

An exploratory study on the increasing involvement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the Music Industry and its impact on an artist's earnings and profits for the music label

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ABSTRACT

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) can now produce a finished track from a simple text prompt, at almost no additional cost per track. At the same time, streaming has become the music industry's most prominent source of revenue, accounting for 69.6% of global recorded-music revenue. Streaming platforms pay revenue to artists based on the percentage contribution of the track's streams to the total streams in the platform, through a fixed monthly pool. This exploratory study examines how the growth of Gen-AI and the volume of songs produced by it affects the earnings of artists and the profits of music labels as well as streaming platforms, and whether an artist's popularity changes this impact. The study is based on a mixed methods approach using secondary data only, from academic research, industry reports and public disclosures from streaming platforms and labels. The findings of this study reveal that AI-produced music is equally eligible for the monthly royalty pool as human music, where the problem essentially branches off: this decreases the amount paid to artists and labels due to the now lower comparative share of streams that they produce. About 10,000 fully AI-generated tracks were delivered to Deezer each day in 2025, and 24% of music creators' revenues are projected to be at risk by 2028. Small and emerging artists are likely to be impacted the most from the immense competition produced by AI production, whereas established artists are most prone to be targets of AI deepfakes. Although, labels are negatively affected in this way, they also gain through the licensing of music catalogues to AI companies. It is empirically evident that platforms and labels are also removing the use of AI content: Spotify scrubbed over 75 million spam tracks in one year, Sony Music asked for the removal of over 135,000 deepfakes and Apple Music protected roughly \$17 million worth of royalties. However, the costs of these removals are not available on public domain. AI also benefits music production, particularly in technical tasks such as mixing and mastering, and lowers barrier to entry. The study concludes that clear

labelling of AI-generated music, compensation mechanisms such as an AI-royalty fund, and licensed training data are needed to protect human artists' earnings.

Key words: Generative AI; Music industry; Streaming platforms; Pro-rata royalty model; Artists' earnings; Record labels; Deepfakes; AI-generated music

Introduction

Technological advancements have consistently disrupted the creative economy with major changes in the ways of how creativity emerges as well as the introduction of many forms of distinct creative activities. Although, these activities tend to adapt more to the current situation than become completely obsolete. For example, with the introduction of photography, painting shifted from trying to portray images to emphasizing interpretation aspects in detail. Similarly, with the advent of Artificial Intelligence in today's society, it is possible that there is a disruption of the established markets for artists and their respective intermediaries.

Older tools that used Artificial Intelligence relied on human input to decide the nature of music. These tools helped the producer complete the task faster. Although now, Generative AI does part of the decision making: it also comes up with an idea and hands back a finished track. This Generative AI is different, where companies train these machines on data consisting of large amounts of existing music, and the 'trained' system then produces a finished track on its own. Therefore, although it is expensive to initially train this system, each additional track it produces costs almost nothing. Consequently, Artificial Intelligence is treated as a disruption to *creative work* rather than just a better tool because it is so easy to produce music (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024).

There exist positive consequences to the integration of AI in the music industry: these tools remove several costs of making music such as in the case of a producer who has to make music without a studio, expensive equipment or formal training and who can then finish a track that is good enough to be released. AI can also aid in speeding up the production/working process, resulting in more ideas being tested in the same amount of time. This boosts the producer's ability to portray creative intellect. Additionally, in the advent of music actually becoming cheaper, it is not inevitable that producers will get pushed out of the market. Instead, they can prevent this and stay competitive by charging less. Looking at this perspective, AI can be again viewed as a tool that producers work with, rather than being a replacement for them (Handke, 2026). Human creative productivity was also seen to increase by 25% when studying over 4 million artworks from more than 50,000 distinct users, with text-to-image AI in Zhou and Lee (2024) acting as one of the closest large-scale pieces of evidence obtained from a neighbouring creative field.

Although, several negative consequences also persist within the music industry. Artificial Intelligence use has been increasing in the labour market, which includes its existence in the music industry. Producers have consistently been raising concerns pertaining to AI taking over tasks they were previously paid for, such as mixing, mastering and demo arrangement, which puts downward pressure on what clients are willing to pay. AI systems are also trained on existing recordings, often without the permission of the musicians who made them, causing legal problems to the producers who use such tools. New inventions also include voice cloning that has made it possible to produce/create tracks in the voice of a dead or retired artist (Galuszka, 2025). The market fills with cheap material that competes with human work for attention because tracks now can be published at large scale.

