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The Impact of Artificial Intelligence Technology on Contemporary Music Artists

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Abstract: With the continuous development and maturation of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, the influence on music artists is becoming increasingly prominent. While a large number of musicians have benefited from AI technology and achieved considerable success, there are also many who have fallen into difficulties due to the emergence of AI technology. This article expounds the positive and negative impacts that artificial intelligence technology has brought to modern music artists based on the phenomena in reality. This paper will prompt music artists to think about how to use technological means to bring convenience to themselves. At the same time, they will also take a series of actions to avoid risks and minimize the adverse impact of artificial intelligence technology on music artists.

Keywords: Contemporary music artist; Artificial intelligence music; Music marketing; Music market environment

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1. Introduction

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technology can be traced back to the last century [1]. With the continuous development of technology, AI has been extended to various fields in just a few decades. As the breadth of AI applications expands, the music industry has the opportunity to benefit as well. Many AI companies around the world have developed and launched various AI music applications, which cover all aspects of music creation, music promotion, music performance, etc. [2]. Almost all parts of the music industry are affected by AI to varying degrees. This article briefly analyzes the impact of AI on music artists from two aspects. The first part briefly outlines the positive impact of AI on music artists from the three aspects of AI creation, AI marketing, and AI copyright protection. The second part shows that even though music artists enjoy the convenience brought by AI, they are also negatively affected. The rapid development of AI technology has brought huge employment pressure to musicians, the simple music production process makes the average professional level of musicians show a downward trend, and the quality of work cannot be guaranteed. Artists who seem to have more opportunities are actually taking on greater and greater responsibilities.

2. AI is the music artist's right-hand man

The use of AI in music is well established; it can be involved in the production of works, record marketing solutions, record tracking, and many other segments [3]. These AI technologies not only provide great convenience to musicians in their daily work, but also provide more options for musicians and music marketing strategies and career development.

2.1. AI is a catalyst for musical works

The emergence of AI technology provides an easier way to make songs, and it has increased the production speed of music work, like a catalyst. For a popular song without using any AI technology, the musician will take several months to write the lyrics and compose the music, plus the rehearsal of the accompaniment and other links, creating a new one may take half a year or even a year. More complex classical music and symphony will take more time. AI has changed this phenomenon and greatly improved production efficiency. Taking the aspect of arranging music as an example, in 2017, Sony CSL Research released Flow Machines, an AI music program, Flow Composer—an arranging application in the series of programs, which attracted the attention of the community [4]. The app currently covers five main functions: automatic composition, interactive composition, harmony rearrangement, variations, and play. The musician can enter different keywords or pieces of music according to their needs, and Flow Composer will generate several different target arrangements for the musician to choose from. There are many composer companies like this in the market, such as Google Experiments: Music and AI, ORB Composer, IBM Watson Music, etc. With the help of this arranging software, musicians can get many different arrangements in a day with the help of a computer, which greatly increases their efficiency [5]. Today, the number of companies in the AI music industry is increasing significantly and already covers almost all aspects of music production, including lyric writing, composing, arranging, singing, and more. AI is becoming increasingly important to music artists, becoming the perfect assistant for their work.

2.2. AI and music marketing

Scott Cohen is an opinion leader in the music industry who sees the potential impact of technology on the prospects of the music industry. In his keynote speech at the Eurosonic Nooderslag conference, he believes that every decade, something happens that has a profound impact on the music industry [6]. In my opinion, AI is that important science and technology for changing the music industry, its emergence has helped musicians open new ways of music marketing. AI can transform customer data and activity into actionable digital information, enabling more relevant and personalized cross-channel consumer engagement [7]. In the past, the promotion of musicians and music works largely depended on third parties (usually record companies or brokerage companies). They use a series of activities such as distribution, press releases, radio station promotion, TV station and variety show promotion, etc., but these activities must rely on strong capital, and music artists often have to sign unequal treaties with party A in order to obtain limited promotion channels. This means that it is difficult for a music artist to present their musical works to the audience with their own efforts. But now that the entire music market is developing towards online music and mobile devices, the once centralized and powerful traditional media has been fragmented into more decentralized new media channels. The channels through which users can access music works are diversified and can be social media, music platforms, and so on. Musicians can choose to upload their own music to the platform and the AI will now categorize the work according to the algorithms set by the platform according to style, tags, genre, and other characteristics, and then rely on the big data collected to push the work to the music listeners that best match the work. This allows

