



▶ **Hitting  
the right  
note** ●

Looking back at PPL's  
impact in the 21st century



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PPL is the UK music industry's collective management organisation (CMO) for performers and recording rightsholders, founded in 1934. We license recorded music in the UK when it is played in public (bars, nightclubs, shops, offices, etc.) or broadcast (BBC, commercial radio, commercial TV, etc.) and we work to ensure that revenue flows back to both our own members and those of our international CMO partners. Our members include both independent and major record companies, together with performers ranging from emerging grassroots artists through to established session musicians and globally renowned artists.

Through a network of agreements with other CMOs around the world, we also collect performance rights royalties internationally when music is played overseas in public and used on TV, radio and some online streaming services, as well as for private copying.

PPL's public performance licensing is carried out on our behalf by PPL PRS Ltd, the joint venture between PPL and PRS for Music.

## Thank you...

to all contributors to this publication

### Design:

Re:View Creative  
www.re-view.design

### Photography:

P35 - Gary Lightbody & Peter Leatham OBE by Sarah Louise Bennett



# PPL in the 21st century

For those wishing to raise a glass to celebrate PPL's 90th anniversary this year, it might be fitting to pour themselves a coffee rather than indulge in anything stronger.

The beverage played a crucial role in the organisation's very existence.

In May 1934, the UK licensing company was formed as a result of a groundbreaking court case involving a coffee shop in Bristol. Stephen Carwardine & Co had been entertaining its customers by playing them records, something EMI - then known as The Gramophone Company - argued needed the permission of the owners of the copyright in those sound recordings. The judge agreed, leading to EMI and Decca forming Phonographic Performance Ltd. Fast forward over six decades to October 2000 - as PPL entered the most impactful, productive and revolutionary period in its proud history - a song called 'Black Coffee' appears among the week's big new releases. Perhaps it was a good omen of what was to come.

The single by the British girl group All Saints, which debuted at No.1 on the Official Singles Chart the following week, soundtracked the arrival into PPL's central London offices of Fran Nevrlka in a then newly created role of Executive Chair. He later became Chair and CEO.



"I'm looking forward to giving the organisation more focus and more sense of direction, and changing the climate slightly so we can have a somewhat better relationship with the outside world," he told *Music Week* as news of his appointment was announced.

What followed more than delivered on his upbeat, hopeful words, with PPL reborn as a modern, 21st-century company which has become an essential, leading component of the UK music industry, underpinned by stronger and closer relationships with its performer and rightsholder members. This transformation has been played out in many ways, including through the roll-out of industry-leading technology, establishing international collections for members, a groundbreaking joint venture with PRS for Music collecting public performance revenue, driving forward critical legislation such as copyright term extension and giving performers a voice in the organisation that they never had before.

## Focus on technology

The changes at PPL instigated by Fran Nevrlka delivered a top-to-bottom reorganisation that began with the appointment of a new team of executives - including now CEO Peter Leathem - and an early focus on introducing IT systems that would enable the business to do its job in a world that was becoming more and more data-heavy. The CatCo database launched in January 2003, enabling member companies to register for PPL and mechanical licences from MCPS electronically. It was completed on time within two years and under budget. At its roll-out, it held details on more than 6 million tracks, including their performers, labels and ISRC numbers.

By the following decade, CatCo had been replaced by even better state-of-the-art systems designed to support all of the key services delivered by PPL. These included a Repertoire Database which today holds information on over 25 million recordings with more than 45,000 tracks added on average every week.



Alongside undertaking a complete rebuild of its repertoire matching and revenue distribution systems, PPL launched myPPL, allowing recording rightsholder and performer members to view payments, access statements, upload repertoire or track contributions and search for recordings. Beyond PPL's own walls, the organisation plays a leading role in the Virtual Recordings Database (VRDB) platform that enables CMOs globally to exchange and improve the quality of data to support international collections. PPL is a board member of DDEX, a group of music industry organisations charged with standardising the data value chain, and in 2019 was chosen by IFPI and WIN to build and run RDX (Repertoire Data Exchange). This is a centralised industry data exchange that enables record companies and CMOs to submit and access authoritative recording data via a single point.

## Closer ties with performers

Arguably, the biggest transformation this century has been PPL's growing and ever-closer relationship with the performer community. Back in 1996, both performers and non-featured performers (or session musicians) were given a statutory right to receive equitable remuneration when recordings on which they featured were broadcast or played in public. This revenue was split 50:50 between the rightsholder and performers with PPL handling distribution. Initially, the revenue from this right was distributed to some performers by the performer associations PAMRA and AURA, but in 2006 the Office of Fair Trading gave PPL the go-ahead to merge with the two organisations, resulting in PPL

# PPL in the 21st century

not only collecting revenue on behalf of performers but also being solely responsible for its allocation and distribution.

The merger followed earlier steps by PPL in forging closer ties with performers, which included the establishment in 2001 of a performer forum and the following year inviting then Musicians' Union General Secretary (and now PPL Chair) John Smith and AURA Company Secretary Nigel Parker to attend PPL Board meetings. Initiatives around this time included the launch of online and advertising campaign 'Artists = Royalties' to track down thousands of musicians owed unpaid royalties, while specially convened panels of musicians, producers, engineers and other relevant parties were put together to help fill in performer information gaps for around 2,300 key tracks from the sixties and seventies. It resulted in a 99% success rate.

Following the merger with PAMRA and AURA, PPL appointed its first-ever Director of Performer Affairs - Keith Harris - and in November 2007, PPL's first Annual Performer Meeting took place in London. In a first for a performer, two years later, Marillion keyboard player Mark Kelly was elected to the PPL Performer Board and gained a seat on the main board, something Fran Nevrkla at the time hailed as a "new and exciting chapter for PPL".

## International collections

One of the most significant benefits of PPL merging with PAMRA and AURA has been the development of performer international collections. In 2003, PPL had signed a groundbreaking deal with the two performer organisations and the Music Producers Guild to take charge of collecting UK performers' revenues from collective management organisations (CMOs) overseas. Fran Nevrkla described it as a huge "leap of faith" for the performer groups to entrust this responsibility to PPL.

The year after this happened, PPL signed a deal with SoundExchange, the US-based CMO, for each company to collect royalties from the other on behalf of respective members.

The merger itself with PAMRA and AURA took matters to another level. In 2005, PPL brought in around £3 million of overseas income on behalf of its members, but this more than doubled the following year. By 2008, annual international income had grown to £15.4 million, and was just under £50 million in 2017 and in 2021, hit a historic high of £94 million. In 2023, PPL collected £75.4 million internationally for performers and recording rightsholders, and is firmly established as the largest international collector of 'neighbouring rights' revenues (principally for broadcasts and public performances), with 111 agreements with CMOs in 50 territories.

**The number of performers and recording rightsholders PPL pays annually has risen substantially. In 2014, over 60,000 performers and rightsholders were paid - by 2023, this had grown close to 165,000.**

Besides its laser focus on improving and increasing its own international collections, PPL is a leading voice in encouraging and enabling CMOs around the world to work together to improve the efficiency and accuracy of international collections and distributions. A good example of this is the organisation providing back-office services to other CMOs via its Business Services offering. This enables these organisations to benefit from PPL's pioneering technology and sound recording data to calculate and distribute their royalties. Among those taking advantage of this are organisations in Iceland, Ireland, Latvia and Portugal.

## Launching a groundbreaking joint venture with PRS for Music

Another critical part of PPL's story this century has been its evolving relationship with PRS for Music, which resulted in the launch in February 2018 of the Leicester-based joint venture PPL PRS Ltd to administer public performance licensing for both recordings and compositions. However, in the long build-up to this groundbreaking joint venture, there had already been a number of examples of the two organisations working closer together. This included everything from commissioning in-depth research to highlight how music could help to increase revenue for businesses to rolling out a series of joint licences, such as a scheme for community buildings to cover music they played. They also

launched a joint online music licence to cover 'background music' on small business websites. Important work was additionally underway to link authoritative data about sound recordings to the underlying musical works.