Collectively, much of the detrimental viewpoint rest on the assumption that AI is reducing what artists earn, though when empirical evidence for the same was collected, high exposure to these AI tools across creative tasks was not matched by a *clear fall in earnings*. What has changed, however, were the parts of the production process being concentrated on by the producer/artist: the actual creative aspects of deciding what the track should be, choosing between outputs, holding client relationships took up more of their time while execution of heavy tasks such as mixing and mastering were taken up by the AI (Makridis, 2025). The work here changes disposition without *income necessarily falling*. The amplitude of this argument, hence, goes ahead, of the evidence behind it.

The evidence provided mostly comes from the US, Europe and China, and from visual art as much as music, and acting being a close relative with respect to research empirical data. It also tends to leave out the self-employed and freelance producers who make up a vast majority of the independent music market, relying on the self-employed and freelance producers (Makridis, 2025), therefore predisposing this debate on a narrow and partly mismatched evidence base. *This paper will analyse the impact of this new revolutionary technology of Artificial Intelligence on the music industry, including the effects on an artist's earnings as well as profits for the music labels.*

Background:

Computers have been used for music production since the 1950s. Recently though, Artificial Intelligence integrated itself in the music production world through DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations) which some music producers have already dabbled in and used to produce music digitally. These software started running on AI without most people realising that they had entered the world of AI technology. By the time it was integrated fully into the music production industry, the impact was such that it was possible to obtain a finished song by just typing a

sentence. Essentially, Artificial Intelligence did not abruptly arrive, rather it came through the software that producers were already using (Galuszka, 2025).

Producing a track involves distinct stages: Composition, Arrangement, Sound Design, Mixing and Mastering, which was all previously done by humans. AI handles mixing and mastering of music tracks extremely effectively, whenever the work is technical and rule bound. Generative AI systems can reach further up from just mixing of tracks to producing composition, arrangement and sound design all at once (Civit et al., 2022). The adoption of AI is not uniform across all music producers: in a survey done, it was found that AI tools substitute most aptly for amateurs, while in the case of more experienced producers the control and assistance is with them rather than depending on the automation provided by AI tools (Vanka et al., 2023).

The manner in which producers earn revenue has also changed in today's world. Almost no one buys music anymore. Instead, income now comes from streams on streaming platforms. These platforms have to pay royalty to the music house/artist as the case may be. Global Music Reports of 2026 portrays figures such as paid subscription streaming accounting for 52.4% of total revenues and total streaming revenues passing US\$22 billion and making up 69.6% of global recorded music income (IFPI, 2026). Therefore, income depends entirely on the numeric number of plays of each track, and how often each track is found on these platforms. Additionally, the frequency of these tracks being found relies heavily on what the algorithm puts ahead. For example, the numeric number of these 'plays' depends on the recommendations and playlists that the algorithm puts forth. It is also effortless and unconstrained to publish a song, therefore the music catalogue on these platforms has the potential to have a plethora of songs, conveying how being discovered matters more than being available. This also illustrates, through their algorithms, how streaming platforms possess immense power in the music industry.

Additionally, it is definite that generative music systems are trained on large collections of existing recordings, learning patterns from that material in order to produce new audio (Civit et al., 2022). The recordings used are frequently commercial releases, and the companies building these systems have generally not licensed them in advance. This remains as the basis of ongoing litigation between the major labels and generative music companies, partly unresolved in most jurisdictions (Billboard, 2024).

Research Gap and Methodology:

This paper would attempt to understand the use of AI technology in the world of music. Has this entry disrupted the existing equilibrium? How does it impact the livelihoods of artists connected with this sector? Does popularity of the artist matter? How has this impacted revenue and sales

of music labels and artists? Has this technology helped in enhancing quality and quantity of music available?

The methodology adopted would primarily be the mixed method type, where both quantitative and qualitative attempt to understand the impact that this technology has had and is having on the music industry that includes the artist and the label. All the data would be collected from authentic secondary sources.

Analysis of the impact of AI on the revenue of the Music Industry

The mechanism of how revenue is paid to producers follows the following pattern: platforms pool subscription revenue and pay for each song, to the music producers or labels, according to its percentage of share out of the total streams that are played. This system is called the 'pro-rata' model (Moreau et al., 2024). In today's scenario where AI tracks are being frequently published, these are competing with human producers for the same monthly pool system. AI tracks corner a large amount of revenue from this system, reducing the amount of revenue going human artists and their respective intermediaries. It is also important to note that this pool does not necessarily grow as and when more and more AI tracks are published. The final pool is still the same in terms of the total number of subscribers and the fee. All of this inevitably reduces the percentage of money that earlier used to go to producers and labels. This is because the overflow of AI music and the 'pro-rata' scheme reduces the amount that goes to the producers and intermediaries (Arenal et al., 2026).

