



AI in the cultural sector

Frei, aber einsam?
Frei und zusammen!

How can we design and develop value driven AI systems?



From human musicians to hybrid human-AI ecosystems



AI, streaming, and the transformation of creative labor



Value-driven AI: beyond innovation towards justice and sustainability, building relevance for human rights?

Overview of Key Themes

**Why AI in culture
and media
matters now**

**Industry
perspective: AI as
“copilot” and
revenue driver**

**Artists and
workers: erosion
of value and
power**

**Legal and policy
responses:
copyright,
neighboring rights,
CMOs**

**Open questions
for value-driven
AI systems**

**Case-law &
breaking news
snapshots**

Why AI in Culture and Media Matters Now

- **AI diffuses across creation and distribution**
- **Streaming platforms dominate access and revenue flows**
- **Digital economy prioritizes scale and efficiency over sustainability**
- **AI reconfigures creative work as data & content, not craft & practice**
- **Many creatives systemically vulnerable in craft &**



Employment and Vulnerabilities in the World of Orchestral Musicians: Symphonic Metamorphoses

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My research niche: key points

**In a minor key: the impact of discrimination,
financial precarity, and the pandemic**

**Influence of diverse hierarchies on a 'closed'
system of employment**

**Out-of-tune categorization: the fully employed,
the self-employed, the false self-employed**

Freelancers' dilemmas

Until the
fat lady
sings?



A SONG ISN'T
JUST AUDIO.
IT'S AN ASSET.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF ONE SONG

THE SCALE IS MASSIVE



253M+

tracks available
across streaming
platforms
(Luminate 2025)



100K+

new recordings
uploaded every
day
(Luminate 2025)

1 CREATION



- Songwriter writes
- Producer composes
- Musicians perform
- Vocalist records

Rights are created from
the very beginning.
Ownership splits decide
who gets paid.

6 CATALOG



Songs don't expire.
They accumulate value
over time.

Earnings continue through
streams, films, ads, gaming,
creator content, remixes,
and sync.

Recorded music revenues reached
US\$31.7B in 2025, marking the
industry's 11th consecutive year
of growth. (IFPI 2025)

5 ROYALTIES

One stream can generate
multiple royalty streams:

- Master royalties
- Publishing royalties
- Performance royalties
- Mechanical royalties
- Neighbouring rights
- YouTube Content ID
- Sync licensing

Most independent artists collect only a fraction
because many require separate registrations.

2 METADATA



- ISRC, UPC
- Songwriter & composer credits
- Publisher information
- Lyrics, artwork, copyright
- Explicit content flag

One wrong credit or missing split
can misdirect royalties for years.

3 DISTRIBUTION



Distributors perform QC,
validate metadata, check
copyright, detect duplicates,
screen for fraud & AI
before delivering to DSPs.

Gatekeeping is critical because
of the scale.

4 DISCOVERY



- Spotify
- Apple Music
- YouTube Music
- & many more

Playlists, search, recommendations,
short-form video and user libraries
decide how far a song goes.

A SONG'S
JOURNEY NEVER
REALLY ENDS.
IT EVOLVES,
EARNS & CREATES
VALUE FOR YEARS.

THE BIGGEST LESSON?



The music is finished when you

The value of creative expression?

Most artists spend months
planning a song

The music business spends
days marketing &
distributing

This is only the beginning

WHY MAJOR LABELS ARE **BUYING CATALOGS** INSTEAD OF SIGNING ARTISTS

They're not chasing the next hit.
They're investing in proven income.

ARTIST MINDSET



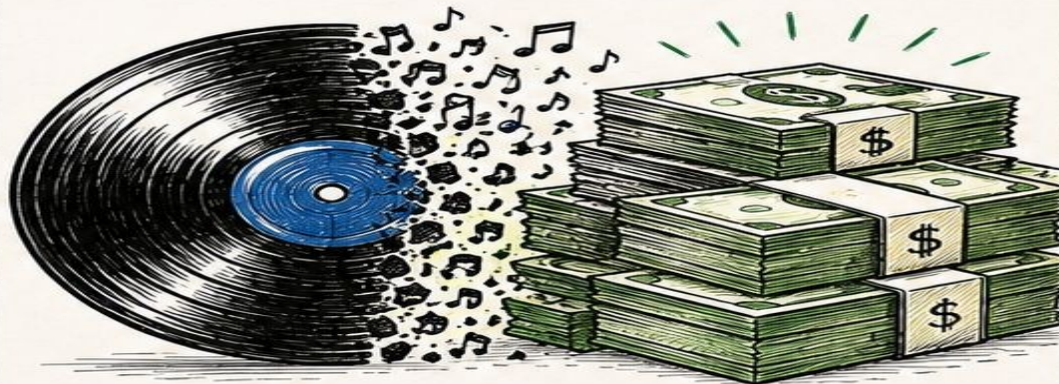
RELEASE SONG



PROMOTE



MOVE ON



A CATALOG IS A PORTFOLIO OF
INCOME-PRODUCING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.

