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And the Winner Is… Human AI-Generated Music Ineligible for Grammys

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The Recording Academy has set the record straight about the eligibility of music developed by artificial intelligence for the Grammy Awards. “A work that contains no human authorship is not eligible in any Categories,” the academy clarified in an update published in its 66th Rules & Guidelines. Works featuring some AI-generated material may be eligible for awards, as long as “the human authorship component of the work submitted” is “meaningful and more than de minimis,” and relevant to the award category at issue.

The academy's position is consistent with that of the US Copyright Office, which “will register an original work of authorship, provided that the work was created by a human being.” Past legal conundrums about authorship have involved animals, such as an Indonesian macaque who took a series of arresting selfies.

Music lovers should keep their ears to the ground: questions about authorship and originality are only going to get more complicated as people find new uses for artificial intelligence in the arts. Paul McCartney, for one, recently told BBC Radio 4's Today podcast that a final Beatles record is slated for release this year, thanks to AI technology that extricated John Lennon's voice from an old demo — in McCartney's words, “a ropey little bit of cassette, where it had John's voice and a piano.”

“We were able to take John's voice and get it pure through this AI, so that then we could mix the record as you would normally do,” McCartney said. “It gives you some sort of leeway. So, there's a good side to it, and then a scary side. And we'll just have to see where that leads.”

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