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*What are they capable of,
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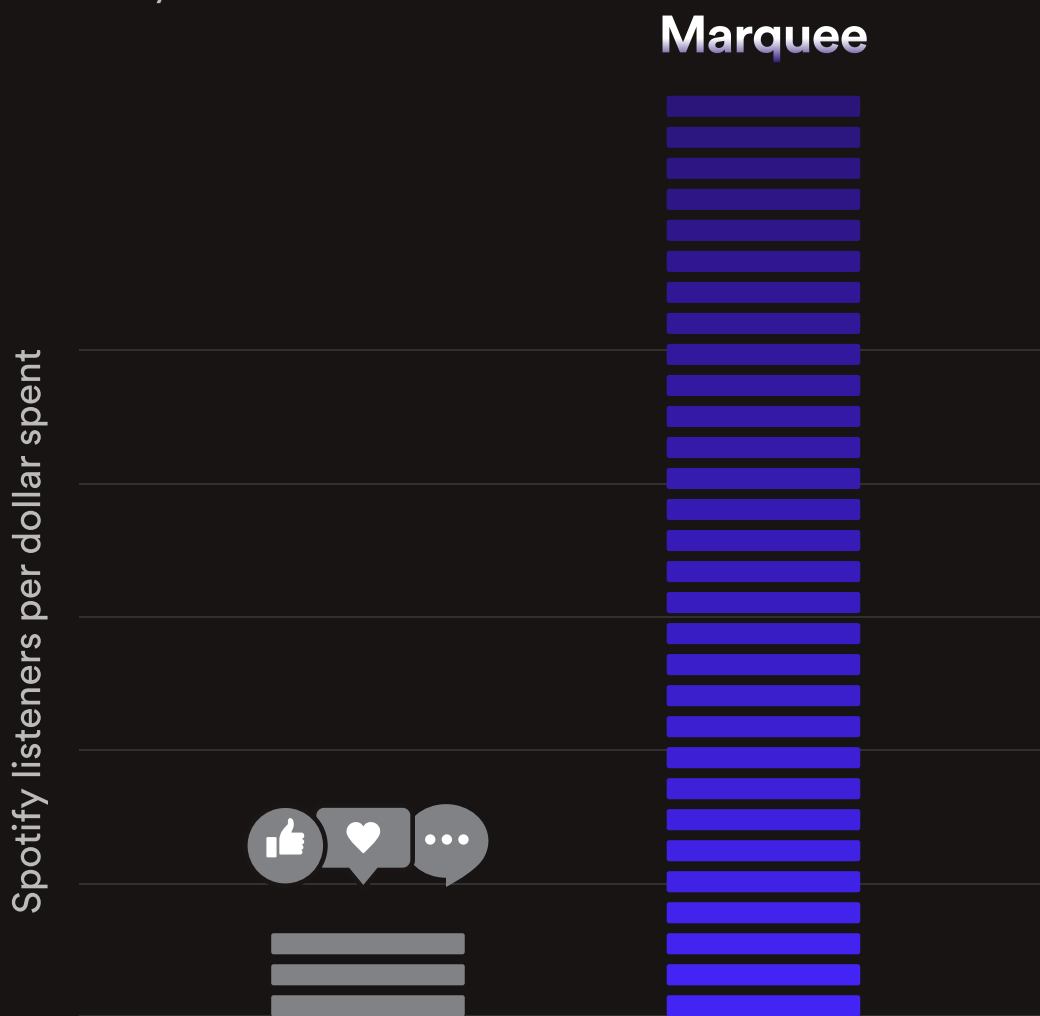
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→ The Sandbox Guide to... Creative AI

Music Ally has been writing about AI music since late 2014, when British startup Jukedeck first emerged with its system for generating original music. In the years since, we've continued following this sector and technology.

In 2022 and the early months of 2023, the wider topic of creative AIs seems to be on everyone's lips, thanks mainly to models capable of spitting out text (ChatGPT) or images (DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, Midjourney). Their emergence has created excitement and controversy in equal measures.

In this Sandbox guide, we look at what musicians and their teams can do with these models, both as part of their marketing and content strategies, and in their creative processes. In this guide:

- **There are a number of different creative AI models out in the wild**, so what are they capable of, and how can you start to use them?
- **These systems are far from perfect**, so they reward persistence and playfulness when coming up with inputs that will create the outputs you want.

- **Case studies:** Hip-hop artist **Darnell Williams** used AI



created by startup Encore to create background imagery for his latest music video. Meanwhile, **Disturbed** made a music video with 10,000 frames created using Midjourney.

- **The best way to understand musical AIs is to test them out.** Our mini-directory will help you get started with the main systems and startups out there.
- **Looking to the future:** How will the output of creative AIs of all kinds be used, and how might this technology evolve to serve artists? But just as importantly, are there legal and/or moral concerns that should make you wary?
- **Actionable takeaways:** as ever, we've condensed the lessons from this guide into action points.



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The Lead

The recent emergence of **creative AIs** capable of spitting out text or images has created excitement and controversy in equal measures. We look at what musicians and their teams can do with these models, both as part of their marketing and content strategies, and in their creative processes.



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Campaigns

In an AI-focused Campaigns, we take a look at **David Guetta** creating an AI-**Eminem** for a new as-yet unreleased track; and how **Linkin Park** created a video for a lost track in collaboration with AI startup Kaiber.



Tools & Behind The Campaign

Sandbox's popular Tools and Behind the Campaign pieces continue to be published every two weeks on the Music Ally website.

From now on you'll find [Tools here](#) and Behind the Campaign [here](#). For past issues of Sandbox, including previous Tools and Behind the Campaigns, please search our [Archive](#).



Creative AIs: a trend that was steady then sudden

The story of creative AIs has been long in the making, even if it burst into the mainstream (human!) consciousness in 2022 thanks to the public launch of services including ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, DALL-E 2 and Midjourney.

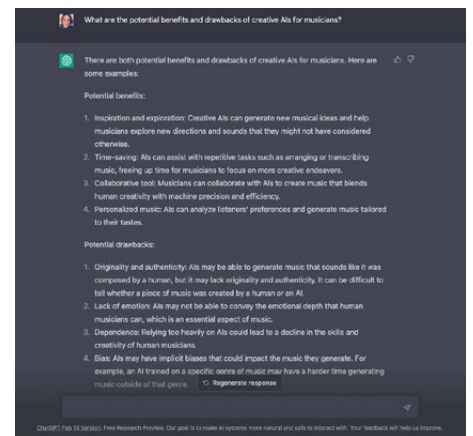
The question of whether machines or algorithms can create original art dates back many decades as a theoretical debate, and in the modern computing age there has been a steady flow of investment and effort to build the systems capable of proving it.