music artists to market themselves and at the same time to observe their fan base (age, geography, gender, etc.) at any time and from anywhere, which helps music artists to adapt their development strategy at any time [8]. In addition to this, AI helps music artists to be more likely discovered by A&R. In the past, sorting through music and finding potential unsigned artists has always been an extremely difficult task; in today's age of streaming music, the problem is even more serious. Industry leaders have identified this problem and are using AI technology to solve them, with Warner Music Group acquiring an AI company to find promising talent. Apple has also acquired a start-up specializing in music analytics to support its A&R process. So, with the advent of AI, artists have more avenues to market themselves and a greater chance of being discovered by good labels, and the relationship between artists and labels is no longer one-way and unequal, but a two-way street.

2.3. Better protection of rights and interests

AI has achieved a major breakthrough in protecting the copyright of music artists, and better helps music artists protect their copyright rights and economic benefits of their works. The traditional way of copyright protection is mainly to maintain music copyright through the law, digital system, copyright registration, and other means. Although these methods can protect the legitimate rights and interests of music copyright, they are not perfect, and there are many limitations and insurmountable problems. For example: In terms of legal protection, the legal procedures and systems of each country are different, and music artists will encounter many unpredictable difficulties in cross-border rights protection; In addition, traditional copyright protection methods require a lot of labor force, the high cost of money and time also hinders some music artist to protect their works. With the continuous development of AI technology, more and more innovative protection methods can bring more possibilities for music copyright protection. For example, (a) Data mining (DM) technology: It extracts music copyright information from large-scale data sets, monitors infringements, and predicts infringement trends, etc.; (b) Machine learning (ML) technology: It develops music copyright identification and digital watermarking technology, monitor and identify infringements, and automate copyright management and maintenance tasks [9]. When the copyright is well protected, it means that the economic benefits of musicians will be guaranteed, and AI will try to ensure that music artists receive copyright fees as much as possible.

3. Potential crises and unknown challenges

However, despite the advantages being very useful, the continuous development and application of AI in the music industry seem to bring some difficult problems that people have not thought of. In recent years, AI has repeatedly become a hot topic discussed by insiders in the music industry, such as the issue of music copyright ownership of AI works, the convergence of music works caused by AI, and the gradual simplification of the music market. For music artists, they themselves will also be negatively affected by AI technology.

3.1. Soaring employment pressure

Hans Abbing pointed out in his book *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts* that the art market has a special economic model, and the winner-take-all market dominates the art field, which means that many competitors are attracted to this market [10]. Everyone firmly believes that they will become the winner in the market and obtain most of the resources and money. Plus, the first part mentioned, various types of music production software launched by music companies on the market provide a shortcut for a large number of music lovers to enter the music market, which has greatly lowered the threshold of the music industry. Even if a music lover does not have very professional knowledge of music theory, they can use this music production software

to be a professional music artist. Therefore, the temptation of high returns in the industry and the simplification of music creation led to it being inevitable that there would be more and more musicians in the market. According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2003, the number of musicians signed by US record companies was 2.93 times that of independent musicians. By 2012, the number of independent musicians was 9.63 times that of signed musicians. In ten years, the number of independent musicians has increased by 6.1 times. Music works have grown accordingly. According to Spotify's official data, there are nearly 40,000 songs uploaded to Spotify every day, and more than 10 million new works are added every year. According to the data released by Tencent musicians in July 2017, 60,000 musicians uploaded more than 100,000 albums on the platform; according to NetEase Cloud Music's data in May 2018, the number of NetEase musicians registered exceeded 50,000, and their uploaded works exceeded 1 million [11]. In addition, the birth of AI music artists has also intensified the competition among musicians. For example, Aiva, the most prominent in the field of AI composition, is one of the earliest composers in the field of AI to gain world status. Aiva specializes in the creation of classical music. After reading a large number of works by famous composers such as Beethoven and Mozart, and after in-depth learning, it can finally complete classical melodies in a few minutes. After the continuous evolution of AI composers, the songs created by AI musicians today can be used in movies, advertisements, etc. For many films, music, and commercial music that do not require complex arrangements, AI music has become the first choice for businesses, because AI music not only saves time but also reduces a lot of costs. AI musicians and music production software are important factors that intensify competition in the music industry. In recent years, some musicians have been affected by them. If there is no better way to alleviate this phenomenon, the situation of music artists will become more and more difficult.