The launch of PPL PRS Ltd was hailed by Peter Leatham, who took over from Fran Nevrkla as CEO in 2012, as "a significant moment" for both organisations as well as the wider industry. Two years of planning and preparation turned this new enterprise into a reality, which included systems development and testing with new IT systems, linking PPL's and PRS for Music's respective repertoire data and, of course, hiring and training the staff for the joint venture. All this hard work meant that, for the first time, businesses such as pubs, shops, nightclubs, venues, restaurants, hotels and hairdressers now only had to acquire a single licence - TheMusicLicence - to be able to play music on their premises, rather than having to obtain separate licences from PPL and PRS for Music, as had been the case for many decades before.

At launch, Peter Leatham described the joint venture as "without doubt the most ambitious project" PPL had undertaken in its then 84-year history. "This is an important moment for the music business at large and is a move towards greater efficiencies for our licensees and greater returns for our members," he said.

At the time of launch, nobody could have foreseen that in little more than two years, the world would

**"This is an important moment for the music business at large and a move towards greater efficiencies for our licensees and greater returns for our members."**



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come to a standstill with the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing many businesses around the UK to close their doors to customers and send their staff home. For PPL PRS Ltd, there could hardly have been a greater test of its abilities when suddenly the outlets it was licensing were no longer operating. Even this early on in its history, the venture came through with flying colours, working hard to support businesses through these uncertain and difficult times. And, even though the changes in the marketplace naturally resulted in a drop in public performance revenue, it is a sign of the underlying strength of the company that in 2022 public performance revenue bounced back dramatically with PPL collecting £100.8 million, nearly 40% higher than the year before, growing once again in 2023 to £111.7 million.

## Helping to secure copyright term extension

PPL's wider industry standing is highlighted by its important and influential public affairs role. No more was this evident than in the leading part it played to secure an extension of copyright term in sound recordings from 50 to 70 years. Without this, landmark recordings by British artists such as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and many countless others would have fallen into the public domain despite their enduring popularity. The extension meant that royalties would continue to be generated for an extra two decades for recordings from 1963 onwards, when these tracks were broadcast, played in public, sold or streamed.

Despite other territories having greater term lengths than the UK, including 70 years in Australia and 95 years in the US, obtaining an extension was far from easy, particularly with a review of intellectual property by former Financial Times editor Andrew Gowers in 2006, commissioned by the then Labour government, recommending that copyright term should not be extended beyond 50 years. However, the tide began to turn for the industry when the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee recommended "at least 70 years" protection for sound recordings.

The influential ear that PPL had among key politicians at this time was reflected by the likes of then Culture Secretary Andy Burnham giving keynote speeches at its AGM. As Health Secretary Alan Johnson spoke at PPL's 2009 AGM, the European Directive on copyright term reached its final stages in the European Council with the UK government preparing the case for term extension alongside a proposal for a session fund for non-featured musicians. Finally, in 2011, copyright term for sound recordings was extended by 20 years and this reform came into effect in the UK in 2013.

As part of the term extension reforms, session musicians became entitled to payments for physical and online sales of any recording they played on after the 50th year it was released. In 2015, PPL began administering a new Session Fund for such payments, making PPL the first CMO in Europe to pay out this 'supplementary remuneration'.

**Open for  
90 years  
of PPL  
timeline**

While copyright term extension was a landmark achievement for PPL, it is just one of many issues that the organisation, along with other parts of the UK music industry, has focused on in the public affairs arena this century. These have included playing a leading role in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented in the post-Brexit world, and contributing to the DCMS Select Committee's inquiry into the economics of music streaming and the subsequent working groups that were set up to look more closely at some of the key issues, such as transparency and the use of metadata.

PPL is also a founding member of UK Music, which was set up in 2008 as an umbrella group to represent the collective interests of the UK music industry. Through its membership of UK Music, PPL also plays an active role in the wider industry lobbying efforts on artificial intelligence, which included seeing off a government proposal for a new and broad copyright exception for text and data mining last year.

## Delivering record annual revenues

An obvious measure of how PPL has grown as an organisation and the impact that it has had on the music industry and beyond is how its revenues have increased across this century. In the year Fran Nevrkla joined the organisation, its annual licence fee income was £68.4 million. By 2010, this had more than doubled to £143.5 million and the following year surpassed £150 million for the first time (reaching £153.5 million). The first annual collection above £175 million was in 2013 and it

then only took until 2016 to break through the £200 million barrier.

A year before the pandemic, PPL achieved its first annual revenue above £250 million when £271.8 million of income was generated in 2019, before reaching another new peak in 2022 (£272.6 million), and continuing to grow further in 2023, generating £283.5 million. Looking at its income growth another way, over £950 million was collected by PPL in the first decade of this century, £1.98 billion in the second decade (so more than double) and already during the first four years of the 2020s its licence fee income has totalled over £1 billion. Significant growth has been achieved in all three of its collection areas of public performance and dubbing, broadcast licensing and international.

**Back when Fran Nevrkla joined PPL in 2000, he warned that without bringing in new ways, new ideas and new methodologies, there was a risk that societies like PPL could be extinct within ten years. But under him and now Peter Leathem, PPL stands tall as an industry-leading organisation whose impact and influence has not just been felt within the UK but on the music business around the world.**



# Timeline



**1934**

PPL formed after Carwardine verdict confirms public performance rights in sound recordings

**1946**

PPL agrees to make *ex gratia* payments to the Musicians' Union for the benefit of non-featured performers (in addition to *ex gratia* payments made to featured artists)

**1950**

First vinyl singles and LPs issued in Britain by Decca

**1955**

'Rock Around The Clock' by Bill Haley (and his Comets) is Britain's first million-selling record

**1958**

First stereo LPs issued in Britain by Pye

**1956**

New UK Copyright Act confirms public performance rights in sound recordings and introduces exclusive rights to broadcast copyright works

**1952**

First UK record sales chart published in New Musical Express

**1960**

Performing Right Tribunal rules that jukebox operators must pay fees to PPL



**1967**

Marine Broadcasting Offences Act outlaws pirate radio stations

BBC launches Radio 1 and Radio 2

WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) established



**1983**

Philips and Sony introduce the compact disc



**1988**

Copyright, Designs and Patents Act abolished needtime restrictions following a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission

**1984**

PPL reports that £69 million was collected for members during its first 50 years

Of that total, £38 million was collected between 1979-1984

Video Performance Limited (VPL) formed, to license the public performance and broadcasting of music videos



**1990**

Broadcasting Act introduces a compulsory licence for radio airplay

**1993**

Copyright Tribunal sets a new PPL tariff for commercial radio



**1996**

UK implementation of the EU Rental Directive strengthens performers' rights, including a right to equitable remunerations, where recordings of qualifying performances are broadcast or played in public

WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty adopted in Geneva



**2001**

PPL and a number of UK performer organisations establish the Performer Forum as a means of working more closely together on performer issues

**2006**

UK performer organisations PAMRA and AURA are merged into PPL with unconditional OFT approval

PPL Performer Board and Annual Performer Meeting established



**2008**

The launch of Spotify disrupts the streaming industry and marks the start of a massive streaming market expansion.