INVESTOR MINDSET



STREAMING



SYNC (FILM / TV / ADS)



RADIO



PUBLIC PERFORMANCE



COVERS & REMAKES



INTERNATIONAL
LICENSING



FUTURE REVENUE
(NEW PLATFORMS,
NEW TECHNOLOGIES)

MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS. DECADES OF VALUE.



STREAMING
(SPOTIFY, APPLE MUSIC)



YOUTUBE
MONETIZATION



SOCIAL MEDIA
USAGE



FILM & TV
SYNCS



ADVERTISING



RADIO



LIVE & PUBLIC
PERFORMANCE



INTERNATIONAL
LICENSING

MAJOR CATALOG DEALS IN RECENT YEARS

QUEEN



\$1.27 BILLION

BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN



**\$500-\$550
MILLION**

BOB
DYLAN



**\$300+
MILLION**

PINK
FLOYD



\$400 MILLION

JUSTIN
BIEBER

JB

\$200 MILLION



SONGS AREN'T JUST CONTENT.
THEY'RE ASSETS.

The most valuable release
is often the one you
made years ago.





Streaming, AI, and the Devaluation of Music Labor

- Streaming $\approx$ 70% of global recorded music revenue; most musicians gain little
- Platforms: users pay for “access,” not per stream → is this used to deny artist linkage
- Treats music as utility rather than a vibrant marketplace of individual works
- Human music: finite and costly AI music: effectively infinite and cheap

Structural dynamics

- Royalties are the largest variable cost in two-sided platform markets
- Content-glut narrative justifies “near-zero” creation cost claims
- Models trained on human catalogs compete with training data without pay
- Playlist gatekeeping can steer to low- or no-royalty audio



Performers, Neighboring Rights, and Legacy Contracts in the Streaming Era

- **Session musicians and non-featured performers: one-off fees + neighboring rights — many now receive zero remuneration from ongoing streams**
- **Pre-internet contracts ignore streaming and AI reuse entirely**
- **Music increasingly treated as a financial asset by investors**
- **Hit-driven model: extreme concentration on a few mega-earners; experimental and niche genres squeezed out**
- **AI flips economics from scarcity (exclusive recordings) to abundance**
- **Would you sign over your voice to an AI model for guaranteed royalties?**

The Industry Narrative: AI as Copilot, Growth Engine, and Revenue Driver



Major players: Apple Music, Amazon, Pandora, Spotify, YouTube, etc.



Generative AI framed as assisting, not replacing, human creativity



AI positioned as growth engine for the creative economy



Positive example: restoring John Lennon's vocals with AI for a Beatles track



Analogy: AI as next expansion wave after home video and digital platforms

Industry Governance: Toolkit and Metadata



- **Internal standards: fairness, transparency, accountability**
- **"Do not crawl" signals, prompt blocking, and limits on "in the style of" imitations**
- **Support for labeling AI's role in all works**
- **Metadata, attribution, and the supply chain**
- **High-quality metadata as precondition for fair payment and attribution**
- **Nuanced labels: human-created, AI-assisted, AI-generated**
- **Critical question: what about non-Grammy winners, the vast majority of creatives?**

Artist and Worker Perspectives: Does AI primarily add value for platforms and investors?



- AI as creative tool in performances, installations, media expressions
- New experiential formats and cross-catalog discovery for audiences
- Potential for richer interfaces and recommendations

But also, significant harms

- Human Artistry Campaign and similar initiatives document risks, AI **becomes** the worker
- AI “bubble” echoing Internet 1.0: speculative gains, hype, instability
- Concern: inability to distinguish AI vs. human music (trust, neuroscience)
- Quo vadis artists/creatives? Ambivalence or action?



Policy & Sectoral Contexts: Digital Transformation impacts Cultural Policy

- **85% of EU cultural ministries address digital transition**
- **Digital revenues $\approx$ 35% of music creators' incomes**
- **79% of cultural professionals see AI as a threat**
- **Out of 148 AI laws worldwide, only 1 places culture at core**

Legal and Policy Responses: Options and Limits

Collective rights and CMOs

Individual contracting cannot fix structural underpayment

"Streams and Dreams" survey (~10,000 musicians): few revise legacy contracts

Strengthening copyright and neighboring rights (e.g., EU DSMC 2019)