For our industry specifically, the topic of automated (if not AI) music has a long history that runs through synthesizers, drum machines and the generative music systems built by the likes of Brian Eno. Music Ally has been writing about AI music since late 2014, meanwhile, when British startup Jukedeck emerged from stealth mode.



Jukedeck's CEO Ed Newton-Rex, who now works at Stable Diffusion, has described creative AI as "the simulation of creativity in machines", with that creativity capable of being applied to text, images, video, music and more. The recent pattern has been for these systems to develop steadily, discussed and followed mainly by people who work in the field or already have an interest in AI, before suddenly breaking

out to become a talking point in the wider world.

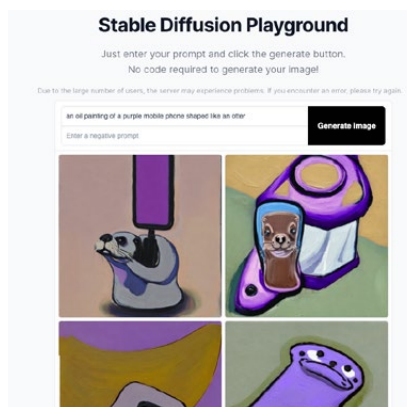


OpenAI announced its GPT-3 language model in 2020, for example, with its ability to answer natural-language questions and translate text. But it was with the December 2022 launch of a free preview of a service using it, ChatGPT, that it properly hit the headlines. The same can be said of its DALL-E deep learning model, which was unveiled in 2021 but truly broke out in the autumn of 2022 when DALL-E 2 opened up to everyone.

Both caught on quickly: more than 1.5 million people were creating images with DALL-E 2 in its public beta phase, while ChatGPT raced to 100 million monthly active users in a couple of months. In both cases, musicians are among those users, figuring out what these technologies are capable of, and how that can help them.

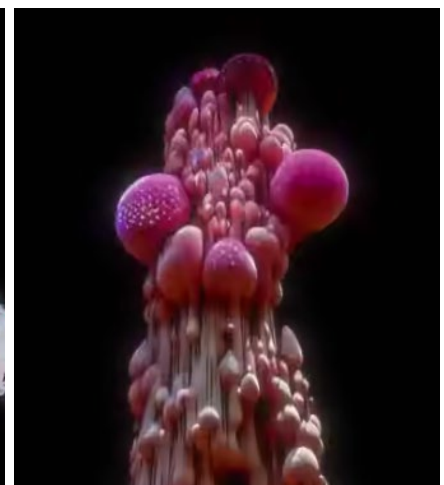
At their simplest, these tools start with a line of text entered by the user. You could tell ChatGPT to write you some lyrics for a rock song about your lost first love; about the end of the world; about rubber ducks, or whatever subject you like.

You could ask DALL-E 2 to create you a photo-realistic image of an alien sitting on the summit of Mount Everest reading a book; an oil painting of a purple mobile phone shaped like an otter; a piece of digital art embodying blockchain technology as a human being... and so on.



“There are two phases of adoption for any technology like this: the really experimental phase, and then the phase when it hits the mainstream,” Newton-Rex tells Music Ally.

“We’re still in the experimental phase, particularly in music and among music creators. People are still using this technology experimentally, and we’re not yet at the kind of mainstream



phase where musicians across the world are using this.”

For now, the dabblers are doing some interesting things. Disturbed and Darnell Williams – both case studies in this report – are examples of artists putting out music videos that use images made by creative AIs.

Other examples of that include director Remi Molotee’s music video for ‘Make Me Feel’, a track by The Chainsmokers x Cheyenne Giles (*pictured above*). They used Stable Diffusion to turn a human dancer into a succession of organic, pulsating textures and objects.

Linkin Park, too, released a music video for their single ‘Lost’ created with generative AI startup Kaiber, which animated the band (including frontman

Chester Bennington, who died in 2017) using the company’s technology.

This isn’t just about videos though: the static images generated by DALL-E 2, Stable Diffusion and Midjourney can be used for other music-related content: album and single artwork; social media posts; YouTube thumbnails; merchandise even, with systems that give full commercial rights to their users.

“I wrote a track last year and released it, and just couldn’t find any decent album artwork, so I used an image generator to create a really nice, minimalist image of the Norwegian fjords. It came up with this crazy, cool geometric version,” says Newton-Rex, who has always been a composer and musician alongside his work on the technological side of creative AI.

Case Study



Disturbed

Rleased in November 2022, veteran rock band Disturbed's 'Bad Man' is one of the first official music videos created entirely using a text-to-image AI. Its director Tristan Holmes spent a month painstakingly creating around 10,000 individual images using Midjourney, which were used as frames for the final video alongside images of the band performing.

"The thing about their music is that it's not small. It's not quaint, it's got a huge sound. It bursts with emotion, it's visceral, it's powerful, and it takes no prisoners," said Holmes in a behind-the-scenes interview about the video.

"A lot of building the images, a lot of searching was finding images that really speak to that kinetic, unmanufactured genius that is their sound... A lot of the R&D, certainly upfront, was trying to find images that match that."

Holmes had been exploring Midjourney for several months before making the video, and sees "tremendous potential" in it as a creative tool for animators and video directors (and by extension, the artists they work with).

"This is a very fluid process. It's definitely not a process where you put something in once, and then you get this result that's a perfect expression of what you intended," he said, as a warning to anyone who thinks creative AI is quick and easy.

"It's a lot more to-and-fro than that. It's kind of like a weird game of tennis



or, you can imagine, like a conversation where you're constantly recalibrating prompts and shifting orders of words, and changing references and nuances and styles, settings, and the AI's constantly giving you back those calibrations. Until eventually you arrive at this piece that feels like it's right."

This process takes weeks of iteration. In this case, Holmes then imported all the frames into Adobe Animator and ordered them into sequences that he felt worked with the music.

This is a reminder – a welcome one, we think! – of the importance of humans to any process currently involving this kind of creative AI. Holmes didn't simply feed Disturbed's song into an AI and press a button to generate the final video.

Instead, the process sounds like a labour of love, wrestling (or conversing) with the AI to create fitting images,

before piecing them together frame by frame into the final video.

"What we really love about the video is that it's not super-slick or super-perfect. There is a jaggedness to it: a feeling of messiness, because I think that really imparts the feeling of the song," he said, describing the final results as an "incredibly novel, incredibly beautiful, incredibly potent, powerful and meaningful music video".

The video for 'Bad Man' does feel like an original and novel piece of work. Would that novelty wear off if lots of artists and video directors started using similar creative-AI tools? In theory, only if they also use similar prompts and have similar visions of what they're looking for. Once again, it's the human element that is important, for both the quality and the originality of music videos (or any content) created using these techniques.

