

AI as a Creative Partner: Human–AI Collaboration in Music

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence has reconfigured nearly every domain of contemporary life. How could music remain untouched? There has been a seismic shift from artificial intelligence as a mere passive instrument to an active, creative collaborator. It is not only executing commands, but it has also begun to influence actual musical outcomes. This research paper examines artificial intelligence as a creative partner and explores human-AI collaboration in music. It examines ethical tensions, authorship questions, and the governance of human–AI creativity in music. It presents findings from a survey of 20 music practitioners, providing insight into AI's role in creative workflow. This interaction between technology and humans is influencing the musical direction and negotiating the creative control between humans and AI.

This shared creative input between artists and the machine has started to *blur the boundaries of authorship*. This creative collaboration challenges the traditional ideas of authorship. This paper underscores the necessity of building awareness of artistic accountability, as innovation must always be accompanied by responsibility. This paper argues that artificial intelligence is *not a replacement for human creativity* but is a tool to reshape how artistic ideas are developed today. Human-AI collaboration is a reconfiguration of the exploration and co-creation of music. It is definitely *a transformation, but not a replacement* for human creativity. This paper examines how human and machine capabilities can be leveraged in this never-before-heard-of collaborative scenario.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence in Music, Human–AI Collaboration, AI-assisted Music Performance, Co-Creation in Music, AI Ethics in Music

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence is one of the most transformative technologies of the 21st century. The ability of this tool to simulate cognitive processes distinguishes it from other tools we've used before in human history. It is not here to replace humans but to augment their capabilities from the canvas to the concert hall and from the pages of a novel to the complex world of healthcare. It not only saves time and boosts productivity but also helps to overcome creative blocks and facilitates ideation. However, the artists need to take the final call to select, refine, or reject AI-generated material. Human agency remains central in shaping the aesthetic direction of AI-generated outputs. We are currently standing at a critical intersection. On one side, there's the entire history of music, messy, emotional, human. On the flip side, there's a future where machines have the capability to produce infinite songs in minutes. It is time to redefine what art and creativity mean in the age of AI.

2. FROM A TOOL TO A COLLABORATOR

Artificial intelligence is becoming more than just a tool. It is becoming a collaborator and a co-conspirator in creative journeys. To describe AI as a collaborator rather than a tool is to recognise that it *does not merely execute commands* but participates in shaping compositional direction through iterative suggestion and response. A tool is instrumental and passive, whereas a collaborator introduces variation and unpredictability. AI isn't just an observer in this symphony; it's becoming a composer crafting melodies and harmonies in a language it has learned from humans by analysing vast amounts of musical data. AI algorithms identify patterns, understand styles, and use this knowledge to compose original pieces.

As noted in recent research, “AI helps the composer to innovate, generate ideas, reduce routine work, and produce new concepts dealing with new manners of composition” (Chen & Liu, 2024, p. 11). AI exposes artists to new forms of inspiration and experiences that we may not have encountered ourselves. Artists and AI work hand in hand, with the system suggesting novel ideas and humans refining them by adding a distinctly human sensibility. AI augments creative processes. It understands different genres, styles, and even the nuances of rhythm and harmony. It offers suggestions that spark new ideas and bring fresh perspectives to compositions. AI is making significant strides in augmenting artists' cognitive abilities. It enhances problem-solving and decision-making skills. This collaboration between artists and AI has pushed the boundaries of music. In this context, AI may become “the next great instrument” (Joss, 2025), comparable to earlier technologies that were initially dismissed but later integrated into artistic practice. As Joss (2025) suggests, a guitar does not compose without a player; similarly, AI does not eliminate human agency but expands the range of creative possibilities. Generative AI can be thought of as a learning assistant that doesn't always get it right, so one has to keep their critical thinking fully on board. It can be highly effective when used in a conscious way. Having AI as a songwriting companion is akin to having an endless source of inspiration, a wellspring of ideas that never runs dry. It provides creative nudges and challenges that help in thinking differently. However, it must be acknowledged that merely selecting AI-generated outputs—for example, choosing one out of ten options—does not in itself constitute artistic authorship. This concern is echoed in the literature: “Who is qualified to compose music when there is composed music by an AI system if that composed music can be considered original?” (Chen & Liu, 2024, p. 3). If AI is no longer merely assisting but actively shaping musical outcomes, then the site of creativity shifts from the isolated human subject to a relational space between human and machine.