3.2. Low threshold of the music industry and serious homogeneity of songs

We have to admit that AI makes it possible for every music lover to become a music artist, but it also lowers the overall level of music artists in the entire music industry. The convenient music production method makes some musicians no longer pay attention to improving their professional music knowledge and skills. With the help of rich music resources on the Internet, they have all kinds of beats and materials, and they can combine a song by themselves after buying them together. They believe that music knowledge and skills are no longer the core competitiveness in this Internet age, but are replaced by traffic, and seizing the preferences of the market is an important condition for becoming a winner in the music industry. Currently, the famous American singer Lil Nas X spent $30 to buy a beat, created a song called 'Old Town Road' at home, posted it on the Internet by himself, and then spread the popularity through short videos. It took him less than two minutes to go from being an independent musician to overturning the American music scene [12]. No attempt to disparage the artist or the song here, but to use this phenomenon to point out that people now make overnight fame the lifelong pursuit of their musical careers. Today's musicians are more impetuous than before. In the past, in order to make a good song, musicians practiced their basic skills hard. Only after they have solid basic skills can they think about making money. Many musicians nowadays have not even learned the basic skills, but already start thinking about selling songs. In this way, selling songs is more about fighting for resources and routines than about work. With the help of AI's huge database and accurate song recommendations, music artists get the most exposure, but the possible consequence is that music artists write songs according to AI recommendation algorithms in order to gain more network exposure, and the quality of songs is difficult to guarantee, the homogenization is serious, the songs we listen to are becoming more and more similar, losing their human characteristics, and are more like being manipulated by technology.

3.3. More complex roles and increased responsibilities

The development of technology has digitized the music industry, and the distribution channels and revenue methods of work have also been dispersed. Behind the new opportunities lies a greater burden. Music artists juggle more work, or tap new sources of income, take more risks, and take on more career management responsibilities, often for less than before [13]. Keeping pace with the times, record companies have expanded their publicity departments, targeting various social platforms, music platforms, and follower groups, and developed different promotional programs.

For music artists who cooperate with music companies, they only need to create works according to the instructions of their superiors and complete various promotional activities arranged by the company, without worrying about the number of new songs being listened to, the sales of albums, etc. But for independent music artists who rely on AI technology to survive, they avoid record companies, and while enjoying the benefits of AI technology in terms of creation and marketing, it also brings some changes to their identities. Producers of musical compositions become creators, performers, promoters, accountants, and more. Thomson show relative information in his article "Roles, revenue, and responsibilities: The changing nature of being a working musician" that more than 5,000 artists were being surveyed about the number of roles they believed they played in their musical careers, many survey respondents chose the term "multiple roles" an option [14]. **Figure 1** proves the above conclusion, more than 70% of the participants chose two/three/four roles. It can be seen that, compared with the traditional music industry, contemporary individual music artists need to do more work and take on more responsibilities.

Role	Frequency	Percentage
Composer	2,660	49.5
Recording artist	2,200	40.9
Performer	4,474	83.2
Salaried player[a]	452	12.9
Session player	2,696	50.1
Teacher	2,858	53.2
Administrator[a]	815	23.4

Note. More than one answer allowed. Money from Music Survey, Sept. 6–Oct. 28, 2011. $N = 5,371$.
[a]For salaried player and administrator questions, $N = 3,485$.

Figure 1. The role played by a musician

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we mainly focus on the theme of AI music and explore the impact of the emergence of AI music on music artists. In the positive impact section, this article lists three manifestations that AI benefits music artists: simplifies the production process of music works and improves the creative efficiency of music artists; helps music artists achieve personalized and more comprehensive marketing; better protects the copyright of music artists and benefits. With the widespread application of AI in the music industry, we have to admit that its negative impact is becoming more and more obvious: the simplified music production process not only increases the competition among artists and leads to serious employment pressure, but also is not conducive to

the improvement of the artist's ability. AI enables music artists to achieve self-marketing and breaks the single identity of music artists. They often play more roles and do more work. On the whole, in the past ten years, music artists have enjoyed the convenience and more opportunities brought by AI. What needs to be considered in the next decade is how to minimize the negative impact of AI technology or develop AI in new fields to benefit music artists.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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