Alternatively, another mode of payout is the artist-centric model, explored by Deezer and Universal Music Group in 2023. It pays more for streams by established artists (at least 1,000 monthly streams from 500 listeners) and for songs that users choose themselves rather than an algorithmic choice. This reduces the value of each stream from users who play more than 1,000 streams a month (Moreau et al., 2024).

This supply shock of AI music is evident when one considers 10,000 fully AI-generated tracks that were delivered to Deezer each day in 2025. This was roughly 10% of daily uploads (Deezer, 2025, as cited in Arenal et al., 2026). It has also been predicted that Generative-AI music will reach about 20% of streaming-platform revenues and about 60% of music-library revenues (CISAC, 2024). The reason this substitution is even plausible is because listeners generally are not in a position to distinguish between AI songs and human ones. Especially so, when listeners were unaware of the origin it was noticed that they slightly preferred AI music and in fact valued it equally with human produced tracks (Friedrichsen et al., 2026).

Table 1 – Projected impact of AI streaming on an Artist’s revenue

Year	Artists	Loss in Revenue due to AI streaming
2028	Global music creators: 24% of revenues at risk	€4bn (projected, 2028 alone)
5 years to 2028 (2023-2028)	Global music creators	€10bn cumulative (projected)
2028	GEMA and SACEM members (Germany and France): 27% of revenues at risk	€950m (projected, 2028 alone)
2023–2028	GEMA and SACEM members (Germany and France)	€2.7bn cumulative (projected)

Source: CISAC (2024); Goldmedia (2024).

The impact on artists might also be exponential: 24% of music creators' revenues are at risk by 2028, a cumulative loss of €10 billion over five years (CISAC, 2024). Furthermore, artists in Arenal et al.'s focus group feared that cheap AI content would dilute revenue pools and create unfair competition (Arenal et al., 2026). Similarly, the same artists also feared that AI could replace producers/musicians particularly in low-budget, mass-market work such as advertising jingles and ambient music (Arenal et al., 2026). *The reason small artists are exposed more to this competition is because a top artist's fanbase is less easily substituted.* AI will definitively compete in the low-stream range where small artists compete for space. In a French Deezer dataset, 91.6% of songs got fewer than 100 streams in a year. Artists ranked below 10,000th made up only 10.5% of streams (Moreau et al., 2024). There are also certain platform rules that can cut the earnings of small artists. For example, Spotify's late-2023 changes limited the earnings provided to "functional noise," artificially inflated streams, and tracks under 1,000 streams per year (Moreau et al., 2024). Under a simulated version of the Deezer–UMG "artist-centric" model, artists ranked below 10,000th would earn 20.4% less revenue per song than under the pro-rata model (Moreau et al., 2024). It can also be that the rules built to filter AI and 'noise' will cut human artist earnings in the case of indistinguishability between AI and human made tracks. Although, it should also be considered that artists see AI as a *productivity multiplier* that in fact lowers entry barriers (Arenal et al., 2026).

Similarly, the impact on labels may also prove to be immense. Intermediaries essentially earn revenue when streaming platforms pay according to the 'pooled streaming revenue system'. In this system the revenue is earned by rights holders who are the parties that supply songs to the platform. For most commercial releases these rights holders are labels (Moreau et al., 2024). It should also be noted that one of the most valuable assets for label's is their catalogues, which is precisely what AI firms need. Mangram (2026) notes Suno's move toward licensed repertoire, suggesting *catalogue ownership gives labels leverage to earn from AI rather than only lose to it*. The major labels dominate this system with one large data set providing empirical evidence for their songs making up 47% of releases but 70% of streams, and any change in the payout agreements requires their approval (Moreau et al., 2024). Nevertheless, labels inevitably face the same dilution as artists, because AI-generated tracks compete for the same monthly pool (Cooke & Taylor, 2024, as cited in Arenal et al., 2026). Furthermore, the effect on all labels will not be the same: if platforms switched to the artist-centric model, major-label songs would earn 1.2% higher, while songs from independent ("indie") labels, distributed neither by the three majors nor by digital distributors such as Believe, would earn 3.1% less (Moreau et al., 2024). Looking out for their own interests, as well as the artists', labels have fought back: by March 2025, Sony Music had asked platforms to remove more than 75,000 AI deepfakes of its artists (Dalugdug, 2025, as cited in Arenal et al., 2026), noting that this figure was under 10,000 in November 2023 (Stassen, 2023, as cited in Arenal et al., 2026). The major labels also sued the AI music firms Suno and Udio in June 2024 (Jacques & Flynn, 2024). Collectively, even with labels' ability to profit from AI, circumstances could shift revenue toward technology firms and away from both artists and labels (Arenal et al., 2026). Overall, small artists mainly absorb the losses, while labels can both defend themselves and license their music.