**2013**

UK implements EU legislation increasing the copyright term for sound recordings to 70 years



**2012**

Peter Leatham appointed CEO of PPL while Fran Nevrlka remains Chair

PPL licence fee income is £170.8 million

PPL adopts Codes of Conduct for members and licensees, as part of a self-regulatory system operated by UK CMOs under the umbrella of the British Copyright Council



**2018**

PPL PRS Ltd launched, the public performance joint venture with PRS for Music

**2024**

PPL has over 140,000 members, registering over 45,000 recordings a week

**1934**

**1935**

The year of the first three-year licence arrangement granted by PPL to the BBC, at £10,000 per annum

By 1939 PPL has 37 record company members

PPL revenues for the 1940s  
**£1 million**

PPL revenues for the 1950s  
**£2 million**

**1961**

International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations is adopted in Rome



PPL revenues for the 1960s  
**£4.8 million**

PPL revenues for the 1970s  
**£19 million**

PPL revenues for the 1980s  
**£118 million**

PPL revenues for the 1990s  
**£430 million**

PPL revenues for the 2000s  
**£951.5 million**

PPL revenues for the 2010s  
**£1.98 billion**





## An interview with Peter Leathem OBE PPL Chief Executive Officer

Having inherited a completely reconstructed PPL under Fran Nevrkla OBE, Peter Leathem OBE has taken the organisation to even greater heights in his 12 years as CEO with revenue collections totalling more than £2.7 billion. To put that into context, across its entire first 50 years of operation PPL brought in £69 million in total for its members.

However, the size of the annual collections - which topped £200 million, then £250 million for the first time during his tenure, and now heading for £300 million - is just one measure of the indelible impact the company has had under him. Among the many achievements, he steered through the successful launch of a game-changing public performance joint venture with PRS for Music, while other key developments include everything from further driving forward PPL's industry-leading expertise in data and technology to providing a desperately needed lifeline for thousands of performers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Peter acknowledges he was "quite nervous" when he took over from Fran as CEO at the beginning of 2012, given his predecessor's success. "Fortunately, 2012 was a really successful year revenue-wise, with double-digit growth," he says. "From there, things moved on quite seamlessly. Fran stayed on as Chair for four years, and we did a really successful handover process, which is what most companies aspire to do, but don't always get the chance. If you have that continuity over a period of time, it means you can develop a good strategy around what you're aiming to achieve and try to continue that."

### Launching a public performance joint venture with PRS for Music

Even before Peter became CEO, there had been "a number of attempts" to forge a joint venture with PRS for Music to handle public performance collections but none had come to fruition. Peter was directly involved in a number of the previous negotiations and sought to learn from those experiences once he took over as CEO. Progress started to be made when Robert Ashcroft became PRS CEO in 2009. Peter forged a close working relationship with him, but a number of obstacles continued to stand in the way of the venture happening, including the choice of IT systems, where the new company would be located and agreeing terms

**"It took us 84 years to get there, but only five years to pay out more than £1 billion in royalties to our respective members."**

between the two organisations. But finally in February 2018, PPL PRS Ltd was launched, providing a single public performance licence to hundreds of thousands of premises to play recorded music. It ended 84 years of PPL and PRS issuing separate licences.

"Seeing how hard it was to come together, I could see why it failed over a few decades," Peter says. "Bringing it together was a really good outcome. We've had lots of success already and that's with two years of set-up, and then two years of Covid, which held us back. We've now had a good few years and there's much more potential for the organisation yet. So I have to say it was a good achievement, getting the agreement, building it, launching it and now trading successfully. It took us 84 years to get there, but only five years to pay out more than £1 billion in royalties to our respective members."

The increase in public performance revenues has been a key factor in PPL's total annual collections increasing, which hit another new high of £283.5 million in 2023.

"We have excellent opportunities to carry on growing our tariffs and improve market penetration and efficiency in PPL PRS. So public performance has definitely got good potential growth over the coming years," Peter says.

**The PPL PRS office was set up in Leicester in 2018**





# An interview with Peter Leathem OBE

## PPL Chief Executive Officer

### The growing breadth of international collections

Peter is equally optimistic about the potential for international collections, which reached £75.4 million in 2023, following a record high of £94 million in 2021.

“We had a couple of really high years of collections for international, where we were effectively bringing through multiple years of past payments owed to members. That’s now settled down and we’re focused on the great opportunities for international to grow. There are only about a third of the countries in the world that have rights for record companies and performers,” he says. “It’s much lower than people would think. That’s starting to change. China now has record company rights; India has more structured performer rights than in the past, and we’re seeing rapid developments in the Middle East - all these changes over time will help grow the total market. Collections are also getting better in lots of different territories, as are the methods of collaborating to get proper identification of repertoire. At the same time, we’re acting for more and more performers and rightsholders internationally, all of which combine to create a great opportunity.”

Peter suggests establishing additional rights in just one of the largest territories “would make a big difference” to international collections, including in Japan where currently there are broadcast rights but no public performance rights. The big anomaly continues to be the US where there are digital



**“We’re focused on the great opportunities for international to grow.”**

performance rights but none for terrestrial radio, despite decades of lobbying to change that, or for public performance in bars, shops, offices, etc.

One potential area of growth is in the EU, following a 2020 European Court of Justice ruling that EU member states should be allowing payments to US performers. Previously, because the US has no performance rights for terrestrial radio or public performance, EU countries were not required to pay US performers and rightsholders for those rights when their recordings were played in their respective territories.

“Following the ECJ case, European governments have changed their laws to protect US repertoire,” says Peter. “More countries in the EU now protect

repertoire than don’t. Our government in the UK is currently consulting on whether to extend qualification for US repertoire as well. If that changes following the consultation, it would open up millions of pounds for US performers which wasn’t there for them in the UK previously.

### Increasing competition for international neighbouring rights

The increase in international neighbouring rights collections across the industry has resulted in a hugely competitive market with hundreds of rival entities offering to collect on behalf of performers. Peter believes this has happened as a consequence of PPL first entering the international neighbouring rights marketplace in the 2000s.

“When we started doing international collections there were a few companies that were collecting for some performers for some of their repertoire in some countries and doing it at a high cost,” he says. “So us coming in made everyone professionalise. They got much better. The price point came down from about 20% to a much lower level. PPL charges a flat rate of 7% for international collections, and our aggregated cost-to-revenue ratio for UK licensing sits at about 14%. We’ve driven better standards, better cost rates, and created open access to all if they want to come to us, but also we report the information so we make it quite clear how much money is being collected.”

While Peter welcomes the competition, he predicts that over time a lot of the companies in this field

will exit. “There will be a bit of consolidation, a bit of people giving up. Some of the publishing and record companies involved have realised it’s not that easy to compete with us.”

### Driving value out of the broadcast market

Out of PPL’s three key collection areas, Peter sees broadcast as the area which is seeing the fastest change. “The way people are consuming music is changing; it is not all linear TV and radio as in the past,” he says.

“On the broadcast side, revenue growth has been down to the popularity of the use of music on TV and radio. TV takes more work to try to make the use of recordings easier and the deals we negotiate. We’ve achieved very good licensing and dealmaking and driven value around the broadcast area over a long period of time. Now the job is to keep evolving our licensing in step with the changing ways that music is being used, to keep the focus on driving that revenue back to members.”

### Supporting other CMOs with an industry-leading suite of business services

One new area of business that PPL has moved into under Peter’s leadership is offering back-office services to other collective management



# An interview with Peter Leatham OBE

## PPL Chief Executive Officer

organisations around the world. This includes matching and identifying rightsholders and performers to repertoire, as well as undertaking distribution calculations and reporting based on local distribution rules. Six CMOs across Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Portugal use a mix of these services, which means that they do not have to make costly investments in their own individual systems to manage their data, as well as improving accuracy and consistency across payments.

“The back-office collaboration side has been growing steadily,” Peter says. “We’ve even been providing HR services to some UK organisations as well. We saw it as an opportunity to try to help the industry and build efficiencies where we can. It’s going very well, helping to build good relationships, as well as removing cost from the ecosystem in general.”

### PPL’s active role in the wider music industry

One of Peter’s priorities as CEO has been to further professionalise the organisation, including bringing in “better and better quality people”, which has helped realise his goal of PPL becoming more actively involved in the wider music industry. This has manifested itself in many ways, including Peter joining the boards of performer CMO global trade body SCAPR and UK Music, the UK music industry’s collective voice to government. Other members of the executive management team also serve on various industry boards and committees.

