



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?

This opening session established the technical and philosophical groundwork for the conference's two-day exploration of Artificial Intelligence. It featured a keynote address by pianist and researcher **Pavlos Antoniadis** (IRCAM/Ioannina University), followed by a technical panel moderated by **Benoit Machuel** (FIM), featuring **Yiannis Stathopoulos** (Microsoft) and **Dimitris Kalocheretis** (Apollon CMO).



APOLLON
GREEK MUSICIANS'
COLLECTING SOCIETY



A. AI | THE MECHANICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Key Themes & Discussions

The session aimed to demystify the "black box" of AI for a non-technical audience of musicians and legislators. It juxtaposed two distinct narratives: an **industry perspective** focused on the scalability, efficiency, and inevitability of Generative AI, versus an **artistic/academic perspective** arguing for a human-centric, embodied approach to AI that resists industrial standardization.

1.1. The Mechanics of "The Black Box" (Input/Output)

- **Training & Encoding:** The panel confirmed that AI does not "hear" music but converts it into **numerical representations (tokens/vectors)**. Once ingested, **the original musical artifact is effectively "thrown out," leaving behind only probabilistic parameters.**
- **The Prompt:** The "prompt" was identified as the new locus of control. Industry speakers argued that the quality of output depends entirely on the user's ability to instruct the model, **shifting the skill set from musical execution to managerial direction.**
- **Infrastructure:** The explosion of AI is driven by hardware advances (GPUs) rather than software breakthroughs alone. This has created an **exponential demand for energy**, with data centers now requiring power at the scale of nuclear reactors.



1.2. The Conflict of Definition: Tool vs. Agent

- **Industry View:** Stathopoulos and Kalocheretis framed AI as a **neutral “tool” or “instrument”**, arguing that liability remains with the “human in the loop”. They emphasized democratization and collaboration.
- **Artist View:** Machuel and audience members expressed anxiety over AI as an **“omniscient expert” or “stowaway student”** that extracts human value without consent. Antoniadis warned of **epistemic violence**, where the embodied, social nature of music is stripped away by statistical modeling.

1.3. Irreversibility and Control

- **Unlearning:** The panel reached a consensus that “unlearning” (**removing specific copyrighted works from a trained model**) is **technically impossible**. The only available remedy is “fine-tuning”—adding a filter to mask specific outputs—rather than erasing the source knowledge.
- **Guardrails:** The industry solution to copyright and ethics concerns is **reactive** (AI monitoring AI) rather than **proactive** (changing the architecture), admitting that total control over “home-brewed” or open-source models is impossible.

2. Conclusions

- The session revealed a profound ontological gap between the technological and creative sectors. The industry panel operated within a logic of Computational Capitalism, treating **music as data to be cleansed, processed, and monetized**. In contrast, the keynote provided a critique based on Critical Data Studies, arguing that **current AI models suffer from deep epistemic biases** because they cannot capture “tacit knowledge”, the embodied, shared experience of music-making.
- While the technologists advocated for “solutionism” (fixing AI flaws with more AI, such as guardrails), the academic perspective suggests that the problem is foundational. The architecture of Deep Learning itself relies on **temporal violence** (freezing past data to predict the future) and **epistemic violence** (reducing cultural artifacts to math). The consensus on the impossibility of “unlearning” confirms a form of **technological determinism**: once creative labor is metabolized by the algorithm, it cannot be reclaimed, only managed.

3. CALLS TO ACTION

- **For Legislators:** Recognize that "unlearning" is a technical impossibility. Future regulations must focus on consent at the point of ingestion (input), as remedies at the output stage (fine-tuning) are insufficient to protect rights.
- **For Musicians' Unions:** Shift the narrative from "AI as a tool" to "AI as a labor displacement mechanism." The industry's admission that "human in the loop" might eventually become obsolete requires immediate policy protections for human creative labor.
- **For the Tech Industry:** Move beyond "black box" architectures. There is a verified demand for "Explainable AI" (as proposed by Antoniadis/IRCAM) that prioritizes real-time human interaction and causality over massive, opaque data scraping.
- **For Environmental Policy:** Address the ecological cost of Generative AI. The exponential energy demand (requiring nuclear power) must be weighed against the societal value of the synthetic content produced.