This shift of revenue in the music industry to technology firms, is that the risk of creators losing income: a prediction made in a study commissioned by CISAC (International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers) that represents creators' societies, indicated that generative-AI firms' music revenues will grow from €0.1 billion in 2023 to €4 billion by 2028, where CISAC describes this as a *transfer of value from creators to AI companies* (CISAC, 2024). This idea is also expanded across other creative industries, where most of the value goes to the platforms that recommend and distribute content (Arenal et al., 2026).

Nevertheless, there exist limits to this shift. Listeners that were told that a song was made using AI, liked it less and were less willing to pay for it (Friedrichsen et al., 2026). This is making human involvement a premium source of value in the music industry, which may be perceivable in the long run (Mangram, 2026). *This essentially suggests that labelling music created by AI as AI-made may help protect human artist's earnings.*

A suggestion that has been put forward is an AI-royalty fund. Jacques and Flynn (2024) which suggest that in the UK, AI firms pay a lump sum into a fund that compensates creators for income lost to AI. Organisations of music-makers, the Council of Music Makers, in conjunction with the Independent Society of Musicians, would administer this fund.

Table 2: Amount of Revenue earned by AI music production

Year	AI Music Producer	Approximate amount earned.
2025	Xania Monet (Telisha Jones, using Suno)	Multi-million-dollar record deal (reported)
Up to 2024	Michael Smith (AI songs + bot streams, fraud)	\$8,091,843.64 forfeited under plea deal
2025 → 2026	Suno (AI platform)	\$200m → \$300m annual recurring revenue

Sources: Billboard (2025); Music Business Worldwide (2026a, 2026c).

In today's world, given the extent of reach and accessibility of AI technology, it is evident that, as far as the music industry is concerned, the platforms are limited and few. Worldwide, these include record labels like Sony Music and streaming platforms like Apple Music and Spotify, while in India labels like T-Series (Music), and Zee music are in existence. Some of them, are multi-faceted in the sense that they exist across all areas of entertainment, be it producing of movies, having their own television channels, streaming on their own OTT platforms, as well as sponsoring music events, music shows, promoting artists, known examples of these are Sony, through its wider group. The Indian labels like T-Series and Zee Music have entered into some but not all portions of the entertainment industry. Here Zee has its own channels on television, along with the production of movies, music, and OTT events, on the other hand, T-Series has restricted itself to production of movies and music. T-Series promotes both music artists and actors and actresses as well as directors while they perform the role of producers for all of the above.

With the free availability of sophisticated AI technology, which can easily deep fake and impersonate, as well as enter into various aspects of labels and platforms, it is required that they invest in various types of software to prevent malafide entry into their domain. This requires a continuous investment due to the speed at which AI is developing, being absorbed and utilized for unethical pursuits. It is difficult to give exact figures as these are not easily available on public domains. However, both parties are financially affected. Streaming platforms must detect and remove fraudulent uploads, while labels must monitor for deepfakes of their artists, file

takedown requests and, in some cases, pursue lawsuits. Each is examined below, beginning with the platforms.

Streaming platforms are financially affected by the costs incurred in removing AI-generated music, because they must detect and take down fraudulent content themselves. The large scale is evident when looking at Spotify, removing more than 75 million "spammy" tracks (Spotify, 2025), in the 12 months to September 2025. Similarly, Apple Music demonetized two billion fraudulent streams in 2025 (The Hollywood Reporter, 2026). Using a royalty calculator from the law firm Manatt Phelps & Phillips, these streams were valued at nearly \$17 million in royalties, which Apple redirected to legitimate artists (The Hollywood Reporter, 2026). No equivalent figure can be calculated for Spotify, as it does not publish stream counts for the removed tracks. The platforms' own costs of detection and removal are not disclosed. Spotify instead shifts part of these costs onto distributors, charging €10 per track each month that flagrant artificial streaming is detected (Spotify for Artists, n.d.; TuneCore, n.d.). The table below shows the scale of removals and their financial impact.