“It was a gradual movement of just getting involved with lots of different organisations, but then we went on a journey of working with and supporting AIM for the indies and the Musicians’ Union and then providing HR services for them,” says Peter. “Those things are us trying to play our role in the bigger picture. Yes, we have our own revenue and cost agenda to manage, but if we can also help other organisations in the music industry, as well as making our colleagues’ jobs more interesting and fulfilling at the same time, it’s a win-win. Over time, that means more of the industry is working with our colleagues, seeing how well we’re run and it’s helped PPL’s reputation because we’re involved with so many different people across the industry in different guises.”



### PPL’s successful relationships across the music industry

PPL’s wider music business role highlights what Peter sees as its “pretty unique” position of having positive

direct relationships with almost every component part of the recorded music industry.

“When I look at the people around our boardroom table, we’re keeping happy the major record companies, the indie companies, the featured performers, the non-featured, the producers. Everyone thinks we’re doing a good job for them and that’s quite hard to achieve. That gives us real strength to push back and say, ‘That’s a daft idea’ because they trust us to be saying that for the right reasons, as opposed to be motivated by just looking after certain interests. We’ve worked really hard to achieve that respected position.”

### Continuing to make PPL even better

More than 12 years after becoming CEO, Peter is “more excited than ever about what we’re going to do over the next three years” as he looks to push PPL forward even more.

“I’m driven by wanting us to get better, and being competitive,” he says. “I’ve always been hard-working and keen to challenge the status quo. That’s my character and I want to be the lead agitator because you get what you tolerate and if I’m not bothered, no one else will be.”

**“When I look at the people around our boardroom table, we’re keeping happy the major record companies, the indie companies, the featured performers, the non-featured, the producers. Everyone thinks we’re doing a good job for them and that’s quite hard to achieve.”**

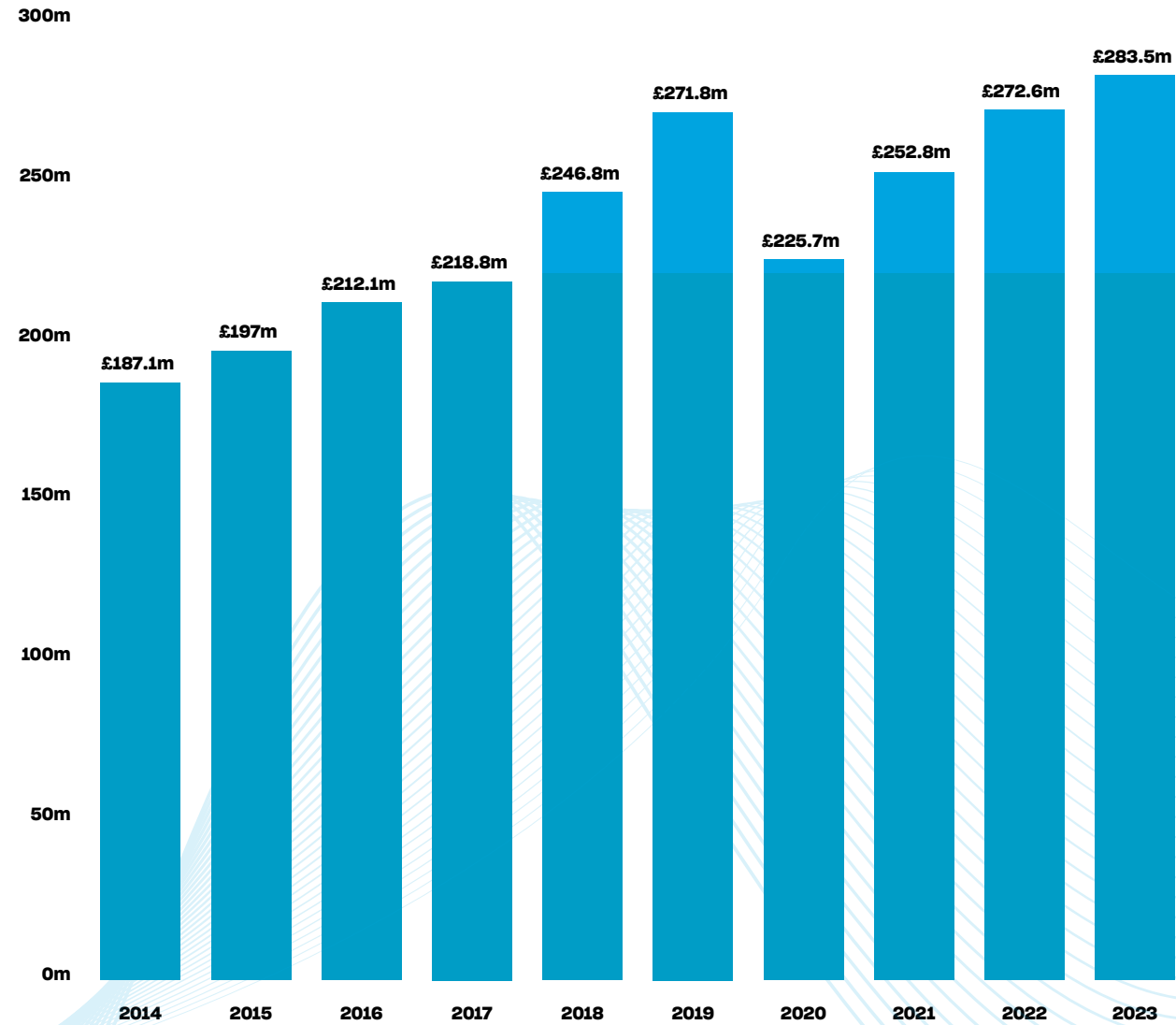
You’d get a drop-off effect. I’m always trying to challenge things and then try to get that mentality across the business. It’s a big focus at the moment, to keep driving that sort of thinking and sense of constant iteration and improvement.”

And, in this 90th anniversary, there is also the opportunity to reflect on everything that PPL has already achieved, particularly over the last two decades.

