MUSIC IN THE DIGITAL AGE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE | DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ARTISTS' RIGHTS

ATHENS, OCTOBER 22-24, STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CULTURAL CENTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

Music in the Digital Age: Streaming & Artificial Intelligence has been a three-day international forum organized by APOLLON (Greek CMO for musicians' neighboring rights) and FIM (International Federation of Musicians). Against the backdrop of **AI-generated content and the dominance of streaming platforms**, the conference examined how **revenue models, legal frameworks and artistic labor are being reshaped** in a digital economy that prioritizes scale over sustainability.

Bringing together artists, journalists, industry professionals, legal experts, academics, policy makers and technologists, the event focused on three core questions:

- How to build **sustainable and equitable compensation** models in a saturated streaming market?
- How to protect creators' rights when **AI is trained on and competes with their work?**
- What role should legislation play in **securing ethical AI and fairer digital markets** without stifling innovation?

In these demo sessions, AI-created/assisted works emerged as **human-led projects**. Machine systems extend, rather than displace, musical authorship, whether in the studio or on stage. Together, they sketched a continuum from workflow augmentation (restoration, arrangement, mastering) to interactive, improvisational co-creativity, keeping **human intention, curation, and responsibility at the center.**

D. AI | DEMONSTRATIONS OF AI CREATED/ASSISTED WORKS

1. Steve Levine: AI in the recording studio

AI-created/assisted works appeared in Levine's session as **studio practices** where AI enhances access, speed, and creative options without displacing the producer's role.

- He first showed AI **stem-splitting** on a 1982 Culture Club stereo tape to recover usable instrumental stems, combining Logic's Stem Splitter with Re-stem to isolate vocals and individual drum elements from a mono source.

- He moved to Logic's Session Player, using **AI-generated drum, bass, and keyboard parts** as editable sketches:
  - parameters such as complexity, intensity, and style were shaped through musical controls and
  - outputs were converted to MIDI for detailed note-level editing rather than treated as finished compositions.

- He then centered on **AI-assisted mastering** with iZotope Ozone, where the system analyzed a mix, suggested processing chains (EQ, clarity, maximization), and intelligently **corrected problems** like floppy low-end while enhancing vocal presence. He stressed that this puts **high-quality mastering within reach of smaller studios** while preserving human control over taste and dynamics.

- In discussion, he extended the frame to **orchestral cues**. He noted the creative value of "happy accidents" when **unexpected AI sounds are embraced**, and mentioned workflows combining **text-generated MIDI** with rich instrument libraries, as well as support for **microtonal and non-Western instruments**, all reinforcing AI's role as a **powerful assistant inside a human-defined aesthetic framework.**

2. Gérard Assayag: human–AI co-creativity

Assayag's session approached AI-assisted works through the lens of **human–AI co-creativity**, placing contemporary systems in a historical line from Descartes and Leibniz's dreams of computable language to Ada Lovelace's prediction that machines could compose arbitrarily complex music.

- He distilled this into **four moments**:
  - Greek foundational mathematics,
  - a 17th-century combinatorial machine worldview,
  - 19th–20th-century logical foundations, and
  - today's biologically inspired neural models,

  to argue that current AI realizes an old ambition to compute aspects of creativity while also raising fresh questions about agency.

- At the practical core was **SOMAX II**, an IRCAM system whose listening, learning (latent "imagination"), and interaction modules together aim to make AI an **improvising partner** rather than a command-response tool.

- In the live, unrehearsed performance, guitarist Tilemachos Mousas played with SOMAX, which had been **pre-trained on a corpus but had not rehearsed** with him; as he played, the system listened, drew responses from its latent space, and entered into an evolving musical dialogue.

- Assayag acted as a **human conductor**, activating and deactivating AI "players" and adjusting parameters like reactivity and inertia to ensure that the machine's behavior remained **musically expressive** rather than mechanically generative.

- The result was framed as **co-evolution**: human and machine continuously influenced each other's ideas, producing music that neither could fully script, and positioning AI as an **extension of human creativity** that introduces surprise and emergent structure within a human-led performance ecology.

3. Overarching implications

Across both sessions, AI-assisted works emerge as **human-led projects** where machine systems materially shape sound (through restoration, sketch generation, mastering, or improvisational response) without supplanting human authorship or responsibility.

- **In Levine's studio examples**, AI provides sophisticated **scaffolding**: extracting stems from archival recordings, generating editable rhythmic and harmonic foundations, and proposing mastering chains, while producers decide what to keep, how to edit, and when a track is finished.
- **In Assayag's live setting**, AI's improvisations are bounded and curated by human performers and conductors, so that authorship emerges from a feedback loop but remains anchored in **human design, oversight, and performance practice.**

4. CONCLUSIONS

- For discussions of AI-created or assisted works, these sessions implicitly support frameworks that continue to locate rights and accountability with human creators, even when AI tools are deeply embedded in the production chain.
- They also point out how AI's deployment may be crucial for classifying works and for drawing normative and legal lines between AI as infrastructure, collaborator, or independent originator. (Workflow augmentation, co-improvisation on stage, versus unsupervised autonomous generation).