

Rosanne Cash to US Congress: streaming killing music

June 25 2014



Rosanne Cash performs during on April 3, 2012 in New York City

The country star Rosanne Cash warned Wednesday that paltry returns to artists in the age of Internet streaming threaten to kill the music industry, as US lawmakers work on an overhaul.

At a crowded congressional hearing, the daughter of legend Johnny Cash said that most musicians felt "marginalized and devalued" by meager

pay, revealing that she earned just \$114 for 600,000 online streams of one of her songs.

"I see young musicians give up their dreams every single day because they cannot make a living, they cannot survive doing the thing they most love, the thing they just might be on the planet to do," she told the House Judiciary Committee.

Recalling that her father once testified to Congress over a website in Slovenia illegally selling his classic song "Ring of Fire," Cash said in her testimony that online listening has since "morphed into a multinational juggernaut that threatens to decimate the livelihoods of all musicians, songwriters and performers."

The hearing—which featured sharply different perspectives from various sides of the industry—comes as the House Judiciary Committee starts work on a broad review of [music](#) copyright laws as streaming services such as Pandora, Spotify and iTunes Radio dramatically transform how people listen to songs.

The previously scheduled hearing came just as the US Supreme Court ruled that Internet TV start-up Aereo—which lets viewers watch broadcast programs on mobile or other devices—violated copyright laws, a closely watched decision that could affect the debate on music streaming.

Paul Williams, the prolific composer whose works range from the theme to "The Love Boat" television series to collaboration with French electronica duo Daft Punk, called for changes to ensure that online music providers negotiate with performing rights organizations—which were created a century ago to handle royalties from bars, shops and other music users of the time.

The antiquated regulatory system makes it "increasingly difficult for music creators to realize a competitive return for their creative efforts," said Williams, who is president of the largest performing rights organization, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

Payments to artists are established by a complex court-arbitrated system that predates the Internet streaming era, during which physical sales of albums have sharply declined.

In another point of contention, terrestrial radio—AM and FM stations—only pay royalties to songwriters and not to performers.

Streaming services pay no royalties at all for songs released before February 15, 1972, which Cash said meant that her late father would earn nothing for his 1956 song "I Walk the Line"—but artists who cover the song today would profit.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Rosanne Cash to US Congress: streaming killing music (2014, June 25) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-06-rosanne-cash-congress-streaming-music.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--