“Back in the day, I would use Unsplash [a free stock images site] to find something. This is so much better than that.”

“Artists have always been pushing boundaries with the use of new and innovative media in their artworks. In many respects, text-to-image, text-to-music and other AIs are just that – new tools for musicians and other artists to freely use,” says Sam De Silva, partner at law firm CMS and chair of BCS (The UK’s Chartered Institute for IT) law specialist group.

“In its terms of use, DALL-E gives its users the rights to their AI-generated creations. The users may use AI-generated art for any permitted purpose, including commercialisation. This allows musicians and other artists to evolve into a new type of a creative – someone who can manipulate the AI tools to create new artworks.”



This is an important point. Creative AIs can be a ‘push a button, get a finished piece of content out’, but in practice they are more of an iterative, almost conversational (and literally a conversation with ChatGPT) thing.

You try a prompt, and see what comes back. Then tweak the prompt or write a new one, and see what comes back again. And repeat, until you have something usable for your purposes. You can edit the results, either with features provided by the creative AI service or with your own tools. In short, your human creativity is very important to the process of creative AIs.

“Actually, a lot of the interest is prompt engineering: you have to become really expert in prompting these systems,”

says Newton-Rex. “Or there are models where you can start with a sketch that you’ve drawn yourself, and generate a high-quality image that makes it look like a photo or a watercolour. It’s much more interactive than just pressing a button for a finished piece of art.”

Practical Tips: image AIs

If you’re creating images using an AI, getting the best results is all about the prompts.

Once you get access to an image AI like DALL-E 2, Stable Diffusion or Midjourney, being faced with a blank text box can feel quite daunting.

The best way to combat that is to start playing with these systems, starting with basic queries and then stretching them more as you gain confidence. Here are some tips that should help.

Don’t be afraid to give more detail

In our experience, short queries with few details rarely come back with something satisfying. It’s better to give as much detail as you can. Besides the subject of your image, you can also include aspects including the medium; the environment and background; the lighting and colours; the mood of the image; and its composition. The more

details you can supply about what’s in your head, the more likely the AI is to create something that matches.

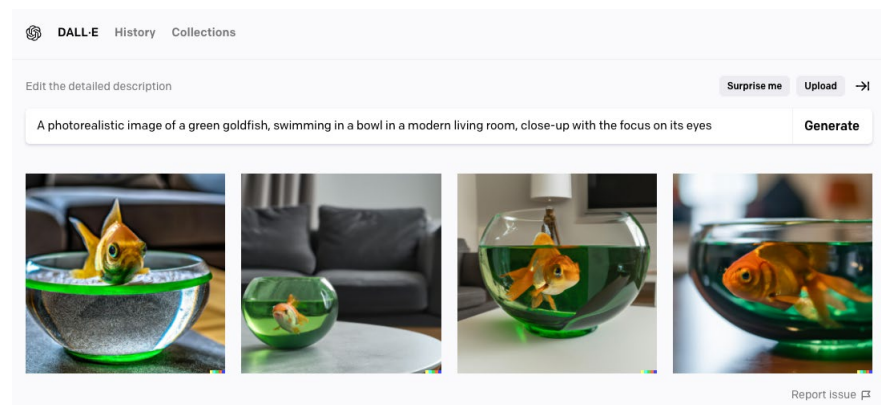
Experiment with different styles



We’re uncomfortable with using ‘in the style of X’ where X is a human artist or designer: it’s one of the current controversies around creative AI, where some of those artists are angry about these models being trained on their work without permission or payment. But it’s a good idea to experiment with more general styles: anime, synthwave, papercraft, cubist, pixel art, minimalist, surreal, cyberpunk... you get the picture.

Keep on tweaking

Working with creative AIs is rarely a ‘press the button once then you’re done’ job. You may have seen ‘prompt engineering’ mentioned earlier in this report, and while that’s a hot new job

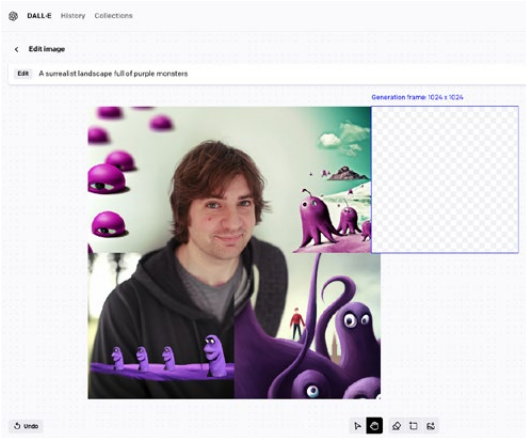


in AI circles, it's something that we may all need to get used to. It refers to the process of prompting an AI to create something, considering the results, then tweaking your prompt in response – and repeat until you're happy.

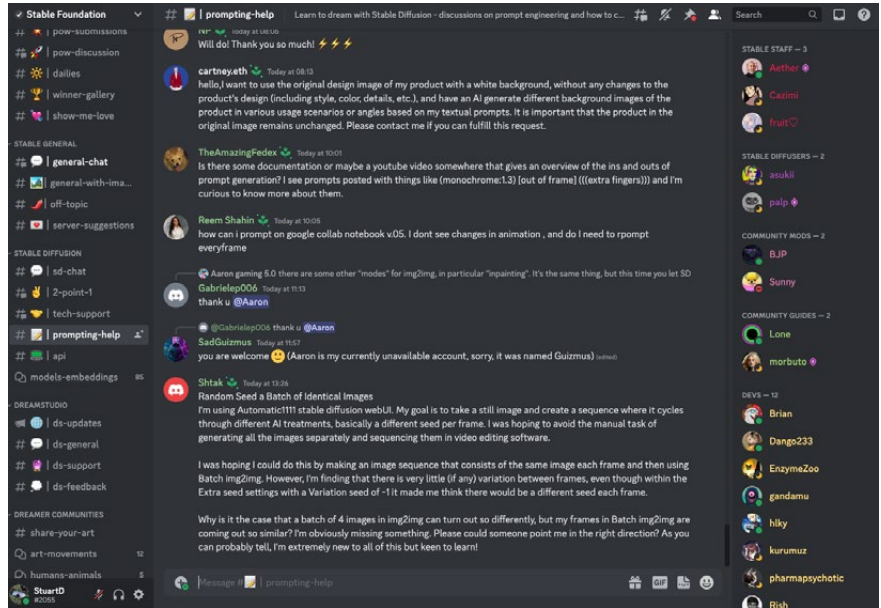
Try uploading your own images

The big text-to-image AIs can also function as image-to-image AIs, because you can upload your own images as a starting point. Think of it as like visual remixing of something you've created. It's a concept that musicians may feel more comfortable with, as their artwork is the origin point for what the AI is doing. Again, the best method is to experiment: play with the settings and prompts to see what happens.