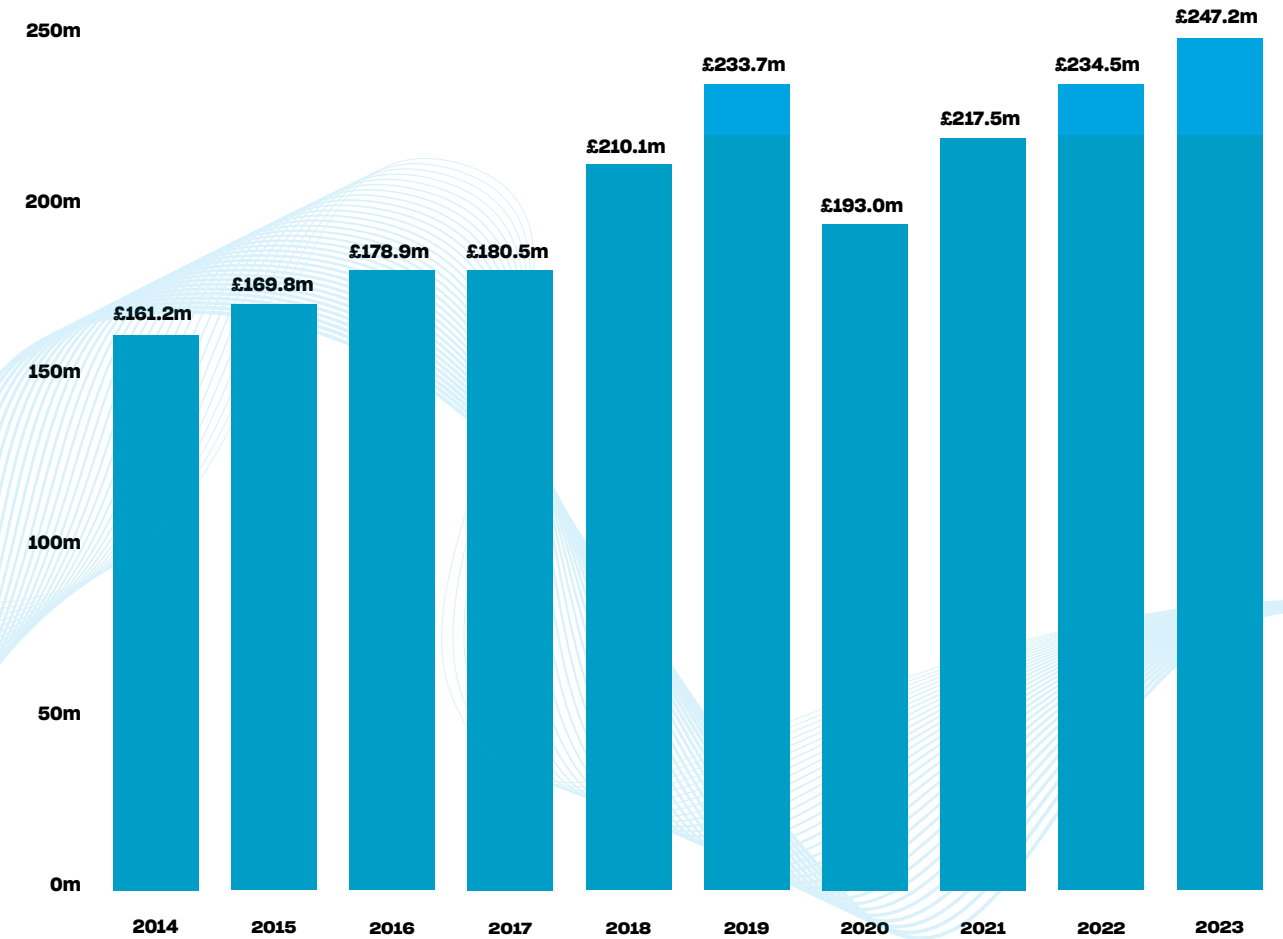
“It’s been immensely satisfying to work for a company that’s got better and better at what it does over the years and to have been a key part in that journey over the last 20 years,” he says. “We’re doing lots of good work. We really believe in PPL’s role, which is effectively trying to collect and share some of the commercial benefits businesses

obtain from playing recorded music with the performers and recording rightsholders that created and own those recordings. It’s a great thing to get behind and we just want to provide really good services at a good price for them. It’s very satisfying to have had some success on that journey and be respected and thought well of for doing so.”

# Total collections 2014 - 2023



# Net distributable revenue\* 2014 - 2023



\*Net distributable revenue is the total amount payable to PPL members after costs and other deductions.





## An interview with John F Smith OBE PPL Chair

Across three decades, John Smith OBE has gained a unique perspective on the impact that PPL has had on the music business from his time representing performers at the Musicians' Union to his role today as Chair.

From these vantage points, he has helped to influence and shape the modern PPL, while seeing at close hand how its stature within the industry has reached new heights, as well as its role in becoming a vital source of income for countless featured and non-featured performers.

"It's been remarkable to see PPL grow," John says. "This is such an important organisation and the future is really bright. I know things are changing. I know the technology is changing and the way people receive their music is changing. PPL is fleet

of foot and does adapt. It has a very healthy future ahead of it and the value of collectively licensing music is now obvious to all."

### A new focus on performers

Having been principal tuba with the English National Opera Orchestra, John recalls his first encounter with PPL was in the late 1990s when he had joined the Musicians' Union (MU) as a full-time official and equitable remuneration (ER) had just been introduced for performers.



He acknowledges that initially there was some "floundering around" regarding how ER payments to performers would work, but this quickly changed when Fran Nevrkla joined PPL in 2000, initially as Executive Chair before becoming Chair and CEO.

"That's when it became clear that we had to pull it together," says John. "I had lots of conversations with Fran and it was his initiative to form the Performer Forum. So that started early in the 21st century and we had various representatives, particularly from PAMRA, AURA, the MU and Equity. The Music Producers Guild were also involved, the managers, so more or less anybody you could think of that would have an input into it, and it was very difficult to start with."

He recalls that prior to Fran's appointment, the organisation's relationship with the performer community had been "kind of distant" and there "wasn't much sign of modernisation", but the setting up of the Performer Forum "did get everybody around the same table", which ultimately led to PPL merging with performer organisations PAMRA and AURA, resulting in one entity handling domestic and overseas revenue for UK performers, rather than three.

"We could see the prize and we could see it was a pretty big prize just to cut out all these admin fees from these different organisations," says John. "We had to create a body with authority and the wherewithal to negotiate and fight our corner. A lot of it was to do with the overseas money, but also being more effective domestically as well."

That prize saw what had been only a few million in annual international income grow to many tens of millions of pounds every single year. At the same time, domestic revenue via broadcast and public performance rapidly increased, alongside increased representation of performers within the organisation itself, including the launch of the Performer Board and places for performers and their representatives on the main PPL Board.

"People had no concept of how the royalties would grow and what they might earn. And, of course, there was a nice honeymoon period when we were actually getting back pay for years when we hadn't had any payments. So that was the next stage and managing expectations for the future," he says. "It has become a very important strand of performers' income and we never imagined it would be so

**"It's one of my proudest achievements getting the performers into PPL and helping to form the modern PPL in the 21st century."**



# An interview with John F Smith OBE

## PPL Chair

important at the time, but it's great. So on an individual level, it really has made a difference. And it was something that was well worth fighting for. It's one of my proudest achievements getting the performers into PPL and helping to form the modern PPL in the 21st century."

### Importance of neighbouring rights income to performers

As a performer himself, John can speak with real authority about how "massively important" neighbouring rights income is to performers and the part that PPL has played in making that happen.

"The groundswell of support for PPL and what it does and the things we hear from colleagues and after the distributions is really pleasing," he says. "For every disgruntled member, we get dozens of really happy people who are very pleased. Twenty-odd years ago, a lot of performers hadn't really ever heard of PPL. It's a very important part of their professional lives now."

Part of that performer income exists thanks to PPL playing a leading role in securing an extension of copyright term for recordings in the UK from 50 to 70 years. This not only provided continued income for performers on tracks that would have otherwise fallen out of copyright, but also delivered new rights and benefits too, including the establishment of the Session Fund. Administered by PPL, this was set up as part of copyright term extension and meant session musicians would now receive payments from physical and online sales of any recording they played on after the 50th year it was released.

"The add-ons to the Directive, the supplementary income for session players, the Session Fund, the Use It or Lose It, the Clean Slate, and all of those bits that they added on have made such a difference. The supplementary income is really growing and we're coming into that sort of golden age now. It really is quite important," he says.

### John's greatest achievement since becoming Chair

John's tenure as PPL Chair began in January 2016 as preparations continued for the launch of PPL PRS Ltd, a groundbreaking joint venture with PRS for Music to create one single company to administer public performance licensing. The success of the venture is what he picks out as the greatest achievement in his time as Chair.

"Seeing how the staff were trained in Leicester, from a standing start to do this arcane stuff like music licensing, was remarkable," he says. "Then to get the pandemic just after it was formed was awful. Venues closing and not knowing if they would open again and lots haven't. But the latest stats show it's now realising its full potential and what we thought it would do. It's been such a change and politically, it's such a good thing for the music industry to have this joint approach."

John believes PPL's response to the pandemic - it put money into hardship funds to support musicians, artist managers and others - demonstrated to the wider music industry what the organisation could achieve. He sees that as another example of the influence PPL has had, alongside its role in such issues as copyright term extension and helping to form UK Music. He also cites its powerful role in being able to bring all parts of the recorded music industry together.

"With PPL, it's the only time we get everybody together in the recorded music industry and it's been very effective over any issues that we've had

to deal with," he says. "PPL is a great organisation - it's incredible the changes that have happened over the 90 years and the massive developments over the last 25 years are terrific."