This shift becomes even more critical when the collaboration extends beyond composition into embodied, real-time musical interaction—an issue that the next section explores through the lens of human–AI performance practice.

3. TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIALS OF HUMAN–AI COLLABORATION IN MUSIC

Human-AI collaboration is reconfiguring the infrastructure and authorship in music. It has considerably lowered the barrier to entry for emerging musicians. It has given *greater access to geographically and economically marginalised creators* by reducing production costs.

Multilingual and cross-cultural productions are also easily possible now. At the same time, music education has also benefited from this collaboration between humans and machines. People are receiving personalised feedback, *AI-driven ear training*, and *compositional suggestions*. Features like stem separation are aiding both learning and content creation. AI is undeniably an ideation partner. Text-to-

music systems like Suno have completely changed the game. A thought in the form of a prompt can be directly translated into a song within seconds. *Artists are now functioning as creative directors*, guiding the vision of creation. AI is being directly embedded into DAWs for functions such as chord detection, generative harmonisation, and adaptive tempo alignment, to name a few. It is no longer external software but an infrastructural layer within the production ecosystem. This has increased efficiency without eliminating human interpretive control. As Chen Wang (2025) argues, "Composition in the AI era is less about direct authorship and more about curation—an active negotiation between human intention and machine-generated possibility" (p. 28). These pathbreaking technological transformations are undoubtedly powerful, yet they also destabilise existing norms of ownership and creative labour, leading directly to ethical tensions that must now be examined in the next section.

To understand the experiences and perceptions of practitioners in AI in music, I surveyed 20 active music professionals. The survey explored AI's impact on workflow, ethical considerations, and the future of human–AI collaboration.

4. ETHICAL TENSIONS IN HUMAN–AI MUSIC COLLABORATION

It is often observed that the same mechanisms that enable expansion and augmentation simultaneously generate instability. The same is true for the AI-human collaboration. There is significant *fear of job loss in the industry*, particularly in areas such as session work, mixing, and background scoring. This may reduce the demand for junior professionals. I asked the survey respondents whether they perceive AI as a threat to jobs in the music industry. As shown in Figure 1, sixty per cent of people anticipate potential employment disruption.

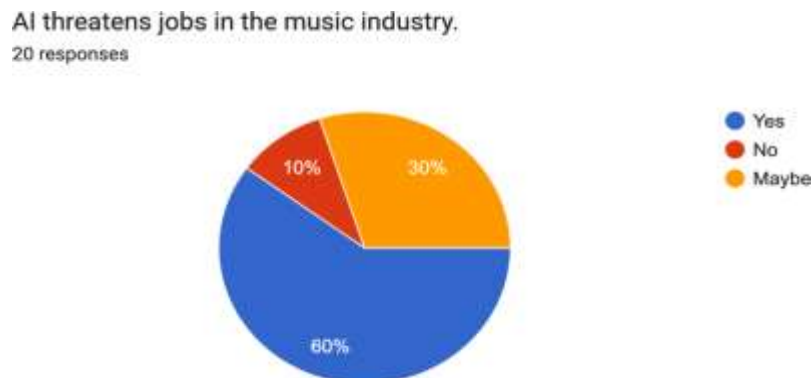


Figure 1. Perceived threat of AI to employment in the music industry (N=20).

Additionally, the platformisation of music production may *concentrate economic power in the hands of AI-owning corporations*. This structural shift reflects what has been described as *disruptive innovation*, wherein new technologies begin as more affordable and accessible alternatives before gradually displacing established players within an industry (Olayeni, Year, p. 10). The gap between AI-literate creators and traditional practitioners may widen.

People have started developing voice models of living artists without their consent. A recent example is the High Court's protection of Arijit Singh against unauthorised use of AI-generated voice models replicating his vocal identity. According to a report in *The Indian Express*, a single-judge bench of Justice Riyaz I. Chagla, in an ex parte interim order dated July 26, 2024, prima facie held that Singh's personality traits are protectable under his right to publicity, noting that "making AI tools available to enable conversion of any voice into that of a celebrity without his/her permission constitutes a violation

of a celebrity's personality rights” (Gokhale, 2024). The court recognised voice as a key component of personal identity and public persona, thereby extending personality rights into the domain of AI-mediated replication. Similarly, deceased artists such as Kishore Kumar and Mohammed Rafi have been mimicked through AI-generated replication. This violates their moral rights. Moreover, there is no compensation for their families. Another major challenge concerns the training of AI models on existing musical databases. This may also lead to the exploitation of marginal traditional music forms without fair compensation. With the existing laws, there is significant *ambiguity about intellectual property in co-generated works*. Critics argue that AI lacks lived experiences and is not capable of reproducing something that is emotionally deep.