Give outpainting a try



Already a standard feature on DALL-E 2, outpainting is when you start with an image (whether created by the AI or uploaded by you) and then generate new 'frames' around it to expand the picture. Start with a mugshot and build it out into a landscape of purple monsters; or uncrop a photo of the natural world with some decidedly unnatural elements; or... well, again, it's about playing, experimenting and sometimes just turning your mind's flights of fancy into prompts to see what ensues.



Get involved in the communities

Stable Diffusion, DALL-E 2 and Midjourney all have thriving online communities of experts and novices alike, and they can be a really good way to understand what's possible

with the technology; get inspiration for new kinds of prompts; and ask for advice if you need it. Look for the official Discords and spend some time poking around their different channels, alongside your experimentation with the platforms themselves.



Future thinking

Creative-AI sceptics enjoyed Nick Cave's [blast of rage](#) (mixed with disdain) about ChatGPT in January, after a fan used it to create a song in his style. Cave's response was

unequivocal: he hated it. "The apocalypse is well on its way. This song sucks. What ChatGPT is, in this instance, is replication as travesty," wrote Cave. → → →



already seen with our creators how AI technologies have evolved their own creative process.”

You may soon be generating videos “in seconds”

What’s next? Newton-Rex thinks that while the technologies behind creative AIs will continue to evolve, the bigger step that’s about to happen is the use of these models continuing to move out of an experimentation phase and into the mainstream. “The mainstream may seem much more boring, but it’s much more impactful!” he says.

“AI-generated music videos have so far been one-off experiments, but we’ll soon be at the point where anyone can make a video for their song in seconds. Now, imagine if for any musical idea you record as an artist, you can create a video for it, and share it with your fans... Suddenly we’re in this world where video content is much easier to produce.”

“It could be as easy as just pressing a button to create a music video to share



But it’s important to note that there will be (and indeed, are already) plenty of musicians who want to dive in to this technology and see what it can do as a tool for their own creativity. They won’t be using ‘Create X in the style of Y’ prompts to make pale imitations of other people’s work, but will rather be seeing if these systems can enhance their own work.

Ed Newton-Rex has his own ChatGPT story, having used it to write a poem which he then set to music as a classical piece for choir and piano. The 17-minute work will be performed at a festival later this year.

“I’m not going to change all my future writing to use AI-generated text,” he stresses. “It’s about experimenting. The text that I got out of this system was crazy. It was beautiful in places. That’s why you do it: you do it because you want to see what happens, and what

“Creatives have always had processes and tools. Creatives seek inspiration and ideas. Generative AI gives them entirely new ways to explore, be inspired and create, and we have



on TikTok. We're not there yet. The technology is almost there, so then it becomes about the product interfaces and adoption."

AI could ease the workload for burnt-out creatives

There may well be a role here for creative AI to ease one of the pressing issues of our current music industry: social-media burnout. Artists are under pressure to become essentially 'content engines' that serve the ever-hungry maws of the various social and video platforms (not to mention streaming services, as they add their own short-video features).

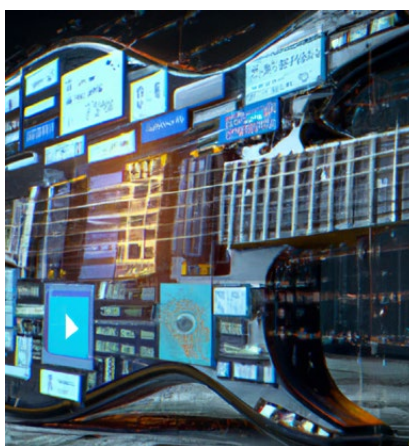
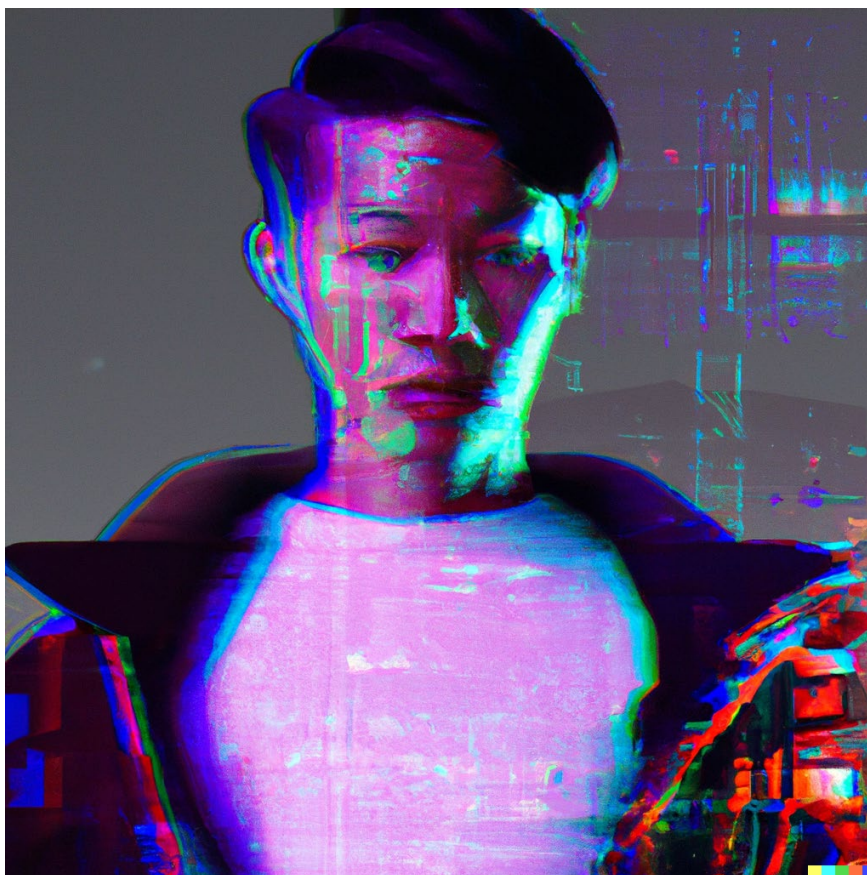
If creative AI can help with this challenge, making it easier for artists and/or their teams to serve all these platforms' needs, it could be a boon. "The direct impact on time and money should not be understated as it is massive," says Encore's Jon Gray. "Things that used to require many days and dollars can now be done for free in minutes. In a world full of creator burnout, being able to do more with less is critical."

