

# Melodious Mayhem: A Music Industry in Turmoil

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CHMUN XIX

*Crisis*

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## Committee Background:

As music continues to influence and dominate many people's everyday lives, musicians continue to deal with many different controversies surrounding their characters as well as their careers in general. However, none are as prominent in the music industry today as what is going on with Ticketmaster and the future of AI in music. Ticketmaster, the world's biggest live events and ticketing site, was founded in 1976 to license computer programs and sell hardware for ticketing systems. However, over the years, it has expanded to be the leader in computerized ticketing, benefiting heavily due to the rise of the .com bubble and the incredible growth of the Internet in the 2000s. Today, Ticketmaster has contracts with almost all live events venues in the world and is an easy one-spot access marketplace for consumers to get tickets. However, recently, its customer service and reign over the ticketing industry has received criticism from artists as well as consumers all around the world, leading to the music industry being at a crossroads today over whether they should abandon the site or continue helping the company's reign over the industry.

In addition to the controversy surrounding Ticketmaster, the music industry is at a crossroads with the rise of artificial intelligence, as questions surrounding its use in music are prominent around the whole industry. AI in music has propelled a rise in musicians' voices being replicated and used to deceive consumers into listening to an AI-made song. In addition, AI has been used by musicians to help them clear up samples, voices, as well as old recordings to help create a better product for listeners,



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with artists such as *SZA* using such technology to help them in their music. However, as AI in music is such a recent phenomenon, there is little to no legislation over how AI can be used in music, with it technically not infringing on copyright law as of now. With mass confusion regarding what the future of AI in music should be, will artists take a stand on their rights being infringed on, or will they embrace the new technology to help them create better music?



## Topic 1: Ticketmaster's Monopoly in the music industry

In 2010, Ticketmaster, one of the world's biggest ticket marketplaces, merged with Live Nation, an American events promoter, to create Live Nation Entertainment, which has promoted, operated, and managed ticket sales for live events worldwide. The merger helped consolidate live events under one entity's control, helping consumers easily book tickets to their favorite shows or artists.



*ticketmaster*

However, this merger also created mass controversy worldwide, with the merger only being approved in countries such as the United States after Ticketmaster agreed to sell its self-ticketing company, Paciolan, and licensed its software to Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), one of the company's biggest competitors in the live events industry. In addition, Live Nation Entertainment was disallowed from seeking legal action for 10 years against venues that chose to accept ticket contracts with other sites. Over time, however, Live Nation Entertainment has created a mass monopoly over the live events industry, with over 70% of the ticketing and live events industry and 80% of live concerts being controlled by the company.

While this makes customers' lives easier as they can easily buy tickets for their favorite events from one site, Live Nation Entertainment has had many controversies during its reign over the industry. For one, until 2023, Ticketmaster did not show "junk fees", extra fees added on at the end of ticket purchases, upfront, leading to consumer trickery where customers were paying more than they thought they were for tickets. In addition, the Ticketmaster site has had many issues of crashing and being slow during queues for live event tickets, leading to customer disapproval of the site as well as Live Nation having legal action directed towards them.



A recent example of this was in 2022 with Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, where tickets were exclusively sold on Ticketmaster. The site saw astronomical amounts of demand for tickets, with 3.5 million people registering for the tour's presale. However, on November 15th, 2022, Ticketmaster crashed an hour after the tickets finally came out, leading to millions of dissatisfied fans never getting access. Ticketmaster issued a statement attributing the site's crash to an unanticipated demand for the tickets, but fans attributed the crash to poor customer service on Ticketmaster's part. Taylor Swift blamed Ticketmaster for the whole fiasco, saying that the site had promised her team that they were fully able to handle the enormous demand for her tickets. In addition, her tour promoter, AEG, one of Ticketmaster's biggest competitors, also contributed to the fiasco of Ticketmaster's exclusive deals with almost all of the U.S.'s live venues, forcing the promoter to have to exclusively sell the tickets on Ticketmaster instead of their own and eventually leading to the fiasco.

Due to the mass mayhem surrounding the incident, as well as other examples happening worldwide with artists such as Bad Bunny, where Ticketmaster sold too many tickets for his Mexico City concert, leading to overcrowding in the venue, legal action has been taken against Ticketmaster and Live Nation Entertainment worldwide. Many Taylor Swift fans have sued the company for price fixing, intentional deception, fraud, and antitrust, and the company was forced to give up 10% of its 2021 income to Mexico's PROFECO for the Bad Bunny fiasco.