Belgian transposition challenged by major platforms and record companies

Brazil: ambitious performer-friendly bill; enforceability remains unclear

Streamz case at CJEU: testing scope for mandatory remuneration scheme

Non-waivable, non-transferable collective remuneration rights via CMOs

Example DE: GEMA manages author/performer license & distribution rights

FKMP Korea: exclusive interactive transmission rights for performers since 2003

FKMP collectively manages streaming royalties for featured and non-featured artists

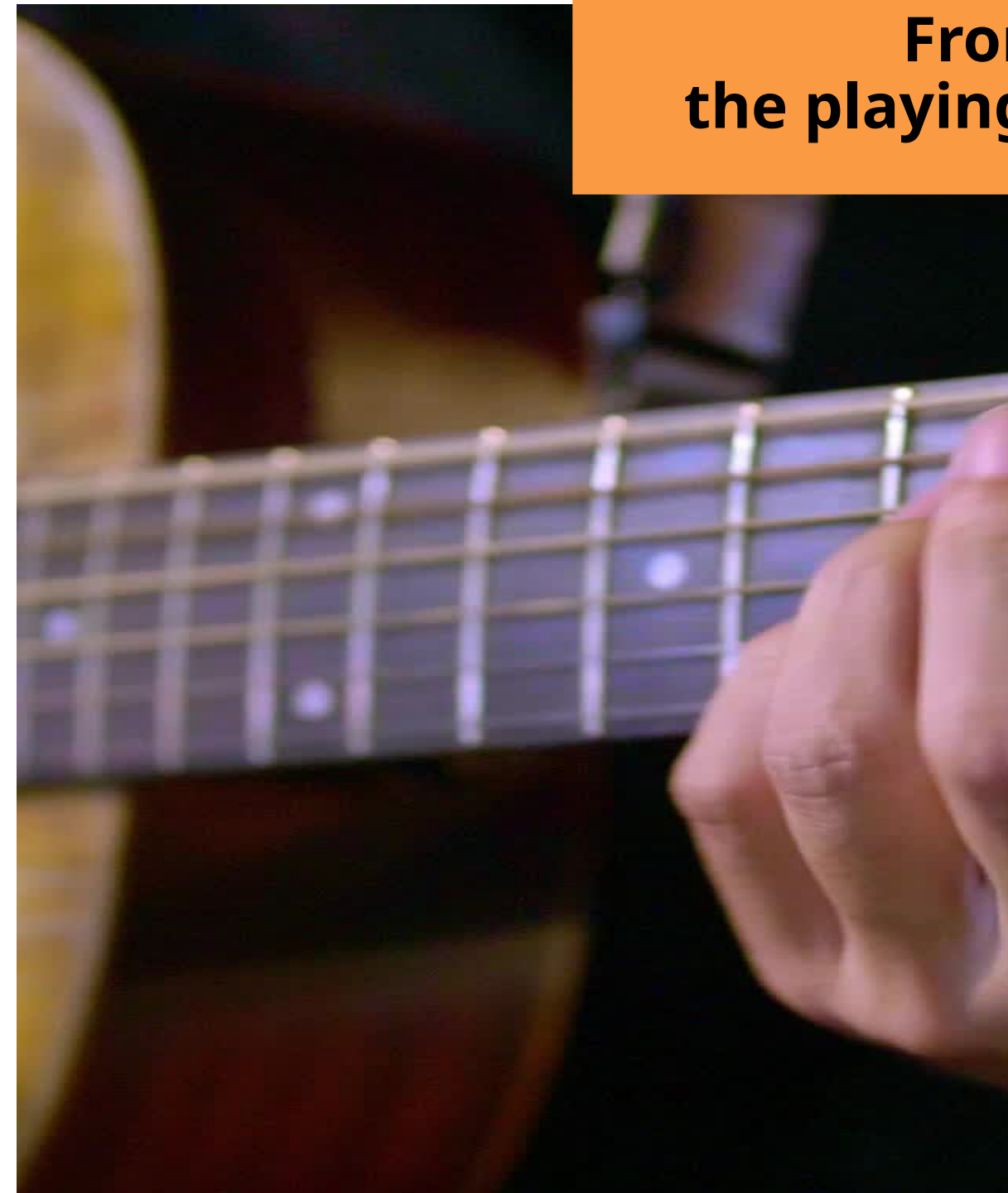
Performers, CMOs, and unions as potential allies counterbalancing platforms

Allocating Responsibility

- Human actors (developers, organizations) are moral agents and duty-bearers
- Corporations as legal persons should be held liable for AI behavior
- Investor story: AI driven by margin expansion not fair pay, calls for drastic reconsideration
- Responsible AI frameworks distribute responsibility across the lifecycle



