

Watchiet Music Distribution System

User Guide – version 1.0.0

For the site owner, staff, artists, labels and listeners of watchiet.com. Written in plain language. Every step describes something that exists in this version.

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1. What this is

The Watchiet Music Distribution System is a WordPress plugin. It adds a music area to watchiet.com: members sign up as listeners, artists or labels; artists upload releases; staff check them; listeners stream them; members can pay for access or support an artist; the platform keeps the artists' money book; and the team can feature music and handle reports.

What it does not do

- It does not send money. Payouts are a queue: staff pay the artist themselves (M-Pesa, PayPal or bank) and then record it.
- It does not deliver music to Spotify, Apple Music or other stores by itself. It prepares a package and staff deliver it by hand and record the result.
- It does not take advertising payments or write contracts. Sponsored placements and licence records are labels and notes only.
- It does not log people in. Sign-in, registration and password reset stay with your login plugin (AMUM) or WordPress.
- Streams do not earn artists money in this version. Money comes from membership payments, imported statements and entries made by staff.

2. Who can do what

Role	What they can do
Administrator	Everything, including settings, payments set-up, royalties, promotion and who is staff.
Platform manager	Dashboard, accounts review, releases review, logs, diagnostics, audit trail.

Role	What they can do
Moderator	Releases review and takedowns, reports and reviews decisions.
Artist / Label manager	Studio: releases, tracks, distribution requests, earnings, memberships, enquiries.
Listener	Listen page: stream, favourites, playlists, history, follow artists, report, review, pay.

3. First-time set-up (site owner)

Do these in order. After each step, open the public page to check it. Take a full backup first (section 10).

1. Upload the plugin ZIP: WordPress admin > Plugins > Add New > Upload Plugin > choose the ZIP > Install Now > Activate. A new menu item called Music Platform appears.
2. Open Music Platform (the dashboard). It lists every function as a card. Cards for functions you may not use are hidden.
3. Create the Music page from the dashboard (the notice at the top offers it), then press "Publish page and add to main menu". A Music link appears in your site menu. You can rename or move it under Appearance > Menus.
4. Press the "Create and publish the ... page" button for each page the dashboard offers: Account (/music-account/), Studio (/music-studio/), Listen (/listen/), Pay (/pay/) and Subscriptions. Each one adds a button and a live card on the Music page.
5. Open Settings. Fill in: brand name and colours, currency (KES by default), your Terms of Use and Privacy Policy page addresses (write these pages yourself and have a lawyer check them), who may apply as artist or label and whether you approve them first (recommended).
6. Open Scheduled Tasks. All tasks should say OK. WordPress only runs tasks when someone visits the site, so on the live site ask your host to set up a real cron (section 9).
7. Open Diagnostics. Look for red items. The private storage folder for audio should be writable and, ideally, outside the public web folder.
8. Payments (only when ready): Music Platform > Payments > Plans: add a plan. Then Setup: enter test (sandbox) keys, switch the method on, press the sign-in test, make a test payment. Only then switch to Live.
9. Distribution, Royalties, Reviews and Sponsored placements are switched off until you switch them on in Settings. Leave them off until you have decided your rules.
10. Finally exclude the Listen page from page caching (SpeedyCache): the plugin sends no-cache headers, but check your cache plugin's exclusion list.

Defaults. Many limits are safe defaults chosen by the developer, not confirmed by you: audio up to 100 MB (MP3, WAV, FLAC), 30 seconds to 20 minutes, up to 30 tracks per release; visitors hear a 30-second preview; a stream counts after 30 seconds of real listening; smallest payout 1,000 KES or 10 USD. Each is shown in Settings with its meaning. Change any of them to match your rules.

4. Listeners

Join and sign in

1. Open the Music page and press Create account (or Log in).
2. Choose Listener. Listeners are active at once.
3. Open My account to see your details, privacy choices and the "Leave the music platform" button, which removes your music data but never your website account.

Listen and collect

- The Listen page shows published releases. Use search and the genre, language and type filters. Open an artist or a release for details and a share link.
- The player has a queue, shuffle, repeat, seek and volume. Visitors who are not signed in hear a preview only (default 30 seconds).
- Press Favourite on a track to save it (the button then reads Unfavourite). Create playlists, private or shared by link. Your history is listed and you can clear it.
- Follow an artist to get an alert when they publish new music.
- Some releases are limited to chosen countries; they play only for signed-in members whose profile country is allowed.

Featured, reviews and reports

- Press Featured on the Music page to see sponsored picks (always marked "Sponsored"), lists chosen by the team and the "Rising this week" chart.
- If reviews are switched on, listen to a release first, then rate it from 1 to 5 and write at least 10 characters. Web addresses and copied text are refused. A new review may wait for staff before it appears. If a review is removed you may appeal once.
- To report, open the release and open "Report this release" (or "Report this review" under a review), pick a reason and send. You cannot report your own content. The other person is never told who reported.