Ultimately, John suggests perhaps the greatest measure of PPL's role within the industry is reflected by the strength of the team.

"PPL really is a major player and an organisation where opinions are valued," he concludes. "It's great when organisations have somebody from PPL on their committees, including from the legal team. They can ask advice of the licensing team, who cover all international issues. There are experts at PPL that people want to tap into from across other parts of the industry. That's something that's really developed well under Peter. It's well established, and one of the most important organisations in the industry now and well respected because of that."

**"There are experts at PPL that people want to tap into from across other parts of the industry."**







## An interview with Fran Nevrkla OBE Former PPL CEO and Chair

In his decade serving as both Chair and CEO, Fran Nevrkla OBE completely transformed the fortunes and standing of PPL, taking it from what he saw as a “dinosaur” to a modern, forward-looking entity with the backing of its members. While distributions hit record highs under his tenure, arguably his greatest achievement was nurturing and cultivating a trusting relationship with performers who, thanks to his initiatives, gained a direct say in the running of the company for the first time.

Even though Fran faced countless challenges in trying to reshape the organisation he joined from Warner Music UK in October 2000, it was what he describes as his own “personal quiet campaign” to win over the performer community where some of the hardest battles were fought. He highlights one difficult encounter in particular as he started out on his mission to establish a new relationship with performers when none had existed before.

“Someone stopped me and said, ‘Let me tell you that it’s totally wrong and let me tell you how it’s

going to fail. Firstly, they’ll start arguing among themselves. They will never agree. And then they will turn on you.’ I’ll never forget that,” he recalls.

However, by this time, dealing with adversity had become second nature to Fran. His movie-like life already included fleeing Cold War-era Czechoslovakia for London and then re-training to become a lawyer in the music industry when his remarkable career as a leading violinist was suddenly cut short by a debilitating injury that made playing impossible. Thankfully, he did not face this

new fight alone. By what he calls “pure luck”, he was able to count on the support of a close bond of allies, including then Musicians’ Union General Secretary (and now PPL Chair) John Smith, Glen Barnham of Equity, AURA Company Secretary Nigel Parker, PAMRA Chair Gerald Newson and celebrated record producer Robin Millar.

“Those were the people I contacted first by phone and my message was, ‘Guys, I have nothing to promise. I just want to do things very differently and I will reshape PPL. There’s no ifs or buts, but I want to do it with you guys around the same table with me. The only favour I ask you is to leave your old baggage in the anteroom. Don’t bring it with you to the table. I don’t want to hear endless stories of this happened.’ And I suppose they listened.”

### Setting up the Performers’ Forum

Fran’s first move to bring in performers to PPL was setting up the Performers’ Forum, which launched an online and advertising campaign to track down musicians who were owed a share of millions of pounds of unpaid royalties.

“I thought, let’s not have a huge revolution. Let’s start with small steps and just see where it takes us.” I also did the rounds face to face with all the key record industry bosses privately, but telling

them honestly what I wanted to do: reshape PPL, and build more recognition with the performers in, as opposed to outside, the tent. They all said, ‘Fran, if you can do that, fantastic.’ I didn’t have one dissenting voice from the senior figures in the industry. It was 100% rock solid support throughout,” he says.

**“I thought, let’s not have a huge revolution. Let’s start with small steps and just see where it takes us.”**

Fran was only just getting into his stride. No doubt encouraged by the success of the Performers’ Forum, he then took the bold step for PPL to do something that no one in the music industry had done before – sue the UK government. It commenced legal action after the government failed to fully implement a European directive which meant that there were certain types of businesses that PPL could not license for playing recorded music, whereas the equivalent societies in mainland Europe could. It resulted in a resounding victory for PPL in the High Court and ultimately more outlets from where PPL could collect income on behalf of its performer and rightsholder members.

“David Pannick QC, now Lord David Pannick KC, was utterly brilliant. In the first round, David won 3–0. We won to such an extent the High Court ordered the government not just to cover their own legal costs, they also ordered them to repay PPL’s legal costs because David Pannick and his victory was so overwhelming that there was nowhere for the government to go.”



# An interview with Fran Nevrkla OBE

## Former PPL CEO and Chair

### Fighting for copyright term extension on behalf of performers

Prior to suing the government, PPL had no real relationship with Westminster, but this newly found public affairs strength would prove to be invaluable when the organisation played a central role in the UK industry's campaign to secure copyright term extension for recorded music. After a long-fought battle, copyright term was ultimately extended from 50 to 70 years. As a former musician himself, Fran saw just how life-changing an extra 20 years of PPL payments could be for some performers.

"One of the most heart-warming letters I received was from a lovely old trumpet player, a British guy settled in South Africa and it said something like, 'Dear Fran, I'm in receipt of your latest PPL cheque.' This was early December before Christmas. 'You probably have no idea how much this cheque means to me and my family. It means that we can have a decent Christmas as opposed to not.'

"You almost want to cry because these are the guys who, you know, maybe rheumatism has set in, the lips have lost their firmness and the breath is more difficult, and basically they can't play music anymore. But that precious stream of PPL income, which can now last for an extra 20 years; frankly it's like manna from heaven."

### Transforming international collections

Under Fran's leadership, PPL's political dealings also

included submitting an application to the Office of Fair Trading to integrate performer organisations PAMRA and AURA. The deal's approval was the catalyst for PPL being able to collect what in 2021 alone was a record £94 million of international income. This meant there was now only one organisation collecting internationally for UK performers, rather than three, something Fran said overseas societies had used as an excuse not to pay up.

"All the overseas societies, in Europe even, kept saying, 'Well, who do we pay? Is it this lot? That lot? Someone else?' Then the performer agents stepped in. Those people were almost doing PPL's job overseas. When I stepped in, the first chunk of overseas income was a miserable £5,000 and it's now how many tens of millions? It's a fortune. The only reason why the number is so big is that we removed all the excuses for everyone," he says.

### Welcoming performers to the PPL Board

Following the success of the Performers' Forum, Fran extended the voice and representation of the performers within PPL even further, launching a Performer Board and the Annual Performer Meeting, while for the first time ever, performers and their representatives had seats on the main PPL Board.

"You could probably use the word revolutionary. No one would have expected that in the year 2000," says Fran, who added former Culture Secretary

Chris Smith into the organisation to help in his efforts to develop closer ties with the performers.

"He brought in absolute integrity, absolute respect and I said to myself, 'When Chris speaks at the table, everybody shuts up.' And he was always incredibly thoughtful, respectful, sensitive. He never spoke without having something pretty serious to say."

Another notable name Fran added to PPL's ranks was artist manager and record executive Keith Harris who was appointed to the new position of Director of Performer Affairs.

"I thought that, in addition to the inclusion of senior performer representatives on the main PPL Board, the performers deserved someone inside PPL and that was my idea to create the so-called Director of Performer Affairs. Keith was someone who I knew would bring integrity, honesty, respect and calm consideration."

### Continuing Fran's legacy

Fran stepped down as CEO at the end of 2011 when Peter Leatham succeeded him and continued as Chair until John Smith took up the role in 2016. John was one of the key supporters who



Keith Harris

helped Fran to forge new links with the performer community, while in Peter he is proud of someone who was a key part of his team and is taking the organisation to even greater heights, including with the performer community.

"Peter is a very good man," he says. "He's very intelligent, and incredibly hard-working just like me. We are both probably workaholics so I knew in my heart of hearts that he would not allow it to go wrong and that he would build on what I achieved and take it to the next level."



Fran Nevrkla OBE, Peter Leatham OBE, John Smith OBE



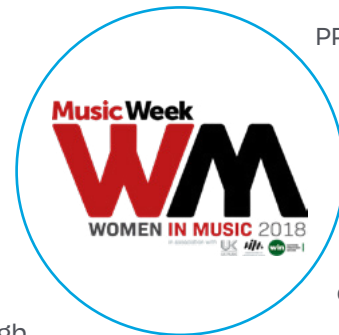
# PPL's social impact

PPL's transformation this century into a modern, sophisticated and forward-thinking music company has resulted in record-breaking income distributions to its performer and rightsholder members. But its impact on the industry can also be measured socially with a sustainable business strategy that stretches from supporting multiple good causes and the performer community to undertaking meaningful work in the EDI space.