In addition, these incidents have led to U.S. bipartisan action against the company, with the company being brutalized in a Senate hearing and many acts and laws being introduced to help detract the influence of Live Nation Entertainment in the industry. Many political leaders believe that if competition is introduced in the industry, then Ticketmaster would be forced to upgrade their site to get consumers to come to their site, which would help stop fiascos such as what happened with Taylor



Swift and Bad Bunny. However, the advantages of Ticketmaster cannot be overstated, as the seamless customer experience of anyone being able to buy a ticket to any event at any venue is one that no other site can replicate right now. As artists, however, you can change this dynamic, and choose whether Ticketmaster's dominance over the industry should live on or if it is time to take a stand against the giant monopoly.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Does Ticketmaster have a monopoly over the live events industry, and if so, should action be taken against the company?
2. As artists, is it possible to give fans a better ticketing experience for events without the use of Ticketmaster?
3. What can be done in the future to stop mergers such as Ticketmaster and Live Nation from dominating the ticketing industry?



## Topic 2: The rise of AI in music



Artificial intelligence (AI) has recently made a resurgence in music, leading to many in the music industry questioning how it should be used and whether it could infringe on artists' copyright or not. On April 4th, 2023, the TikTok user ghostwriter977 released "heart on my sleeve", a song in which vocals from the artists Drake and The Weeknd were replicated with AI. The song generated mass attention worldwide, with the song's usage of AI being called into question on whether it infringed on copyright as well as if AI could be used to deceive listeners into listening to music created by people using AI to replicate artists' voices. A few weeks after "heart on my sleeve" came out, it was taken down by Universal Music Group (UMG), Drake's music label. The label said that they would take whatever action necessary to protect the rights of the label as well as their artists, sending a statement that AI in music is not welcomed by many.

However, "heart on my sleeve" was the first of many AI-generated songs and covers being made replicating artists' voices to create songs. Artists such as Kanye West, Playboi Carti, Lana Del Rey, Ariana Grande, and Kendrick Lamar have had their voices replicated by AI to create fully newly produced songs or covers of already made songs, such as "Somebody That I Used to Know" by Gotye or "Die for You" by The Weeknd. In addition, cartoon characters such as those from Spongebob, the Regular Show, and The Fairly Oddparents have had their voices replicated by AI to make covers of songs, leading to mass controversy over the usage.



However, AI in music has also been used for other purposes as well. For one, producers have been able to use AI to help clear up samples, which was used by producer Rodney Jerkins to clear up a Wu-Tang Clan sample for the song "Forgiveness" by SZA. In addition, AI can be used for "pitch



records”, which are songs written by professional songwriters and shopped around to artists to record. With AI, these “pitch records” can better help professional songwriters find which artists would sound better on their written songs, using AI voices to help see the flows and how exactly each artist could combat such a track. In addition, AI can help replicate dead artists' voices, such as Frank Sinatra and Michael Jackson, to create covers of popular songs, helping keep their legacy popular for generations.

However, the crossroads of how AI can be used in music has led to a music industry in disarray, with many artists not even being able to pursue legal action against the illegal usage of their voices. The



legal aspect of whether AI usage in music is illegal is very clouded due to AI music technically not infringing on most music copyright laws. “Heart on my sleeve”, for example, has been speculated to only be copyrighted due to the usage of a producer tag in the song, but the usage of AI to replicate The Weeknd’s and Drake’s voices could not have legal action used against it. In

addition, the song is technically eligible for a Grammy, which has spurred further controversy over whether this usage of AI is ruining and changing musicians' careers and legacy. However, with no clear legal action over what the next steps are to either end AI in music once and for all or to use it to help artists create better music, it seems that the music industry is at a crossroads with the legacy of musicians' careers.

### Questions to consider:

1. Should AI be used in the music industry to help artists create better music, or should the future action regarding its usage be?
2. Do AI replications in music infringe on musicians' rights, and if so, what legal action should be taken if any?
3. Should artists agree with their labels regarding what the future of AI in music should be, or should they voice their own opinions?



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