Paying

Open Pay. Choose a plan and a method. For M-Pesa enter your phone number and approve the request on your phone. For PayPal you are taken to PayPal and back. Your access starts when the payment is confirmed; you get an email receipt. If a payment does not seem to arrive, wait a few minutes and refresh; staff can check it.

5. Artists and labels

Become an artist

1. Open My account and choose Artist or Label.
2. Your account shows "waiting for review". You can keep listening while staff check it.
3. When approved, the Studio opens. If you are not approved, the reason is shown.

Make a release

1. Open the Studio. Under "Start a new release" fill in the title and basic details and press Create draft. Then complete the release details (type, genre, language, release date).
2. Add cover artwork: a square image, 3000 to 6000 pixels, up to 20 MB.
3. Add tracks. Upload audio (MP3, WAV or FLAC) for each. Add credits; the royalty splits for each track must add up to exactly 100%.
4. Answer the six rights statements honestly. These are your declaration that you own or control the music.
5. Press Submit for review. Status becomes "Waiting for review". If staff send it back, read the note, fix it and submit again.
6. When approved, press Publish now, or schedule a date. Published means published on this platform only.

Statuses you may see: Draft, Waiting for review, Needs correction, Approved, Scheduled, Published, Takedown requested, Taken down, Not approved. You can request a takedown of your own release; staff confirm it. If staff take a release down you may appeal once.

Distribution to music stores

If staff have switched distribution on, open the Distribution view in the Studio (the Distribution button on the Music page leads there) and press Request delivery for an approved release. Staff approve, prepare a package and deliver it by hand to the distributor or store, then record the result and store links. You will see the status. Nothing is sent to any store automatically.

Earnings and payouts

1. Open Studio > Earnings and payouts to see your balances: Estimated (can still be refunded) and Confirmed (final).
2. Save your payout details (M-Pesa for KES; PayPal or bank for others). They are shown masked.
3. When your Confirmed balance reaches the minimum, press "Request payout" (the button names your currency). You can cancel a request that is not yet approved.
4. Staff approve and pay you by hand, then record the payment reference. Your monthly statement can be downloaded as a CSV file.

Memberships and licence enquiries

- Memberships: if switched on, propose a support tier (name, price, benefits). Staff approve it. Fans who pay keep access to what the tier promises.
- Licence enquiries: anyone can use "Ask about a licence" on your release page. You see enquiries in Studio > Reviews and licensing. Reply by email, keep private notes, set the status, and record an agreed licence (who, what it covers, where, from and to). The platform only records it; no contract or payment is handled.

6. Staff work

Accounts

Music Platform > Accounts has tabs for Waiting for review, Active, Suspended, Not approved and Staff. Approve, Reject (a reason the member sees), Suspend (ends sign-in sessions) or Reinstate. You cannot act on administrators or on yourself. Administrators mark verified artists and give the Platform manager or Moderator role.

Releases

1. Open Music Platform > Releases. Tabs: Waiting for review, Needs correction, Ready to publish, Published, Takedowns, All.
2. Open a release. Listen to every track. Check credits, rights and the duplicate note (the same audio in two releases is flagged).
3. Press Approve, or "Send back for correction" (a note is required), or Reject (a reason is required).
4. For takedowns, confirm or record a rights complaint. Owners may appeal once.

Streams and diagnostics

Streams (read only) shows the last 7 days: counted, preview only, own music, repeat, over the hourly limit, stopped early. Diagnostics lists environment checks and the state of every scheduled task. Logs are technical and pruned automatically; the Audit trail records changes and cannot be edited.

7. Money

Payments

- Orders lists every attempt. "Needs a staff check" means money arrived that did not match (wrong amount or currency); it never gives access. Check the provider's dashboard and decide.
- M-Pesa refunds: pay the member back yourself, then record your M-Pesa reference on the order. PayPal refunds are made through the system. A full refund ends the access that order bought.
- Secrets (keys, passkeys) are stored encrypted and never shown again. To change one, type the new value; leave it blank to keep it.

Royalties and payouts

The Royalties screen is the artists' money book. Every line is permanent: a mistake is fixed with a new line that cancels the old one (Reverse). Estimated money turns Confirmed by itself after the refund window plus the safety wait. Only Confirmed money can be paid out.

1. Open Royalties > Payouts. Open a request to see the amount and the artist's saved account.
2. Press Approve (or "Do not approve" with a reason).
3. Pay the artist yourself outside the site.
4. Press "I paid it" and type the payment reference. Pressing it twice cannot pay twice.

5. If the payment fails press "Payment failed" with a reason; the money returns to the artist's balance. If it bounces later press "Payment came back".

- Adjustments: add or remove money with a written reason.
- Statement imports: upload a CSV with the columns release_id, period_start, period_end, amount (and optionally currency, reference, note). If any row is wrong nothing is imported. The same file cannot be imported twice.
- Rules and splits: a rule is the share the platform keeps (0% to 50%) from a date; a split says who shares a release's income (up to 10 people, total 100%).
- Exports: ledger, payouts and an artist's statement as CSV files.