AI won't replace humans' magic spark

Meanwhile, as part of artists' creative processes, it could also be a helpful brainstorming tool (whether for music itself or the visual content around it) and a way to beat creative block or comfort-zone stasis.

"Is there a tool that will stop me playing the same types of chords every time I sit down at a piano?" as Newton-Rex puts it. "We always get into these patterns as musicians."

"I found a lot of artists think that AI can replace them, but me personally, I don't think that AI would ever replace



the magic that humans have when making art," is how Darnell Williams sees it. "I do think that it will be a great tool to help us express ideas that we didn't even know that we had. Also ideas that weren't achievable years ago."

Williams is also an example of an artist that has built his own creative AI tool, an app called RapSwift, in an effort to explore the technology.

"I created this as a tool to help artists overcome writer's block and for newcomers to understand the process of creating a rap song," he says. "AI is the future and I don't think artists should be afraid of it."

Think about if – and why – you should use AI

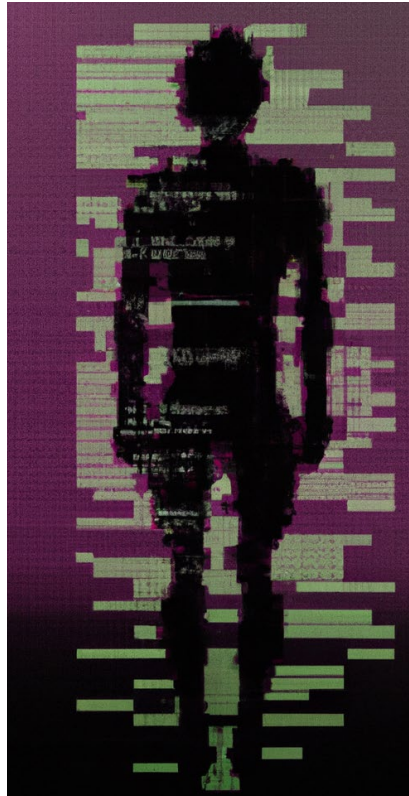
Creative AI isn't a good or bad thing in itself: it's a tool for humans to use. And humans being what we are, those uses may well be negative as well as positive.

"I think, as with all tech, we should always be taking a 'think before you build' approach. The important thing is how and why technology is used - rather than if it's used," says Rosie Copland, strategy director at creative agency Unit9, which has used creative AI for projects including Fellini Forward (a short film "infused with the essence"

of film director Federico Fellini) and The Sound of Light (a project for tech firm Huawei that translated footage of the Northern Lights into music).

“For example, pop music is becoming more lazy, homogenous and formulaic than ever before. And if AI is used to create even more generic music, then it’s a huge shame. However, if AI can be used as a tool to drive creativity - rather than a tool to excuse laziness - then I’m here for it.”

“The use cases of AI that are worth supporting are the ones that wouldn’t be feasible without AI. If you’re a platinum-selling band looking for your next album cover, go and use a photographer! If you’re making a music video, go to a professional director or videographer!” adds Ed Newton-Rex. “But if you’re a young musician looking to break through, you’re strapped for cash and your album cover would otherwise be a stock image or a photo you took with your phone, then



absolutely go and use an AI image generator. And the same with video.”

He doesn’t think that the musicians currently paying professionals to

create artwork and videos for them will suddenly stop because creative AI offers a cheap alternative. Indeed, they may go to those people for help making use of these tools – as Disturbed did with Tristan Holmes. Creative AI (prompt engineering included) may become part of those people’s skillsets.

The overriding message for any artist or music industry professional thinking about creative AI is to lean in to it – both to the technology itself, and the debates around it. Take time to understand the different tools, including which ones you think benefit creators (and which ones don’t) and get involved in the online communities around them.

That will guide your decisions over whether to use these tools, keep a watching brief or actively avoid them. The key thing is that those decisions will be taken from a place of knowledge, rather than one of fear.

Actionable takeaways

We’ve condensed the lessons from this guide into action points, so that you can get started right away, and on the right foot.

- **View these creative AI platforms as creative tools and try iterating useful work:** try generating images for album and single artwork or even merchandise.
- **Allow them to empower your personal creativity** – and thus, ownership of your work: systems like Dall-E give full commercial rights to their users.
- **Learn the new skill of describing images that don’t exist (yet):** if you’re a creative or expressive writer, these tools are ideal for you.
- **The devil is in the detail:** the better you can describe what you want, the better the result. Try precise descriptions; weird descriptions; loose descriptions...
- **“Remix” your existing content:** upload some writing or images, and ask the AI to generate something new based on it.
- **Treat AI as a creative partner:** bounce ideas off an AI, and see what they create – or if you have a creative block throw something at it and see what emerges.
- **Experiment, experiment, experiment:** using an AI is a bit like learning to play an instrument – you need to understand the nuances of the instrument to get the best from it.
- **Create a fast creative marketing workflow:** smart use of AI can speed up drafting written ideas, creation of imagery mood-boards, or iterating other visual ideas.
- **But consider slowing down and digging deep:** plan carefully and incorporate AI-created items into a highly-polished final piece of work.

Case Study



Darnell Williams

Darnell Williams is an artist and music video director, having fulfilled the latter role for the likes of Big Sean and Mac Miller. It's perhaps no surprise that he's keen to explore new technologies to use in videos for his own tracks.

'[Lark 23' Freestyle](#)' was released in February, partly as a showcase for a tool developed by [Encore](#), the music/tech startup co-founded by artist Kid Cudi, originally as a platform to help artists livestream and interact with fans.

However, it is evolving, with an Encore Studio app currently in private beta which will help artists to shoot videos using their phones, and tapping into some creative AI.

Encore is integrating DALL-E 2 and Stable Diffusion, providing a simpler mobile interface while adding its own specialised models that musicians can use. It's all controlled from the phone.

"The new user interface is voice, and the expansive capabilities we can put into an app on a phone can be most easily accessed through a simple, intuitive voice interface rather than an ever-expanding set of buttons and knobs," says Encore CEO Jon Gray. "To the creator, the world is your green screen and your voice is the brush."

In this case, Williams used the app to create images to be shown in the background while he rapped, based on the lyrics. It's an insight in itself



to see how the AI coped with phrases including "throwing up chili fries", "hogging the blunt" and "clothes smell like weed".

(A reference to "my dick big" is, thankfully, illustrated with a man sitting on a giant, inflatable aubergine, rather than anything more NSFW).

"I'm always trying to figure out how to do big things with a small team or small budgets, and usually when I do that I end up coming up with dope new ideas," said Williams, of the video.

"The first thing I do was write the raps, and I took lines from the raps and put them into the AI generator on Encore. I generated images that came from basically my song, and then I just kept revising, trying to see which images fit best."