The organisation has long taken the issue of equity, diversity and inclusion seriously, but this has come into even sharper focus in recent years. Running alongside a people strategy to develop a culture that is fair and considerate to all, in 2017 the company compiled data for its first-ever Gender Pay Gap Report. This was published in March 2018, in accordance with what were then new statutory regulations requiring any businesses with more than 250 full-time employees to make such information publicly available. Although it revealed a mean gender pay gap of 6.6% in favour of men, the median gender pay gap was 4.3% in favour of women. We were one of the few leading music companies to achieve such a trend at that time.

As this first report was being compiled, PPL also asked all the recruitment agencies it worked with to provide their own equality and diversity policies and explain how these were monitored. Internally,

the organisation enshrined an ongoing policy which ensured that when recruiting staff it would actively seek out candidates from all backgrounds.



PPL's EDI work won industry recognition when it received the Company Award for Diversity in the Workplace at Music Week's Women in Music Awards 2018 in London. This acknowledged the positive work undertaken in recruitment, training, apprenticeships, third-party collaborations and employee engagement.

Since the launch of the joint venture PPL PRS Ltd in February 2018 to oversee public performance music licensing, PPL's full-time direct staff numbers fell below the 250 threshold - the point where it is legally obliged each year to publish its ethnicity pay gap and gender pay gap numbers. However, it is a sign of PPL's dedication to these issues that it has voluntarily continued to make this data available on an annual basis.

## Taking a stand on EDI issues

One disturbing event in particular brought into focus why EDI issues really matter. Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in the US after being arrested by police, PPL took part in Black Out Tuesday on 2 June 2020 to stand in solidarity with Black people. It also published a response to an open letter to the UK music industry from the Black Music Coalition, setting out a commitment to do more and to do better to drive further change on EDI matters both internally and as part of the wider industry.

An immediate example was the launch (in the same month as Black Out Tuesday) of an internal Diversity Forum to push forward ideas, deliver feedback and provide wider support to what PPL was doing in relation to EDI. Made up of more than two dozen members of staff, the group took on a number of important responsibilities, including reviewing, scrutinising and developing PPL's policies, processes, initiatives and partnerships. It also worked on creating a Diversity Hub for staff where resources and information could be shared. This came in addition to EDI training for all staff, including specific training on unconscious bias.

Alongside other industry organisations, PPL was a signatory to a Ten-Point Plan put together by UK Music's Diversity Taskforce and unveiled in October 2020. The plan aligned evidence and metrics to strategic actions with the goal of increasing diversity and inclusion within the trade bodies making up UK Music, including PPL. The points included a programme to increase diversity among middle

and senior management, as well as on UK Music members' boards.

To help support the latter goal, in 2021 PPL worked closely with non-profit music development organisation Women in CTRL on the second edition of its 'Seat at the Table' report. Supporting Women in CTRL's mission to advance gender equality in the music industry, the report looked at the demographic make-up of the boards of the 12 music industry trade bodies that are members of UK Music. PPL supported the report's announcement in the press and on social media, as well as co-organising and co-hosting a series of panel sessions designed to help women put themselves forward and obtain board-level roles in the industry. By the time the 2024 'Seat at the Table' report was published, PPL's progress on gender representation in the boardroom had climbed from 6% in 2020 to 44%, with three of the seven female board members being global majority women.

**Jess Kangalee, Roxanne de Bastion, Kate Reilly (PPL), Eve Horne, YolanDa Brown at the launch of the Women in CTRL Seat at the Table 2024 report, at PPL HQ**





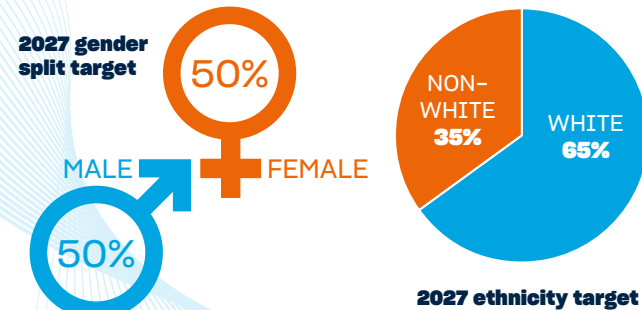
# PPL's social impact

PPL has also backed a range of charities to help aid the career paths of women and those from diverse backgrounds in the industry, including The Cat's Mother, Girls I Rate, Small Green Shoots, The Ultimate Seminar and MOBO's MOBOLISE platform.

PPL's EDI efforts have also included working with UK Music on its biannual Diversity Report, including the 2022 edition which set out a new industry framework called The Five Ps, made up of people, policy, partnerships, purchase and progress. This aims to help deliver enduring results for diversity and inclusion.

PPL has also been active in supporting people with disabilities in the workplace, including welcoming a number of interns from the Leonard Cheshire graduate programme to work in different PPL departments, some have gone on to become permanent members of staff.

While the organisation had already made significant progress in advancing EDI issues, it took another major step forward in 2022 with the launch of a five-year strategy that set out clear goals for the diversity of its workforce by 2027.



## This included:

- ▶ A 50-50 split between men and women.
- ▶ An ethnicity target of 65% of white people and 35% of non-white people, reflecting the make-up of the 2021 Census for London and South East England, where most of PPL's staff live.
- ▶ Another important and growing focus has been the health and wellbeing of its own staff, something that gathered momentum during the dark days of the pandemic when a series of lockdowns forced everyone to work remotely and ultimately led to a hybrid working set-up between office and home. Against this backdrop, PPL launched a wellness campaign called Get PeoPLe Talking, which included guidance on how to manage wellness.

## Supporting a sustainable future

As another example of how PPL is looking to drive change in the music industry, in 2023 it launched its first dedicated sustainability strategy. Under the bold and ambitious heading The Journey Towards Net Zero, this set out 17 actions the company planned to take to reduce its overall emissions and reach the ultimate goal of net zero status by 2050, in line with national and global targets. In the lead-up to this, the company commissioned a full audit of its carbon footprint, which took in an independently conducted assessment of the volume, range and sources of its emissions both



East London Arts & Music

within the office and from home working, as well of those from third-party partners and suppliers.

A number of actions were already underway when the strategy launched, including ones concerning renewable energy purchasing, recycling, and upgrading heating and lighting in the PPL office. The company vowed to measure the progress it was making towards net zero and publish the results on an annual basis.

## Taking corporate responsibility seriously

Charity giving and supporting good causes have been a big part of PPL's remit throughout this century. In 2001, it introduced a Charity of the Year, nominated and voted on by staff. Over the following two decades, a diverse range of charities has been helped through this endeavour, including the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research, Dementia UK, Great Ormond Street Hospital, MIND, Shelter,



Teenage Cancer Trust, Thames21 and Whizz-Kidz. Employees have undertaken all sorts of activities down the years to raise as much money as possible for the year's chosen charity, from marathons and skydives to raffles.

## Backing future creator talent and those working in the music industry

Given its role as a music licensing company, PPL has naturally made supporting organisations and good causes, either indirectly or directly associated with music, a top priority in its mission of giving something back. This has included annual contributions to the **BRIT School**, the UK's leading performing and creative arts school and which provides a free education for 14- to 19-year-olds in disciplines such as music, film, digital design, production, and visual and performing arts. In 2023, a three-year partnership was announced in which PPL became a lead partner in the **south London school's Music Careers Programme**. This was followed by an announcement in early 2024 that PPL would provide funding to **East London Arts & Music (ELAM)** for the next three years to support diversity and equity in the creative and cultural industries.