There is a notable absence of standardised consent frameworks. The need of the hour is to develop a system of transparent documentation and equitable revenue-sharing models.

Psychologically, there may be a reduction in the acquisition of deep craft due to over-reliance on AI. These tensions do not make the collaboration impossible, but they demand regulatory changes and new models for governance.

5. BEYOND REPLACEMENT: GOVERNING HUMAN-AI CREATIVITY

AI is just an instrument. Just as a guitar cannot write a song on its own, AI is also direction-dependent. It is generative in nature, but it is not an autonomous creative subject. Similar forms of technological anxiety have appeared throughout the history of art.

Photography was initially not considered an art form. Sampling in music was once considered illegal. Electronic instruments were seen as a threat but later became an integral part of music-making. The real disruption is structural, because copyright laws were framed long before artificial intelligence emerged. These laws, therefore, require reconfiguration. As Suhailudheen (2025, p. 3) notes, ethical frameworks are necessary to ensure transparency in AI-generated compositions and fair compensation for musicians whose works may have informed model training. The future of human-AI collaboration is not about replacement, but about how musicians design and govern this collaborative system. As Michele Newman (2023, p. 80) suggests, the more desirable future path lies between opposites, where productive and ethical human-AI collaboration can emerge through responsible use of these tools. Survey results indicate strong practitioner belief that human-AI collaboration will soon become a standard part of music production (Figure 2).

Human-AI collaboration will become a standard part of music production within the next 5 years.
20 responses

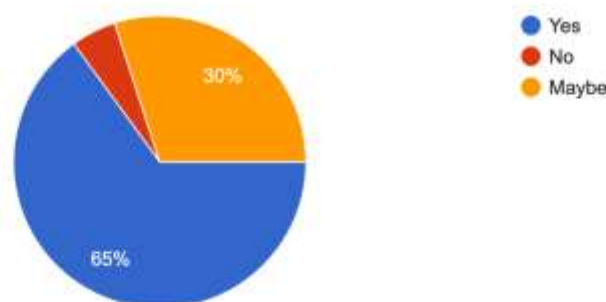


Figure 2. Anticipated standardisation of human-AI collaboration in music production within 5 years (N=20).

6. CONCLUSION

We are at a pivotal moment where AI is no longer just a tool for music production, mixing or mastering. It's creating complete symphonies, pop songs and soundtracks. Some see this as a revolution, while others fear that it could mark the end of human creativity and displace human musicians. The *impact of AI on the music industry is both transformational and contentious* (Gera, 2026, p. 6). For centuries, music has been regarded as a profoundly human practice. It has served as a medium for expressing love, pain, and joy and for narrating human stories. Thus, the idea of a machine that has never experienced any emotion producing music that moves us feels unsettling. Many fear that AI will replace real musicians, leading to a landscape dominated by synthetic, machine-generated melodies. AI is not meant to replace the artists; it's here to co-create with human beings. The next era of creativity will be defined by a symbiotic relationship between humans and AI, where both parties collaborate to push the boundaries of what art and design can achieve. (Raza, 2025, p. 119) It needs to be thought of as a tool, just like the synthesisers and digital audio workstations. All of these innovations were initially feared, but today we cannot imagine making music without them. Artists are already using AI in innovative ways to generate and expand new ideas. For example, an emerging musician with no formal training and no musical education can use AI to bring their ideas and compositions to life. This raises the question of whether this is the death of creativity or its expansion.

The future of music isn't about choosing between AI and human creativity. It's about combining them. AI can analyse patterns, while humans can bring soul, meaning and emotion. But it must be ensured that innovation is accompanied by accountability while engaging with generative technologies. As Vengathattil (2025, p. 260) argues, "Transparency in creative AI development should be supported by ethical frameworks." Both artists and developers must use AI ethically and responsibly for this human-AI collaboration to remain meaningful. Also, there is an urgent need to reconsider the creative ownership and assignment of artistic credit, keeping in mind this evolving model of collaboration. Creative potential emerges when we use AI as a collaborator, a creative partner, and a co-writer, not as a replacement. So, *AI-generated music is not the end of creativity; it's a new beginning*. It's a new way to explore sound, to push boundaries, and to create something the world has never heard before.

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