Williams' story is quite different from Tristan Holmes, the director in the other case study this issue. While Holmes worked on Disturbed's AI-generated video for a month, in this case Williams had a far quicker process.

"I feel like AI gives you the power to pretty much build a team," Williams told Music Ally. "As an independent artist, I create my artwork, I create the song, I create the marketing, but with AI I can do all of those things faster, and to some extent better than the labels because I'm more in tune with what's going on... The ideas emerge immediately, the workflow is 20 times faster."

"Creativity is not limited to those with big budgets and teams, but so many creative outputs have required them until now. This is a massive leveling of the playing field and incredibly disruptive to the status quo," is how Encore CEO Jon Gray sees the significance of this technology.

"Rather than being limited by their means, creatives are now limited by their ideas and ability to harness the powerful tools at their disposal."



Musical AIs Directory

There are a growing number of music AI startups, systems and experiments that you can play with, both as a listener and a musician. Here's our guide.



› **Aimi**
www.aimi.fm

What is it? A generative music player creating music for relaxing, exercising, focusing and other activities. Aimi has been around for a while, raising \$20m of funding in 2021, but in early 2023 the company released a new app in beta that lets people interact with the music as they listen.

What can you do? As a listener

you can register for the beta to see what Aimi's system is capable of. However, Aimi also wants to work with musicians who are creating music: you can register interest in its upcoming Aimi Studio tool too.

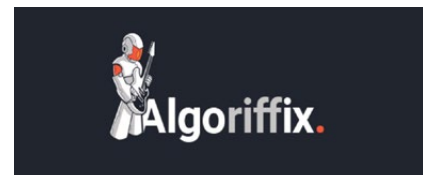


› **Aiva**
www.aiva.ai

What is it? Aiva describes itself as “the artificial intelligence composing emotional soundtrack music”. While that sometimes means giving non-musicians the ability to create music for their jobs (game developers for example), Aiva is also keen to be seen as a co-creation tool for musicians.

What can you do? You can sign up to try Aiva on three tiers. The free tier is good for dabbling, but anyone

who wants to own the copyright of the music they create with it will need the €49-a-month highest tier, which is quite pricey.



› **Algoriffix**
www.algoriffix.com

What is it? This musical AI is entirely focused on being a tool for musicians. The system works by getting you to upload unaccompanied solos or stems, and then tries to recommend harmonies that match them. The pitch is that it could help you beat writer's block.

What can you do? You can download Algoriffix's audio plugin for MacOS or Windows, while there's also an Android mobile app for capturing

ideas. A free tier gives you a taste of using the service, with hobbyist, creative and pro tiers costing €6.95, €9.95 and €14.95 a month respectively.

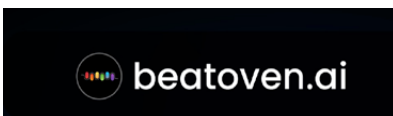


› Audialab

www.audialab.com

What is it? Audialab is a startup that currently offers one product: Emergent Drums. It's a plugin for DAWs including Ableton Live, Logic Pro X, Cakewalk, Maschine and Cubase 8 that will cough up original drum samples on demand, all of which can be used royalty-free.

What can you do? If you're curious, you can listen to some of the samples of work created using Emergent Drums on its website and SoundCloud profile. There's a Discord to discuss it with other musicians too, but to use it you'll need to buy the \$149 plugin.



› Beatoven

www.beatoven.ai

What is it? One of (if not the) first AI music startups from India, Beatoven is another firm putting its AI to use to create production music for videos and podcasts. Users can pick a genre or style; make their own cuts and change the mood; then create the final track.

What can you do? Again, if you

might be able to use the music for your own content, there's a choice of free or \$20-a-month tiers. However, Beatoven also wants to work with artists in other ways, getting them to upload their music to help improve its model. Check the 'Artists' tab on its website for more information.



› Boomy

www.boomy.com

What is it? Designed initially for non-musicians, Boomy lets anyone choose some parameters and create tracks, which they can then group into albums and release on streaming services, getting a share of the royalties.

What can you do? You can sign up and use Boomy for free, to get a grasp on what kind of songs it can create. Professional and aspiring musicians can also use it as a starting point for their own work: including singing vocals over the tracks they create. It's also possible to submit requests to gain ownership of the copyrights.



› DAACI

www.daaci.com

What is it? One of the newest AI music startups, but it's already won a Music Ally S:IX award and joined the prestigious Abbey Road Red music/tech incubator. Armed with patents, it is creating a 'meta-composition' tool that will help musicians create music,

and is thus pitched as an "assistive" tool rather than just a generative one.

What can you do? Not much just yet, although there is a contact form on DAACI's site to register your interest in the company's technology when it becomes available. It has already been testing it out with Brit School students and Abbey Road's network of musicians and producers.

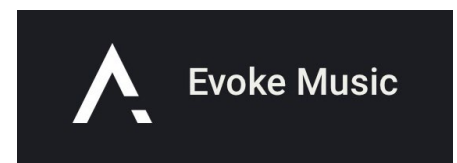
› Endel

www.endel.io



What is it? This startup's AI generates "personalised soundscapes" for focusing, relaxing and sleeping, delivered through a combination of mobile apps, its website and an Alexa skill. It has also released music on streaming services, including its recent collaboration with Amazon Music on a 'Sleep Science' playlist.

What can you do? As a listener, you can download and try Endel's various apps. The company has also partnered with artists, including James Blake, Miguel and Grimes, so artists at a certain level who are interested in feeding their stems into its system to create new soundscapes should contact the company.



› Evoke Music

www.evokemusic.ai

What is it? The successor to a startup called Amadeus Code, which closed down in January this year. Evoke is a royalty-free production music library, with more than 60,000 tracks composed by its AI. They can be used

for videos online, games, podcasts and other uses.

What can you do? As a musician, there isn't much you can do beyond browsing Evoke Music's library to see what its AI has come up with. If you need production music, it costs \$8 a month for a personal subscription, or \$20 a month for a business sub which allows you to use the tracks in commercial work.




› **Harmonai**
www.harmonai.org

What is it? Harmonai is creating open-source generative audio tools, pitched as "AI by musicians, for musicians". Its first tool is called Dance Diffusion, which can be used to create audio samples to be used in your music-making process.

What can you do? You can use Dance Diffusion, although for anyone not already comfortable with the Google Colab platform it will take a bit of getting used to. Harmonai is also very keen to work with musicians to help train its model: you can sign up to its Discord to join its community and find out more.