8. Promotion and moderation

Open Music Platform > Promotion and moderation. Six tabs: Overview, Lists and chart, Sponsored campaigns, Reports, Reviews, Licensing.

- Lists: create a list, add published releases by ID (up to 40), order them, publish when ready. A release that is later taken down silently drops out.
- Rising chart: counts plays in the last 7 days. One listener counts at most 3 plays of a release, a release needs at least 3 different listeners, and you can exclude a release by ID. Reviews and sponsored placements never change the order.
- Sponsored campaigns (off by default): promote one published release or list between two dates (UTC). Steps: Save as draft, Schedule; it starts and ends by itself. Visitors always see "Sponsored" and the sponsor name. This records placement only; no advertising payment is taken.
- Reports: decide each with a written reason. For a release: "No action needed" or "Take the release down". For a review: "No action needed" or "Remove the review". Three different reporters hide a shown review until you check it.
- Reviews (off by default): by default each review waits for you. Show it, or Reject with a reason (the author is emailed). Answer appeals with a reason.
- Licensing: see all licence records and revoke one. A daily task marks licences expired and reminds the owner 30 and 7 days before the end.
- A weekly summary email goes to the site admin address at most once every 6 days; you can switch it off or send it now.

9. Scheduled tasks and the server cron

The plugin runs jobs on a schedule: release scheduling, upload clean-up, stream totals, new-release alerts, payment checks, reconciliation, receipts, subscription reminders, distribution checks, royalty income, payout reminders, campaign start and end, licence expiry and the weekly promotion summary. Each can run late, run twice, or recover after a failure without harm. A job that fails five times in a row pauses and a warning shows; fix the cause, then press "Retry (clear failure)".

Set up a real cron on the live site. WordPress normally runs jobs only when someone visits. To make them run on time:

1. In wp-config.php add: `define( 'DISABLE_WP_CRON', true );`

2. In your host's cron screen add a job that runs every minute: `curl -s "https://YOURSITE/wp-cron.php?doing_wp_cron" > /dev/null 2>&1`
3. Open Scheduled Tasks; after a few minutes every task should show a recent "Last run".

10. Backup, update and restore

Back up

1. Export the database (your host's phpMyAdmin or: mysqldump).
2. Copy the plugin's private storage folder (where audio and artwork live; Diagnostics shows its location).
3. Copy wp-content/plugins/watchiet-music-distribution-system if you want the exact code you ran.
4. Keep these three together, labelled with the date and the plugin version.

Update to a new version

1. Take a backup (above).
2. Plugins > deactivate the plugin (this does not delete data).
3. Delete the old plugin folder, upload the new ZIP and activate. The database updates itself; Dashboard > Diagnostics shows the schema number.
4. Open the Scheduled Tasks screen and the Music page to check them.

Rolling back: deactivate, then restore the previous plugin folder. New tables stay in place and are ignored by older versions. Do not tick "Delete all data when the plugin is deleted" unless you really want everything erased.

Restore

1. Put the site in maintenance mode.
2. Import the database backup into an empty database (or over the current one).
3. Copy the storage folder back to the same place.
4. Activate the plugin and open Diagnostics: it should show the same schema number and a writable storage folder.
5. Play one track and open one earnings statement to confirm.

11. Privacy requests

Use WordPress Tools > Export Personal Data or Erase Personal Data. The plugin adds its data: favourites, playlists, history and alerts; reviews, reports and enquiries; saved payout details. Money records (orders, ledger lines) are accounting records and are kept; phone numbers are removed from orders. Erasing a person removes their saved payout details and cancels open payout requests.

12. Problems and answers

Problem	What to do
A scheduled task shows red	Check the server cron (section 9), then Retry (clear failure).
Audio will not upload	Diagnostics shows the server limit. Raise upload_max_filesize and post_max_size in PHP. Check the audio is MP3, WAV or FLAC and within the length limits.
A member says they paid but have no access	Payments > Orders: look for "Needs a staff check" or a waiting order; press "Ask the provider again".
The Music page is missing a button	The matching page has not been created yet: use the dashboard button for it.
Pages look old after an update	Clear the page cache in SpeedyCache and your browser.
A payout cannot be requested	The Confirmed balance is below the minimum, or payouts are switched off in Settings.
The Featured view is empty	Create and publish a list, or wait until releases have enough different listeners for the rising chart.

13. Words used in this guide

Word	Meaning
Release	A single, EP or album made of tracks, with cover art.
Estimated / Confirmed	Estimated money can still be refunded; Confirmed money is final and can be paid out.
Ledger	The permanent list of money lines. Lines are never edited or deleted.
Takedown	Removing a release from listening.
Sponsored	A placement a sponsor asked for. Always labelled. Never changes a chart.
Cron	The clock that runs scheduled jobs.
UTC	The universal time used for dates in reports (Nairobi is three hours ahead).

Short help for each admin screen is also inside WordPress: open the screen and press the Help tab at the top right.