mail
  - investing more in design to increase the pick up rates of print
- Focus on the 'waverers' by producing publicity material that::
  - elicits responses rather than give information
  - describes what the music is like
  - uses vivid verbal imagery
  - talks about influences
  - talks about the musicians as people
  - offers recommendations from people they can connect with

and offering:

- post-show discussions (not talks)
- interaction with the musicians
- discovery gigs for grown-ups

Overall, promoters need to:

- Make more effective use of images

- Drive people to their websites
- Raise the media profile of jazz off the arts pages



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