From consultation to action: the playing field expands with the rise of AI

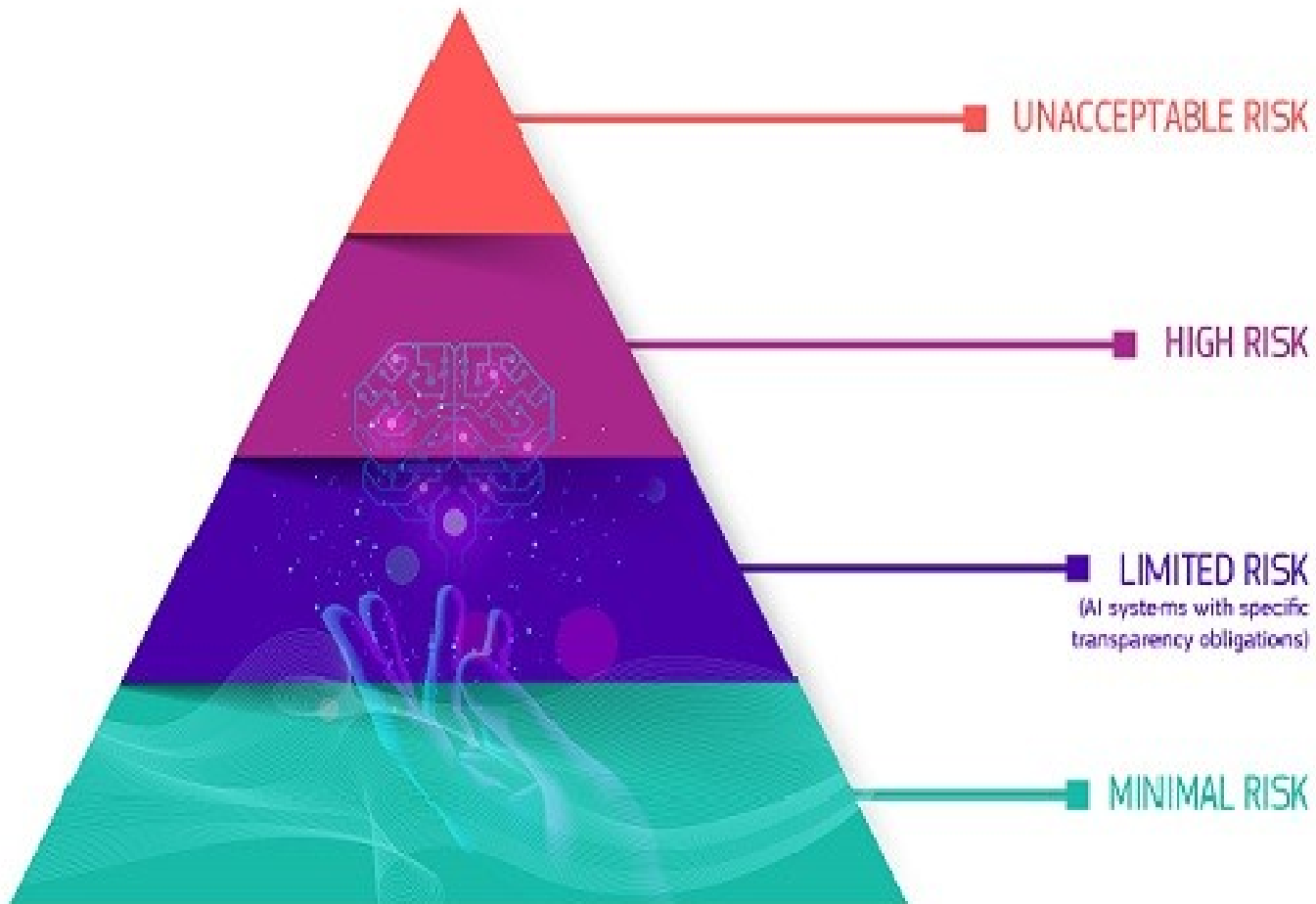


- **As a reminder” streaming generates approximately 70% of global recorded music revenue (2025), most musicians, particularly session musicians, receive inadequate revenue**
- **Considering streaming and shrinking revenues for performers, can unions and CMOs unite to provide better remuneration for musicians? AFM-SAG-AFTRA examples from the US**
- **Stand up for the weakest links: what has collective bargaining achieved in EU unions (UK-Belgian examples)?**
- **Shift the union narrative? AI as a labor displacement tool is the common cry**
- **The EU AI Act?**

The EU AI Act (Regulation 2024/1689)

A Risk-based Approach

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How does it strengthen regulatory mechanisms?



What are its pros and cons?



Would a more interventionist approach provide advantages?

Designing Value-Driven AI Systems



- What do we want to achieve with AI in culture and media?
- How do we establish valid ethical and cultural values in the first place?
- How do we embed societal, ethical, and cultural values in data and design?
- What opportunities and limitations do current AI tools create?
- Can we design revenue models