Table 3: AI-related content removed by streaming platforms, and its financial impact.

Year	Music Platforms	Content Removed	Financial impact (approx.)
Sept 2024– Sept 2025	Spotify	75m+ spam tracks	Not computable (no stream data published)
2025	Apple Music	2bn fraudulent streams	≈ \$17m royalties protected

Source: Spotify (2025); The Hollywood Reporter (2026).

Furthermore, record labels are also financially affected, as they have to consistently find deepfakes of their own artists' music and request for its removal from platforms. For example, Sony Music had requested the removal of more than 135,000 AI-generated deepfakes by March 2026 and said this was likely to be only a fraction of those uploaded (Music Business Worldwide, 2026b). Similarly, though Universal Music Group has not published a quantitative figure for the number of AI-generated deepfakes being requested to be removed, it got the AI-generated version of "Heart on My Sleeve", imitating Drake and The Weeknd, removed in 2023 after it reached 625,000 plays on Spotify (Music Business Worldwide, 2023). Labels may also pursue legal action in certain cases. For example, in September of 2026, Universal sued the distributor DistroKid, seeking up to \$150,000 per infringed work if the infringement is found to be wilful (Music Business Worldwide, 2026d). Similar to the platforms the costs incurred by these labels are not publicly available, but to portray how much they are financially affected, the figures can be approximated by multiplying streams by a typical Spotify payout of \$0.003-

\$0.005 per stream (Quin, 2026). Another assumption that has been made for this approximation is that each deepfake is assumed to have reached 1,000 streams, which is Spotify's minimum number of streams per year required for a pay-out (of royalties to the artist) to be possible (Moreau et al., 2024). The table below shows the results:

Table 4: The number of deepfakes removed, and its financial impact on Music Labels.

Year	Music Labels	Number of Deepfakes Removed	Financial impact (approx.)
Up to March 2026	Sony Music	135,000+	≈ \$405,000–\$675,000*
2023	Universal Music Group	Total not disclosed (e.g. "Heart on My Sleeve")	≈ \$1,875–\$3,125 (one track)

*Assumes 1,000 streams per deepfake at \$0.003–\$0.005 per stream.

Source: Music Business Worldwide (2023, 2026b); Quin (2026).

Given the above information, it is clear that the impact of AI on the music industry is immense and that legitimate streaming platforms have to spend a lot of resources to prevent the illegal entry of such type of music into their streaming platforms.

Limitations of the Study:

The study is a secondary study of AI-generated music usurping the territory of legitimate music platforms, labels and artists. Large companies like Sony Music and Spotify have invested many resources in trying to prevent the entry of such content and uphold the legitimate rights of the artists. But this is not really possible by small streaming platforms which neither have the resources nor the technology to prevent their entry. All the data collected has been from public domains. Lack of primary data is a limitation due to insufficient time and finances. An ideal scenario would have been where certain music labels and artists could have been interviewed and their opinion added to the research. Lack of data on the impact of this technology on specific artists, pertaining to the revenue lost, were not available in public domain. As a result, the financial impacts on labels were approximated using assumed stream counts and a typical per-stream payout, and the projected losses for artists come from industry-commissioned studies (CISAC, 2024) rather than measured data.

Conclusion and the way ahead:

The music industry, in recent years, has been flooded with AI deep fake technology in terms of artists impersonation. Two streaming platforms were considered namely, Apple Music and Spotify, along with two music labels, Sony Music and Universal Music Group. Others like

Deezer have also been flooded with AI impact on various music productions, receiving about 10,000 fully AI-generated tracks a day in 2025. The impact of this technology has been primarily concentrated within the streaming platform sphere, where impersonation and falsification are rampant. Both platforms and labels have had to commit resources to prevent this from entering into their domain. However, there is always a race between technology being used in a positive advantageous manner and that of it being utilised in a harmful negative space.

As far as upcoming and new music artists are concerned, the impact of AI is likely to affect their earning capacity. This is less likely in the case of established music artists. The reason being, that the competition is between a new upcoming artist and an AI version of a type of music. This competition does not exist with eminent and established artists, although they remain the main targets of deepfakes.

AI can also be used in a beneficial manner, in terms of sound, acoustics, and technical tasks such as mixing and mastering. It is in this sphere that money and time can be saved and thus worked towards increasing the revenue and sales of the platforms, labels and production houses. It is imperative that for the way ahead, both AI and human artists should work together in creating and producing music and music videos in a way that brings immense pleasure and happiness to the listeners.

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