Among the other good causes and projects that PPL has backed in the music industry as part of its corporate responsibility remit are: **The Blues Project**, a platform supporting emerging R&B talent; the **Ivors Academy Trust**, which educates and nurtures songwriters and composers; **Jazz re:freshed**, which promotes underexposed



# PPL's social impact

musicians in the genre; national charity [Music for Youth](#); music therapy charity [Nordoff & Robbins](#); and [Music Minds Matter](#). This was established by [Help Musicians](#) to provide a dedicated mental health support line and service for the UK music community.

The [Hospital Broadcasting Association](#), a national charity supporting hospital broadcasting in the UK, has long been a benefactor of PPL, as has the [British Association for Performing Arts Medicine \(BAPAM\)](#), a healthcare charity providing medical advice to people working and studying in the performing arts. PPL CEO Peter Leathem serves as its Chair. PPL has also supported a number of events and award shows, including [Focus Wales](#), [Folk Expo](#), the [Gramophone Awards](#), [Jazz FM Awards](#), [Music Industry Trusts \(MITS\) Award](#), [MPG Awards](#), the [Northern Irish Music Prize](#), [Scottish Album of the Year](#), [Sound of Belfast](#), the [Student Radio Awards](#), the [Welsh Music Prize](#) and [Wide Days](#).

Since 2016, it has partnered with [PRS for Music Foundation](#), the UK's leading funder of new music and talent development across all genres. Initially, this tie-up started with a £200,000 investment each year to support the Foundation's [Momentum Music Fund](#) and [International Showcase Fund](#). However, in 2020 the relationship was enhanced when PPL became the headline sponsor of what was rebranded the flagship [PPL Momentum Music Fund](#). The scheme offers UK-based solo artists and bands grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 to help them to break through to the next level of their careers. This includes support for activities

such as recording, touring and marketing. Many hundreds of artists have been helped by the fund, a number have gone on to achieve commercial and critical acclaim, including receiving BRIT Awards and Mercury Prize nominations. These include Little Simz who won Best New Act at the BRITs and the Mercury Prize in 2022, multi-BRITs winner Sam Fender, and acts such as Hannah Peel, K-Trap, Kae Tempest, Knucks and Shygirl.

For many years, PPL has been one of the industry partners supporting the [British Music Embassy](#) showcase of UK artists at the annual South by Southwest music conference and festival in Austin, Texas. At the 2024 event alone, the line-up included more than 60 artists over eight days, while in



The BRIT School

recent years, those who have played the showcase include AJ Tracey, Arlo Parks, Celeste, Dave, IDLES, Nova Twins, Rag'n'Bone Man, Sam Fender, Self Esteem, Yard Act and The 1975.

Then, in 2024, to mark its 90th anniversary year, it made its single biggest contribution to date to the music community with the launch of PPL Giving. This will donate £1 million annually to help to build a sustainable music industry, beginning with funding to 26 organisations covering a wide range of music genres, spread across the UK.

## Supporting the careers and welfare of performers

Beyond its day-to-day role of collecting and distributing revenue for performers when their music is broadcast or performed publicly, PPL has made supporting performers at whatever stage of their career a fundamental part of its DNA. This support took on a whole new level of significance during the pandemic when a series of lockdowns forced the closure of venues and other music outlets around the UK, suddenly leaving many musicians with little or no income. PPL immediately stepped up to provide support in numerous ways. In April 2020, a month after lockdown restrictions were first imposed, it made an advance payment of £23.9 million to more than 15,000 performers and

**PPL's positive impact this century goes far beyond its primary focus of collecting and distributing revenue.**

recording rightsholders, while across that year it contributed £1.4 million to hardship funds administered by AIM, BPI, Help Musicians, the Music Managers Forum, the Musicians' Union and Stagehand. This helped a range of people, including performers and others working in the industry, such as tour managers, roadies, publicists and stylists.

Although lockdown restrictions had started to ease the following year, the livelihoods of some performers and others in the industry continued to be impacted, resulting in PPL making further contributions to Covid-19 hardship funds.

Additional donations were made to funds administered by MMF and Stagehand, while a £100,000 contribution to Help Musicians' mental health support line Music Minds Matter highlighted PPL's support of the mental health of performers.

What all this activity shows is that PPL has made its mission to be an active and responsible participant in the music industry, especially when it comes to supporting the careers and welfare of performers and other creators. Alongside the distribution payments it makes to the performer community, this is helping to ensure a healthy music ecosystem for current and future creators and those who work with them. Couple that with its EDI work to help build a fairer and more just music business and it highlights that PPL's positive impact this century goes far beyond its primary focus of collecting and distributing revenue.

# Most played tracks in the 21st century

PPL's 21st-century chart is compiled from music usage and airplay data from radio stations and television channels as well as public performance locations across the UK.

▶ **2023**

**Flowers**

Miley Cyrus

▶ **2022**

**As It Was**

Harry Styles

▶ **2021**

**Bad Habits**

Ed Sheeran

▶ **2020**

**Blinding Lights**

The Weeknd

▶ **2019**

**Giant**

Calvin Harris & Rag'n'Bone Man

▶ **2018**

**Feel It Still**

Portugal. The Man

▶ **2017**

**Shape Of You**

Ed Sheeran

▶ **2016**

**Can't Stop The Feeling**

Justin Timberlake

▶ **2015**

**Uptown Funk**

Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars

▶ **2014**

**Happy**

Pharrell Williams

▶ **2013**

**Get Lucky**

Daft Punk ft. Pharrell Williams & Nile Rodgers

▶ **2012**

**Domino**

Jessie J

▶ **2011**

**Rolling In The Deep**

Adele

▶ **2010**

**Bad Romance**

Lady Gaga

▶ **2009**

**The Fear**

Lily Allen

▶ **2008**

**Mercy**

Duffy

▶ **2007**

**Chasing Cars**

Snow Patrol

At PPL's 85th anniversary celebrations Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol accepted the award for Chasing Cars, released in 2006, being the most played track of the 21st century.

**As PPL celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2024, Chasing Cars is STILL the most played track of the 21st century!**





# David Harmsworth

## 1977 - 2023

**In September 2023, PPL was devastated to announce that David Harmsworth, PPL General Counsel, died after a short illness.**

David was a much-loved figure in the music industry; a highly respected lawyer, a peerless colleague, and a friend to many. He leaves behind a legacy to be proud of.

David read Law at Cambridge University, and trained and worked at City law firm Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw before joining the Legal & Business Affairs team at PPL in 2003. He rose through the business, finally assuming the role of General Counsel, leading the Legal & Business Affairs team and sitting on the Executive Management Team for over a decade. His impact during his 19-year career at PPL was huge, not least as a key member of the teams which led the 2006 merger of PAMRA and AURA with PPL to create a single home for performers and record companies, and the creation of the public performance licensing joint venture PPL PRS Ltd in 2018.

His influence extended far beyond PPL. Alongside his role as PPL General Counsel, David was chair of the UK Music Rights & Legal Affairs Committee, a director of the British Copyright Council, chair of the BCC Collective Management Organisation and sat on the BPI Rights Committee.



David was a lifelong Arsenal fan, and a legendary baker - everyone wanted to be in the office when he turned up with a cake.

Peter Leathem OBE said: “David was my first appointment at PPL 19 years ago and he turned out to be one of the key people who created the PPL of today. An incredibly able lawyer, a thoroughly kind and conscientious friend and colleague. I will miss him greatly. His ability, and his friendly and collaborative nature made him very popular across the music industry and creative copyright world more generally, which is why he operated in so many external roles as well as his role at PPL. He will be missed by so many and my thoughts, and those of everyone at PPL, are with his wife Heather, his three young children, and their families.”

**During 2023, the PPL team raised over £27,000 for Bowel Cancer UK, David’s chosen charity, as well as over £2,000 for other charities.**



▶ **Hitting  
the right  
note** ●

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