› **Holly+**
www.holly.plus

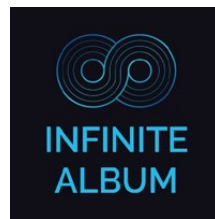


What is it? Another musical AI built by an actual musician: in this case Holly Herndon, who already has a long history of experimenting with AI music. She described Holly+ as her "digital twin" – a tool to "allow for

others to make artwork with my voice".

What can you do? You can access Holly+ and give it a try. It involves uploading polyphonic audio, and getting a download in return with that music sung by Herndon's processed voice. It's also well worth reading her thoughts on the rights and legalities around this: Herndon is one of the most thoughtful artists in terms of what this technology means and where it leads.

› **Infinite Album**
www.infinitealbum.io



What is it? Another startup whose system uses generative AI to create soundtracks

for online video, but in this case with a very specific focus. Its system creates music for gamers streaming on platforms like Twitch, with the music able to react and adapt to the game – or be influenced by viewers.

What can you do? Artists who are also Twitch gamers can join Infinite Album's beta test, with the carrot that they'll get free, lifetime access to its service. The startup is also exploring potential for 'artist sound packs' where it will work with musicians to create their own branded packs for its users.



› **LifeScore**
www.lifescoremusic.com

What is it? LifeScore works with composers and musicians to record

"musical building blocks" which its AI then processes to create adaptive music soundtracks, capable of reacting to the listener's current activity: whether that be walking, meditating or driving for example.

What can you do? Thus far LifeScore's system has been put to work largely in B2B partnerships, for example with Bentley to create driving soundtracks, and with Twitch to create an interactive installation for its HQ. Musicians keen to find out more can contact the company from its website however.

› **Loudly**
www.loudly.com



What is it? Initially a startup working on a tool to remix songs with AI, Loudly has pivoted to one of the most common current uses for musical AIs: creating a library of royalty-free production music aimed at YouTubers, influencers and podcasters.

What can you do? Musicians interested in Loudly can give its Music Maker Jam music creation mobile app a try, although its lead product AI-wise is called AI Studio, which can be used to create and customise music for your video and audio projects. You can also browse its library to see what it's capable of.



› **Mubert**
www.mubert.com

What is it? Stop us if you've heard this already: Mubert is a startup whose system can be used to generate

original tracks for video content, podcasts and apps. It also has a consumer-focused service providing functional music for relaxing, travelling and working.

What can you do? You can give Mubert's tools a try as a consumer, but the company also has a separate Mubert Studio product designed specifically for musicians. It promises artists a way to "get paid for riffs, loops, samples and full tracks that are sitting on your hard drive" via contributing to Mubert.



Never
Before
Heard
Sounds

› Never Before Heard Sounds

www.heardsounds.com

What is it? This startup was Holly Herndon's partner in the development of Holly+ but it has also been working on its own service: a browser-based music-making studio that helps musicians to create and edit tracks, and collaborate on them with other people remotely.

What can you do? At the time of writing all you can do is sign up for early access to the beta of the studio product: that's done from the Never Before Heard Sounds homepage.

› Soundful

www.soundful.com



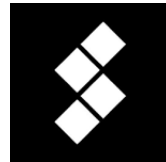
What is it? You guessed it: another AI music tool to create royalty-free background music for videos, livestreams and podcasts. As with similar tools, it's a case of choosing a genre, customising it and then hitting a button to create tracks

to approve or discard.

What can you do? Also like other companies in its space, Soundful wants to be a tool for professional artists and producers, generating tracks that they can download as stems to work on and incorporate into their own tracks. It has a free tier to get started, with a premium tier that covers commercial projects for \$7.42 a month.

› Splash

www.splashmusic.com



What is it?

Australian startup Splash (formerly Popgun) created a smart musical AI, and has been finding several uses for it, from a music-making app and Roblox game to a plugin for DAWs that musicians could use – although the emphasis now is on the former two.

What can you do? The best way to dive in to Splash is to visit its Roblox experience Splash Skate & Music, and have a go at DJing with its sound packs – all of which use sounds created by its AI. If Roblox isn't your thing, the Splash Music & Beat Maker app is still available for iOS and Android.

› Staccato

www.staccato.ai



What is it? AI-sceptical Beatles fans look away now: Staccato bills itself as "an AI Lennon to your McCartney" which is fairly bold. This is another example of AI as co-writer, designed for musicians to use to nudge them out of their comfort zone or beat writer's block – for music and lyrics alike.

What can you do? You can try Staccato's app for free, although for

all its features you pay \$5 a month for its lyric-writing, \$5 a month for its composition, or \$8 a month for both. The company has a SoundCloud profile to show off its best samples. It's also working on an integration with DAWs.

› Starmony

www.starmony.io



What is it? Starmony is an app for singers who want to have some music created by an AI to accompany their vocals. So far the app has been released for iOS, although there is a waitlist for the Android version.

What can you do? Starmony wants to sign up professional artists and producers to continue populating its sounds library. You can sign up as a 'Starmony producer' on its website, getting a 25% royalty on any music released that uses your work (Starmony keeps 50% and the 'artist' (the user of the app) gets 25%.



WAVEAI

› WaveAI

www.wave-ai.net

What is it? Another startup focusing on tools for professional musicians who might want an AI to be their creative foil. It has two products: LyricStudio, which pops up potential lyrics in response to your prompts, and MelodyStudio, which turns your lyrics into suggested melodies which can then be combined and edited.

What can you do? Both products are free to try, with subscription plans offering full features. The two can be used together: creating lyrics in LyricStudio then melodies for them in MelodyStudio, but it's not obligatory.

music:)ally NEXT

in association with
JKBX

A new music and technology summit

Tuesday 25th April 2023, London

Music Ally is delighted to announce Music Ally NEXT, a new one-day music and technology summit.

Taking place at Hijingo in London on Tuesday 25th April in association with JKJBX and with support from Boomy, Last.fm, PRS For Music and Universal Music Group, this event will provide practical, expert insight on what's happening next in technology and music.



last.fm



UNIVERSAL
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
DIGITAL INNOVATION

Both in-person and virtual tickets are available - in-person tickets include lunch, drinks throughout the day, and an aftershow drinks and canapés reception.

Tickets are available at next.musically.com/tickets

The sale of Early Bird tickets ends
Wednesday 1st March - get them quickly!

The event will focus on five main tracks:

- Web3 music - *the return of ownership over access?*
- Creative AI and Virtual Artists - *supported by Boomy*
- Payouts, royalties and transparency - *supported by PRS For Music*
- Data, automation and fans - *supported by Last.fm*
- Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award - *supported by Universal Music Group*

KEYNOTE Scott Cohen, CEO & Investor, JKJBX

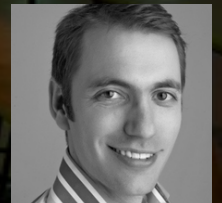


Scott will talk about how his new venture JKJBX is leveraging web3 to deliver a more meaningful sense of ownership to music fans and artists. Scott will also talk about how the ethos and technology underpinning web3 will contribute to the growth of the industry by unlocking new revenue streams.

Other confirmed speakers include:

Katherine Bassett, Community Lead, Water & Music; *Alex Brees*, CEO & Founder, Un:hurd; *Carlotta De Ninni*, CEO, The Creative Passport; *Cliff Fluet*, Partner, Lewis Silkin; *Dan Fowler*, Product and Operations, HIFI Labs; *Rachel Lyske*, CEO & Co-Founder of DAACI; *Christina Osazuwa*, Chief Strategy Officer, Shoobs; *Negar Shaghahi*, CEO & Co-Founder, Auxuman; *Cassandra Strauss*, Director, New Digital Business & Innovation, Universal Music Group; *Mark Krajewski*, Chief Information Officer, PRS For Music; *Alex Jae Mitchell*, Co-Founder & CEO, Boomy; *Vaughn McKenzie-Landell*, Founder, Butter; *Simon Moran*, GM, Last.fm

... and many more - check the NEXT website for the latest speaker announcements.



THE LATEST PROJECTS FROM THE DIGITAL MARKETING ARENA

CAMPAIGNS¹



The Unreal Slim Shad-AI: David Guetta creates artificial Eminem

Is it a forward-facing marketing strategy? Is it a copyright nightmare? Is it a precedent-setting lawsuit waiting to happen? Is it going to make musicians unemployed? Is it so ridiculous as to be elevated to the level of satirical art prank?

It's probably all of this and more. In brief, David Guetta – a man whose career has been boosted several times by the judicious use of a featured vocalist – has teased [a piece of music](#) he created that features the “vocals” of Eminem created using AI.

“

It is something I made as a joke and it worked so good I could not believe it... I'm sure the future of music is in AI. For sure. There's no doubt. But as a tool."



He says he's not going to release the "collaboration" (or should that be "collabor-AI-tion"?), commercially, but he was more than happy to post a [brief clip online](#) from a live set so that people get an idea of what the AI Eminem (or, as Guetta terms him, Emin-AI-em) sounds like.

"It is something I made as a joke and it worked so good I could not believe it," Guetta explains in the video. He reveals he started off by going to an AI website (he does not say which one) that promises to write lyrics in the style of any pop star. He got it to write a verse "in the style of Eminem about future rave" and took that to another AI site (again undisclosed) to feed in the lyrics and have it recreate the

rapping style and voice of Eminem.

"This is the future rave sound," says the AI Eminem in the video as Guetta lip-syncs along, "I'm getting awesome and underground." To be fair, it does sound like Eminem.

Guetta told the BBC, "I'm sure the future of music is in AI. For sure. There's no doubt. But as a tool."

He added, "Nothing is going to replace taste. What defines an artist is you have a certain taste, you have a certain type of emotion you want to express, and you're going to use all the modern instruments to do that."

He leaned hard on the technological

determinist stance that new genres and new sounds come from new uses of technology and said this was no different.

Eminem has not responded – or even created an AI version of Guetta mocking the process. Is he preparing his legal case? Is he not bothered? Is he in on the joke? Is it actually him rapping and the whole thing is a multi-tier prank?

It all raises a thousand questions about future creativity and rights ownership. It also raises a thousand questions about what music marketing will have to become in an AI future, most notably if the gimmick is going to overshadow the music.

THE LATEST PROJECTS FROM THE DIGITAL MARKETING ARENA

CAMPAIGNS²



Linkin Park Life: band use AI for new video

A challenge facing all estates and catalogue departments when unearthing a “lost” recording is how that is visually presented to the world. A moody compilation clip assembled from archive footage – where everything is shot in black and white, it slips into slow-motion and occasionally profound quotes are flashed up – is the

default setting, but it is now such a hackneyed trope as to be neither use nor ornament. New technology, however, can allow for something different, something better.

That does not have to involve using AI/deep-fake technology to raise a deceased star from their grave and grimly sing along to the track. In fact, it’s best if this



The video was created by inputting specific terms and phrases and having AI generate visual sequences from those triggers...



whole route is never pursued.

Chester Bennington, lead singer of Linkin Park, died in 2017 and now the remaining band members are building up to the 20th anniversary of their second album, *Meteora*, which originally came out in March 2003.



A previously unheard song from the sessions for that album, the appositely titled 'Lost', has been released and the track [comes with a video](#) that was made in collaboration with AI startup Kaiber.

The video was created by inputting specific terms and phrases and having AI generate visual sequences from those triggers. It sits roughly within the worlds of anime and Manga, blending animation of Bennington

(and other band members) with fantasy sequences.

There is a tie-in 20th anniversary boxset of the album that includes demos, B-sides and live footage, but the remaining band members insist they will not be working on any new music or planning live shows.

In any marketing involving a deceased musician, it must all be about a lightness of touch, avoiding the

bombastic or crass. The new video is in some ways a throwback to the original video for 'Breaking The Habit' from the *Meteora* album, giving a sense of a band paying tribute to a lost member and placing it within the creative context of the time.

Such marketing is a high wire act, but this is a good example of AI being used in a subtle way rather than an overpowering – and needlessly blundering – way.

Published by **music:)ally**

About Sandbox

Clients include: Spotify, Red Bull, Universal Music Group, Sony Music Group, Warner Music Group, Beggars Group, Facebook, Amazon, Google, Domino Recording Co, AEI, Anjuna, Songtrust, Blue Raincoat Music, Chrysalis Records, The Orchard, the MMF, the BPI, Berklee College of Music, BIMM, RARE Sound, Tommy Boy Records, Hollywood Records and more.

music:)ally helps companies with marketing insights, strategy and education. We do this by researching and publishing news and the latest trends, startups, tools and best practice across the industry and around the world; then taking what we know and turning it into hands-on training for marketers, managers and others. And behind the scenes we also work with select clients on their own marketing campaigns and ideas too.

We also produce events to facilitate international discussion, planning and networking around digital change and digital strategy.

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If you have a digital campaign related story for **sandbox**, please contact **Eamonn Forde** on campaigns@musically.com

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- Team-level / department-level best practice presentations
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- Full-service Digital Campaign Implementation

Next issue

Due: 22 March, 2023



Guide to Music Analytics

The use of analytics is, of course, vital – but what are the most essential learnings you can make from the key music analytics platforms: both DSP and third-party? How are labels and artist teams using analytics to plan and refine their campaigns in 2023? And more importantly, how can you act on those lessons without getting overwhelmed by the data? We speak to the people who have the ideas you need.

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